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FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE  
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## EDITORS' NOTE

*Markéta Johnová and Michaela Weiss*

The volume *Silesian Studies in English 2012* presents selected papers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference of English and American Studies *Silesian Studies in English – SILSE 2012*, which took place on 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at the Institute of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Philosophy and Science, Silesian University in Opava, the Czech Republic.

As was the case with the preceding SILSE conferences, which took place in 2006 and 2009, there was no prescribed theme of the contributions. Scholars were invited to present their latest research in the fields of Linguistics, Literature and Methodology without being limited to a specific topic.

Since the conference attracted many scholars both from the Czech Republic and abroad, the resulting volume provides a representative sample of the current state of research, mainly in the Central Europe.

Following the structure of the conference, the current volume has been divided into three main sections with 11 papers in the Linguistics section, 9 in the Literature section, and 2 in Methodology. *The Chicago Manual of Style* was chosen as the reference style for the proceedings; papers on linguistics and methodology use the author-date system, whilst the literary papers use footnotes. When it comes to electronic sources, the access dates are not provided, as all the links were checked by the editors to be fully functional at the time of publishing.

While the last volume was published in print and on CD, following the latest trends and allowing for a better accessibility of the papers, the current proceedings are published in print, and they have also been made available in a PDF format on the Institute of Foreign Languages webpage.

Similarly to previous years, the volume does not include all the papers that were presented at the conference. While some participants did not meet the deadlines for submitting their papers, others did not

reach the required quality standard and their contributions were not accepted for publishing.

We would like to express our thanks to the Institute of Foreign Languages, which partially funded the publishing of this volume. Our thanks also go to the organizers for their hard work in preparation of the conference, as well as the participants, who created an excellent atmosphere and made the conference a memorable and successful event.

## I. LINGUISTICS



# **SOME NOTES ON THE PRESENTATIONAL CAPACITY OF HENDIADYS-LIKE VERBAL CONFIGURATIONS**

*Martin Adam*

**ABSTRACT:** Exploring the Firbasian theory of functional sentence perspective (FSP), the present paper attempts to throw light on the Presentation sentences that contain hendiadys-like verbal pairs (*A ruler came and knelt before him*). The main question posed is whether such constructions can be considered verbal hendiadys, thus representing one communicative unit, or rather two separate verbs operating in two distinctive dynamic semantic scales. The principal aim of the analysis will be to discuss the potential capacity of such configurations to present a context-independent subject on the scene, i.e. to express appearance/existence with explicitness or sufficient implicitness.

**KEY WORDS:** FSP, Firbas, presentation, scale, hendiadys, verb, existence appearance

## **1. PAPER OBJECTIVES**

The present corpus-based paper proposes to throw light on the structure and the function of the Presentation sentences (Pr-sentences) that contain pair verbal configurations in predication (cf. *A ruler came and knelt before him*). As a matter of fact, these sentences typically fall into one of the most frequent types of sentences implementing the Presentation Scale (Pr-Scale), i.e. those which feature a rhematic subject in preverbal position. The principal question discussed is whether such constructions are capable of presenting a context-independent phenomenon on the scene, i.e. to express appearance/existence with explicitness or with sufficient implicitness. On top of that, the paper will investigate the syntactic semantic nature of such verbal pairs, attempting to conclude whether they represent one communicative unit (and so one dynamic semantic scale) or rather two separate verbs operating in two distinctive dynamic semantic scales.

Methodologically anchored in the theory of functional sentence perspective (FSP) and drawing on the findings presented especially by Firbas (1992), Svoboda (2005, 2006) and Dušková (1998, 2005), the paper deals with the register of fiction narrative and New Testament

narrative. For the purpose of analysis two fiction texts (novels) are used: C. S. Lewis' (1950) *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (in the corpus abbreviated N) and D. Lodge's (1979) *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses* (C). The biblical subcorpus contains the following New Testament books of narrative character (Kohlenberger 1997): *The Gospel of Luke* (L), *The Gospel of Matthew* (M), *The Book of Acts* (A), *The Book of Revelation* (R), and a part of *The Gospel of John* (J). As to the statistic data, the whole corpus under examination consists of 207,366 words; within the corpus, there are 11,395 basic distributional fields, which are technically counted as finite clauses; non-finite clauses are regarded as separate communicative units within the basic distributional fields. Out of all the basic distributional fields in the corpus, 488 instances of sentences that implement the Presentation Scale were identified, which represents 8.2%. Apparently, a low number of the basic distributional fields in the corpus follow the general occurrence pattern of the Pr-Scale; it is possible to claim, however, that such an incidence is in full compliance with other findings and other genres examined so far (see e.g. Adam 2009, 2010, 2011).

## 2. FSP AND THE DYNAMIC SEMANTIC SCALES

In a nutshell, in Firbas' view (for further information on FSP the reader is referred especially to Firbas 1992), sentences represent fields of semantic and syntactic relations that in their turn provide distributional fields of degrees of communicative dynamism (CD); Firbas defines a degree of CD as "the extent to which the element contributes towards the development of the communication" (Firbas 1964, 270). The most prominent part of information is the high point of the message, i.e. the most dynamic element; other elements of the sentence are less dynamic (have a lower degree of CD). The degrees of CD are determined by the interplay of FSP factors involved in the distribution of degrees of CD: linear modification, context and semantic structure (Firbas 1992, 14-16). In spoken language, the interplay of these factors is joined by intonation, i.e. the prosodic factor. Through the interplay of FSP factors it is then possible to identify the degrees of CD carried by the communicative units, roughly following the pattern of theme – transition – rheme (Firbas 1992, 66ff). The distribution of degrees of

CD within a sentence is not necessarily implemented linearly, and so it is inevitable to distinguish between the linear arrangement of sentence elements on the one hand, and their interpretative arrangement on the other (Firbas 1995, 63). The latter is defined as “the arrangement of the sentence elements according to the gradual rise in CD irrespective of the positions they occupy within the sentence” (Firbas 1986, 47). The two arrangements may either coincide, or there are differences of various kinds.

In his summarizing monograph, Firbas (1992, 41ff) introduced the idea of the so-called dynamic semantic scales that are implemented in sentences; they functionally reflect the distribution of communicative dynamism (CD) and operate irrespective of word order. In principle, Firbas distinguishes two types of dynamic-semantic scales: the Presentation Scale (Pr-Scale) and the Quality Scale (Q-Scale). In these scales, each element is ascribed one of the dynamic-semantic functions (DSFs), such as Phenomenon to be Presented (Ph), Specification (Sp), Bearer of Quality (B), Setting (Set), etc. (for further details as well as the complete list of DSFs see Firbas 1992). In contrast with a static approach towards semantic functions of sentence constituents (e.g. agent, instrument etc.), the dynamic semantic functions may change in the course of the act of communication; the same element may thus perform different functions in different contexts and under different conditions (cf. also Svoboda 2005, 221). The items of both scales are arranged in accordance with a gradual rise in CD from the beginning to the end of the sentence reflecting the interpretative arrangement.

### **3. PRESENTATION SENTENCES**

The Presentation Scale (Pr-Scale), i.e. the focus of the paper, includes, as a rule, three basic dynamic semantic functions. Firstly, nearly every act of communication is set by the scene (Set) of the action, i.e. typically temporal and spatial items of when and where the action takes place. Secondly, the existence or appearance on the scene is typically conveyed by a verb (Pr) and, thirdly, the most dynamic, hence rhematic (and actually the only obligatory) element (Ph) is literally ushered onto the scene.

In terms of the corpus data analysed, the second most recurring subtype of the Pr-Scale sentence pattern (after the existential *there*-construction) may be described as that with a rhematic subject in the initial, i.e. preverbal position (about 25 percent); such a configuration is perceived as the prototypical, canonical type connected with the Pr-Scale (cf. Dušková 1988, 62; 531-532). In it, the initial sentence element is typically represented by a context-independent subject, which is only then followed (in concord with the requirements of the English word order principles) by the verb, which expresses existence or appearance on the scene (cf. Dušková 1999, 248-250). The sentence may also be opened with a scene-setting temporal or spatial thematic adverbial. (In the examples adduced, from now on the rhematic phenomenon is presented in bold, whereas the transitional Pr-verb is underlined). As for FSP articulation, the word order of such configurations actually violates the end-focus principle observed in English. Nevertheless, sentences with a rhematic subject in preverbal position are considered unmarked by native speakers of English (exceptions may be observed in connection to prosodic re-evaluating intensification; cf. Firbas 1992, 154-156).

It follows that the verb operating in Pr-Scale sentences (Presentation verb; Pr-verb) presents something new on the scene. It is important to recall that in relation to its presentation role, Firbas claims that it does so “if it expresses the existence or appearance on the scene with explicitness or sufficient implicitness” (Firbas 1995, 65; cf. Adam 2011). In the current corpus (and also in other corpora under our investigation), two types of verbs classified in this respect have been detected. Most Pr-verbs clearly express the existence or appearance on the scene in an explicit way. Prototypically, these are verbs such as *come, arrive, step in, come down, be born, enter, appear, occur, turn up, rear up* etc. (Adam 2010, 2011). The Pr-verbs falling into this are, in their nature, dynamic, mostly intransitive, and carry the meaning of appearance, both as a result of a dynamic process or seen in the process of motion proper. Such verbs actually exactly reflect the definition of Firbasian appearance on the scene with explicitness.

However, research has convincingly shown that other types of verbs are also capable of expressing the existence or appearance on the scene even though they do not convey the meaning of appearance in a straightforward manner; in other words, they do so with sufficient

implicitness. A relatively large group in the corpus is made up with Pr-verbs that express the existence or appearance on the scene in a rather implicit way; all different sorts of verbs, such as *overshadow*, *send*, *strike*, *await*, *buzz*, *wake*, *chirp*, *shine*, *seize*, *pour*, *feed*, *blow* or *preach* were identified in the research corpus (cf. Adam 2010). Seemingly, the verbs come from different semantic groups of verbs and do not have much in common.

#### 4. S-V SEMANTIC AFFINITY

During the course of investigation, it has become obvious that one of the most significant features of such Pr-verbs occurring in the prototypical Pr-sentences may be described as a certain degree of semantic affinity between the Pr-verb itself and the clause subject (Adam 2011; cf. Firbas 1992, 60). To be more specific, the corpus findings seem to reveal a significant semantic feature of what may be considered to express existence/appearance on the scene in an implicit way: the semantic affinity observed between the verb and the subject. In a number of previous papers (see esp. Adam 2010 and 2011), various sentences with a certain sort of semantic affinity were detected. Cf.:

- (1) a. *A **bee** buzzed across their path.* (N120e)
- b. *At that moment **a strange noise** woke the silence.* (N128)
- c. ***The sun** shone.* (C20)

In (1a-c), the action is so semantically inherent to the subjects that it is the subject that takes over the communicative prominence at the expense of power of the verbal content (see also Adam 2011). The static semantics of the verb then – even if expressing a specific type of action – is reduced to that of presentation. The semantic content of the verbal notional component is so natural of the agents employed that the full verb serves to denote a form of existence or appearance on the scene. In other words, the verb that operates in semantic affinity with its subject semantically supports the character of the subject. One may readily say that buzzing is an inbred activity for bees and thus in (1a) the highest degree of CD is definitely carried by the subject. Similarly, it is

most natural for a strange noise to wake silence (1b), or for the sun to shine (1c).

In this respect, it is the static semantic load of the verb that as a matter of fact vitally determines the sentence perspective; it can be argued that the English verb acquires its dynamics in the immediately relevant context, the base being its static semantic equipment. It should be highlighted that semantic affinity of the English Pr-verb with the subject seems to stand at the root of the question concerning the (semantic and syntactic) criteria that make it possible for the verb to act as a Pr-verb in the sentence. Hence, such semantic affinity proved to be a truly formative force operating in the constitution of the Presentation Scale sentences.

## 5. PAIR VERBAL CONFIGURATIONS AND FSP

Let us now embark the discussion on the specific transitional verb configurations mentioned at the beginning of the paper. The point is that in the corpus two peculiar (even if rather marginal) syntactic semantic structures were identified, viz. pair verb groupings (sequences of coordinate predications), such as *came and knelt*; *break in and steal* and *honk and hum*. See the following examples (in square brackets the necessary preceding verbal context is given):

- (2) a. [*While he was saying this*], **a ruler** came and knelt before him [*and said, "My daughter has just died..."*] (M9:18a)
- b. [*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy*] and where **thieves** break in and steal. (M6:19b)
- c. [*The Avenue was getting busy.*] **Cars** honked and hummed in the road. (C117a)

As has been hinted above, the crucial question in terms of the FSP interpretation is whether such pair verbal constructions serve as a single communicative unit or rather as two separate verbs operating in two distinctive dynamic semantic scales. The principal aim of the analysis is then to discuss the potential capacity of such configurations to present a context-independent subject on the scene, i.e. to express appearance/existence with explicitness or, at least, with sufficient



Tárnyiková 2007, 107). English names for hendiadys include two for one and figure of twinnes. As Tárnyiková (2007, 107) clarifies, exploiting Hopper's definition (2002, 146), that

the Latinised term hendiadys (from Greek *hen dia duoin* 'one by means of two') names a figure of medieval rhetoric in which a semantic modifier-head complex is presented as a coordinated compound. In it, a single conceptual idea is realized by two distinct constituents.

Tárnyiková aptly adds that hendiadic configurations are symmetrical in form (two co-ordinate elements), but non-symmetrical in functional hierarchy (hence pseudo-coordination) (Tárnyiková 2007, 108). On top of that, giving a number of analogous examples such as *try and come*, *go ahead and think* or *start and create*, she understands hendiadys as a scalar notion, in which "the first predicate is interpreted as being in a satellite relationship to the second element, understood as its nucleus" (Tárnyiková 2007, 106). It follows that two syntactic constituents are capable of conveying the hendiadys meaning only on the provision that they appear together in one syntactically and semantically homogeneous unit. In this respect, the model example extracted from the corpus – see (2a) above – may be seen as border-line, definitely not the core representative of the phenomenon.

Let us illustrate the idea of hendiadys being suitable tools of presenting subject on the scene in the deep sense of a single Pr-verb by bringing one more example:

- (4)     *[While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house], **many tax collectors and "sinners"** came and ate with him and his disciples.*  
(M9:10)

It seems that (4) fulfils the idea of syntactically symmetrical yet functionally asymmetrical character of hendiadys more precisely than (3). Interestingly, most examples of hendiadys discussed so far come from the Gospel of Matthew, i.e. the religious, New Testament narrative; the point is that e.g. Hopper maintains that hendiadys is primarily used as a device "of the spoken (colloquial if not highly colloquial) mode of language use" (Hopper 2002, 148). Generally



speaking, pseudo-coordination of the *try and come* pattern tends to be used in informal style; Quirk et al., for instance, claim that *I'll try and come tomorrow* is “roughly equivalent to *I'll try to come tomorrow*, but is more informal in style” (Quirk et al. 1985, 978). In contrast to their observations, some of our hendiadys examples come from the highly literary style of the New Testament. It is only fair to state that also Hopper (ibid.) hastens to add, “their existence is also reflected in the simulation of conversational passages in the written mode (e.g. in the language of fiction...)”, which may be the case of (2b), which is found in the dialogic section of the narration.

Not all constructions resembling the pseudo-coordinate hendiadys function in this manner (i.e. are not capable of presenting a context-independent subject), though. To illustrate, below are two examples in which the two neighbouring verbs, in our opinion, do not represent such pairs. As far as (5a) is concerned, the point is that we deal here with a compound sentence; its first clause is a Presentation one (*came* presents the context-independent subject on the scene), and the second clause implements the Quality Scale. In the case of (5b) we may probably speak of pseudo-coordination; however, the Quality Scale is implemented again (the pseudo-coordinated verb phrase performing the Q-function and *your hand* being the most dynamic element of the distributional field, performing the DSF of Specification):

- (5) a. *Then **John's disciples** came // [and asked him, “How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”] (M9:14)*
- b. *But come and put your hand on her, [and she will live.] (M9:18b)*

At this point, let us recall that we deal with a syntactically symmetrical yet functionally asymmetrical grouping; at least on the level of FSP these sequences of co-ordinate predications functionally operate as single communicative units, i.e. as one transitional verb. Nevertheless, such an interpretation may evoke the following question: If such hendiadys-patterning Pr-verbs function as one unit, can they express existence/appearance on the scene with explicitness or sufficient implicitness? Do such sentences at all implement the Presentation Scale? The point is that structures as *came and ate* would then lose their presentational capacity and their semantic s would be reduced to that of ascribing a Quality to the Bearer; thus the sentence would implement

the Quality Scale in its Combined variant. Consider, for instance, (6) below (the modified interpretation of (4)):

- (6) *[While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house], **many tax collectors and "sinners"** (Ph+B) came and ate (Pr+Q) with him and his disciples (Sp). (M9:10)*

In other words, to follow up with the Firbasian claim concerning the Combined Scale (Firbas 1992, 67) that the distributional field “telescopes the Ph-function and the B-function into the subject”, we can readily say that, also the dynamic semantic functions of both Presentation and Quality are telescoped into the verb. It should be noted that although Firbas (including his opera magna of 1992 and 1995) consistently uses the expression Combined Scale, the function of such sentences has been recently understood as a functional variant of the Quality Scale (Chamonikolasová & Adam 2005, Dušková 2008, 73-74). Incidentally, also Svoboda noticed that the Phenomenon presented actually coincides with the Bearer of Quality and is introduced on the scene *in medias res*, i.e. without any actual presentation (cf. Svoboda 2005, 226). Whether structures as *come and eat* or *break in and steal* may perform the dynamic function of Presentation and thus express existence/appearance on the scene at least implicitly or whether they should be interpreted as two separate units and thus serve in two distributional fields remains an open question. As has been shown, the decisive factor in an appropriate FSP interpretation of the hendiadys-like verbal constructions is undoubtedly its verbal context.

To complete the mosaic of the gradient of hendiadys-like verbal configurations operating the transition of Pr-sentences, let us consider other two subtypes (7a), (7b). In them, a vital role is played by the semantic link (affinity) between the context-independent subject and the verbal predication. Cf.:

- (7) a. *[Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy] and where **thieves break in and steal**. (M6:19b)*  
 b. *[The Avenue was getting busy.] **Cars honked and hummed** in the road. (C117a)*

(7a) gives evidence of a verbal hendiadic configuration, the individual items of which may be understood to be semantically more related than in the classical *come and kneel* pattern. It is undoubtedly the semantic affinity between both the verbs (*break in* and *steal*) on the one hand, and the context-independent subject (*thieves*) on the other, that makes it possible for the analyst to see the hendiadic verbal structure as operating as one communicative unit. Admittedly, the two verbs under discussion are semantically close – which adds to the overall affinity – yet not synonymic in the true sense of the word. The point is that from the temporal perspective the actions depicted by the two verbs are typically not simultaneous but consecutive.

If we take the *come and kneel* pattern as the least hendiadic, and the *break in and steal* as ‘somewhat hendiadic’, (7b) ranks, on the contrary, on the other side of the hendiadic scale. The point is that it fulfils the idea of the hendiadic presentation on the scene most precisely, mainly thanks to the double-edged semantic affinity. Namely, not only does the verbal configuration *honked and hummed* manifest obvious semantic linkage with the subject (*cars*), but it also shows a high degree of synonymy, if not tautology, between the two coordinated verbal items. In this way, *honk and hum* semantically intensifies the meaning conveyed (e.g. *honked and hummed* is more emphatic than mere *honked*, not to speak of the obvious effect of alliteration etc.); apart from the crystal-clear use of hendiadys in terms of their pseudo-coordinate nature the expression achieves such an intensification also by means of synonymous parallelism (for details on the intensifying use of coordination see Quirk et al. 1985, 980).

Owing to such semantic coherence and the accompanying emphatic effect, we may readily consider the pair verbal configuration to serve as a single communicative unit from the FSP point of view. Thus, the transitional verbal unit *honk and hum* can certainly express existence/appearance on the scene, at least with sufficient implicitness.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Research has indicated that hendiadys-like verbal configurations actually display certain interpretative potentiality. Also Tárnyiková admits that verbal hendiadys has “a midway status between coordination

and subordination” and as such “presents a formidable problem for the analyst” (Tárnyiková 2007, 112). As such, the issue of the role of hendiadys and its operation in terms of FSP calls for further research.

As a matter of fact, we may claim at this point that the coordinated verbal pairs in transition represent a rather heterogeneous category since their syntactic semantic character may substantially differ; we should rather speak of a gradient, or cline of the hendiadys-like configurations. Analogously, Hopper (2002, 149), in harmony with our current observations, maintains that

hendiadic verbal expressions cover a spectrum that extends from ‘core’ examples like *go and, come and, come along and, come up and, (...) to a plethora of occasional types such as take a chance and, plunge in and, wake up and, go to work and, roll up one’s sleeves and, and very many others that could be characterized as hendiadic in a broader sense.*

Nevertheless, from the viewpoint of FSP it is possible to claim that verbal hendiadic pairs – under favourable conditions – are capable of presenting new, context-independent phenomena on the scene, and thus can serve effectively as Pr-verbs in Pr-Scale sentences.

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# **SLEEPING LANGUAGES IN THE ENGLISH SPEAKING WORLD**

*Miroslav Černý*

**ABSTRACT:** The paper is an outcome of a long-term project entitled Past, Present, and Future Prospects of Indigenous Language Maintenance and Renewal. The main goal of the project is to map the global debate on the endangerment and revitalization of the world's languages and cultures, with the research focus put on the situation in (former) British territories, where the status of English is an important factor contributing to the dynamics in the modification of language and cultural diversity. The present treatise brings to the fore examples from three continents: Europe (Cornish), North America (Miami-Illinois), and Australia (Mati Ke).

**KEY WORDS:** sleeping languages, English, Cornish, Miami-Illinois, Mati Ke, language revitalization

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

As has been frequently emphasized in recent decades (see Dorian 1989, Hagège 2000), a large portion of the languages that are actively spoken today are doomed to become extinct within the next one hundred years. General reasons for this have already been articulated – for example by Dixon (1997), Nettle and Romaine (2000) or Tsunoda (2005), – and need not to be elaborated here. What is, on the other hand, worth mentioning right at the beginning of the present paper is the current numerical data and its potential to illustrate the extent and the rapidity of language loss we are about to face in future.

According to latest counts, the world's population of around six billion people speaks 6,909 languages (cf. Lewis 2009<sup>1</sup>). While the so called top languages (Chinese, English, Spanish, Hindi and Arabic) have hundreds of millions of speakers each, “accounting for just over 50 percent of humans” (Harrison 2007, 13), more than 3,500 languages are spoken by only 0.2 percent of the globe's population (Harrison 2007, 14). In relation to this predicament Krauss (1992, 6) estimates that about

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<sup>1</sup> For the online version see <http://ethnologue.com>.

50 percent of the world's languages are no longer passed on to new generations, making him conclude that the number of languages which can be expected to die out by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is 3000 at minimum. In other words, one half of the world's nearly 7000 languages can be considered endangered.

A more subtle division of endangered languages can be found in the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* (Moseley 2010)<sup>2</sup>, an invaluable resource for both scholars and general public interested in language endangerment and related issues such as language revival and ecology. It maps changes in linguistic diversity at the global level and updates the list of languages under threat, which are further classified into five categories: 1) vulnerable, 2) definitely endangered, 3) severely endangered, 4) critically endangered, and 5) extinct languages.<sup>3</sup>

The identification of their current status is based on nine language vitality factors proposed by the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group. These “life” criteria include: 1) absolute number of speakers, 2) intergenerational language transfer, 3) community members' attitudes towards their ancestral language, 4) shifts in domains of language use, 5) governmental and also institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use, 6) type and quality of documentation, 7) responses to new domains and modern media, 8) availability of materials for language education and literacy, 9) proportion of speakers within the total population.

## 2. PROBLEMS OF TERMINOLOGY

The fact that the UNESCO Atlas delimits “extinct languages” as one category of *languages in danger* suggests that its editors and advisory board consider the word “extinct” as too final, too definite, and they believe that under suitable circumstances at least some languages are capable of being brought from the state of having no speakers back to the status of living languages. This approach goes hand in hand with the opinion of several scholars who – instead of labeling languages as

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<sup>2</sup> For the online version go to <http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/>.

<sup>3</sup> Alternate five-level classifications were introduced by Bauman (1980), Kincade (1991) and Wurm (1998).



“extinct”, “obsolete” or “dead” – give preference to less final metaphors of “silence” or “sleep” (Hinton 2008, 413–417).

Expectedly, the above coinages are not the only terms which are employed when referring to the attrition of languages. Another frequent expression is “moribund”. Languages are usually considered moribund when they are no longer being learned as a native tongue by children (Krauss 1992, 4), which “captures the notion of a language well beyond the stage of ‘mere’ endangerment, because it lacks intergenerational transmission; the analogy is with a species unable to reproduce itself” (Crystal 2000, 20). However, it is not that simple to equate languages with biological species. Unlike animals, well documented languages – with plenteous linguistic data – can be awakened even centuries after the departure of the last native speakers.

In what follows I would like to magnetize our attention to three languages which either were, are or might be in near future classified as “sleeping” or “silent”. I have chosen illustrations from three continents: Europe (Cornish), America (Miami-Illinois), and Australia (Mati Ke). What these languages have in common is that the territories where their users live form parts of English speaking countries and, as such, they are exposed to the political and cultural dominance of the English language. By comparing the stories of Cornish, Miami-Illinois, and Mati Ke, I want to specify several factors which contribute to the modification of language and cultural diversity.

### **3. THE STORY OF CORNISH**

Cornish belongs to the Brythonic branch of Celtic languages, once spoken throughout all of Cornwall in Southwest Britain. Despite the Anglo-Saxon and later Norman occupation of the region it thrived until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and produced a unique collection of literary works. In the following three centuries, however, Cornish ceased to be used, and its last *monolingual* speaker – Dolly Pentreah – died in 1777. Factors involved in the steep decline of Cornish included religion and economic opportunities conducted in the dominant language – English. “One clear source of English contact was the spread of fishing and tin-mining in the

area” (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, 45). The second significant source was “[t]he introduction of the English prayer book”<sup>4</sup>.

The First serious attempts towards reviving Cornish began at the very end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are usually associated with two strong-minded men Henry Jenner (1848–1934) and Robert M. Nance (1873–1959), who invested their skills, time, and energy to documentation, recreation, and standardization of the Cornish language. Besides other things, they authored key texts – *Handbook of the Cornish Language* (Jenner 1904) and *Cornish for All* (Nance 1929) – which laid strong foundations for the Cornish revival movement, and initiated a renewed interest in the traditional culture of Cornwall.

The post WW2 generations of Cornish activists continued in the language and cultural revival movement, for example by establishing the Cornish Language Board (*Kesva an Taves Kernewek*) in 1967, but at the same time they opened a turbulent discussion about whether the reconstruction and the writing system of Cornish as suggested by Jenner and later updated and unified by Nance (the so called *Unified Cornish*) was the most suitable solution with respect to modern users of the language. In the light of modern linguistics it became clear that neither *Unified Cornish* – with grammar and lexicon based on middle Cornish (see Bičovský 2005, 111–117) – nor its orthography could properly function in the current period (Macháčková 2006, 185). Several reforms were proposed (Ken George’s *Revised Cornish*, 1986; or Richard Gendall’s *Modern Cornish*, 1991; etc.) but none of them have so far gained general acceptance in the community of Cornish scholars and speakers.

Despite the difficulties within the process of standardization of the language we can say that Cornish has been successfully brought back to life. Today, it is used by about 3,500 people, of which 100 are fluent speakers and 500 use it regularly (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, 47). There are also “[c]lasses and correspondence courses, and organizations lobby for the support of the Cornish language in the schools and for the recognition by the government” (Hinton 2008: 416). Books are being published, radio programs broadcast (on Radio

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<sup>4</sup> See Agan Tavas – Society for the Protection and Promotion of the Cornish Language and Support Group for Users of the Cornish Language (<http://www.agantavas.com/>).

Cornwall), and social events arranged. The language is learned by children. If we consider the long period during which not a word of Cornish could be heard, and if we take into account the pressure from English, it is a remarkable achievement (Hagège 2000, 312–313).

#### 4. THE STORY OF MIAMI-ILLINOIS

Miami-Illinois is a Central Algonquian language originally spoken in the present-day USA states of Indiana and Illinois and in adjoining parts of Iowa and Missouri along the Mississippi River (Bauxar 1978, 596; and/or Callender 1978, 673). Together with other Algonquian languages (*Eastern*: e.g. Micmac, Unami, Powhatan; *Central*: e.g. Shawnee, Cree, Menominee; *Plains*: e.g. Cheyenne, Arapaho, or Blackfoot) and with Ritwan languages (Wiyot and Yurok), located in California, it belongs to the Algic language family (Campbell 2000, 152–155). The closest relatives of Miami-Illinois seem to be Fox-Sauk-Kickapoo, Potawatomi, and Ojibwa (Mithun 2006, 333–335).

Following the contact period with the white newcomers from Europe in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the number of Miami-Illinois speakers decreased dramatically. By 1832 – also due to wars with hostile neighboring tribes – practically all Miami-Illinois groups had left the Illinois area and only few communities managed to stay in Indiana (Costa 2003, 2–3). The rest of the tribal members were forced to cross the Missouri River, and removed to eastern Kansas and later, in the early 1870s, to Oklahoma (Rinehart 2006, 76–78). The last native speakers of Miami-Illinois “[a]ppear to have died in the early 1960s and were probably all born between 1880 and 1900” (Costa 2003, 3).

This rapid loss of the Miami-Illinois is associated with a number of factors. In the period before the World Wars, we can register: 1) the influences of Christianity on Miami-Illinois worldviews and languages, 2) the isolation from Miami-Illinois landscapes & economies, 3) Miami-Illinois marriage patterns, and 4) Miami-Illinois schooling experiences (Rinehart 2006, 56–208). The post World Wars’ American society has contributed to its decline, apart from other things (cf. Crawford 1997, 51–68), with technological advances expanding the number of open social domains in which the last Miami-Illinois speakers were exposed to the power of the English language.

Fortunately, “[t]here is a very large body of documentation of the Miami<sup>5</sup> language” (Hinton 2008, 416). This enables scholars to address the reactivation of the language as we could observe in the case of linguist David Costa who worked with the data, and produced a thorough reconstruction of Miami-Illinois (1994). His analytical account was soon turned into practice when one member of the Miami tribe, Daryl Baldwin, began learning the language. “Daryl, his wife, and their first two children has since become conversationally proficient. Two more children were born in the late 1990s, and are being raised with Miami as a native language” (Leonard 2007, 1).

Besides this impressive reclamation of the language at home, Baldwin is active in the process of returning the language back to the Miami tribal community. He plays an instrumental role as the leading organizer of Miami Indian language and cultural research and revival project<sup>6</sup> at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio (for details see Baldwin and Olds 2007). It is thanks to his personal and organizational efforts that after more than thirty years of being silent, Miami-Illinois is back, and its voice can again be heard.

## 5. THE STORY OF MATI KE

Mati Ke, an Australian Aboriginal language from the Arnhem Land area, differs from Cornish and Miami-Illinois in two main aspects. Firstly, it has not yet reached the state of extinction; there are still two native speakers: Patrick Nudjulu and Agatha Perdjert see (Abley 2005, 1–12). Secondly, some scholars (e.g. Black 1983) claim that Mati Ke is not an independent language, but just a dialect of Marringar.<sup>7</sup> Taking into consideration the fact that Marringar – as well as Mati Ke – is on the verge of disappearing (with a mere 30 fluent speakers), and that in a sociolinguistic view the distinction between a language and its dialects is always debatable (cf. Holmes 2001), the latter aspect does not really

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<sup>5</sup> Miami-Illinois and Miami are used interchangeably here. Another alternate term for the language is Miami-Myaamia.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.myaamiaproject.org/>

<sup>7</sup> For the spelling of Mati Ke I follow Abley (2005); the language is otherwise spelled Marti-Ke, Marri Ke, Magadige or Magadi Ge.

matter. Why Mati Ke can still be described as a sleeping language will be suggested below.

What, on the other hand, relates the languages and cultures in Aboriginal Australia to their counterparts in the United States and Britain is the exposure to the dominance of the English language, resulting in steep decline in their number. According to Walsh (2010, 1), there were approximately 250 distinct languages spoken in Australia before the arrival of Europeans in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. “A recent study of the language situation in Australia indicates that 160 languages are extinct, seventy are under threat and only twenty are likely to survive – at least in the short term” (Walsh 2010, 2).

Mati Ke, too, is a victim of the “[d]ark ages of Australian Aboriginal policy” (Dixon 2011, 16), when the Aborigines were – under the threat of severe punishment – discouraged from using their ancestral languages. For a long time, it has not even attracted the attention of linguists. Just recently Mark Crocombe (from the Wadeye Aboriginal Languages Center) has started linguistic work on Mati Ke, with an attempt to document the speech of the two remaining speakers. Sad to say, his informants are gradually losing their fluency as there is nobody with analogous competence they could talk to. Why don’t they practice the language together? “Agatha is Patrick’s sister. The culture by which they live prohibits a brother and sister from conversing after puberty” (Abley 2005, 12). The only time they use their mother tongue is in their dreams – when sleeping!

## **6. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

What can be deduced from these short outlines of stories of three silent languages from three different parts of the English world? First of all, we could see that English, with its political, cultural, and economic prestige, has had a tremendous impact on the stability of languages spoken in minority communities colonized by the British and Americans. It is, however, also obvious that any language can be revived, or even awakened – on condition that it has been recorded to such an extent and comprehensiveness that the documentation enables reconstruction and reactivation of the language as a fully functioning code. Obviously, there needs to be at least one person qualified and

devoted enough to invest his/her time and energy for the benefit of the present or future speakers of the language and, what is very important, the community itself must show interest and give assistance.

On a larger scale, language revitalization cannot be successful without institutional support. It is inevitable to establish official projects and to address the issue of funding (governmental, private). Project activities should have both their research and applied dimensions, resulting in the production of grammars, dictionaries, collections of texts, audio and video recordings, on the one hand, and educational tools, teaching materials, interactive programs etc., on the other hand. It is clear that within the process of bringing language back to life we cannot do without the help of linguists. And since language reclamation should always go hand in hand with the revitalization of culture, anthropological expertise is needed as well.

It is, of course, not that simple. Revitalizing Cornish, which aspires to become an officially recognized language, requires different strategies than revitalizing Mati Ke, where cultural norms oppose successful language renewal. Moreover, Cornish is the only ancestral language in Cornwall, and one of a few in Britain, so for Cornish activists it is much easier to search for financial support than for the advocates of Mati Ke and Miami-Illinois. These languages have to cope with one simple fact: in the United States and in Australia there are hundreds of other native languages that long for resurrection, which means that prospective financial sources would have to be redistributed. Nevertheless, one general conclusion can be reached: saving languages is meaningful.

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# CZECH GRAMMARS OF ENGLISH

*Libuše Dušková*

**ABSTRACT:** The paper presents an overview of Czech grammars of English covering the period from their beginnings in the latter half of the nineteenth century to the university grammar of the nineteen-eighties. A milestone in their development is seen in Mathesius's *Functional Analysis of Present Day English*, the first scientific grammar of English conceived on an English-Czech contrastive basis. The grammars of the post-Mathesius period are represented, respectively, by a brief, a medium-size and a large grammar, with a focus on the scope of treatment, points of contrastive interest and the conditions that gave rise to their coming into existence.

**KEY WORDS:** grammar, pronunciation, spelling, morphology, syntax, contrastive approach

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The paper presents an overview of Czech grammars of English covering the period from their beginnings in the latter half of the nineteenth century to the university grammar of the nineteen-eighties. The grammars to be briefly described include early grammars written in the last decades of the nineteenth century and a selection of grammars issued in the latter half of the twentieth century. The selection was restricted to printed grammars which represent different categories in the genre of grammar writing, notice being also taken of the background that gave rise to their being written. Although both the choice of the grammars and their treatment are necessarily limited, it is hoped to show the gradual stages through which they passed in their development. The grammar that played the most important part in this respect was Mathesius's *Functional Analysis of Present Day English* (Mathesius 1961, 1975), which laid the foundation to scholarly contrastive grammars and to contrastive English-Czech studies in general.

The part concerned with the early grammars draws on Klégr's article on Czech grammars before Mathesius (Klégr 1988); the part on Mathesius's work and later grammars is based on primary sources (see bibliography) and my previous work.

## 2. EARLY GRAMMARS

The first Czech grammar of English, *Mluvnice anglická* (A grammar of English), that can be traced in the bibliographical sources listed by Klégr (1988: Durdík 1874) was written by Adolf Straka in 1862. It was followed by *Rukověť anglického jazyka* (A handbook of the English language) by Jakub Malý in 1870 and four editions of J. V. Sládek's *Průpravná mluvnice anglického jazyka* (A preparatory grammar of the English language, 1st ed. 1872).

Adolf Vilém Straka (1825–1882) lived for over twenty years in England, where he had fled to escape arrest after the revolutionary events in 1849. He became assistant professor at London University and acquired British citizenship. Jakub Malý (1811–1885) was concerned with English mainly as a translator. Besides literary translations (he is best known as a translator of Shakespeare), he also translated English textbooks and wrote about America. The best-known of the early English grammars were the grammars by Josef Václav Sládek (1845–1912), whose status of a grammarian has been greatly overshadowed by his being a poet and the first renowned translator of Shakespeare's plays. Sládek taught, in the capacity of professor of the English language, at the Czech-Slavonic Commercial Academy in Prague (Českoslovanská obchodní akademie, where also Josef Vachek started his career) and later as lecturer at the university. His grammar was the most important contribution to English studies at that time. According to Jan Schmitt's *Příruční seznam české literatury* (1916), there had been no other grammars until after the turn of the century: V. A. Jung, *Mluvnice jazyka anglického pro školy a samouky* (A grammar of English for schools and self-instruction, 1909), J. Váňa, *Stručná anglická mluvnice a čítanka* (A brief English grammar and reader, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1891, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1903, 3<sup>rd</sup> e. 1911), besides textbooks and grammars by František Vymazal (1841–1917), author of the series *Snadno a rychle* (Quickly and easily, a series of textbooks of different languages and other subjects), *Anglicky snadno a rychle* (English quickly and easily, 1902), *Anglicky ve 40 úlohách* (English in 40 lessons, 1909). The growing interest in English in the latter half of the nineteenth century, reflected in the production of the first English textbooks, grammars and dictionaries (Mourek 1879), was connected with Czech emigration to America, launched by the first wave about the middle of the nineteenth

century. The immediate impulse for the writing of the grammars, however, differed. While Straka's pioneer grammar had been motivated by the patriotic idea of promoting the nation's education and broadening Czech horizons, Jakub Malý's grammar had been commissioned to balance the use of English grammars written in German and to promote the teaching of English at secondary schools. The publication of Sládek's *Průpravná mluvnice* was motivated "by an urgent need to provide at least some practical instruction to the study of English for his pupils"<sup>1</sup> at the Academy. It is not without interest that the first two editions of the grammar were financed by Sládek himself, and only the later editions by the Commercial Academy.

As could hardly be otherwise at that time, the early grammars were based on English and German grammars. They have two parts, the first presenting pronunciation, morphology and syntax, the second teaching material. They differ in the extent of exercises. Straka's grammar, besides presenting short exercises in some places, contains a part on phrases covering some topics of conversation (health, weather), Malý's practical part contains some idioms, proverbs and sayings, conversational dialogues and texts illustrating newspaper articles and literary passages. Sládek's *Průpravná mluvnice* is consistently conceived as a textbook: it contains grammatical exercises, reading passages and translations, and includes, at the end, an English-Czech and Czech-English vocabulary with pronunciation.

In all these grammars, major attention is paid to pronunciation, based on John Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* of 1791, viz. the pronunciation of an older generation. From the present point of view, it is of interest to note the reflection of the changing pronunciation in the case of the diphthongs /ei/ (*fate, name, date*), and /əu/ (*stone, smoke*). Surprisingly, the most progressive form is registered by Straka, who gives /ei/, while Malý only (e:) and Sládek both; as regards /əu/, again only Straka gives both /o:/ and /əu/, while Malý and Sládek prescribe only the long monophthong /o:/. Sládek is mindful of emphasizing the retention of voice in word-final position. Morphology is based on the parts of speech, most attention being paid to the temporal system of the verb and to the mood. Each author presents a different

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<sup>1</sup> "K vydání této knížky donutila mne jedině naléhavá potřeba, dáti svým žákům aspoň jakýsi praklický návod k učení se anglickému jazyku."

system, e.g. Straka distinguished the three basic tenses, seven types of action – indefinite (simple form), lasting (progressive), emphatic (*I do write*), terminating (simple perfect), lasting terminated (progressive perfect), intentional (*I am going / about to write*) and lasting intentional (perfect forms of intentional action); and six moods: demonstrative, subjunctive, potential (possibility, inclination, ability, viz. modal verbs), imperative, indefinite (infinitive) and participle. Another point of interest in the nineteenth century grammars is the retention of the second person singular *thou*, although described as a feature of “religious and poetic language”.

The least elaborated part was, understandably, syntax. It mostly dealt with the construction of word classes in sentences, the multiple sentence being largely treated only in terms of conjunctions. Malý included a part on word order, and Sládek exercises, as in the treatment of all other points. The shortcomings of the grammars were pointed out by Josef Durdík (1874), who accentuated the cultural and political importance of English, which only few Czechs knew at that time, but noted the insufficiency of the grammars in respect of comprehensiveness and their non-scholarly character. However, as a practical handbook, Sládek’s grammar was appraised as the most successful. Durdík’s appraisal was confirmed by the three re-editions of Sládek’s grammar (1875, 1891, 1902).

In general, these early grammars represent the state of the art both in the sphere of grammar- and textbook-writing, and in the linguistics of that time. Moreover, they mark the beginning of a change in the professional profile of their authors. Except for the polyglot František Vymazal, the authors of these grammars were primarily concerned with English as translators – Sládek was above all a poet. The scope of the first Czech authors of scholarly English grammars, Vilém Mathesius and Bohumil Trnka, was narrower, but still very broad: they were philologists who studied language in connection with literature. Authors of grammars of the most recent time are language practitioners and linguists.

### 3. THE GRAMMARS OF VILÉM MATHESIUS

The entrance of Vilém Mathesius into the academic sphere represents a turning point both in the approach to language description and in its pedagogical application. Mathesius proceeded on the basis of three tenets: synchronic approach, consistent comparison and functional basis. His general conception of language is expounded in *Řeč a sloh* (1942a). It starts with the relation between language and the extralinguistic reality and the relation between the language system and concrete utterances, and proceeds to the two basic features of utterance, the act of denomination and the act of predication (sentence formation). Naming units are described from the aspect of form, content and connotations, including stylistic ones. In the description of the sentence, a fundamental distinction is made between the grammatical structure of the sentence, based on the subject and the predicate, and its functional perspective, based on the two principal components of the information structure, the theme and the rheme. The theme is defined as the starting point or what is spoken about and the rheme as what is said about the theme. The usual order, termed objective, is the placement of the theme at the beginning of a sentence and of the rheme at the end. The reversed position of theme and rheme is conceived as subjective order. The treatise proceeds from the sentence to semiclausal constructions, and hence, in the concluding chapter, to a textual subject, the art of writing paragraphs.

**3.1** This general conception, illustrated by Czech examples, is better known from its application to English in *Obsahový rozbor současné angličtiny na základě obecně lingvistickém* (1961). However, the first scholarly pedagogical treatment of English was presented earlier in Mathesius's lectures accompanying an English radio course broadcast in 1935–36. The lectures appeared in print under the title *Nebojte se angličtiny* (Don't be afraid of English) and reached eight editions (the latest in 2001). This course of lectures is a model example of what Mathesius called linguistic characterology. In contrast to descriptive grammar, linguistic characterology is selective in that it deals only with the important and fundamental features of a given language at a given time. It analyses them on the basis of general linguistics and ascertains the relations between them. A useful tool in this respect is a comparison

of languages of different types irrespective of genetic relationship, insofar as it helps to uncover the real nature and meaning of the analysed language facts. Such a comparison can be made on the basis of a function-to-form approach, based on his contention that the communicative needs of different language communities are more or less the same, what differs is only the means of expression.

*Nebojte se angličtiny* has a fitting subtitle *Praktický průvodce jazyka* (A practical guide to language), altered in the post-war editions to *Průvodce jazykovým systémem* (A guide to the language system). Here, within twelve comparatively brief chapters – the university text of *Nebojte se angličtiny* covers sixty pages – Mathesius describes the characteristic features of English against the background of Czech. His pedagogical mastership is shown at the very beginning, in the introductory chapter that dispels the then far-spread superstition about English being more difficult than other languages, notably French or German. Mathesius points out the lack of inflections, which makes the mastering of grammatical structures much easier than in languages with grammatical gender, inflectional declension and conjugation, and grammatical concord. Neither is the pronunciation more difficult than in French or German, once we learn the few different sounds and get used to the reduction in unstressed syllables. Even the difficulties of spelling are presented as surmountable when dealt with in a proper way. Pronunciation and spelling are then treated in the next four chapters. Mathesius here explains the relations between pronunciation and spelling, illustrated by the existence of a large number of homonyms. The treatment of pronunciation is based on phonology,<sup>2</sup> cf. e.g. his comparison of the status of /n/ and /ŋ/ in English and Czech (*win* – *wing* x *džbánek* – *džbáanky*). The following chapters immediately proceed to the level of the sentence, with the counterparts of Czech inflection being left until later. Some of the points explained in the treatment of the sentence are recurrent in Mathesius's writings: the necessity to express the subject and its position in contrast to Czech, the passive as a means of achieving the same word order as in Czech sentences with the subject at the end. Other topics discussed in *Nebojte se angličtiny* include the

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<sup>2</sup> Phonology was one of Mathesius's main linguistic concerns, as it was with most members of the Prague Linguistic Circle in the initial period after its foundation in 1926.

English verb, the nominal tendencies of English – another recurrent point in Mathesius's work, the condensed structure of the English sentence, word classes and the unconstrained transition between them, also observed between intransitive and transitive verbs. The closing chapter is devoted to the differences between the English and the Czech extralinguistic reality, illustrated e.g. by the respective secondary school systems and concepts like *a cup of tea* and *bread and butter*.

**3.2** Unlike *Nebojte se angličtiny*, which had been prepared for print by Mathesius himself, *Obsahový rozbor současné angličtiny* (1961), as we know it today, is an outcome of the work of its editor, the deceased professor Josef Vachek. As explained in his postscript, the typescript of the Czech text, found after Mathesius's death, had been made by Karel Hais from his notes taken according to Mathesius's dictation. Without Josef Vachek's initiative and exacting, most meticulous editorial work, *Obsahový rozbor* would never have been preserved as a printed book for later generations of Anglicists. Mathesius himself had intended to prepare his analysis of English for print as a counterpart of his volume on Czech, *Čeština a obecný jazykozpyt* (Czech and general linguistics), which, though published posthumously in 1947, was Mathesius's own work, completed for print in 1942. At that time, however, it could not come out for political reasons (due to censorship). In the case of *Obsahový rozbor*, Mathesius was prevented from preparing it for print by other pressing tasks and possibly even more by his deteriorating health, the eye disease and problems with the spine.

The publication of *Obsahový rozbor* was soon followed by its English translation (*Functional Analysis of Present Day English on a General Linguistic Basis*, 1975). Its production was again due to Professor Vachek, who not only initiated the project, but also ensured adequate rendition of the Czech text by carefully checking the translation, and proposing Jan Firbas and Rudolf Zimek, respectively, as scientific editor and scientific adviser. The book has had three more editions: a Japanese translation (1981), re-edited in the following year. The latest edition is a Chinese reprint of the English translation (Mathesius 2008).

The content of the book is set within a general framework of the processes of coding and decoding, the former constituting the basis for a division into two main parts, onomatology – the field of denomination,

and syntax, which brings naming units into mutual relations. Many of the particular points treated in the body of the book are of special contrastive interest, and hence recurrent in Mathesius's writings: the subject, the passive, word order, in connection with these points functional sentence perspective, nominal tendencies and sentence condensation.

**3.2.1** Comparing the function of the subject in English and Czech, Mathesius shows that while the Czech subject has largely retained the function of the agent, the English subject tends to perform the function of the theme. This tendency appears to be connected with its grammatical position, typically preverbal, mostly also initial, and ultimately with the analytical character of English, in contrast to the inflectional character of Czech. From the present point of view, Mathesius's distinction between the agentive character of the Czech subject and the thematic character of the English subject demonstrates a two-level approach to sentence structure: formal structure with the main constituents subject and predicate, and functional structure constituted by the theme and the rheme; semantic concepts such as agent are conceived as components of the functional structure. This treatment of the different functions of the subject was a novel conception with no precedent. In further developments, semantics and functional sentence perspective began to be treated as separate levels (cf. Daneš's three-level approach to syntax in Daneš 1964), and this is also the approach adopted in the university grammar of 1988.

The thematic function of the English subject is further expounded with respect to its impact on the form of the predicate, manifested in the different uses of the passive as a typical construction with a non-agentive subject, and the subject construction of the bearer of physical, mental and emotive states, cf. *I am* / *I feel unwell* – *není mi dobře* [not-is to-me well], *I am cold* – *je mi zima* [is to-me cold], *I missed you* – *stýskalo se mi po tobě* [it-missed to-me after you], *she found it hard to conform* – *bylo jí zatěžko se přizpůsobit* [it was to-her hard to-conform]. In continuous texts, these uses often produce strings of consecutive sentences with a constant theme, resulting from the retention of the same subject. In this respect, English is again shown to differ from Modern German or Modern Czech, where subject construction of thematic function is not required.



**3.2.2** Mathesius's conception of the passive demonstrates his consistently functional approach, which in this particular point has been departed from in later treatments (cf. Poldauf 1940, who pointed out the relevance of form for the delimitation of a category). In the section entitled types of passive actional predication (1975, 107–114), passive predications are defined as predications whose grammatical subject is affected by, or involved in, verbal action. Mathesius explicitly states that the form is also to be taken into account. Accordingly, he rejected Schuchardt's inclusion in the passive of active forms like *Žáka učí učitel* (Discipulum instruit magister). Nevertheless, in his classification of the different types of actional passive, active forms are included. With the exception of participial passive, all his other types have an active verb: (2) nominal qualifying, e.g. *to be subject to*, *to be the subject (object) of*; (3) adverbial, e.g. *Four other ship of the same type are just now under construction*; (4) possessive, with directly affected subject, e.g. *he had his reward at once*; possessive passive with indirectly affected subject, represented by several subtypes, e.g. *persons who had relatives going out*, *this tract has a rich vein of philosophy running through it*, *I had my door broken in*, the last distinguished from causative constructions of the same form *I had my shoes soled*; (5) the last type of passive actional predication contains a verb of perception, e.g. *At these words I found my heart beating violently*.

**3.2.3** As regards word order, the description presented in *Obsahový rozbor* summarizes Mathesius's previous treatments. Of these, mention needs to be made of his article of 1942b, which had a major impact on further developments of the theory of functional sentence perspective. Reflections on Mathesius's view that in comparison with Czech, English is comparatively heedless of functional sentence perspective as a word-order factor, inspired Jan Firbas (1964) to elaborate his concept of the four FSP factors.

The methodological framework within which Mathesius treated word-order questions was based on identifying the main word order principles operating in a given language, on the character of these principles and on their hierarchy. He discerned four word order principles. The first, the grammatical principle, plays a more important role in English than in Czech since changes in the position of English

clause elements are restricted by the paucity of inflectional endings. This principle subsumes the closely related principle of coherence of members (or the principle of close proximity), which manifests itself in preventing the insertion of another element between two components of one unit and in the movement of both components if a change in sentence position is called for. In Mathesius's earlier works, this principle was treated as a separate one. The next principle is rhythm; it affects the position of unstressed words. In English, it is illustrated by the different position of pronominal and substantival subjects in postposed reporting clauses: *The weather will change, said father / he said*. A third word order principle is functional sentence perspective, comparable to the principle of end focus in contemporary British grammar. In English, instances where this principle is brought into conflict with the grammatical principle and cannot be resolved by resorting to another construction or by prosodic means (sentence stress) led Mathesius to speak of little susceptibility of English to the requirements of FSP (1942, 187; see Firbas above). The last principle included in his word order system was the principle of emphasis. Further studies of word order have ascertained an additional word-order factor, viz. semantics, with rhythm being assigned to speech as its specific feature.

**3.2.4** The nominal tendencies of English are usually regarded as involving two features: the verbo-nominal form of the predicate and condensation of sentence structure. This conception is found in *Nebojte se angličtiny*, which treats the two features together in one chapter entitled “verbal and nominal expression”. Mathesius here speaks of the predilection of English for nominal expression as its characteristic feature, which has two aspects, lexical and syntactic. He first describes the nominal tendency in the vocabulary, in the sphere of denomination. It is illustrated by instances such as *take leave of / rozloučit se, get hold of / zmocnit se, have a smoke / zakouřit si, fall ill / onemocnět*. In syntax, the nominal tendencies manifest themselves in the use of non-finite verb forms where Czech employs finite clauses. In *Obsahový rozbor*, the two features are treated at different points, verbo-nominal constructions in Section III of Syntax, entitled “Formal classification of the simple sentence”, and sentence condensation in Part IV of Syntax, dealing with “The sentence as a whole”. The reasons for this difference

can only be surmised. It may be due to the much smaller extent of *Nebojte se angličtiny*, but it may also reflect a change in conception: sentence condensation as a feature of sentence structure, verbo-nominal constructions as realization forms of the predicate. Both approaches are found in the works of scholars who continued to elaborate the nominal tendencies of English in more recent times (cf. Vachek 1955, Hladký 1961, Renský 1964, Poláčková 1988).

#### 4. GRAMMARS OF THE POST-WAR PERIOD

The post-Mathesius period chronologically coincides with the latter half of the last century; Mathesius had died shortly before the end of the war, on April 12, 1945. The three grammars to be briefly discussed, *Stručná mluvnice angličtiny* (Dušková, Bubeníková & Caha 1959), *Anglická mluvnice* by Karel Hais (1959) and *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny* (Dušková et al. 1988), represent different categories of grammars, respectively, a concise, a medium-size and a large grammar. Apart from these and other printed grammars, there were numerous mimeographed university texts written by scholars teaching in the respective departments. However, the texts mostly dealt with one aspect of the language system, cf. Poldauf 1958a, b; Vachek 1952, 1958; Nosek 1977, 1987. Even Trnka's three-part university text covers the level of syntax only in part (1953, 1954, 1956).

**4.1** *Stručná mluvnice angličtiny* was a typical product of its time. It originated in the Department of foreign languages of the then Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, established by the Academy for its postgraduate students (called aspirants at that time). Postgraduate studies then included Russian and a world language as compulsory subjects. However, there were no materials to teach from. This was partly due to the general shortage of any teaching materials after the war, and in the case of English moreover to the fact that during the war, English had been greatly disfavoured. The first edition of *Stručná mluvnice* appeared in 1959 and was soon followed by a series of textbooks of English for special purposes / academic discourse. The grammar has had six editions, the last in 1999. It was once revised and once corrected, but altogether few changes have been made, partly for

technical reasons but also because the core of the language system changes slowly and such changes as do occur are mostly beyond the scope of a brief description. The only alteration in this respect was the replacement of *shall* by *will* in the second person of the future tense in questions. The first edition still had *shall* in this form: *Shall you be here?* as was the rule in the first half of the nineteenth century. The concise character of the book is reflected in its size, which makes it almost a pocket grammar. Yet, it includes all the components needed for the teaching of English. The most extensive part deals with morphology, treated with respect to both forms and functions / uses. A good deal of attention is paid to pronunciation and spelling, which are given more space than the treatment of syntax. The book concludes with a chapter on word formation. As a publication of the Academy, intended not only for its postgraduate students, but also for the general public, the grammar was supposed to be free of major shortcomings. Hence the Academy sought approval of the foremost representatives of the field, Bohumil Trnka, Josef Vachek and Zdeněk Vančura, who were engaged as reviewers. The Academy also made sure that their comments materialized in the respective corrections. Some of the more general comments concerned the nature of the book as such, e.g. that writing a brief grammar is more difficult than writing a larger one.

**4.2** Karel Hais's *Mluvnice angličtiny* (1959, revised edition 1973) is a grammar of medium size, which corresponds to its aim: it was intended for intermediate and advanced learners who study English for different practical purposes. The preface to the 1st edition demonstrates a notable change in the general opinion of English as one of the languages being taught and learnt. While in the nineteen-thirties, when English was studied by few people, Mathesius in *Nebojte se angličtiny* attempted to dispel the superstition about its difficulty, a quarter of a century later, when learning English became fairly common, Hais warns against the erroneous view "that English has no grammar or at least that English grammar is so simple as to be compressible within the space of a postcard"<sup>3</sup>. He points out its many intricacies, especially in the verb system, article usage, the use of prepositions and in other spheres. The

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<sup>3</sup> "... že angličtina nemá žádnou mluvnici, nebo alespoň že anglická mluvnice je tak jednoduchá, že se vejde na korespondenční lístek. "

bulk of the book deals with morphology, while syntax covers only about a fifth of the space devoted to the latter. However, the relative extent according to the number of pages is misleading insofar as many syntactic points are treated in morphology. There is also a brief account of English vocabulary with respect to its origin and the processes of word formation. The final part deals with punctuation, word division, the writing of capital letters and the varieties of English. The section on the varieties, largely concerned with British and American English, also notes Cockney. Of the many points of contrastive interest deserving mention, one that cannot be omitted is the category of definiteness. The author refrains from attempting to describe its nature for “the nature of the category is not the same even in those languages which possess formal means for expressing it, and as regards English, a satisfactory theoretical description has not yet been presented”<sup>4</sup> (1975, 42). Hais’s statement is to be seen in connection with the differences in the uses of the articles between languages that possess an article system, in particular between English, French and German, rather than as concerning the category as such. On the other hand, for one of the aspects of the category, the distinction between no article (bezčlennost ‘articlelessness’) and the zero article, Hais proposed a model (1975, 52) in terms of the relation between ‘absence of article – expressed article’ in the case of absence of article; this is the case of proper names, which are used with an article only if there is a special reason for it. The zero article is characterized as an opposite relation: expressed article – absence of article, viz. distribution according to the class of nouns with respect to un/countability. Other points treated contrastively are found especially in cases of strong interference from Czech. For example, possessives are described with respect to their different Czech counterparts, notably the dative, and exclusion from combining with other determiners, mention being also made of the opposite case, viz. a Czech possessive against a personal pronoun in English: *that will be the death of me*. Similarly, attention is paid to instances where English has more than one counterpart of one Czech expression: pronouns in *-self* /

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<sup>4</sup> “... podstata této kategorie není však stejná ani v těch jazycích, které mají formální prostředky k jejímu vyjadřování, a pokud jde o angličtinu, nepodařilo se ještě podat její uspokojivý teoretický výklad.”

*alone – sám*. There is an interesting note on the difference between the pronouns in

*-one* and *-body* (individualizing vs. generalizing meaning), which is rarely found in practical handbooks. In the description of the verb, rather unusually a distinction is made between present stem, preterite stem and perfect stem. Again rather surprisingly, in the account of the passive, passive forms of multi-word verbs like *take care of*, *lose sight of* are missing. As is common in German, the conditional mood of the modals is regarded as the subjunctive. The description of the non-finite forms consistently points out their condensing function, especially where Czech has only subordinate clauses (absolute participial constructions, accusative with infinitive, etc.). English is here shown to have a more nominal character than Czech. The practical goal of the grammar manifests itself not only in consistent comparison with Czech, but also in long lists of verbs, nouns and adjectives complemented or modified by non-finite verb forms. Owing to its greater comprehensiveness and practical aim, Hais's grammar has often been recommended to students preparing for university studies of English who sought a more detailed account of English grammar to help them bridge the gap between insufficient practical knowledge and more exacting theoretical exposition.

**4.3** The last grammar to be briefly mentioned, *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny* has a similar history as *Stručná mluvnice*. It started as part of a larger research project carried out in the Institute of Languages and Literatures of the Academy of Sciences. The aim of the project was the production of scholarly grammars of the languages studied there, English being one of them; the other languages were Russian, Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian and German. It is not without interest that in the lexicographical department of the Institute, Karel Hais and Břetislav Hodek were at that time working on their large English dictionary.

The conception of *Mluvnice současné angličtiny* and its content reflect the state of the art of the sixties, seventies and early eighties, which is apparent from the bibliography. It was the period of the second

series of Prague *Travaux – Travaux linguistiques de Prague*,<sup>5</sup> in which our foremost linguists published the latest results of their work: Bohumil Trnka (On the linguistic sign and the multilevel organization of language, 1964), Jan Firbas (Non-thematic subjects, 1966), Ivan Poldauf (Third syntactical plan, 1964), Josef Vachek (centre and periphery of language, 1966) and František Daneš (three-level approach to syntax, 1964), to mention only a few. As regards the grammars by Randolph Quirk and his co-workers, the bibliography lists only those published before the appearance of *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, although the first edition of *Mluvnice* appeared three years after its publication – *CGEL* in 1985, *Mluvnice* in 1988. This was due to the fact that the manuscript of *Mluvnice* had been completed and submitted before *CGEL* became available; however, both the reviewing and the printing process took a very long time. The first delay was due to the Publishers' request for considerable curtailment, which is the reason why, for example, a detailed table of contents, now available on-line, is lacking. The second delay was due to previous commitments of the reviewers, again foremost scholars, Jan Firbas and Rudolf Zimek.

As regards the contents of *Mluvnice*, it covers only morphology and syntax. It should also have included, as the initial part, a chapter on phonetics and phonology. The chapter was to have been written by a qualified phonetician and cooperation in this respect had been arranged, but it failed in the end. Even though the utterance level is not covered or treated separately, *Mluvnice* made a first step by including functional sentence perspective as the third level of sentence structure; there is thus connection with the textual level through the contextual and semantic factors, albeit the operation of FSP is described within the boundary of the sentence. This partly reflects the stage of research into the FSP theory, since apart from Daneš's general treatise on thematic progressions,<sup>6</sup> special studies of the relations between FSP and the text build-up with respect to English began to appear only later. Moreover, description of the textual level was at that time the domain only of large

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<sup>5</sup> The four volumes of the second series of Prague *Travaux*, entitled *Travaux linguistiques de Prague*, appeared between 1964-1971.

<sup>6</sup> Functional sentences perspective and the organization of the text. In *Papers on Functional sentence Perspective*, 1974. Prague: Academia.

grammars of native languages, such as *CGEL* and the Academic Grammar of Czech, Volume 3 Syntax.

At present, *Mluvnice* is also available on-line and a project has been started for updating the electronic version. At the present initial stage, work focuses on devising tentative models for presenting the updating material. As for actual elaboration, a first probe has been made into updated description of the modal verbs. Evidently, the project is a long-term undertaking, continuous rather than ever reaching completion.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In the foregoing brief outline of the developments that have taken place in the writing of English grammars by Czech authors in the course of a century, attention was paid to the conditions that gave rise to their coming into existence, to the aim for which they were written and to their content in regard to the respective state of the art, including the current stage in the development of linguistics. The outline has also shown a change in the profile of the authors, especially in the case of small and medium-size grammars. Throughout, the contrastive aspect of the grammars has been noted as their inherent feature.

This leads to the question whether grammars by non-native authors for learners of the same non-native language are really necessary – especially at present, when all kinds of handbooks of English for foreign learners are currently available and new continue to be issued. However, even though written for foreign learners, handbooks by native authors address learners with different source languages, who perceive the target language through the sieve of their mother tongue. It is in this respect that grammars and handbooks by non-native authors play a major role in the study of a foreign language. They overtly reveal the correspondences and non-correspondences between the forms, functions and meanings of the source and the target language, and by viewing the foreign language against a different linguistic background may even uncover its aspects that have so far gone unnoticed.



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# **GENDER AS AN IDENTITY VARIABLE IN COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION**

*Markéta Johnová*

**ABSTRACT:** Individual demographic variables play distinct roles in different Internet situations. In some communities certain features of our identity are silent, in others salient, and yet in others they are newly constructed in accordance with the character and purpose of a particular setting. The one variable that permeates all the Internet environments is gender, regardless of whether or not the user's on- and offline genders correspond. The present paper brings an overview of studies on gender differences in computer-mediated communication (CMC) with the conclusion that gender is constructed and negotiated differently in individual Internet communities. It also establishes the importance of gender as a prerequisite for successful communication both in CMC and in the real world, and shows that in some Internet communities gender is more salient than in face-to-face communication.

**KEY WORDS:** identity variables, gender, computer-mediated communication (CMC), Internet environments, Internet communities

## **1. THE INTERNET ENVIRONMENTS AND COMMUNITIES**

After print media, broadcast and television, the Internet is considered the fourth medium that has transformed human communication.

<sup>1</sup> The Internet is not a homogeneous environment, it consists of several independent environments or situations. Although they partially overlap, each Internet situation has its own distinctive features that serve different purposes and set the individual environments apart. Depending on the type of information exchange and the purpose of the environment, the Internet settings are:

- the World Wide Web,
- electronic mail,

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<sup>1</sup> At the end of the 1990s mobile phones were recognised as the fifth media channel.

- asynchronous discussion forums (message boards, social networks),
- synchronous discussion forums (instant messaging, Internet Relay Chat),
- virtual worlds (massively multiplayer online games).

A different division of the Internet and a different frame of reference is based on the kinds of *virtual communities* formed across the Internet environments (see Cherny 1999). The traditional definition of a community is one of a social group of any size that has cultural, religious, ethnic, or other characteristics in common and is geographically circumscribed. A different theory is concerned more with the quality or relationships, common interests, and mutual goals of communication. McMillan and Chavis (1986) proposed four criteria that form their definition of a community: membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection. The virtual communities meet all the criteria. With regard to the type and purpose of the communication we can distinguish four kinds of virtual communities:

- message boards,
- Internet Relay Chat,
- virtual worlds,
- social networks (*Facebook, Twitter, MySpace*).

Each type of virtual community comprises hundreds, even thousands of individual communities. Every chat room or every online game forms a different community with a specific interest, with its own language and rules of conduct. Therefore, the language of the Internet does not constitute a single style or genre, but rather a myriad of styles which defy generalisation and as such need to be studied independently.

## 2. IDENTITY VARIABLES IN CMC

“On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog” goes the popular cartoon by Peter Steiner that has been circulating in the cyberspace since 1993 (Figure 1). Reflecting initial predictions about the nature of CMC, it

presents a notion of the virtual world as an environment that frees people from the constraints of their offline lives and in which they can shed the weight of gender, race, age, appearance, and social status and engage in a more equal, stereotype-free communication.

Figure 1: Peter Steiner (The New Yorker, 5 July 1993, vol. 69, no. 20)



Although the hyperbole is more than just a witty bon mot, it should be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. It has been proven that certain features of our identity are indeed easily left behind when we enter cyberspace (e.g. Wallace 2001). However, other characteristics turned out to be necessary prerequisites for successful communication and as such have not been omitted from CMC, but are either taken over from our offline lives, or newly constructed in the discourse of virtual communication. The importance of the individual variables as well as which factors are taken over and which are newly established changes with regard to the type of the Internet environment and community.

To demonstrate this, let us consider the role that the identity factors play in the individual Internet communities.

Firstly, we shall focus on *message boards*. As the purpose of this kind of asynchronous communication is to exchange information and views on a given – often specialised – topic, our physical appearance, real life age, race or affiliation to ethnic group typically matter little in this particular Internet situation unless the topic of discussion is directly related to one of the identity variables, e.g. a forum devoted to the issue of ageism, the problem of the glass ceiling, etc. The participants treat one another as equals; opinions of a teenager are given the same attention when they are presented by an adult professional, simply because these variables are characteristically invisible on message boards.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that a pecking order is non-existent here. Just as in any other animal kingdom, social hierarchy inevitably develops online, only it is formed on different criteria than the ones we know from the real world. What matters in the message forums is knowledge, skills and articulacy, not formal level of education or economic status. Eloquent and persuasive users get more credit than those unable to argue their point with conviction. Age matters too, but not in terms of real age of the participants, but in the time they have been members of a particular mailing list, or discussion forum. Regular and senior members stand higher in the group hierarchy than *newbies* (newcomers). In other words, social order is salient on message boards, but it is newly constructed in the community irrespective of the participants' offline identity.

The situation is rather different in *Internet Relay Chat* (IRC), a type of synchronous communication in which people engage in real-time conversations. Asynchronous forums always have a clearly set topic of discussion and the contributions which deviate from the prescribed topic are unwelcome and may get deleted, or in moderated discussions they are rejected by the administrator and never appear on the screen. On the contrary, forums in IRC have often rather vague names (e.g. *The Lobby*, *Make Friends*, *Trivia*, *Current Events*) and even in more specific chat rooms the discussions rarely follow the prescribed topic, but invariably turn to general chat. As Crystal puts it, IRC represents “a situation where content is not privileged, and where factors of social kind are given precedence” (Crystal 2001, 58). Since

the communication in IRC is of social character, identity features such as gender, age, appearance and location are of paramount importance in this environment. Indeed, the *asl* (age/sex/location) request is a commonplace conversational gambit in IRC, often also serving the purpose of a greeting line and directed at the whole room. Many users post the *asl* request even when the nickname of the participant in question reveals the information and refuse to talk to the users who do not provide the requested data. So important gender, age and geographical whereabouts are in chat room.

As far as social hierarchy is concerned, the only signal that regular chat users stand higher than new users is in the amount of attention they get from other regulars, especially when they enter the room. But as chat is not about exchange of information, when entertaining, new users receive the same attention in discussions as regulars. In this sense, the environment of IRC is egalitarian.

A unique position among the Internet communities is assumed by *virtual worlds*. These are nowadays mainly represented by MMOs (massively multiplayer online games) and their most popular type MMORPGs (massively multiplayer online role-playing games), which developed from MUD, a multi-user dungeon that was based on the 1970s role-playing adventure game *Dungeons and Dragons*. Online games represent fantasy worlds where the players create characters such as warriors, elves, magicians, or spaceship captains. Identity plays an important role in virtual worlds. However, the users' identity features are not typically taken over from real life, but are newly constructed in the environment of online games. Players choose a character's name, they pick a race and class (which constitute a different system from the one in the real world) and gender. In MMOs players choose not only between male or female, but they can make their character plural, indeterminate or non-gendered. Social hierarchy is realised in the form of *levels*. A new user starts on level 1. Collecting points for completing tasks called *quests*, the player ascends on the social ladder. Currently the most popular MMORPG, *World of Warcraft* with 12,000,000 subscribers, operates 85 levels.<sup>2</sup>

In the environment of virtual worlds, the characters in the games are more important than the people behind them. Unlike in IRC, where

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<sup>2</sup> For current number of users and levels see <http://eu.battle.net/wow/en/>.



people feel betrayed when they find out that their interlocutors present themselves as somebody they are not, in online games such behaviour is expected and counted upon, and it forms an inseparable part of the game.

In stark contrast to virtual worlds that are based on the principle of a newly constructed identity, *social networks* represent a virtual community where people bring their real life identities. Social networks allow users to connect with people from anywhere in the world who share the same ideas and interests. For instance, *LinkedIn* is a business-oriented network, *Flickr* is a photo and video sharing website. The most popular social networks (*Bebo*, *Facebook*, *MySpace*) help users find and keep in touch with their friends and families. The users' accounts contain profiles with personal information, often accompanied by photographs. To protect their privacy, the users can decide who will be allowed to see their profile. The subscribers post their ideas in forms of messages or blog entries and share them with the others on their list of contacts, who can then comment. Currently the largest networking site is *Facebook* with more than 9550,000,000 active users.<sup>3</sup>

Given the foundation of this Internet environment, and the fact that many social networks connect people who know each other from real world or use these networks to share their hobbies or business endeavours, playing with one's identity would be if not impossible, then certainly counterproductive. Therefore, from all the Internet communities, the identity of users in social networks corresponds to their offline identity to the greatest extent.

### 3. GENDER IN CMC

The one identity feature that seems to permeate every nook and cranny of cyberspace is gender. Whilst all the other identity variables are silent in at least one Internet community, gender is ubiquitous on the Internet, whether it is taken over from real life or newly constructed in CMC. Early studies on gender in CMC expressed the belief that the Internet has the potential to break the traditional male/female dichotomy and that it will bring about a more androgynous style of interaction among users.

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<sup>3</sup> For current statistics see <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>.

Cyberspace was seen as a new frontier that invited the Internet users to leave behind the weight of their offline gendered lives (e.g. Siegel, Dubrovsky, Kiesler and McGuire 1986; Graddol and Swann 1989). However, it soon transpired that even in the virtual world gender is omnipresent not because we cannot omit this factor from communication, but because we do not want to or simply cannot be bothered to conceal it. Regardless of the fact whether the gender we present online matches our sex in real life, no Internet situation is completely gender-silent. Those who wish to engage in cross-dressing games advertise their gender of choice in order to create the desired impression. Those who are not interested in cross-dressing do not feel the urge to hide their gender from other users (Savicki, Lingenfelter and Kelley, 1996).

Although the character of text-based communication makes it possible to conceal gender online, it takes a lot of effort to keep one's postings completely free of gender cues, and in the long run it is increasingly laborious and wearisome. Users demonstrate gender either directly with their choice of login names or nicknames and by using personal pronouns, or in the form of indirect cues, such as speech styles and by displaying what is perceived as typically masculine or feminine features and stereotypically coloured behaviour. Interestingly, in the eternal night of CMC, people have become particularly attuned to gender cues of all kinds.

Synchronous groups, such as IRC, were originally believed to hold the greatest potential for being gender-silent and to neutralise gender differences because of the use of nicknames rather than real names. Danet (1998) compared the pseudonyms the chat and MUD users employ to carnival masks that inspire the Internet participants to hide their true gender or even become genderless, thus liberating themselves from the limiting gender binaries. However, further studies proved that "gender is far from invisible or irrelevant in recreational chat" (Herring 2003) and that "the binary gender system is alive and well in IRC" (Rodino 1997).

Moreover, Internet users find communication with someone who does not display their gender an uncomfortable and disorienting experience and view those who refuse to disclose their gender as untrustworthy and deceitful (e.g. Smith and Kollock 1999, Wallace

2001). Hiding one's gender or posing as a member of the opposite sex is considered a breach of *netiquette* (the Internet etiquette).

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet point out the importance of gender as an indispensable requisite in interaction with other people:

Gender is so deeply engrained in our social practice, in our understanding of ourselves and of others, that we almost cannot put one foot in front of the other without taking gender into consideration. (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 17).

Unless we know the gender of the person we communicate with, we are unsure how to talk to them, even about them; we feel at a complete loss as to what register and tone we should apply as well as what topics to address.

Matheson (1991) conducted an experiment in which men and women held negotiations with a computer, but were told to be talking to a person. When the study subjects were told they were communicating with the person of the same gender, they altered their behaviour, applying familiar patterns of typical gender stereotypes. Interestingly, when they were not informed about the gender of their interlocutor, they assumed their opponent was male as the purpose of the conversation was to negotiate, which is stereotypically considered a signal of a male pattern behaviour. The results prove that we readily adjust our language and behaviour with regard to the gender of our interlocutor, and apply expected gender stereotypical behavioural norms. We do so because behaving in accordance with socially constructed and acknowledged standards has proven to be effective and goal achieving.

With her computer experiment Matheson also confirms that we are stereotypically perceived and judged based on our gender, regardless of our behaviour. Women are automatically expected to be cooperative and complying, men competitive and assertive. So instead of breaking the gender binaries and eliminating stereotypical behaviour, the lack of other signals in CMC causes people to rely heavily on both perceived and performed stereotypical gender cues. As a result, CMC has become even more gender-salient than FTF communication (Matheson 1991, Rodino 1997, Wallace 1999).

#### 4. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN CMC

In her discourse analysis of CMC bulletin boards, Herring (1994) argued that women and men constitute different discourse communities by having different styles in posting to the Internet and valuing different communicative ethics. Women “displayed features of attenuation – hedging, apologizing, asking questions rather than making assertions – and a personal orientation, revealing thoughts and feelings and interacting with and supporting others”, whilst men “made use of an adversarial style in which the poster distanced himself from, criticized, and/or ridiculed other participants, often while promoting his own importance” (Herring 1994).

Other studies of gender in asynchronous CMC arrived at similar conclusions stating that females are more emphatic and cooperative, and provide more personal information in their postings (Blum 1999), tend to prevent and reduce tension in CMC and exhibit greater patterns of social interdependence (Jaffe et al. 1995). Males, on the other hand, were reported to use more fact oriented language and call for action, be more certain and authoritative, tend to control the environment by posting more messages, and answer questions posed by other members more often than women (Blum 1999).

However, research into different communities of practice within the asynchronous Internet groups brought different results. In moderated discussions women were reported to feel more comfortable and participate more actively than men (Herring 1999). Just like in FTF communication, in virtual communities where one gender forms a majority, the members of the minority group tend to modify their behaviour so that it mirrors the norms of the majority group. Thus, in male-dominated groups women accommodated their language and behaviour to the more assertive and aggressive male style, whilst in predominantly female groups men kept their belligerence in check (Herring 2003).

As Herring notes, “research into synchronous CMC both differs from and resembles asynchronous CMC” (Herring 2003, 201). Unlike in asynchronous conversations, men and women participate more equally in IRC in terms of the number and length of their contributions (Herring 1999). In concordance with the asynchronous CMC findings, women in IRC are reported to express support and appreciation, whilst men

engage in violent actions and make a greater use of insults and sexual references (Herring 2003, Rodino 1997).

Savicki, Lingenfelter and Kelley (1996) examined the language of online discussion groups to find out whether there are any differences in stereotypically male and female use of language variables in predominantly male groups and in groups where the majority of users were women. In the male dominated forums, the participants used more fact oriented language and called for action. However, despite the prediction, the language of the contributions did not prove to be more challenging, coarse or argumentative. There was more self-disclosure and attempts at tense prevention and reduction in the predominantly female discussion groups, but the research did not show any relation in apologising, posing questions, use of opinion, or 'we' pronouns. In mostly female groups subjects responded less to the contributions of other users. It follows that the different proportions of men and women in a discussion affects the group interaction, and that stereotypical behaviour is malleable depending on the group composition.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The first aim of the present paper was to argue that individual demographic variables play different roles in individual Internet communities and environments. In some Internet situations some or all of our identity features are silent, in others salient, and there are Internet environments in which the variables are newly constructed to fit the purpose and demands of individual communities.

Furthermore, the present study showed that our performance of gender as well as how we perceive and interact with others represent an inseparable part of both our offline and online lives. No Internet environment is completely gender-free, the users request information about the gender of their counterparts, and have learnt to discern the slightest of gender cues in order to communicate successfully.

In summary, the results from the individual Internet environments demonstrate the complexity of gender-language relationship and confirm the pitfalls of generic research and conclusions about women's and men's language. They show that gender is constructed and negotiated differently and assumes a different role in

individual Internet situations and communities, which proves the importance of examining language and gender in localised context of specific communities. Only when comparing results of localised studies can we draw conclusions of global nature.

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# ON MODAL AUXILIARIES IN ITALIAN IN COMPARISON WITH ENGLISH

*Eva Klímová*

**ABSTRACT:** The contribution deals with modal auxiliaries in Italian in comparison with English, considered as non-grammatical competitors of grammatical means in the act of indication of different modal meanings. Within the modality of an utterance, defined as “the grammaticalization of a speaker’s (subjective) attitudes and opinions”, modal auxiliaries may not only be associated with several types of modality, i.e. with epistemic and deontic modality, they may also contribute to the indication of different types of illocutionary acts. At the same time the usage of modal auxiliaries is considered as a step towards the explicit indication of a particular modal meaning.

**KEY WORDS:** modal auxiliary, Italian, English, non-grammatical means, type of modality, epistemic modality, deontic modality

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The contribution deals with modal auxiliaries in Italian in comparison with English, considered as non-grammatical competitors of grammatical means, i.e. **verbal mood**, in the act of indication of different modal meanings. Within the modality of an utterance, defined as “the grammaticalization of a speaker’s (subjective) attitudes and opinions” (Palmer 1986, 16), modal auxiliaries may not only be associated with several **types of modality**, i.e. with **epistemic** and **deontic** modality, they may also contribute to the indication of different types of **illocutionary acts**, considerable as??? a type of modality as well. At the same time, the usage of modal auxiliaries is considered as a step towards the **explicit indication** of a particular modal meaning.

The comparison of the Italian and the English system of modal auxiliaries may result in a fuller understanding of both of them. Though it should be stressed at the very beginning that the aim is not to give an exhaustive list of the auxiliaries in Italian and in English. The intention is to point out to the differences and similarities in the **system** of the Italian and the English modal auxiliaries that may result in the



comparison of the whole modal system between two typologically different languages.

Six years ago in the contribution dedicated to the borderline between types of modality, verbal mood in Italian and in English was presented as a grammatical means of modality (Klímová 2006), yet Palmer's statement that "modality is not expressed in all languages within the verbal morphology" and that "it may be expressed by modal verbs or by particles" was quoted to point out to the differences that may appear in the modal system of typologically different languages (Palmer 1986, 21).<sup>1</sup>

Let us also remember a previous observation that in Italian the term "mood" as the means of expressing a modal meaning is associated with the verbal inflection, while in English, considering its limited verbal morphology, modal meanings are distinguished very often by means of modal auxiliaries. This is why the Italian inflectional verbal mood will be considered as **synthetic mood**<sup>2</sup> contrasted with the English structure including a modal auxiliary and the infinitive of a full verb considered as **analytical mood**<sup>3</sup>. The first two examples should illustrate my approach (Cf. Klímová 2006, 117):<sup>4</sup>

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| (1) | Giovanni <i>aprirà</i> la porta.<br>John <i>will open</i> the door.        | <b>epistemic <i>Probable/statement</i></b> |
| (2) | Giovanni, <i>aprirai</i> la porta.<br>John, <i>you will open</i> the door. | <b>deontic <i>Imperative/command</i></b>   |

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Lyons 1977, 746. According to him the distinction between different types of utterances is

grammaticalized in the form of the "main verb" and his conclusions are similar to those of Palmer also as far as the function of *modal auxiliaries* is concerned.

<sup>2</sup> The indicative and conditional in declarative sentences are considerable as the implicit epistemic mood because "the speaker, in uttering an unqualified assertion, is committing himself to the truth of what he asserts, ..., but he is not explicitly laying claim to knowledge in the utterance itself." Lyons 1977, 797. Cf. also Schneider 1999, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. forexampleHuddleston 1984, 164.

<sup>4</sup> Discussed forms are in italics.

The utterances of (1) and (2), as far as the form is concerned, are declarative sentences. The Italian and the English future forms *aprirà/(he) will open* and *aprirai/you will open*, indicating the action as posterior to the moment of speaking, refer to events that have not happened yet. From this point of view, the future forms of (1) *aprirà/(he) will open* may be considered as **epistemic Probable** and the utterance will be classified as a *statement*, while the future forms of (2) *aprirai/you will open* may be considered as **deontic Imperative** and the utterance will be classified as a *command*.<sup>5</sup> As these two examples show, the verbal mood, as the basic constituent of the sentence modal scheme, contributes not only to the indication of specific types of sentences and consequently to the indication of different types of illocutionary acts, but also to the indication of different kinds of modality (Klímová 2006). Let us take another example. The utterance

(3) Ciandresti?  
Would you go there?

as far as the form is concerned, is an interrogative sentence that will be classified as a *question*. The utterance may also be pronounced by the speaker with the aim to induce the interlocutor to perform an action and could be classified as a polite *request*. From this point of view the conditional *andresti/would you go* serves as the means of indication of the speaker's *will* and is considerable as **deontic mood**. At the same time, the conditional indicates the action as possible and expresses the speaker's *uncertainty*. From this point of view the conditional might be considered as *epistemic mood*. In (1), (2) and (3) the Italian inflectional mood, i.e. future indicative *aprirà, aprirai* and the conditional *andresti* are considered as synthetic mood expressing the given modal meanings **implicitly**. The English future *will open* and conditional *would go* with the modals *will* and *would* are considered as analytical mood that expresses the modal meaning more **explicitly**.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bybee 1985, 170.

- (4) (Eccellenza, ho pensato, a far preparare un bagno); *dev'essere*  
pronto adesso. GATT 71  
(Excellency, I ordered a bath to be prepared for you), *it should be*  
ready by now. LEOP 45
- (5) E che cosa *dovrei dire*, io, secondo voi? GATT 73  
Well, what *should I* say, in your opinion? LEOP 48

While in (4) the Italian *deve* and the English *should* are used to express the speaker's *certainty* and their meaning is **epistemic**, in (5) the Italian modal auxiliary *dovrei* and the English modal auxiliary *should* indicate the action as desirable or expected and their meaning is **deontic**. The modal auxiliaries are presented here as the means that, in comparison with the inflectional mood, express the modal meanings in a more explicit way. Successively, the Italian modal auxiliaries *dovere* and *potere* and their English counterparts, will be observed in the act of indication of different types of modality and modal categories they share, i.e. necessity and possibility.

## 2. EPISTEMIC MOOD

Let us start the discussion on **epistemic mood** quoting Palmer again: "epistemic should apply ... to any modal system that indicates the degree of commitment by the speaker to what he says." (Palmer 1986, 51). Thus, if the speaker uses the indicative, i.e. epistemic *factive*, or the conditional, i.e. epistemic *non-factive* in a declarative sentences/he expresses, in a synthetic way and implicitly, certainty or uncertainty about what s/he is saying. Using the modal auxiliary *dovere/must* or, respectively, *potere/may (can)* s/he expresses the same, but, by means of an analytical structure and explicitly. Let us examine our first examples in which Italian inflectional mood corresponds to an analytical structure in English:

- (6) Il Signore *salvi* ancora il nostro amato Re. GATT 54  
*May* God *save* our beloved King! LEOP 33

The proposition is presented as non-factual and the Italian subjunctive *salvi* classified as epistemic *non-factive* or *dubitative*, corresponds to the English structure *may + save*. In the following example inflectional mood is observed on the borderline between the indication of an illocutionary act and epistemic modality:<sup>7</sup>

- (7) ... che alla data della scadenza lei *avrà* i suoi quattrini, ... IND 28  
 ... that, at the date when it falls due, *you shall have* your money.  
 TIM 28

The Italian epistemic future *avrà*, corresponding to the English structure with a modal auxiliary *you shall have*, indicates an action that may only come true in the future and thus may be associated with the meaning of *epistemic possibility*. It is used by the speaker to express *promise*. In the English version it is the modal *shall* with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person form to express it explicitly.

The modal auxiliaries *dovere/must* convey the meaning of epistemic “necessity”: they both correspond to the structure “I am sure/convinced that ...” In the sentences

- (8) But *you must know* something about it, Persse. WOR 14  
 Ma *devi saperne* qualcosa, ... PROF 28
- (9) *You must have heard* of it. WOR 14  
*Devi assolutamente averne sentito* parlare. PROF 28

the forms *devi* and *you must* express the speaker’s certainty at the moment of speaking. In other words, in (8) the speaker says *I am sure you know* and in (9) he says *I am sure you have heard*. In contrast to the English *must*, the Italian *dovere* has past tense forms:

- (10) Era un vestito di stoffa turchina ... molto usato, che Leo *doveva avergli*  
*veduto* addosso almeno cento volte. IND13  
 It was a dark blue suit,... considerably worn, which Leo *must have*  
*seen* him wearing at least a hundred times. TIM 13

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Klímová 2006.

The modal auxiliaries *potere/can (may)* convey the meaning of **epistemic possibility**: they both correspond to the structure “I am not sure/I think that ...”. In the sentence

- the Italian imperfect *non poteva* corresponds to the English *could never* (though we should notice the difference between the Italian past infinitive *aver torto* indicating the situation as anterior and the English *do wrong* which is indifferent with regard to this temporal meaning) and in the sentence

- the Italian future form *potremo* corresponds to the English present *we may*. With the future, even lower degree of certainty about the proposition is expressed.

<sup>8</sup> For verbal aspect of the English modals see Ziegeler 2003, 39.

69

- (13) ... ma *temo che* Tancredi *debba* mirare più in alto, ... GATT 51  
 But *I fear* Tancredi *will have to* aim higher, ... LEOP 31

In the Italian sentence, the verb of fearing *temere* in the main clause and the present subjunctive of the modal auxiliary *dovere* in the dependent clause participate on the indication of the modal meaning of uncertainty and fear. In the English translation it is the verb of fearing in the main clause *fear* and the future form of the dependent clause *will haveto* that expresses the same.

### 3. DEONTIC MOOD

The two above mentioned types of modality share not only the same modal meanings, i.e. necessity and possibility. They share also the means for their indication, i.e. the inflectional mood and modal auxiliaries *dovere/must* to express deontic necessity, and *potere/can (may)* to express deontic possibility. First let us take an example in which Italian synthetic **deontic mood** corresponds to an analytical structure in English:

- (14) Ma tu *non lo devi* fare, Fabrizio, ..., *non lo farai, non lo devi* fare!  
 GATT 100  
*You mustn't* do it, Fabrizio, *you mustn't* do it, *you shan't* do it, ...  
 LEOP 68

The Italian *non devi* may correspond not only to the English *you mustn't*, as in the case of this example, but also to *you needn't*. In other words, its modal meaning may be both prohibition and permission. The prohibition is repeated in Italian with the future *non farai* that corresponds to the English prohibitive *you shan't*. In the following example, the Italian conditional of *dovere* was used:

- (15) Lei *dovrebbe* scrivere dei romanzi, ... GATT 158  
*You should* writenovels, ... LEOP 119

The Italian form *dovrebbe* corresponds, in this case, to the English modal auxiliary *should*, both indicating the action as desirable or convenient. The speaker is giving *advice* to the interlocutor. In the following example the imperfect of *dovere* is used:

- (16) *Dovevi* vedere da Palermo a qui quando ci femavamo alle stazioni di  
 posta per il cambio dei cavalli! GATT 141  
*You should* have seen what it was like from Palermo here, when we  
 stopped at post stations to change horses! LEOP 103

With the imperfect *dovevi*, corresponding to the English *should*, the action is indicated as incomplete, though expected. While the Italian imperfect of *dovere* conveys both temporal and modal meaning, the meaning of the English *should* is only modal. The action is indicated as anterior by means of the past infinitive *have seen*.

The Italian deontic *potere* corresponds most often to the English *can*. Sharing the meaning of deontic possibility they differ in forms: while *potere* is used in different tenses, *can* has only two forms, i.e. *can* and *could*. In the sentence

- (17) Padre Pirrone, *potrà* passare due ore a Casa Professa...  
 GATT 33  
 Father Pirrone, *you can* spend a couple of hours at your Mother-  
 house... LEOP 14

the Italian future form *potrà* corresponds to the English present *you can*. The formal difference is connected with a difference in the modal meaning: the speaker, using the future, expresses a lower degree of certainty about the proposition again. In the sentence

- (18) *Potremo* magari preoccuparci per i nostri figli, forse per i nipotini;  
 GATT 50  
*We may* worry about our children and perhaps our grandchildren;  
 LEOP 29

the Italian future *potremo* corresponds to the English present *we may*. This time the future does not express a lower degree of certainty; it indicates the action as posterior to the moment of speaking.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The intention of the contribution was to present Italian modal auxiliaries in comparison with English, considered as non-grammatical competitors of grammatical means, i.e. verbal mood, in the act of indication of different modal meanings. Within the framework of epistemic and deontic modality, modal auxiliary *dovere/must* convey the meaning of epistemic and deontic “necessity”; while modal auxiliaries *potere/can (may)* convey the meaning of epistemic and deontic “possibility”. The main difference between the Italian *dovere* and the English *must* lies in their morphology: while the Italian *dovere* has forms for all tenses and moods, the English *must* does not have them. The formal difference reflects in their potentiality to express different modal meanings. Used in different tenses (present, imperfect, future) and different moods (indicative or conditional and subjunctive) *dovere* may correspond to modal auxiliaries *must* and *should* in English. The same holds good to the Italian *potere* that, being used in different tenses and moods as well, may correspond to *can* and *may* or *might* in English. We may conclude that although the system of Italian modal auxiliaries is limited, they have, thanks to their rich morphology a capacity to convey exactly the same modal meanings as numerous modal auxiliaries in English.

The Italian modal auxiliaries *dovere e potere*, along with the inflectional verbal mood, modal adverbs and particles, create the Italian modal system. A more profound attention might be, and in fact, should be dedicated to the Italian subjunctive, its potentiality in the Italian modal system and the possibilities that the English language with its elaborated system of modal auxiliaries has for expressing corresponding modal meanings. With the previous considerations, concentrated on a partial problem, we only wanted to provoke more interest concerning modality considered as “l’animadellafrase” (the spirit of the sentence) (Bally 1963, 66).



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# NAMES OF MUSHROOMS IN THE CURRENT USAGE

*Pavel Kolář*

**ABSTRACT:** The paper continues in Josef Hladký's study on the names of mushrooms in English and Czech. While Hladký focused on the diachronic analysis of the matter and developmental trends, the paper presented gives evidence on the usage of the mushrooms lexicon in current English. The conclusion is that the scope is becoming wider both in terms of onomastics and synonymy and getting closer to the usage common in continental Europe.

**KEY WORDS:** mushrooms, current usage, language corpus, web sites

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mushrooms represent a fantastic world of an incredible multitude of species. Some are edible and very tasty, some inedible, some represent a deadly threat, other are an indispensable part of modern medicine but they are all organic parts of the ecosystem. We should not forget their aesthetic qualities – either pleasurable or not. In this paper we want to pay attention to the area of mushroom hunting and its consequences. What happened to people who were in Britain some thirty-five years ago? At that time it was not very common to come across mushrooms, either at the grocers' or in family cooking. No wonder then that Josef Vachek once claimed that the English had practically no names for mushrooms (Hladký 1986:5). Later on after his statement, in the 1980s, you could have roast mushrooms for breakfast, which were actually *champignons*, although the French term was not very common for this particular species. So whenever you asked someone from an English speaking country, they usually used a general word for the whole family – mushrooms. Now the situation has moved forward, you can buy not only champignons in the market, but there are also *chanterelle*, *puffballs*, *boletes* etc. It all depends on a certain area or particular country, county or even state (e.g. Derbyshire, California, Quebec, New South Wales and the like).

## 2. PRE-CORPUS LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

Josef Hladký spent a few years researching into the semantic field of mushrooms and their names in Czech and English. His study was published in 1996 and provides us with an extensive linguistic insight into the field. He dealt with the terminology and especially the history of this lexical domain. He managed to contradict Vachek's statement and proved that the English language offers a rich lexicon of the area irrespective of the general assumptions. Hladký focused especially on the historical aspect and developmental trends. He rendered a deep insight into Comenius' *Janua Linguarum Reserata* (1629) which we can today compare with Roget's *Thesaurus*. Hladký managed to compare four original editions with their English translations. He also studied the so called herbals (Gerard, Parkinson) and traced the mushrooms in the Oxford English Dictionary – a dictionary on historical principles. Although the entries in the OED are only approximate in the first year of usage, they give some evidence of the apparent usage, at least in printed texts. Hladký claims that Old English had only one generic name (swamm). After that the following series can be presented: *toadstool* (1398), *mushroom* (LME), *fungus* (1527), *agaric* (1533), *puf* (1538), *Jew's ear* (1544), *earthnut* (1548), *champignon* (1578), *truffle* (1591), *boletus* (1601), *puffball* (1649), *morel* (1672), *ergot* (1683), *goat's beard* (1688), *cap* (1762), *chanterelle* (1775), *flybane* (1863), *fly agaric* (1866), *meadow mushroom* (1884), *fairy ring champignon* (1884), and *St. George's mushroom* (1891). The available data for the year 1600 show that mushrooms were more common in central Europe than in Britain:

Table 1:

Country	Czech	Germany	Hungary	England
Number of names	40 (14 <sup>th</sup> cent.)	44+18 descriptive names	>40	15 + swamm

Hladký 1996:126, 127

Besides that Hladký managed to collect a relevant database. What we miss, though, is the evidence of the current usage.

### 3. MATERIAL EVIDENCE OF MUSHROOMS IN ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES

If we want to track mushrooms in their real existence in English speaking countries today, we can certainly collect relevant data. We can even examine their occurrence in supermarkets, deli shops or in the street markets. Such data would only tell us that a particular species is available – unfortunately we would not get information about the origin of a particular product. This is why we decided to browse specific web pages, namely <http://www.rogersmushrooms.com> and managed to get a long list which gives us serious evidence of mushroom existence which is accompanied by onomastic reference in the language.

We can start with *Macrolepiota procera*, also called *parasol mushroom*, *parasol* and *parasol agaric* collected by Asley Watson in the United Kingdom in April 2009. Fairly popular, due to a number of synonyms is *Pleurotus ostreatus*, commonly called *oyster fungus*, *oyster cap*, *oyster mushroom*, *oyster pleurotus*, *oyster shell*, and also *sapidpleurotus*, collected by Nesco Simic in Berkshire in 2009, by Neill Mapes on a fallen crab apple tree, in the United Kingdom in 2011, or Mary Swihart in Michigan in 2011. Less common is *Calocybe gambosa*, commonly known as *Saint George's mushroom* (due to its occurrence in spring time), collected by Asley Watson in Warwickshire in 2012 and Martin Telfer in Bedfordshire also in 2012. Among *russulae* it is the *Russula vesca* with the following popular names *bare-tootherrussula*, *bared teeth russula* and *bare-tootherbrittlepill*. In this case we have currently no forage. Then comes a large family of *boleti*: the *Boletus erythropus*, known as *dotted stem boletus*, collected by Dave Kelly in New Forrest, U.K. in 2011 or Steven Murray by a field edge in South Wales in 2010. In addition, there is *Boletus reticulatus* or *aestivalis*, also called *spring boletus*, *summer boletus*, *cepereticul*, and the *Boletus edulis*, which is the most common type with a number of popular synonyms: *Cep*, *porcini*, *edible boletus*, *king boletus*, *king bolete*, *penny bun*, *penny bun bolete*, *penny bun boletus*, and *stone fungus*, collected by Rachel Dyson in Thedford Forest, U.K., in 2011, Tim Hale in Gisburn Forest, Lancashire in 2008, Aaron Lee in Hagley Park Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2009 and Jo Priestnall in New Forest, U.K., in 2004. Fairly common is *Lecinum scabrum*, also known under

the following popular names: *brown birch boletus*, *brown birch bolete*, *rough-stemmed boletus*, *cow fungus*, *birch rough stalks*, *common scable stalk*, and *birch bolete*. It was collected by Zuzana Pivková in Foxhall, Derbyshire in 2011, Jo Priestnall in New Forest, U.K., in 2011 and Stuart Bates in Shire Hill, Derbyshire, in 2010. We can also add *Lecinum versipelle*, *orange-cap boletus*, or *orange birch bolete*, *orange birch boletus*, *orange bolete* and *birch boletus*, collected by Jo Priestnall in New Forest, U.K., in 2010. Among popular mushrooms (especially in cooking) rank also *Cantharellus cibarius*, known as *chanterelle*, *chanterele*, *funnel chanterelle*, and *girole*. It was collected by Stephen Kane in Dumfries and Galloway in 2010, Jo Priestnall in New Forest, U.K., in 2011 and Jack Edmunds, U.K., in 2011. Another interesting mushroom is the *Amanita muscaria*, very popular in fairy tales and among photographers, with popular names *fly agaric*, *fly amanita*, *fly mushroom*, *fly poison amanita*, and *bug agaric*, collected by David Hamilton in a field in Peeblesshire, U.K., in 2009, Adam Green in Sandringham, U.K., in 2009, and Francine Conway in Newcastle, U.K., in 2010. Posh restaurants in Britain offer a speciality imported from Italy, another *amanita* – the *Amanita caesarea*, which has also a number of synonyms: *Caesar's mushroom*, *Caesar's amanita*, *Orange amanita*, and *royal agaric*. We should not forget the *Amanita rubescens*, commonly known as *blusher*, *red-fleshed mushroom*, and *blushing amanita*, which was collected by Greg Lay, U.K., in 2010, and Jo Priesnall in New Forest, U.K., in 2011. The most dangerous among toadstools is the *Amanita phalloides*, typically known as *death angel*, *death cap*, *death cup* and *poison amanita*, collected by Lee Collins under a birch tree, U.K., in 2010. Very common are the three following mushrooms. *Lycoperdum perlatum* with a wide list of synonyms: *Puffball*, *devil's snuff boxes*, *devil's tobacco pouch*, *frog cheese*, *fuzzball*, *gemmed puffball*, *gem-studded puffball*, *pearl-studded puffball* and *poor man's sweetbread*. It was collected many times by Emily Sneddon in woodland, Petersfield, U.K., in 2011, Tony Wharton, Pieper's Hill Wood, Worcestershire, in 2010, Zsuzsa Magyar in spruce woods, U.K., in 2010, and by Asley Watson, U.K., in January 2009. Fairly popular, especially in New South Wales in Australia, is the *Lactarius deliciosus*, which is commonly called *saffron milk cap*, *delicious lactarius*, *orange-milk lactarius*, *orange-milk mushroom*, *delicious lactaria*, *delicious milk cap*, and *red pine mushroom*. It was

collected by Lee Collins, U.K., in 2009, Paul McHugh in Maine, USA. The *Agaricus campestris*, which is similar to the most commonly marketed mushroom, also known as *horse mushroom*, *horse agaric*, *field mushroom*, and *pink bottom*, collected by Asley Watson in Leicestershire, in 2010. In autumn it is the *Armillariella mellea*, which is frequently collected. It has the following synonyms: *honey fungus*, *honey mushroom*, *common morel*, *honey agaric*, *honey tuft fungus*, *bootlace fungus*, *shoestring agaric*, and *oak fungus*. It was collected by Tony Wharton in Piper's Hill Wood, Worcestershire, in 2010 and Paul McHugh and Mack Hitch, both USA, in 2010 and 2009 resp. Another popular mushroom across Europe (U.K. inclusive) is the *Morchella esculenta* or *vulgaris*, commonly called *morel*, *true morel*, *sponge mushroom*, *may mushroom*, *yellow mushroom*, and also *yellow morel*. It was collected by John Baker in a garden, Cobham, Surrey in April, and by Lynne Daroch ten minutes off Montreal downtown in 2010. Fancy restaurants offer their guests *Tuber magnatum* (*white truffle*, *Italian white truffle*) and *Tuber melanosporum* (*black truffle*, *black Périgord truffle*) for which we have no other material evidence. They are hunted in the Mediterranean area. A speciality among mushroom hunters is *Sparassis crispa*, commonly known under the following synonyms: *wood cauliflower*, *cauliflower fungus*, *cauliflower mushroom*, *brain fungus*, *sponge fungus*, and *rufflesa*. It was collected by Ivan Teague in New Forest, Hampshire in 2011 and Jo Priestnall in New Forest in 2007. Even mushroom hunters in the Czech Republic feel very proud when they manage to find this species. Another specific mushroom is *Fistulina hepatica*, which used to be very common among poor people in France, and which is known under the popular names *beefsteak fungus*, *beefsteak mushroom*, and *ox tongue*. It was found on a chestnut by Lee Collins, U.K. Then comes *Lepista nuda*, or *wood blewit*, which was collected in a compost heap in U.K. in 2008 by Anthony Eccles and by John Pemrose in an old racecourse in Richmond, North Yorkshire in 2010. Another is *Phallus impudicus*, known as *stinghorn* (with a rather mythological usage) and *Boletus satanas* with popular names *satan's bolete* or *devil's bolete*. It was found by Gary Palmer (U.K.) in 2010.

This plentiful list answers sufficiently the question whether mushrooms grow and are also hunted in Britain and other English speaking countries. The hypothesis that the disappearance of oak woods

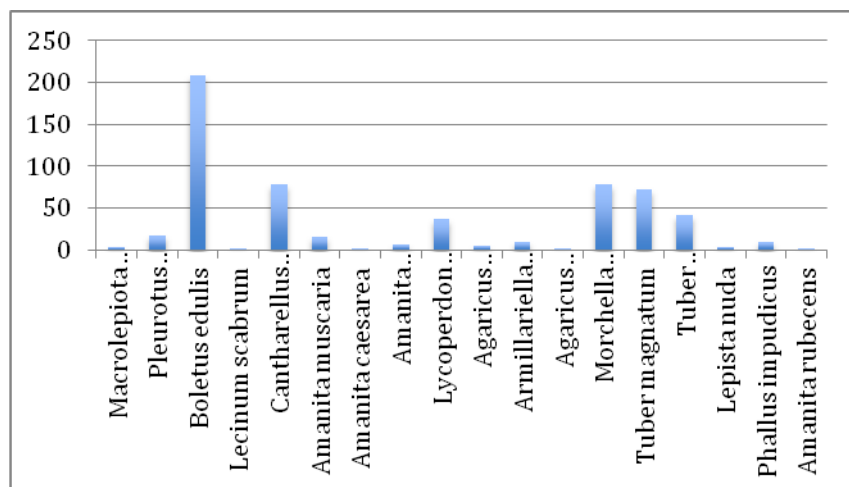


in British history resulted in the disappearance of mushrooms has not been proved. On the contrary, mushrooms grow in various and often different biotopes. In addition, we can see that mushroom hunting in Britain has been strongly influenced by immigrants from continental Europe. The evidence in our text is in the names whose origin is not English: Zuzana Pivková (Czech), Zsuzsa Magyar (Hungarian), Nesco Simic (South Slavonic). It is claimed that Australian immigrants from the former communist countries (Central and East Europe) are keen mushroom hunters in New South Wales, Australia.

#### **4. LANGUAGE CORPUS EVIDENCE**

As was claimed before, Hladký's study did not provide us with the evidence retrieved from a language corpus. What he considered a corpus was actually only a database, though a very useful one. What he managed to do was a large terminological database retrieved from encyclopaedias, dictionaries and professional books on mushrooms or the nature (herbaria). His method was historical and enables us an adventurous excursion to the past centuries. What it does not render is the current usage. This is not a criticism of Hladký but a mere statement – due to the fact that he could not analyse a suitable language corpus in the early 1990s. That is why he was not able to provide linguists with the analysis of the current usage. The situation has changed remarkably. We can now examine two extensive corpora (besides the Bank of English): the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Current American English (COCA). We have deliberately decided to retrieve the usage of mushroom names from the latter because it is larger (more than 500 million words) and also updated (the BNC covers only the period between 1990 and 2000 with 100 million words).

Figure 1: Normed occurrence of mushrooms in COCA

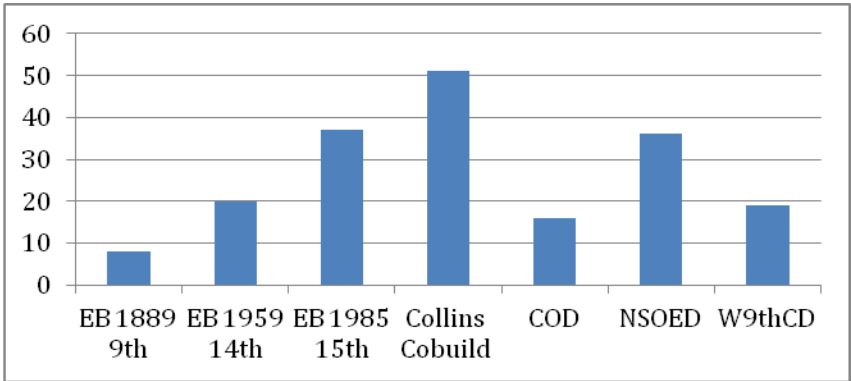


The chart provides linguistic evidence (number of occurrences per one million words). For obvious reasons we have used a simplified terminology with Latin taxonomy. We can see that the most common mushroom in the text is the *Boletus edulis* with 208 occurrences in all genres. Then come the *Morchella esculenta* (79 occ. in all genres), *Cantharellus cibarius* (78) – in all genres. The third and the fourth positions are occupied by the *Tuber magnatum* (73) and *Tuber melanosporum* (4) although their origin is in the Mediterranean – they are not hunted in Briatinor in the U.S.A. but certainly eaten (news, magazines, fiction, spoken). Then with the fifth position comes the *Lycoperdon perlatum* and with 37 occurrences in magazines. The second decile has two representatives: the *Pleurotus ostreatus* (18) – magazines and spoken, and *Amanita muscaria* (16) – magazines, academic, fiction. The first decile has only marginal occurrences: the *Phallus impudicus* – academic, magazines, fiction, and *Armillariella mellea* both (9) – magazines, spoken, *Amanita phalloides* – (7) magazines, fiction, *Agaricus campestris* – (5) academic, *Macrolepiota procera* – (4) – academic, fiction, magazine. The rest is statistically irrelevant with *Lepista nuda* (3) – magazine, *Agaricus sylvaticus* (2) –

news, magazines, *Amanita caesarea* (2) - magazine, *Blushing amanita* (2) – magazine, fiction, and *Lecinum scabrum* (1) fiction). We have also studied the occurrence of generic terms. The word *mushroom* occurred 2515 times which is about 12 times more than the most common species the *Boletus edulis*. It only proves a general tendency in language usage to use a generic term instead of specific one if we are not sure about the correct name. The term *toadstool* is more common (25 times) than the *Amanita muscaria* though not significantly. It is certainly used in the meaning of mushroom today.

### 5. REPRESENTATION IN DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANICA

Figure 2: Mushrooms in EB and dictionaries



The chart provides linguistic evidence of the tendencies in the usage of of the lexical field of mushrooms. It is rather limited in scope, yet it shows some developmental tendencies which are in accordance with corpus data. If we look at the representation of mushrooms in Encyclopaedia Britanica, the three columns on the left, we can see that the 9<sup>th</sup> edition (1889) rendered 8 species - *Dry Rot*, *Horse Mushroom*, *Meadow Mushroom*, *Fairy Ring Champignon*, *puffball*, *truffle*, *morel*, and *stinkhorn*. The edition also mentions two generic names: *pasture mushroom* and *poisonous mushroom*. The 11<sup>th</sup> edition had one more –

*Jew's ear*, while the 14<sup>th</sup> edition (1959) rendered thirteen more items – *Beefsteak Fungus*, *Caesar's Mushroom*, *chanterelle*, *Death Angel*, *earthstar*, *English Truffle*, *Fly Agaric*, *Giant Puffball*, *Honey Agaric*, *Inky Cap*, *May Mushroom*, *Perigord Truffle*, and *Shaggymane*. The 15<sup>th</sup> edition (1985) renders another 17 – *artist's fungus*, *bird's nest fungus*, *cauliflower fungus*, *chicken of the woods*, *death cup*, *death cap*, *dryad's saddle*, *ear fungus*, *false morel*, *field mushroom*, *honey mushroom*, *horn-of-plenty mushroom*, *jack-o-lantern*, *lorchel*, *oyster cap*, *scaly pholiota*, and *shaggy parasol*. It is interesting to see that the increment in the first period, between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> eds. covering 70 years is 12 items while the increment in the period between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> editions (only 26 years) was 17 items. The developmental trend is progressive and assures us about the fact that mushrooms were becoming more common. Today, in the era of on-line EB we would be able to track the increments continually.

If we compare the dictionaries in the chart we can state the following. The Collins English Dictionary (1986) with 171000 entries renders the largest number of mushroom entries: *agaric*, *amanita*, *beefsteak fungus*, *bird's nest fungus*, *blew its*, *boletus*, *bootlace fungus*, *cep*, *champignon*, *chanterelle*, *cramp ball*, *death angel*, *death cap*, *destroying angel*, *dry rot*, *earthnut*, *earthstar*, *elf-cup*, *ergot*, *fairy ring mushroom*, *fly agaric*, *funnel cap*, *grisette*, *honey fungus*, *horsehair fungus*, *horsehair toadstool*, *horse mushroom*, *ink-cap*, *jelly fungus*, *jelly mould*, *jew's ear*, *lawyer's wig*, *liberty cap*, *meadow mushroom*, *milk cap*, *the miller*, *morel*, *orange-peel fungus*, *parasol mushroom*, *parrot toadstool*, *puffball*, *russula*, *Saint George's mushroom*, *scarlet elf-cup*, *shaggy cap*, *the sickener*, *stinkhorn*, *sulphur tuft*, *truffle*, *wax cap*, *witches' butler*, and *yellow brain fungus*. On the other hand the Concise Oxford Dictionary with 120000 entries renders only a fraction of the former: *agaric*, *beefsteak fungus*, *blewits*, *cep*, *chanterelle*, *death cap*, *dry rot*, *ergot*, *fly agaric*, *honey-fungus*, *horse-mushroom*, *ink-cap*, *morel*, *puff-ball*, *stinkhorn*, and *truffle*. For comparison we can add the Oxford Shorter Dictionary with the items mentioned in the COD plus the following: *boletus* (+ *bolet*, *bolete*), *champignon*; *false chanterelle* (under *chanterelle*), *destroying angel*, *earth-ball* (not in CED), *earth-nut*, *earth-star*, *fly fungus* (= *fly agaric*),

*Jew's ear, lawyer's wig, liberty cap, milk cap, orange-peel fungus, parasol (mushroom), Scotch bonnets* (not in CED or COD), *St George's mushroom, shaggy ink-cap, shaggy parasol* (but not *shaggymane*), *sulphur tuft, witches' butter*. It is surprising that the least representative is the Webster's Nine Collegiate Dictionary (160000 entries) with only 20 items: *agaric, amanita, boletus, champignon, chanterelle, death cap, death cup, destroying angel, dry rot, earthstar, ergot, fairy ring, fly agaric, inky cap, meadow mushroom, morel, puffball, shaggymane, stinkhorn, and truffle* Hladký (1996, 31–32).

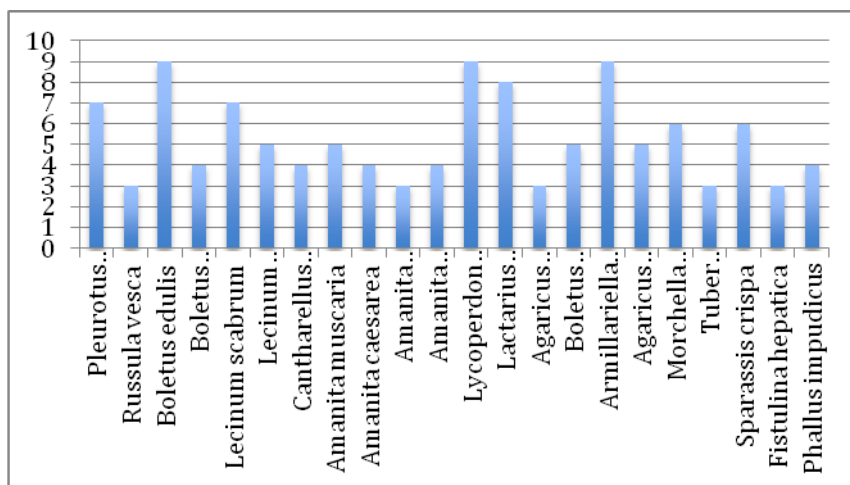
If we want make a conclusion about the representativeness of the above mentioned dictionaries, we have to ask an obvious question. Why does the Collins English Dictionary render the largest number of mushroom entries? In this case we have to be informed about its database. The CED was among the first which were based a language corpus: The Collins Corpus. The latest 11<sup>th</sup> edition is backed by a 4.5 billion word corpus. This fact fully coincides with the data retrieved from the Corpus of Current American English.

## 6. CURRENT USAGE OF MUSHROOMS AND THEIR SYNONYMS

The level of synonymy is also a reasonable proof of evidence. We have studied current sources and came to results which are certainly not surprising. The sheet with the frequency of particular mushroom species renders a highest occurrence of nine. Here we can start with the most common one the *Boletus edulis* with the following names: (*cep, porcini, edibleboletus, king boletus, king bolete, penny bun, penny bun bolete, peny bun boletus, stone fungus*). The same variety applies to *Lycoperdon perlatum* with: *puffball, devil's snuff boxes, devil's tobacco pouch, frog cheese, fuzzball, gemmed puffball, gem-studded puffball, pearl-studed puffball, poor man's sweetbread*. The third in the same rank is the *Armillariella mellea* with the following synonyms: *honey fungus, honey mushroom, honey agaric, honey tuft fungus, bootlace fungus, bootlaces, shoestring agaric, shoestring fungus, and oak fungus*. Although the *Boletus edulis* equals the other two, the *boletes* are still superior if we add the following: *Boletus erythropus* (1), *Boletus*

*aestivalis* (2), *Boletus chrysenteron* (4), *Lecinum scabrum* (7), *Lecinum versipelle* (5) and *Boletus subtomentosus* (5) – altogether 33. We should count them together especially due to the fact that the exact differentiation is not frequent and mushroom hunters can be wrong. Eight names can be identified with the *Lactarius deliciosus*: *saffron milk cap*, *delicious lactarius*, *orange-milk lactarius*, *orange-milk mushroom*, *delicious lactaria*, *honey armillaria*, *delicious milk cap*, and *red pine mushroom*. Quite common with seven synonyms is the *Pleurotus ostreatus* with *oyster fungus*, *oyster cap*, *oyster mushroom*, *oyster pleurotus*, *oyster shell*, *oyster*, and *sapid pleurotus*.

Figure 3: Synonyms of mushrooms (> 3)



Six synonyms are found with the *Sparassis crispa* with the following names: *wood cauliflower*, *cauliflower fungus*, *cauliflower mushroom*, *brain fungus*, *sponge fungus*, and *rufflesa*. Although this species is rather rare, its synonymic representation is wide. Another common species with the same number of synonyms is the *Morchella esculenta vulgaris*. It can have the following names: *morel*, *true morel*, *sponge mushroom*, *may mushroom*, *yellow mushroom*, and *yellow morel*. The come amanitas and similar mushrooms: the *Amanita muscaria* (5): *fly agaric*, *fly amanita*, *fly mushroom*, *fly poison amanita*,

*bug agaric; Amanita caesarea* (4): *Caesar's mushroom, Caesar's amanita, orange amanita* and *royal agaric; Amanita phalloides* (4) whose danger can be easily recognized by its common synonyms: *death angel, death cap, death cup, and poison amanita*; and the *Amanita rubenscens* with three synonyms: *blusher, red-fleshed mushroom, blushing amanita*. The *Agaricus sylvaticus* has five synonyms: *brown wood mushroom, scaly wood mushroom, wood psalliota, red-staining mushroom, and forest mushroom*. Equal synonymy can be found with the *Agaricus campestris* which has four names: *horse mushroom, horse agaric, field mushroom, and pink bottom*. Besides them, we can present the *Cantharellus cibarius*, which ranks among the most common in cooking, with four synonyms: *chanterelle, chanterle, funnel chanterelle, and girole*. The last representative with four synonyms is the *Phallus impudicus*: *stinkhorn, common stinkhorn, prick mushroom, and wood witch*. The scope of synonymy is not a single proof of the current usage but on the whole, together with the findings retrieved from the corpora and specialized mushroom hunting web pages, it represents a valuable piece of information contributing to the overall picture of this area of the English language.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The initial idea of this paper was a critical analysis of Hladký's study from 1966, in which he rightfully contradicted Vachek's statement that there are practically no mushrooms in English. Hladký analysed many sources with a special interest in the diachronic development and tendencies. He found that in the Old English there was only one generic name for mushrooms – *swamm*. The specific lexicon gradually extended both in terms of the onomastics of species and the scope of synonymy. Especially valuable are his findings from the 17<sup>th</sup> century – Comenius' *Janua Linguarum Reserata* (1629) and its English real and possibly false translations. It is highly probable that Comenius indirectly contributed to widening the English lexicon of mushrooms. Hladký renders evidence of this matter retrieved from *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Oxford English Dictionary* and several other dictionaries, besides the so called *herbaels*.

The reason of this paper was the fact that Hladký did not and was not able to render relevant information on the current usage which was the focus of our analysis. We studied relevant web pages for mushroom hunters and the most extensive language corpus the Corpus of Current American English. The material evidence rendered in this paper makes us sure that mushrooms grow and are hunted and even eaten in the English speaking countries at a great multitude. Data retrieved from the corpus show that mushrooms are an organic part of the language and their usage is not limited by the register because we can find mushrooms names in magazines, fiction, spoken language and the news.

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# INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES IN ORAL HISTORY

*Lucie Kučerová*

**ABSTRACT:** The paper draws on the results of research into the interviewing methods of Studs Terkel, an American oral historian. It focuses on the interviewer's role in the creation of an interview text and recognizes the role as crucial. It demonstrates how the interviewer's choice of a question type in combination with a careful choice of words influences the interviewee's response. Certain interviewing strategies might result in blurring the seemingly obvious borderlines between the interviewer's and the interviewee's statements.

**KEY WORDS:** oral history, structured interview, semi-structured interview, unstructured interview, single-issue testimony, question types

## 1. ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Aiming at preserving history through oral testimonies, oral history can be viewed as a method of collecting historical evidence or a way of learning about history. It is based on a dialogue between an interviewer who is well-trained and seeking historical evidence and an interviewee who has been selected as a person whose memories or experience may offer the evidence that the interviewer is looking for. These interviews are recorded and subsequently used for historical research. It is the aspect of interviewing that distinguishes oral history from oral traditions, i.e. "stories that societies have passed along in spoken form from generation to generation" (Ritchie 2003, 20).

Sacks and Schegloff identified interviews as one of the "speech exchange systems" (1978, 696) where turn-taking is used. While interviews share some of their properties with conversation, which "occupies a central position" (1978, 701) among the systems and was the focus of Sacks and Schegloff's study, they also have their own specifics. An interview is a question-answer system, in which the interlocutors are allocated their individual roles. One of the interlocutors has the role of the interviewer, i.e. the one who asks questions, and the other has the role of the interviewee, i.e. the one who answers the questions. Moreover, the turn order in an interview is a repeated question-answer sequence, in contrast with conversation, "where there is

much greater flexibility in both the ordering and nature of participation” (Wooffitt 2005, 57).

There are two more properties of conversation mentioned by Sacks and Schegloff that do not apply in the case of an oral history interview: “Length of conversation is not specified in advance” and “what parties say is not specified in advance” (1978, 701). Oral history interviews are based on mutual cooperation between the interviewer and the interviewee, which includes agreeing on the amount of time that will be allocated to the interview. The *Principles and Best Practices for Oral History* give the length of an oral history interview as being approximately two hours. What parties say cannot be specified in detail, but it again contributes to a better rapport if the interviewer informs the interviewee about “the general focus and purpose of the interview” (Oral History Association, 2009) prior to the session. Thus the thematic content of an oral history interview tends to be more specific than that of a general conversation, which could take any thematic direction.

An oral history interview can be further characterized in terms of its structure. In *Conversation analysis: principles, practices, and applications*, three types of interviews are defined based on the interviewer’s method of asking questions: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Hutchby 2008). A structured interview presupposes a set of questions prepared beforehand and closely followed during the session. In this type of interview, “there is [no] opportunity to develop lines of inquiry raised by the interviewee’s responses” (2008, 173). A semi-structured interview allows the interviewer “to explore issues generated in the course of the interview” (2008, 173), although the questions are again prepared in advance and their order is followed. Lastly, an unstructured interview is defined as follows:

The interviewer comes to the interview with a set of issues to be discussed and can raise them at any order; furthermore, it is not necessary to ensure that questions are worded consistently across interviews. In addition, the interviewees have some control over the range of topics discussed, as they may raise issues not introduced by the interviewer: they will also be encouraged to talk at length, perhaps illustrating an experience or an opinion with a series of anecdotes. Consequently, the interviewee may provide long stretches of relatively uninterrupted talk. (2008, 173)

An oral history interview can be conducted in any of the three forms, depending on the type of interviewee and the character of the information needed. As far as interviewees are concerned, they may range from very open and talkative people to shy and taciturn ones, and the interviewer should be skilled enough to adjust their questioning accordingly. Those interviewees who do not need too much support to produce long stretches of speech and who may even tend to take control of the interviewing session should not be discouraged from doing so or interrupted as “often it is what is spontaneous about the interviews that is most revealing” (Bozzoli 1991, 151). A good oral history interviewer is one who possesses “a willingness to sit quietly and listen” (Thompson 2000, 222). These cases result in an unstructured type of interviewing where the interviewer formulates their questions in reaction to what the interviewee says.

The less verbose interviewees will wait for the interviewer’s questions, and it is generally recommended that the interviewer have them prepared beforehand. It can vary from “a skeleton list of headings, along with wordings for key questions” to “a more fully elaborated interview schedule” (Thompson 2000, 231), but even with the questions ready, the interviewer should not forget the basic rule to “let the interviewee talk” (Morrissay 1970, 108). Thus a semi-structured interview is the product of the interviewer being well-prepared while at the same time adhering to the principle of not interrupting the interviewee “if they have a clear idea of what they want to say” (Thompson 2000, 231). As Paul Thompson further explains: “If you stop a story because you think it’s irrelevant, you will cut off not just that one, but a whole series of subsequent offers of information which *will* be relevant” (2000, 231).

A structured interview, resembling a questionnaire in that the questions are prepared beforehand and the responses are not further pursued by the interviewer, is also utilized in oral history, but it is not the preferred form of questioning since “people are forced into the predetermined framework of the interviewers and so large relevant areas of experience are never examined at all” (Hay, 8). As a result, “the interview [becomes] less interactive”, “more one-sided” and “subjectivity [vanishes]” (Bozzoli 1991, 152). Nevertheless, it is useful

“to produce material which transcends the individual respondent and can be used for comparative purposes” (Hay, 8).

Apart from the interviewees, it is also the subject of the interview that influences its form. In their article *Ways of Listening*, Hugo Slim and Paul Thompson identify five types of interviews based on the kind of testimony that may be of interest in oral history: life story interviews, family-tree interviewing, single-issue testimony, diary interviewing, and group interviews (1993, 116–118). Depending on the information required, various forms of interviewing will be employed. For instance, a structured interview may be used to elicit the same information from a number of family members or a group of respondents, while an unstructured interview might yield better results in the case of a single-issue testimony where the interviewee is encouraged to talk about anything that comes to their mind related to the issue.

Whatever the order of questions or the degree of preparedness, the questions themselves are also important to consider. The way a question is formed has an impact on the way it is answered. In oral history, it is essential that questions “be carefully phrased to avoid suggesting an answer” (Thompson 2000, 230), and the interviewer should also “avoid asking questions which make informants think in [the interviewer’s] way rather than theirs” (Thompson 2000, 230). The questions should be open-ended as opposed to the types of questions likely to be employed by “a lawyer trying to build a case in a courtroom” (Morrissey 1970, 109).

Grammatically speaking, certain forms of questions are more suitable for meeting the requirements above than others. The table below summarizes the question types defined in the *Cambridge Grammar of English*, which is also the source of the examples and the common types of responses:

Table 1: Question types

Question type	Example	Expected response
Yes-no questions	<i>Are there any shops nearby?</i>	The reply either affirms or negates the proposition of the question ( <i>yes</i> , <i>no</i> , <i>yes/no</i> + elaboration).
Wh-questions	<i>Where is your farm?</i>	The response is information which provides the missing content of the <i>wh</i> -word.
Alternative questions	<i>Do you want tea or coffee?</i>	The answerer is given a choice between two or more items contained in the question.
Declarative questions	<i>You're busy all day?</i>	Accompanied by rising intonation, the answerer is asked for confirmation. Falling intonation suggests that the speaker is strongly assuming something.
Tag questions	<i>He's gone back, has he?</i>	The response may be agreement with <i>yes</i> , agreement with <i>no</i> , anticipated agreement with <i>yes</i> but open to challenge with <i>no</i> , or vice versa.
Echo and checking questions	A: He's called Oliver. B: <i>He's called what?</i>	The response contains the information that has not been previously understood.

(Carter 2006, 715–727)

Yes-no questions and wh-questions are the two basic question types. While a yes-no question elicits either an affirmative or a negative, a wh-question requires a specific type of information indicated by the wh-word. Both these types of questions can be used to form an alternative

question, i.e. a question in which the alternatives the respondent has are specified. Table 1 gives an example of an alternative question in the form of a yes-no interrogative: *Do you want tea or coffee?*, which could be rephrased as a wh-interrogative in the following manner: *What do you want, tea or coffee?* Declarative and tag questions are essentially yes-no questions in that they elicit either an affirmative or a negative, but they differ in form. As the term suggests, declarative questions are not interrogative but declarative in form, and a tag question consists of a declarative clause followed by a tag. In both cases, intonation plays an important role in the way the questions are understood and appropriate response chosen. Echo and checking questions substitute wh-questions in cases of uncertainty or a lack of understanding on the listener's part. As such, they require specific information as a response.

When an oral history interviewer is selecting from the possible question types and attempting to avoid suggestive questions at the same time, alternative and declarative questions should be the last ones on the list, since they limit the interviewee's options of response. Furthermore, declarative as well as tag questions contain the interviewer's assumption, understanding, or view of the subject discussed (and either an affirmative or a negative is required), which may lead to the interviewee following the train of thought proposed in the question instead of contributing with their own.

## **2. STUDS TERKEL'S INTERVIEWS**

Studs Terkel (1912-2008) is widely acknowledged as "the preeminent oral historian of 20th-century America" (Barnes 2008). He is not only appreciated for having let the voices of numerous "etceteras" (Terkel 2007, XV) be heard, but also for his ability to make people open up and talk about things they have never talked about or feelings they never knew they felt. Interestingly enough, however, he was not a historian. He never received any proper training in conducting oral history interviews, which makes his success in the field all the more intriguing. The following part of this paper presents the results of the research into Terkel's approach to interviewing with the focus on the extent to which Terkel adhered to the general principles of oral history interviewing described above.

The research was conducted on four interviews, i.e. their recording, transcripts and the edited versions published in *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (1970). As far as the type of testimony is concerned, the analyzed interviews would be best classified as single-issue testimonies as they were all conducted with the focus on the Great American Depression. The main subjects of the interviews with Jim Sheridan and Frank & Rome Hentges were historical events that took place during the Depression - the Bonus March and the Farmers' Holiday. Dorothe Bernstein and Tony Soma were interviewed about the more general issues of being a child and being a businessman in the Depression period.

Although single-issue testimonies are the types of interviews which allow the interviewer to prepare their questions beforehand since the subject to be discussed is predetermined, Terkel does not seem to have done so. Most of the questions in the four interviews followed up the interviewees' words and thus do not give the impression of having been previously prepared. Relying on his interviewing skills, Terkel evidently chose to proceed differently from "the idiots wedded to their notepads of written questions" (Terkel 2007, 176) and form his questions in reaction to what the interviewees were saying. Moreover, the interviewees were to various extents allowed to initiate their own topics, depending on how relevant Terkel considered them. If the interviewees digressed too much from the main subject of the interview, Terkel would steer the conversation back, unless he found the digression useful, in which case he encouraged the interviewee to continue.

Although the four interviews were unstructured, there were two questions that Terkel used in all of them – the question opening the topic of the Depression, and the question used towards the end of the interview and usually signaling that the main topic has been exhausted. Though worded in a slightly different way in each case, the opening question was used to begin all of the interviews. It is always included in Terkel's first turn except for the interview with Jim, where the question occurs in Terkel's fourth turn.

Table 2: The question opening the interview

<b>Jim Sheridan</b>	<i>When I say to you the depression, what does that mean to you?</i>
<b>Dorothe Bernstein</b>	<i>When I say to you: the depression, the 30's, what does that mean?</i>
<b>Tony Soma</b>	<i>... when I say to you, Mr. Soma, the 30's... the depression, what comes to your mind?</i>
<b>Frank &amp; Rome Hentges</b>	<i>If I were to say to you the Great American Depression, what's the first thought comes to your mind?</i>

The wording of the question closing the main part of the interviewing session also varies to a certain extent mainly because it occurs in different question forms. In Jim's interview, it is formulated as a declarative yes-no question, while in the interviews with Dorothe and the Hentges brothers it has the form of an elided yes-no interrogative, and in the interview with Tony it is a wh-question.

Table 3: The question concluding the main part of the interview

<b>Jim Sheridan</b>	<i>Any other depression story comes to mind.</i>
<b>Dorothe Bernstein</b>	<i>Any other thoughts come to your mind, impressions, memories?</i>
<b>Tony Soma</b>	<i>What other thoughts come to your mind?</i>
<b>Frank &amp; Rome Hentges</b>	<i>Any other thoughts about that period come to you mind?</i>

A brief examination of the rest of the questions in the four interviews revealed that these three question forms – a declarative yes-no question, an elided yes-no interrogative, a wh-question – were in fact the most frequent ones. A more detailed analysis would be required in order to obtain exact figures since the presence of elision, repetition, and



recasting in Terkel's turns renders the count and classification of the questions a rather complex matter. However, even a cursory examination has given certain evidence of Terkel's questioning style.

What appears to be characteristic of Terkel's approach to questioning is his tendency to predominantly ask yes-no questions. Given that the expected response to a yes-no question is either an affirmative or a negative, employing this particular question form in an oral history interview seems rather unexpected. As the interviews were to be edited into narratives, a wh-question would seem preferable since it has a greater potential to elicit an elaborated answer, which could later be transformed into a monologue with relative ease. Using yes-no questions, Terkel ran the risk of receiving brief replies such as those in the extract from Tony's interview below:

- (1)    *ST29 Was your patronage still good during this era?*  
      *TS29 Better than ever. Oh yes. Oh yes. It was ... many, many of my customers were in the paper. Producers, Rodgers could come in ... you can talk to Alec Wilder about it.*  
      *ST30 You mean you carried them?*  
      *TS30 Not carried, but they were friends. Fitzgerald, any of the big names. Wolfe, Fitzgerald.*  
      *ST31 But didn't you suffer economically?*  
      *TS31 Not me. I never suffered economically. Because I never looked at the economics.*

Such a lack of elaboration on the interviewee's part occurs in the interviews with Tony and the Hentges brothers. While Jim and Dorothe seized the initiative and even a yes-no question was enough of a stimulus for them to offer elaborate responses, Tony and the brothers communicated differently. Asking yes-no questions was especially perilous in their case, though the question form was not necessarily the only cause of their brief answers. In (2a) and (2b), Terkel uses a wh-question but receives short responses similar to those in (1):

- (2) a. *ST16 Well, what happened in that period?*  
      *RH17 Well, we just closed up the stores.*  
  
      b. *ST24 What did the town look like then? The stores just ..... what did people do?*

RH29 *Oh, I don't know. They just got along the best they could.*

FH30 *Yes.*

Tony and the Hentges brothers may have simply been less verbose people by nature who only expanded their responses when they considered it necessary, or other factors may have been involved. The fact that English was not Tony's mother tongue may have prevented him from always offering developed answers. In the case of the Hentges brothers, the participation of two narrators in the interview may have led them to shorten their turns to allow each other to speak.

Apart from the risk of failing to motivate the speaker to talk, the danger of employing yes-no questions is that it guides the speaker to either agree or disagree with a proposition that they may never have thought of otherwise. Especially a yes-no question in the declarative form, which implies a certain understanding or assumption on the interviewer's part, prompts the interviewee to follow the thought process of the interviewer instead of their own. Consider the following exchange:

- (3) ST46 *So you mean the soldiers were driving out the marchers ...?*  
JS47 *The soldiers were driving out the marchers. And I know this, that it was one assignment that they reluctantly took on. And I remember the newspapers the next day, how the liberal newspapers was deploring the fact. But MacArthur was looked upon as a hero at that particular time.*  
ST47 *Now these soldiers, were they national guardsmen?*  
JS48 *No. The soldiers were regular army men.*  
ST48 *They were then younger, weren't they?*  
JS49 *They were younger than the marchers. And the regular soldiers, jumping on and attacking their predecessors, so to speak. It was the army attacking the army.*  
ST49 *It was almost like sons attacking their fathers.*  
JS50 *It was really like sons attacking their fathers. That's right, Studs.*

During a long turn in which Jim described the riot in Washington caused by the bonus marchers (JS46), what caught Terkel's attention was the fact that the bonus marchers were forced out of the city by soldiers. Since the marchers were ex-servicemen themselves, the factor of soldiers attacking soldiers added to the dramatic character of the

situation. However, Jim did not point this out, and it is debatable whether he would have if it had not been for Terkel's leading questions. First asking for the confirmation that the two actors in the riot were soldiers and the bonus marchers, subsequently inquiring whether the soldiers were national guardsmen, and finally presenting the assumption that they were younger than the marchers, Terkel was of considerable assistance to Jim in his realization of *the army attacking the army*. Once Jim openly expressed the idea, Terkel added the comparison of the marchers and the soldiers to fathers and sons, which Jim agreed with. Incidentally, the published version of the text only contains the fathers/sons comparison:

- (4) *The soldiers threw tear gas at them and vomiting gas. It was one assignment they reluctantly took on. They were younger than the marchers. It was like sons attacking their fathers.*

There are more such instances in the four interviews in which Terkel brings his own perspective into the dialogue and presents his own understanding of the interviewees' words. The questions are then introduced with phrases such as *(So) you mean...*, *So that meant...*, or their formulation resembles a commentary rather than a question.

On the one hand, such observations may have contributed to insightful dialogue, and the interviewees may have been inspired to discuss matters they had never talked about before or to discuss them from new perspectives. In the two extracts above, both Jim and Dorothe probably realized something that had not previously occurred to them or that they had never attached any importance to. On the other hand, Terkel's involvement in the interviewees' testimonies such as it was raises doubts as to whether removing the questions did not distort the reader's view of whose ideas are being expressed. As (3) and (4) showed, the reader may eventually be presented with a text that, in spite of having been composed of the interviewee's words, contains the interviewer's ideas.

### 3. DISCUSSION

Terkel explains in his memoir *Touch and Go* (2007) that his motivation behind writing oral histories is more than anything else his interest in

talking to people. He contrasts himself with historians: “We think of historians as scholars who research in great scope and detail. What I do in great scope and detail is converse” (2007, 171). This statement is quite apt, in fact, and it is confirmed by the findings presented in recent corpus-based grammars. In the chapter on question types distribution, the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (1999) states that:

- questions expressed by declarative clauses are found particularly in conversation and fiction, while wh-questions are proportionally more common in news and academic prose
  - nearly half the questions in conversation consist of fragments or tags
  - about every fourth questions in conversation is a question tag; the most common type of question tag is negative
  - question tags are a frequent means of seeking agreement and keeping the conversation going
- (1999, 211)

Simply put, the question forms Terkel employed are typical of general conversation, which had an impact on the overall structure and ‘feel’ of his interviews. They resembled everyday conversation rather than a planned, well-prepared oral history interview, which may have been the reason why he achieved different results than other oral historians. However, the fact that he presented his own ideas in the course of his interviews as well, as the examples from his transcripts showed, raises the question as to how useful his interviews would be for oral history research. Terkel’s books are appreciated by the general public as they contain engaging stories of ordinary people, but since he did not seem to follow the general principles of oral history interviewing, the produced texts might be less appreciated by oral historians.

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# PROBLEMS OF IDIOMS PRESENTATION IN TRANSLATION IDIOMATIC DICTIONARIES

*Pavol Kvetko*

**ABSTRACT:** The paper deals with some problems which occur in idioms presentation in translation idiomatic dictionaries. Six (Czech and Slovak) dictionaries are examined from the point of view of the content, the way of presentation, and the equivalents in the target language. The paper points out some problems in the presentation such as the coverage of idioms, kinds of units included in the dictionaries, the form and place of idioms in the dictionaries, and the kinds of equivalents used in the dictionaries and their presentation.

**KEY WORDS:** idioms, idiomatic dictionary, coverage, keyword, multiple headword/head phrase, equivalent, alphabetic ordering

## 1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Linguists and dictionaries differ in their approach to idioms. Differences are in terminology, the treatment of the basic units, their categorization, and their place within linguistics. Moreover English and Slovak/Czech linguists may differ over certain points.

Present-day opinions on idioms can be summed up thus:

1. Idioms in the narrow sense – phrasal idioms/expressions
  - (a) In the narrowest meaning the term idiom includes semantically opaque (non-transparent) expressions having the character of a phrase, e.g. *kick the bucket*, *white elephant*, *shoot the breeze*, *the hair of the dog*. They are sometimes called “pure idioms” in English; the term “*idíóm*” is used in Slovak.
  - (b) In more general use the term includes semantically fully and partially opaque expressions having the structure of a phrase. Included are also traditional types such as similes, binomials, phrasal verbs, semi-idioms – restricted/bound collocations, etc., for example *white elephant*, *add fuel to the fire*, *smell a rat*, *once in a blue moon*, *by the way*, *as red as a turkeycock*, *give up*, *blue-eyed boy*.

2. Idioms in the broad sense – phrasal and sentence units. In this broadest sense the term idiom includes all types of expressions mentioned before (phrasal idioms) plus expressions with a sentence structure, i.e. both paremiological and non-paremiological expressions, e.g. *white elephant*, *add fuel to the fire*, *make hay while the sun shines*, *as red as a turkeycock*, *give in*, *of course*, *blue-eyed boy*, etc.

Current British and American dictionaries understand and present idioms in their broadest sense. Regardless of this fact, there exist separate dictionaries of proverbs, phrasal verbs, etc., in both geographical varieties. British dictionaries, unlike the American ones, do not present idioms and phrasal verbs together: traditionally, phrasal verbs are compiled in separate dictionaries.

In this paper the term **idiom** – (corresponding to Slovak terms: frazeologická jednotka, frazéma, frazeologizmus) will be used in its broadest sense, i.e.

An institutionalized multi-word expression (a phrase or a sentence) with semantic integrity, certain imagery and certain lexico-grammatical fixedness. It is understood here as an ideal and relatively fixed complex of variants (allophrases) and grammatical forms used in concrete utterances. (Kvetko 2009, 17)

For example: *live off/on the fat of the land*; *handle/treat sb with kid gloves*; *all that glitters/glisters is not gold* or *all is not gold that glitters*, etc. From the pedagogical point of view these multi-word expressions function as one unit and thus should be learned as a whole, regardless of their metaphorical or non-metaphorical character.

A **dictionary** is usually defined as a list of words in alphabetical order with definitions (in explanatory/monolingual dictionaries) or equivalents (in translation/bilingual dictionaries). It is a reference book and a written record of certain institutionalised units (now also in the electronic form). There are different types of dictionaries: explanatory/monolingual, translation/bilingual, general-purpose, specialist, alphabetical, non-alphabetical, thematic, etc. Idiomatic dictionaries focus on multi-word expressions (idioms) and not

individual words, and this may cause some problems in presentation/listing of individual units.

Translation/bilingual dictionaries record multi-word units (idioms) of the source language with particular equivalents in the target language. For example English-Slovak idiomatic dictionaries list English idioms with their Slovak equivalents and vice versa Slovak-English dictionaries list Slovak idioms with English equivalents. Preference is given to idiomatic equivalents. These equivalents are, however, determined by the existence/non-existence of idioms in the target language, taking into account the fact that the semantic structures of idioms in two languages are not always the same. The paper pays attention to the following “newer” dictionaries<sup>1</sup>, namely:

Gryczová, Mária. 1997. *Anglicko-slovenský slovník, idiomatické vztahy a ustálené spojení*; (Gryczová)

Hrách, Tomáš. 1998. *Sbírka anglických idiomů & slangu*; (Hrách)

Dopjerová-Danthine, Mária. 2002. *Anglické idiomy pod lupou*; (Dopjerová-Danthine)

Fronek, Josef, and Pavel Mokráň. 2003. *Slovensko-anglický frazeologický slovník / Slovak-English Dictionary of Idioms*; (Fronek and Mokráň)

Rojahn, Christopher, and Susan Bollinger. 2005. *Anglické idiomy / English idioms*; (Rojahn and Bollinger)

Bočánková, Milena, and Miroslav Kalina. 2007. *Anglicko-český frazeologický slovník, ustálené fráze, expresivní výrazy a idiomy, anglicko-česká přísloví*; (Bočánková and Kalina).

The aim of the paper is to find out how the common lexicographic principles are applied in these dictionaries, and also to compare how the authors’/editors’ claims are realized in practice. It focuses on the content (coverage), the way of presentation (form and location of units), and the choice of the target language equivalents. It

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<sup>1</sup> The choice of dictionaries is determined by the fact that each dictionary contains the word *idiom/frazéma*, *idiomatic/idiomatický*, *frazeologický*. The paper does not include the older dictionaries, e.g. Grobauer, M., G. Brožová, and F. Malíř. 1948. *Idiomy a rčení v angličtině*; Kvetko, Pavol. 1984 (1991). *Anglicko-slovenský frazeologický slovník*, etc.



aims to answer the following questions; does the content of a dictionary correspond to its title? What kinds of units are included? How are the units listed? And what types of equivalents are used?

## 2. CONTENT OF DICTIONARIES

The content of idiomatic dictionaries is determined by individual approaches to idioms. It depends on different understanding of the term in different dictionaries such as: inclusion or exclusion of specific groups such as proverbs and sayings, similes, phrasal verbs, etc., approach to synonyms and variants, polysemy and homonymy of idioms, etc.

All the examined dictionaries are different from the point of view of their content, organization, size, etc. They present great differences in the coverage of expressions. Each of them is interesting and contains something specific. They present idioms in their broadest sense, that is, they list phrasal and sentence idioms: pure idioms, similes, binomials, proverbs/sayings, social formulae, etc. Some dictionaries, similarly to American ones, for example, also include phrasal verbs (Bočánková and Klíma, Rojahn and Bolinger, Hrách, Gryczová). In some cases the dictionaries go beyond the scope of phraseology/idiomatology.

Some titles (or subtitles) explicitly suggest the content of dictionaries, for example Hrách combines idioms with slang, which is objected by some linguists, since the terms *idiom* and *slang* belong to different aspects of language. Dopjerová-Danthine examines also the origin of idioms, sometimes presents synonyms or related idioms, and organizes idioms by topics. Bočánková and Kalina have a separate part for idioms and for proverbs, etc.

From the titles it is also obvious that some of the dictionaries, in addition to multi-word units, also include individual words. In fact, words as separate entry heads are presented in all dictionaries except Rojahn and Bollinger.

- (1) a. Gryczová: *best, bill, damn, dry, hairless, bathroom*, etc.
- b. Hrách: *bowler, bins, collar, edge, cheese, Irish*, etc.
- c. Dopjerová-Danthine: *the rhubarb, whammy, mush, the face-off*,

- walkover, windfall, etc.*  
 d. Bočánková and Klíma: *balls, belly, brat, dyke, pinch, plot, etc.*  
 e. Fronek and Mokráň: *haraburdie, hlaváč, hned', hoci, horlivec, etc.*

The highest number of individual words is in Fronek and Mokráň. Among them are interjections or abbreviations such as *ajhl'a, jojoj, táák; PhD, UFO, a pod, ap.*, moreover, there are expressions like: *byť hypermoderný, byť hostiteľom, or hroziť niekomu, hanobiť niekoho*, etc. For example they list at the keywords beginning with H 28 individual words, and under Z as many as 99 individual words (on 80 pages). It seems that the reason for their presentation are multi-word units in the target language, although there exist more appropriate systemic (single-word) equivalents, e.g., *hoci – in spite of the fact, cf. although, though; hocikto – all and sundry, cf. anyone, anybody; váhať – be in a dither, sit on the fence, cf. hesitate*, etc. This dictionary goes even further. In addition to the above-mentioned words it presents not only collocations, but a large number of examples of usage, i.e., free combination of words, items belonging to context, grammatical constructions, etc., under the same or different keywords.

- (2) TANCOVAŤ: *t. jive/rumbu/sambu/tango/twist, t. s niekým, t. s niekým valčík, ísť t., včera som bol t., dobre t~uje,~oval s ňou okolo sály, t. medzi vajcami, t. ako mu pískajú, t. od radosti, všetko mu ~ovalo pred očami.*  
 ČLENOK: ... *nesiaha jej ani po ~ky, nikto z nich mu nesiaha ani po ~ky, nesiaha ti ani po ~ky.*

Although some non-idiomatic examples or individual grammatical constructions of idioms could also be found elsewhere (e.g. Bočánková and Kalina *he can THANK his lucky star; you can thank your lucky STAR*), the above cases in Fronek and Mokráň's dictionary represent the majority of the listed head phrases, which greatly enlarges the dictionary. The problem is not the size of the dictionary, but the fact that these „forms” (examples of usage, variants, etc.) are presented in the same way as institutionalized idioms. Hence, this way of presentation complicates the situation since the user cannot distinguish between language units (idioms in their basic forms, which should be learned as a whole) and the examples of their usage, grammatical forms. These cases remind us more of the illustrative examples in learner's

dictionaries than the multiple headwords of idiomatic dictionaries. In this point I completely agree with Čermák, J., and R. Blatná (1995) who pointed out that such an approach to idiomatology is at present not acceptable: “v minulosti se pod frazeologií a idiomatikou rozumělo lecos, co je dnes už nepřijatelné, napr. rekce slovesa” (1995, 112). It means that the content of this, otherwise very interesting and useful dictionary does not correspond with its title *Slovak-English Dictionary of Idioms* or with the content of idiomatic dictionaries as they are understood nowadays<sup>2</sup>.

In the following lines we will pay attention to idioms from the point of view of the form and location in particular dictionaries.

### 3. THE WAY OF IDIOMS PRESENTATION

Among the main problems of idioms presentation should be mentioned the identity of idioms expressed by the form of idioms and the place/location of their presentation in a dictionary. In the first case, we have to solve the problems of idioms versus variants/synonyms (variability) and idioms versus context, i.e. what is an idiom and what is a variant, which components belong to context, and which are part of an institutionalised/standard idiom, etc. In a word which forms should represent a particular idiom and have a separate entry. Compare the following examples of idioms presentation:

- (3) a. *treat s.o. with kid GLOVES*, and *HANDLE with kid gloves* (Rojahn and Bollinger)
- b. *LIVE (off) the fat of the land*, *LIVE off the fat of the land*, *LIVE on the fat of the land*, and *live off the FAT of the land* (Bočánková and Kalina)
- c. *vodit' za NOS* and *t'ahať za NOS* (Fronek and Mokráň)  
cf. KSSJ: *vodit', t'ahať niekoho za NOS*
- d. *THROW sth in sb's face/teeth* (Bočánková and Kalina)
- e. *tempest in a teapot/teacup*. (Dopjerová-Danthine)

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<sup>2</sup> From the point of view of format, content and function it looks like a (common) learner's dictionary, which omits single-word (frequently systemic) equivalents.

The problem in (3d) is that there exists only *a tempest in a teapot* (Amer.), and *a storm in a teacup* (Brit.), cf. Oxford Idioms Dictionary and other dictionaries.

In common practice all these individual cases are considered variants of one and the same idiom, since they have the same (very close) meaning, symbolism, identical or similar lexical words, etc., and thus they are listed together under one head phrase with particular cross-references.

Another problem is a question of presentation from the point of view of structure/form of idioms and their context. The dictionaries sometimes present the same idioms in one place in their basic forms, in another place in one of their grammatical forms or with words which belong to the context in which they are used.

- (4) a. he was in a BLUE funk but be in a blue FUNK; he keeps having it thrown in his TEETH, and THROW sth in sb's face/teeth; he MISSEd the bus but miss the BOAT (Bočánková and Kalina)
- b. we walk on eggs but to walk on air, to shoot in the dark, used in their basic forms ( Dopjetrová-Danthine)
- c. My hair stands on END; My HAIR's standing on end; nobody cares two HOOTs for it (Rojahn and Bollinger)
- d. perks to fat cats; deadlock/to be at a deadlock/wedlock (Dopjetrová-Danthine).

As we have seen, in addition to additional words of context or there are presented "strange forms" in (4d). British and American dictionaries list only the following forms: *(end) in/reach deadlock; be born out of wedlock, and a fat cat.*

It happens that one headword represents two or three different idioms, i.e. two or three idioms are listed (mixed) under one heading, as it is in Dopjetrová-Danthine in the case of *ring the bell*. In this case there are three idioms mixed together, i.e., *ring the bell, ring a bell, and ring true* (presented as the illustrative example for *ring the bell*). Similarly *lay/put the finger on someone* represents three idioms: *(not) put one's finger on; lay a finger on and put the finger on.*

As we have mentioned before, Bočánková and Klíma have separate parts for idioms and for proverbs, but some multi-word expressions are listed both in the idiomatic part, and one or more times

in the proverb section (in separate places), with the same or (slightly) different forms/variants or with the same or different equivalents.

- (5) a. Among idioms and proverbs: *ACTIONS speak louder than words, Scratch my BACK and I scratch yours* in both sections. *No MAN can serve two masters*
- b. only among proverbs: *a man cannot serve two MASTERS; you cannot serve two MASTERS; everyone has its own TASTE (proti gustu žádný dšputát)*
- c. Only among idioms: *there's no ACCOUNTING for tastes* (with the same equivalent as in (b)).

On the other hand: *beat the air* is presented among proverbs, though it is traditionally considered idiom proper.

Lexicographic work needs the knowledge of both languages (the source language and the target language). Dictionaries must pay attention to grammar, usage, orthography and natural forms in both languages. Compare the cases in Slovak and English:

- (6) a. *za dva dni* (instead of *o dva dni*), *vyliat' s vaničkou* aj *diet'a* (instead of *so špinavou vodou* *vyliat' aj diet'a*), *nestačiť vo vode* (instead of *nedočiahnuť/ nedosiahnuť na dno*), etc. (Fronek and Mokráň)
- b. *v brynde* (instead of *v kaši*), *za chvíľočku* (instead of *o chvíľočku*) (Gryczová)
- c. *Veľký Piatok* (instead of *Veľký piatok*), *be under cloud* (instead of *be under a cloud*); *be on a cloud nine* (instead of *be on cloud nine*); *be in red* (instead of *be in the red*); *out of blue* (instead of *out of the blue*); *in loggerheads* (instead of *at loggerheads*), etc. (Dopjerová-Danthine)

When speaking about the **location**/place, idioms can be listed (grouped) under a **keyword**, that is, the most significant word under which individual idioms are presented. Idioms listed under the same keyword are arranged in alphabetical order in their basic forms. This way of presentation is preferred mostly in British idiomatic dictionaries. Another possibility is to list idioms **alphabetically** according to the first word (preferred in American dictionaries). Sometimes they are listed alphabetically according to the first lexical word of the idiom. In some dictionaries idioms are organised **by topics** (with index of the most important words). All these types of presentation may use cross-

references or may be accompanied by the index of the most important words at the end of a dictionary.

Comparing the examined dictionaries we can say that individual dictionaries present idioms in different ways. Some dictionaries include in their preface/introduction a guide to using the dictionary (Hrách, Dopjerová-Danthine, Fronek and Mokráň), others are not very explicit about the rules for finding idioms/presenting units (Gryczová, Rojahn and Bollinger) or do not pay any attention to this problem (Bočánková and Kalina).

All dictionaries, with the exception of “*Idiómy pod lupou*” list their idioms under “keywords”. Presentation is, however, not always systematic. Some dictionaries mix the alphabetical ordering with a keyword system. Some idioms with a similar construction are listed according to the first words, others not. Some idioms are listed twice, three times (even at one keyword), others not. Frequently, there is a difference between units with a similar/same structure:

- (7) a. *as DEAD as a doornail* (adj.); *AS hard as nails* (conjunction); *as different as CHALK* (noun) (Rojahn – Bollinger)  
b. Similarly: *RED tape*, *RED herring* (first word, adj.); *birthday SUIT*; *burning QUESTION* (second word, noun) (Bočánková and Kalina)  
c. *OF the old school*, *AS a duck takes to water*; *BEFORE you can say knife*, *IN a huff*, etc. (Rojahn – Bollinger)  
d. *AT a snail's pace* (Bočánková and Kalina); *AS usual* (Gryczová), etc.  
e. *za akú CENU* (twice); *za každú CENU* (twice) (Fronek – Mokráň).

All “keywords” in (c) and (d) are functional words and not the most important words in the idioms. Though the cases of listing under a first word can be found elsewhere, in Rojahn and Bollinger they are more frequent than in other dictionaries. There are presented 34 similes at the keyword *AS*, nine are presented also under the adjective or noun, although the dictionary claims on the cover that idioms are arranged under their main words: “*Anglické idiomy jsou řazeny abecedně dle hlavního slova, od kterého se fráze odvíjejí.*”

## 4. EQUIVALENTS

Any translation dictionary is the result of a certain comparison of two vocabularies expressed by *equivalents*. Ideally, the objective is to find corresponding parallel idioms – systemic equivalents. These equivalents are determined by the possibilities of the target language, i.e. by the existence or non-existence of idioms with the same (very close) content/denotation in the target language (units containing the same or different lexical components with the same denotation). In the choice of equivalents one should also bear in mind their typical common usage and familiarity among native speakers and avoid the unusual and forced equivalents in his/her choice. One must be aware that symbolism, motivation, as well as stylistic properties, emotional charge and associations (connotation) of the equivalent should be as close as possible to the original idiom. Current British and American dictionaries frequently use illustrative examples to help to understand the meaning of a particular idiom, and to show its usage in concrete situation.

Let us look at concrete idiomatic translation dictionaries from the point of view of the above-mentioned general principles to find out how these principles are taken into consideration in practice.

### (8) **lead sb by the nose:**

- a. Oxford Idioms dictionary (OID): *make sb do everything you want; control sb completely*
- b. American Heritage Dictionary of idioms (Ammer): *dominate or control someone*
- c. Gryczova: *robiť si s niekým, čo chceme*
- d. Dopjetrová-Danthine : *vodiť za nos; manipulovať niekým, ako sa mu zachce; zametať niekým; obtočiť si niekoho okolo prsta*
- e. Bočánková and Kalina: *věšet komu bulíky na nos*

### (9) **vodiť/t'ahať za nos**

- a. Krátky slovník slovenského jazyka (KSSJ): *vodiť/t'ahať niekoho za NOS: zavádzať niekoho; at VODIŤ: zavádzať, klamať* (i.e. deceive, lie); *ŤAHAŤ* niekoho za nos: *klamať* (i.e. deceive, lie)
- b. Fronek and Mokráň: *vodiť niekoho za NOS: put one over on sb* (inf. esp. Amer.), *lead sb up the garden path, play sb along, pull the wool over sb's eyes, put it across on sb* (inf.), *tell sb tall stories, lead sb by the nose, spin sb a yarn, take the mickey out of sb* (sl.); *VODIŤ*

niekoho za nos: (the same equivalents) as above plus: *give the roundaround, put on show for sb's benefit*;  
 ťahať niekoho za NOS: *pull sb's leg*<sup>3</sup>; ŤAHAŤ niekoho za nos: *pull sb's leg, lead sb up the garden path*

(10) **lead sb up/Amer. down the garden path**

- a. OID: *cause sb to believe sth that is not true; to deceive*
- b. Ammer: *lead so down the garden path: to deceive someone*
- c. Hrách: *vodit za nos* (at GARDEN)
- d. Rojahn and Bollinger: *tahat koho za nos* at LEAD
- e. Bočánková and Kalina: *don't LEAD me up the garden path: netahej mně za nos*; *lead sb up the GARDEN path: tahat koho za nos*; at PATH: *vodit koho za nos*

(11) **pull sb's leg**

- a. OID: *tell sb sth which is not true, as a joke*
- b. Ammer: *play a joke on someone, tease*
- c. DopjEROVÁ-Danthine: (as a related metaphor to: *pull the wool over sb's eyes*): *we are pulling sb's leg: ťaháme niekoho za nohu – uťahujeme si z človeka*
- d. Hrách: *utahovat si z koho*
- e. Rojahn and Bollinger: *utahovat si z koho*
- f. Bočánková and Kalina: at PULL: *dělat si z koho blázný/dobrý den*; *she pulls his LEG: tahá/vodí ho za nos*

Though the dictionaries in most cases give the correct/appropriate equivalents, sometimes the idioms, especially those presented under different keywords, different (incorrect) equivalents could be found. Look at further examples showing correct, and/or synonymous, atypical or incorrect equivalents, and both correct and incorrect/atypical equivalents:

(12) **Synonymous equivalents**

- a. byť bledý ako STENA – *be green about the gills*; at BLEDÝ: *be as white as a sheet* (Fronek and Mokráň)
- b. As cool as a cucumber – *s klidem angličana, s ledovým klidem; s chladnou hlavu*; be as COOL as a cucumber – *být klidný jako želva*; be as cool as a CUCUMBER – *mít chladnou hlavu*; REMAIN cool as a cucumber – *zachovat si chladnou hlavu* (Bočánková and Kalina)

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<sup>3</sup> Compare at DOBERAŤ SI : ... *pull sb's leg* (the same equivalent)



- (13) Different class, incorrect equivalents, or both correct and incorrect
- a. as GOOD as gold (adj.) – *zlaté dieťa* (noun); fair-weather FRIEND *priateľ do každého počasia* (Gryczová)
  - b. baker's dozen (noun idiom) – *pridať navyše, nad očakávanie, predčiť* (verbal idioms); skin of one's nose – *odhryznúť z nosa vrch* (Dopjerová-Danthine)
  - c. a KNEE-HIGH *to a grasshopper* – *male dítě*; HAVE a heart in one's mouth – *co na srdci to na jazyku*, at HEART: *mít srdce v krku* (Rojahn and Bollinger)
  - d. vyviest' niekomu ČERTOVSKÝ skutok – *pull a fast one; podaj ČERTovi prst a on chce celú ruku* – *give the devil an inch and he'll take an ell, he should have a long spoon that sups with the devil*; podaj mu PRST a chytí ti celú RUKU *give him an inch and he'll take a mile or an ell*, (Fronek and Mokráň)
  - e. BITE the bullet – *kousnout do kyselého jablka*; it is as the CROW flies – *je to co by kamenem dohodil*; as the crow FLY – *přímo, vzdušnou čarou* (Bočánková and Kalina)

The examined dictionaries do not always pay enough attention to symbolism or connotation in their equivalents or/and use sometimes neutral equivalents or explanation, although there exist systemic, figurative expression with a similar symbolism or connotation. Compare

- (14) a. like a BAT out of hell at (Brit. sl.): *jako namydlený blesk*, at LIKE: *co nejrychleji*. Cf. LIKE greased lightening: *vyšokou rychlostí* (Rojahn and Bollinger)
- b. once in a blue MOON – *takmer nikdy* (compare *raz a uhorský rok*); go to see a MAN about a dog – *fráza, keď nechceme niekomu odpovedať* (Gryczová)

As we have said some dictionaries also supply **illustrative examples** (Dopjerová-Danthine, Rojahn and Bolinger, Gryczová, Hrách) which is a very positive feature, because it shows the usage and helps to better understand the meaning of the idiom. However, in some cases we can find different or atypical/strange illustrative examples:

- (8) a. ring the bell: *But there came a point when the comparisons just did not ring true anymore, he said* (The New York Times) (Dopjerová-Danthine)

- b. have a bone to pick: *The one bone Moscow had thrown Saddam was to lobby for Iraq.* (Time). (Dopjetrová-Danthine)

## 5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Previous discussion/analysis can be summed up thus:

- The dictionaries present idioms in their broadest sense.
- Some dictionaries go beyond the scope of phraseology/idiomatology/idiomatics.
- Titles of some dictionaries do not always correspond with the content.
- All dictionaries use “keywords” (except one), however sometimes it is a mixture of the keyword system and alphabetical ordering (ordering according to the first word).
- Idioms are listed in different ways: at one word, two or more words, under grammatical and lexical words, and not always in their basic forms.
- Dictionaries give correct equivalents in most cases. Sometimes they use different equivalents: synonymous, sometimes atypical, even incorrect or both (correct and incorrect) equivalents.
- Dictionaries do not always pay attention to connotation, symbolism and actual usage of idioms.
- All dictionaries are interesting and useful but it seems that the most systematic and systemic dictionary is Hráč’s *Sbírka anglických idiomu a slangu*.

Compiling a dictionary is a very difficult task requiring much effort, energy and time, and it deserves our credit. However, some discussed problems may call into question the credibility of some parts of the examined dictionaries: especially the absence of a more systematic approach. We agree with S. Johnson who said that “Dictionaries are like watches; the worst are better than none and the best cannot be expected always go quite true. No single dictionary can ever be completely or totally [...] accurate in every instance” (In Flavell, L, and R. Flavell, 1992).

In conclusion we would like to add that the lexicographer may choose any approach, however the same approach and units of the same category should be used throughout the whole dictionary, and equivalents should be verified in more than one source language and target language dictionary, and if possible in concrete authentic texts.

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# THE PRAGMATICS OF POLITENESS IN ACADEMIC BLOGGING

*Gabriela Miššíková*

**ABSTRACT:** The paper explores the discourse strategies used in academic blogging which represents less formal setting of academic discourse. Taking affirmative or critical stance, the participants use various discourse strategies. Mapping the variety of these strategies, we focus on those parts of academic web pages that are devoted to vivid and spontaneous discussions of the subject matter. Usually, the blog section introduces a research paper that invites responses from web page visitors. We discuss mainly those politeness strategies which are used in the responses expressing agreement and support. The analysis is theoretically rooted in the conception of politeness (and face) as introduced by Brown and Levinson (1996) as well as in the conception of interpersonal rhetoric as introduced by Leech (1983). The research draws from a corpus of articles and related responses randomly chosen from personal and institutional academic web pages.

**KEYWORDS:** academic blogging, politeness strategies, affirmative stance

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Swift interaction with colleagues and experts from the field via personal web pages has become very popular. Individual scholars, professional societies and institutions create and run web pages to enable interaction within a given scientific community. This form of interaction allows certain freedom from the usual norms of academic writing. In particular those scholars who display their academic work on their personal web pages welcome the opportunity of receiving suggestions and comments before the actual completion of their work. Quite often this is a way of getting the paper unofficially reviewed before it is considered for print.

## 2. ACADEMIC BLOGGING

In this paper we discuss academic blogging (AB) as an informal variety of academic discourse. It is to a certain extent less restricted by the

norms and standards of academic writing commonly required in research articles. A complex research on popular and professional science (cf. Hyland 2010) has revealed a variety of important aspects in academic discourse and the need for consistency with the norms of the given scientific community. Our assumption is that certain aspects, such as proximity and interpersonality, will slightly differ in the informal setting of AB. However, the recognition of scientific value and desire for certain academic prestige also play a role. Online discussion provides alternative voices and the participants themselves often support their professional stance via referencing or directly inviting experts to contribute. The analysis shows that the most characteristic feature of AB is interpersonality. Here, the conception of interpersonal rhetoric (Leech 1983), which examines the interplay of the main pragmatic principles and their maxims, can be efficiently applied. The analysis of responses to academic blog articles developing into lively discussions of the subject matter also reminds us that science should remain a communicative activity where ideas are to be discussed rather than presented as finalized pieces of information (cf. Hyland 2010).

### **3. POLITENESS DISCOURSE STRATEGIES IN AB**

Academic online discussions provide interesting language material which can be seen as a parallel to spoken professional slang. In the presented analysis, we focus on the study of the *pragmatic force* of an utterance (cf. Leech 1983, 17) which combines both the *illocutionary* (i.e. illocutionary and social goals) and the *rhetorical force* (i.e. the adherence to rhetorical principles). More specifically, the analysis will point out which rhetorical principles (cf. Miššíková 2012) the respondents prefer to use (i.e. to what extent do they choose being truthful, polite, ironic, etc. in their comments). In AB politeness discourse strategies (such as showing professional appreciation, formulating criticism via asking questions, providing suggestions, giving references, etc.) enhance the natural flow and dynamism of turn-taking in online debates. In the heat of an argument, the cooperative and polite exchange of ideas often develops into a more direct persuasive form of communication.

## **4. DATA DESCRIPTION**

The corpus comprises a total of 43 articles and 1478 related responses retrieved from eight (personal and institutional) academic web pages (See the list of surveyed web pages). The analysis focuses primarily at the responses to the articles, not the articles themselves. We examine these responses from the point of view of the discourse strategies used; taking to consideration also conversational implicatures created mainly by violating conversational maxims (cf. Grice 1975).

## **5. ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

In this paper we are taking an explanatory approach to discourse analysis; the analysis includes descriptive and interpretative approaches. We have classified the collected language material into two main groups: 1) Expressing (professional/personal) opinions and 2) Dealing with criticism. In group 1) we have further specified two subgroups: 1a) Taking an affirmative stance and 1b) Taking a critical stance. In group 2) two subgroups have been identified too: 2a) Resolving disagreement and 2b) Unresolved disagreement. The scope of this paper has been limited to those discourse strategies that are (preferably) used to express affirmative stances (i.e. subgroup 1a). As our findings illustrate, there are certain differences in the use of politeness strategies in AB in comparison to more formal academic discourse, such as conference discussions etc. Exploring expressions of agreement shows that the concept of politeness is present all through the exchange of ideas in AB. All observed strategies seem to develop from the pragmatic notion of face as introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987). In the following section we discuss the most common strategies used to express agreement in AB.

## **6. TAKING AN AFFIRMATIVE STANCE**

The focus of this paper is to explore the responses to articles that show affirmative stance of the respondent. These responses illustrate the positive politeness discourse strategies among which the most efficient

are the claiming of common (professional) ground and emphasizing cooperative attitudes and collegiality. No face threats are created or intended and the purpose of the individual politeness maxims used is mainly to fulfil social goals of communication: being tactful and showing praise enhances the positive atmosphere of familiarity and comradeship. The most frequent positive politeness strategies have been identified as follows:

**Full agreement** with no criticism intended involves the PP maxims of agreement, sympathy, consideration and praise. These responses hold considerable illocutionary force as they serve mainly social goals such as showing support and providing encouragement within the given community of devoted specialized professionals. They outline the preferred participants and contributors of the given blog section and select target readership. The language used in these blog discussions shows a varied level of formality, it oscillates on the axis between the popular scientific and the professional slang style. Expressive means and a variety of intensifiers are used to enhance interpersonality via emotional colouring:

- (1) *Absolutely! As you say, an interesting case study.* [PWP]  
*You're right he didn't go through your argument in good faith.* [PWP]  
*Well written and useful article.* [TUB]  
*What you say about references being a knowledge map is very true.*  
[TUB]  
*Yes, it has happened.* [TSB]

**Initial or partial agreement** with comments and suggestions involved builds on the PP maxims of praise and generosity. The first example shows the expression of support from the opponent who belongs to a different political spectrum. He shows appraisal and interest in the presented work and the comment on his different political opinions enhances the illocutionary as well as the rhetorical force of this statement:

- (2) *Big fan of your blog (if not your politics), you've got far and away the best collection of polling data in the country. I'm eager to download your predictor.* [PWP]



The following response to David Crystal can be perceived as overtly affirmative; the respondent starts with an informal address (DC) and, abiding by the PP maxim of Tact and modesty, shows full agreement first. His aim is to clarify the subject matter so he soon proceeds with further details and explanations. The positive politeness strategy of claiming common ground has been used to correct DC and complete the original statement without creating potential face-threatening acts. Clear organization and ordering of the response imply that DC and the respondent are co-operators:

- (3) *DC, you're right. There is great relevance in word pronunciation in the Shakespeare plays. However, the pseudonym (brand name) Shakespeare as used variously in front matter printings, etc., is irrelevant. At the time of the original private court performances of the plays, no reference is made at all to the existence of an actual person named "Shakespeare" as well as no posthumous reference. There is a common misconception the plays are intended for the common man and originated from a common man. They did not.*  
[DCB]

**Complimenting** is an efficient discourse politeness strategy aimed at claiming common ground by showing admiration and interest (cf. Valor 2001), as well as empathy and reflexivity. The PP maxims of praise and consideration play a role in the following examples:

- (4) *Bravo! [PWP]*  
*An excellent point and well made. [PWP]*  
*Keep up the good work!! [PWP]*

In the next response expressive sentence patterns indicate excitement, hedging expressions (such as actually) and recognized politeness structures (full name address, academic titles, etc.) are used to claim reflexivity and reciprocity:

- (5) *Dear David Crystal,*  
*Lovely post! Prof. Grosjean sent me a link to this and I am delighted that he did. I was actually breathless when I read the part where you compare our love of languages to our love of children! I wrote and published the following a few years back... [DCB]*

**Collaborative agreement** via the responses written in agreement with the main article aimed at providing further additions, illustrations of the case, etc. (the positive politeness strategy of claiming common ground via reflexivity and reciprocity is used to invite collaboration, belittling one's contribution is an efficient face-saving strategy):

- (6) *Although it's far less scientific than what you presented, I think we can... [PWP]*  
*What you say about ... is very true. When reading journal articles etc. citations provide ... as well as pointing you to... [TUB]*

**Teaming up with the author** is an efficient way how to show support and encouragement; the PP maxims of sympathy and consideration are used; responses aim at minimizing the discomfort of the author and maximizing his comfort:

- (7) *Paul thanks for the link to this academic research project/essay of yours. Ignore Max, he's a reactionary idiot. [PWP]*

The examples discussed above illustrate affirmative collegial utterances where respondents show agreement and support. In the next section we will briefly discuss responses where the impulse of collaboration often suppresses the tact maxim and critical attitudes are communicated. Taking critical stance represents potential face-threatening acts and thus negative politeness strategies and mitigating devices are used to save the opponent's face. To complement our analysis of the positive politeness strategies used in supportive responses, we shall briefly mention specific politeness strategies used to resolve disagreements in AB.

## 7. RESOLVING DISAGREEMENT

### **Agreement: complete or initial**

The easiest way to resolve a confrontation is to agree with the critique. Complete agreement restores the harmony of communication, such as in the following examples:

- (8) *I think this is a fair point. [TSB]*  
*That's a great point Martin, I also heard about ... [TSB]*

The initial or partial agreement usually functions as a prerequisite to further clarifications:

- (9) *Yep. But as you know... [TSB]*  
*It's true that ..., but he didn't .... [TSB]*  
*I fully agree with this. This is a huge problem with.... I don't think ... [PWP]*  
*Interesting analysis, but I think it is ..., and honestly, as a .... I don't think... [PWP]*  
*Surely, there are ... but... I was neither disruptive nor insulting. [TSB]*

### **Apologizing and counterattacking**

An efficient and common politeness strategy in academic debates is to show empathy and respect before producing potential face threats:

- (10) *Paul, I'm taking your reasoning seriously, but I think you have to... [PWP]*  
*So I'm going to have to say that your statement there really needs some serious support because from where I'm standing, it's not tenable. [PWP]*

### **Clarification of stance taken**

Considerate authors of the reviewed articles prefer to provide additional explanations and try to rationalize their attitudes:

- (11) *If I quoted the whole thing, a) I'd have to ... and b) I'd potentially have a ... because I would have... [PWP]*  
*That's why I gave the full citation of the article so that you can ... [PWP]*  
*I can see that some people are having a difficult time understanding this, so let's spell this out as clearly as I can: If you think my math is intended to... , I can only tell you that: 1) I'm not... And 2) you are welcome to go over my math and see if I've made an error. It's possible I made a mistake, but I used this exact same methodology in predicting... [PWP]*  
*If you're interested, my data is ... You can also verify my ... by... [PWP]*

## **Repetition and cross reference**

In AB it is common and technically easy to return to some responses or parts of the discussed articles and even copy the passage in question. The respondents also refer to other pieces of research and provide references to their own projects and academic work.

- (13) *Just as a follow up, I now realize what's bothering me about your ... You're... Basically, as I understand it ... [PWP]*  
*To reiterate my key point: you've made some basic false assumptions because you believe that... [PWP]*

## **Dismissing criticism**

Sometimes the act of saving one's face wants requires simply dismissing the criticism as being trivial and inadequate. This strategy produces responses that are acceptable only in the informal setting of AB. Their illocutionary strength, openness and directness create face threats to the addressee and are perceived as impolite.

- (14) *So I think you're attributing a great deal of ignorance to me here without considering that.... [PWP]*  
*I did notice this. You must really think I'm profoundly incompetent not to recognize this. I don't think that this is a particularly problematic issue ... [PWP]*  
*I don't believe for one second that 80,000 votes will be cast in this riding. This is, incidentally, why I wrote... [PWP]*  
*As for the last paragraph of your comment, I don't even know what that means or what you're getting at, so I won't attempt a reply. [PWP]*  
*Unfortunately this last sentence is entirely inaccurate. Now, keeping in mind the... [PWP]*  
*And as to your final point, all I'm saying is that ... It is simply not possible for ... Take a look at my post at., hopefully it's clear why ... [PWP]*

## **Accepting criticism**

The PP maxims of tact, generosity, approbation and modesty participate fully in accepting criticism. Often a promise to render inaccuracies is involved.

- (15) *Obviously I cannot verify if this is true, and I am pretty certain that you would not entirely agree with it...* [TSB]  
*Hi Greg, Thanks for your reply. First off, in your reply, you did make a very important point. Yes, I did forget to take into account the ... I'll be updating this ...* [PWP]

## 8. CONCLUSION

In academic blogging a range of discourse strategies are used to maintain smooth interaction and collaboration. The data show that in presenting agreement and taking an affirmative stance the maxims of the CP and the PP are respected and particular positive politeness strategies are used to resolve potential conflicts and disagreements. In the informal setting of web pages, in AB the typical participant of a scholarly debate chooses expressions that minimally belittle the status of their opponent and explores strategies aimed at avoiding FTAs. The scope of this paper has been limited to the responses to blog articles expressing agreement, support and collegiality. These are aimed mainly at achieving particular social goals and as such show considerable illocutionary force. They seem to efficiently outline a close community of professionals and target the preferred participants of the given blog section. Among the most frequent discourse strategies used in AB belong 1) showing (full, partial or initial) agreement, 2) complimenting, 3) collaborative agreement and 4) teaming up with the author. Trying to resolve disagreements the respondents most frequently try to 1) clarify their stance or use 2) apologizing before counterattacking.

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## THE LIST OF SURVEYED WEB PAGES

- A web page called *Paulitics* run by Paul, an MA graduate in media studies, political theory and international politics from the University in Ottawa, ON, Canada. The blogs and related responses (8 blogs with 62 comments) from the period between 2006 and 2009, the homepage link: <http://paulitics.wordpress.com> the samples taken from this corpus are marked as [PWP]
- A web page called *The University Blog* run by Martin, all used blogs and related responses (5 blogs with 11 with 337 comments) were displayed in June 2012. The homepage link: <http://theuniversityblog.co.uk/>. The samples taken from this corpus are marked as [TUB].
- A web page called *Evolution News and Views*, the blog comments on the article by Richard Dawkins (1 article, 238 comments, Aug 2012) [http://www.evolutionnews.org/2012/06/richard\\_dawkins\\_3060991.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2012/06/richard_dawkins_3060991.html)
- An official web page of *The Richard Dawkins Foundation*, (Dawkins retired from Oxford University in 2008 after 13 years as a professor of public understanding of science) an article in two parts, both parts and related responses (1 blog with 80 comments) displayed in June 2012. The homepage link: <http://richarddawkins.net/> the samples taken from this corpus are marked as [RDF].
- A web page called *The Science Blog*. The blog is added to the corpus because it cross-refers the blog from the above stated web page of *Evolution News and Views* (1 blog with 76 comments). The homepage link: <http://scienceblogs.com/>. The samples taken from this corpus are marked as [TSB]
- The Guardian online* (UK) version, more specifically its higher education network blog section, all blogs and related responses published between January and June 2012 (8 blogs with 62 comments, one article without a response). The homepage link:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/>. The samples taken from this corpus are marked as [TGO]

*The Telegraph online* (UK) version, more specifically its blog section on *Politics*, a blog article by Ed West on Steven Pinker with 409 comments (August 2012) the homepage link: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/> the samples taken from this corpus are marked as [TTO]

*David Crystal blog archive* (18 articles with 203 comments). The homepage link: [http://david-crystal.blogspot.sk/2012\\_01\\_01\\_archive.html](http://david-crystal.blogspot.sk/2012_01_01_archive.html) the samples taken from this corpus are marked as [DCB]

# **STRATAGEMS OF CALQUES (TRANSLATING FROM ENGLISH TO CZECH)**

*Václav Řeřicha*

**ABSTRACT:** Borrowings and calques constitute a specific word-formative process resulting from intercultural and interlingual deficiencies and their analysis may benefit from this perspective. The process is a result of a language lacking the concept itself or a deficiency. The target language qualifies the terminology by loanwords or loan transitions. The denotation of borrowings and calques may remain unchanged, aligned with the source language, it may undergo an intralingual change in the denotation of a particular borrowing or remain unchanged and when there is a successive new meaning they acquire emotional value which may be explained by dimensions of national culture. The complexity of borrowings will be proportional to the growing volume of international communication. This word-formative process belongs both in the domain of translation, which is a special brand of intercultural and interlingual communication, and by its nature to comparative linguistics.

**KEY WORDS:** Calques, borrowings, English, Czech, alignment, change, emotional value, dimensions of national culture

## **1. THE ‘DEFICIENCY’ AND ‘LANGUAGE PATTERN’ APPROACHES**

There are different approaches to calques and borrowings and another one eventually linked to intercultural and interlingual communication is presented here. The classifications of borrowings reflect the assimilation within TL’s phonological, graphematic, morphological and syntactic patterns (Gorlach 2003, 65) or TL’s deficiencies.

The latter, deficiency-based approaches to the classification offer a number of more or less well-defined categories. A comprehensive set of criteria is suggested by Bliss (1966, 19–21) whose classification of foreign words and phrases in current English would not significantly differ from other European TLs, cf.:



1. Expressions for which no tolerable English equivalent happen to exist like *chic*, or *flair*.
2. Expressions which display a markedly felicitous turn of phrase. Most quotations belong in this category.
3. Expressions picked up by British servicemen in foreign countries, service slang which found its way into the general slang. *Bambino*, *kaput*.
4. Expressions couched in a foreign language for reasons of decorum (decent obscurity of a learned language), *genitalia*, *stundenhotel*, *bordello*.
5. Expressions which are in a sense technical, *ombudsman*, *au pair*.
6. Expressions which are strictly technical and belong to the professional vocabulary of some art or science. It is characteristic of such expressions that they have acquired in their language of origin special connotations lacking from their English equivalents *allegro* (cheerful), *staccato*, *détaché*, both meaning detached, have quite distinct meaning as technical terms.
7. Quasi-technical expressions only recently introduced to the language. The foreign status ...seems likely to be only temporary ... they will doubtless be either anglicized or translated, *comédie noire*, *nouvelle vague*, *black comedy*, *new wave*.
8. Expressions which acquire a temporary vogue and rapidly become obsolete, *discothèque*, *boutique*. Expressions referring to women's fashion are particularly unstable: as fashions change, so do the current terms. Expressions referring to foreign institutions or things, *chateau* is not the same thing as the English *castle*, the Russian *dacha* has political connotations not easily rendered into English without periphrasis.
9. Expressions used rather to convey local colour than because there is no English equivalent, the obvious English equivalent is avoided for the sake of local colour. In a book about Germany the word *Rathaus* may be preferable because of a vague suggestion of stepped gables or Gothic pinnacles.

10. Expressions used for purposes of stylistic decoration. To impress the reader with the superior culture and erudition of the user.

A classification based on a deficiency considers calques and borrowings rather from the intercultural perspective, while the primarily linguistic approach, like Gorlach's<sup>1</sup>, will consider the criteria of spelling, pronunciation and morphology and describe the "ease or difficulty with which they can be integrated into the language patterns of the receptor language".

## **2. SUBSEQUENT DENOTATION CHANGES AND SUCCESSIVE "BORROWING"**

Neither the proponents of the deficiency classification nor those who describe the language patterns of calques and borrowings neglect the development of their meaning. Since meaning is determined by inner-linguistic constraints, it cannot be assumed that it will remain the 'same', even in the case of monosemantic items, at best denotation/reference can be held constant.

There seem to be two points of view presented together, the polysemy in the source language can be compared with a single meaning of the borrowed word, cf.: "However, it is normal for the loanwords to be borrowed from one specific context, and with one meaning – a fact especially obvious with items polysemic in the source language. ... Thus, the highly polysemous words *set*, *train*, *fair*, *fan*... retain only a fraction of their senses after borrowing." (Gorlach 2003, 14). This is a patently unhelpful observation as the lexical unit borrowed by the TL is clearly defined as a mono-semantic word in the SL. Gorlach is concerned with a static development of calques and

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<sup>1</sup> The TL's "deficiency" is implied in Manfred Gorlach, *English Words Abroad* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub Co, 2003), 14. by meaning, defining both the one meaning the loanword was borrowed with and the meanings developing after it has been borrowed.

borrowings, i.e. the comparison of the SL and TL denotations, due to his descriptive approach, avoiding their subsequent intralingual changes.

Neither the functional approaches based on communicative needs, i.e. on TL's deficiencies consider a classification of subsequent intralingual changes as their priority. However, Bliss had forecast that the expressions like *discothèque*, *boutique* "which acquire a temporary vogue" (Bliss 1966, 21) would rapidly become obsolete. Although he was proved wrong he has drawn our attention to the changes of the denotations of the word *boutique* in the last sixty years proving that assimilation of a borrowing can have a lexical dimension.

The original borrowing 'boutique' *a small shop selling 'trend-setting' clothes or other articles, esp. for young or fashionable people*<sup>2</sup> has acquired another denotation *a (usually small) business which offers a highly specialized product or service or caters to a sophisticated or exclusive clientele*, hence the collocations *investment boutique*, *health-care boutique*, for a modifier there is the componential meaning of something that is stylish or good looking, cf. *boutique operation*, *boutique winery*, *boutique brewery*.

Bliss referring to women's fashion stresses that as fashions change, so do the current terms and the same foreign expression may be introduced more than once into the language in different senses (Bliss 1966, 21). Similar observation is made by Gorlach who, discussing the development of borrowings, mentions that "the pattern becomes more complex where several meaning were borrowed successively, as is the case with the German words *Box* (4 meanings), *Film* (2), *Set* (2), *Single* (3)" (Gorlach 2003, 14). This is not clearly the case of *boutique* which as a fully assimilated borrowing into English has been acquiring further denotations.

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<sup>2</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "boutique", [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)

## 2. SUCCESSIVE BORROWING AND EMOTIONAL CALQUES COMPONENTS

There are several possibilities of the development of the “original” single denotation of a calque or borrowing in TL.

- a) The denotation remains unchanged, it is not continuously aligned with new denotations in the source language (if there are any), e.g. *fair*.
- b) The denotation changes by being continuously aligned with new denotations in the source language (if there are any), e.g. *minority*.
- c) The denotation changes because new meanings are borrowed successively, e.g. *single*.
- d) There is an intralingual change in the denotation (unrelated to any possible new denotations in the source language), e.g. *boutique*.
- e) The denotation of a fully assimilated calque or borrowing remains unchanged and when a new meaning is borrowed successively it is misunderstood and acquires emotional value, e.g. the Czech *tým/team*.

Czech and other European languages have easily assimilated words like *guru*, *whisky* or *yoga/jóga*, in Czech the words are partly orthographically or fully grammatically assimilated by having declension. A borrowing is assimilated in TL, as any other sign, only after its meaning has been approved through *thesei*, there is an agreement on the meaning of *guru*, *whisky* or *yoga* by all the speakers of the community.<sup>3</sup> The language deficiency a loan-word compensates for

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<sup>3</sup> An example of a lack of *thesei* is now the notorious event on 25.3.2009 when the Czech prime minister Topolánek speaking through an interpreter in the European Parliament accused the USA of funding its spending by selling *bombs*. The misunderstanding had turned out to be the result of a mis-translation, the parliamentary interpreter having heard the Czech word ‘*bomby*’ (*bombs*) when Topolánek in fact said ‘*bondy*’ (bonds). For Topolánek the word *bondy* had a high degree of morphological assimilation when he used it with

is frequently a term as a part of a system imported from a foreign cultural and linguistic environment (*yoga, asana, guru, tai ji*). The complex issue described in the paragraph e) above is closely linked to translation and interpreting within the framework of intercultural communication which will be analyzed in a greater detail.

A representative of a borrowing which remains unchanged while its new meaning is borrowed successively is the word *team*. In the Czech language it is a well-established and completely assimilated word, it has full declension (inanimate masculine) and even its spelling is assimilated, influenced by its pronunciation (*tým*). The word had been frequent already sixty years ago mostly in the context of *sports teams, expert teams* or *police teams* (investigating a particular crime).<sup>4</sup> *Team* was borrowed again after 1990 when a number of Czech companies had been purchased by the companies communicating in English. Eighty percent of them worked through translators (Průcha 2010, 157) and interpreters and the word *team* was frequently used with the translators being unaware that *team* was a model example of successive borrowing and might be described as a *faux ami* of *tým*. The Czech *tým* had not been aligned with its English intralingual denotations (as was the case of e.g. successively borrowed *single*) and had not changed its meaning from 1950 to 1990 when the newly-developed organizational theory had appropriated the word and added its new denotations— and it was the new concept of *team* that was re-borrowed and introduced to the Czech language in 1990.

The culturally specific monosemantic *team* was considered to share the same denotation with the assimilated Czech common noun *tým*. The complexity of the issue started to be evident when *tým* has been contextualized, cf. *team-building, team leadership, team-work, product development team, executive leadership team* (some of the collocations have been borrowed directly, others as calques) and the word *team* has acquired negative connotations. Had the term *team* been

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Czech masculine inanimate genitive plural *-y*, the degree of assimilation was lower for the interpreter who therefore had heard *bomby* (*bombs*). It was Topolánek's assumption that the Czech plural of the loan-word *bondy* was a fully assimilated word.

<sup>4</sup> *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého*, s.v. “tým”, <http://ssjc.ujc.cas.cz/>

treated by the translators as one of the *faux amis* the misunderstanding might have been avoided.

The borrowing *team* as an obstacle in intercultural communication is by no means isolated in Czech, another example from its lexical field is *leadership*. Defined as “the action or influence necessary for the direction or organization of effort in a group undertaking”<sup>5</sup> this concept of *leadership* is difficult to translate because the obvious Czech equivalent of the word *leadership*<sup>6</sup> *vedení* used to have exclusive political connotations which do not collocate with *leadership behaviour*, *leadership school*, *leadership skill* and *leadership styles*.

The concept of *leadership* has been undergoing the same process as the concept of *team*. The assimilated Czech equivalent *vedení* has not acquired the new denotations linked to international business communication or more specifically to organizational theories and when used it has prevailing political connotations, which are stronger than the connotations of organizational theories. These issues have been solved by the contemporary Czech users by abandoning *tým* and the calque *vedení* and replacing them by the direct borrowings *team* and *leadership* in the contexts of international business communication. There is a high degree of morphological and syntactic assimilation and both terms have inanimate masculine declension in formal style (cf. titles of published diploma thesis and university subjects).<sup>7</sup>

Two of popular Hofstede’s dimensions of national culture<sup>8</sup> might be employed to assess the feasibility of this approach: the category of “Power Distance” describes how a society handles inequalities among people. Translators who must be by definition multicultural will readily suggest a list of concepts related to the

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<sup>5</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “leadership”, [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)

<sup>6</sup> The more relevant equivalent *vůdcovství* is historically unacceptable because of its connotation with *Führer*.

<sup>7</sup> This degree of assimilation is not reflected by The Institute of the Czech Language of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic which does not list *team* and *leadership* in its *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého*, <http://ssjc.ujc.cas.cz/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>.

category of Power Distance besides *team* and *leadership* (*level, manager*, the calques for *human resources* and *entrepreneur*).

The other national culture category by Hofstede “Masculinity versus Femininity”<sup>9</sup> should prove useful for translator’s awareness as well. The Masculinity of this dimension is typical for a society that prefers achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success. When the Czech borrowings for this category are analyzed, starting with *assertiveness* (*asertivita*) and ending with the Czech calques and borrowings of *case study*, *career* or *success story* we would find out that all of them have negative connotations in Czech because Czech national culture is still more inclined to “Femininity” with a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life.

Linguistics, translatology and the theory of national and organizational cultures could complement each other. The complexity of borrowings will be proportional to the growing volume of international communication enhancing the intercultural mediator role of translators and interpreters, and their classification should reflect it. The classifications of borrowings, calques and relevant lexical units with new denotations based either on the assimilation within TL’s phonological, graphematic, morphological and syntactic patterns or TL’s deficiencies may be complemented by one benefiting from the theories of national and organizational culture.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html>

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# **THE HARD NEWS REPORT: THE BEGINNING, MIDDLE AND END**

*Zuzana Urbanová*

**ABSTRACT:** The paper is concerned with the generic structure of hard news, notable for a non-chronological presentation of information and the possibility to reorder or remove sections of text without hampering its overall functionality. Consequently, the generic structure of newspaper reports is frequently contrasted with the genre of narration with a beginning, middle and end. Though newspaper reports are generally said to lack the closing phase, some contain a final section that could be seen as providing a sense of closure. The aim of the paper is to offer a tentative observation of the extent to which newspaper reports rely on the closing stage and whether it is possible to identify any tendencies in the kind of closure provided. The analysis is based on a corpus of hard news excerpted from British broadsheet newspapers.

**KEY WORDS:** hard news, narrative, orbital generic structure, nucleus, satellite, ideational and interpersonal wrap-up, appraisal, equilibrium, solidarity, voice

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The function and linguistic features of the hard news report have been given a lot of attention. The present paper examines one of its characteristic properties, namely its generic structure. The generic structure of hard news has been referred to as the inverted pyramid (Bell 1991) or the upside down triangle (Östman 1999). The present paper follows the concept of genre as defined by the Sydney School, drawing on ideas from Systemic Functional Linguistics. More specifically, it draws on the works by Iedema et al. (1994) and White (1998). Though attention will be paid to the generic structure of hard news generally, special focus will be placed on a not fully conventionalised element, the so-called wrap-up, whose function is to provide a sense of closure not unlike the one found in personal stories or narratives (White 1998). The occurrence of wrap-up will be examined with regard to the rhetoric functionality of the hard news structure and the function of the hard news story.

## **2. THE FUNCTION AND GENERIC STRUCTURE OF HARD NEWS**

Before discussing the function of hard news, the function of a personal narrative will be briefly considered. Narratives concern surprising or interesting events which are evaluated in affective terms or some system of moral values and which are explained in terms of cause-effect relations or by providing background information; consequently, stories are not true descriptions but construals couched in a personal perspective (Ochs 1997, 192–193; cf. Burke 1962; Toolan 1988; Labov and Waletzky 1968). The function of the hard news story is said to be an identification of some newsworthy event, in most cases an event perceived as socially destabilizing or disturbing the established social norms (White 1998, 377; White 1997, 104–106). As both the personal narrative and the hard news story identify and thus reinforce the established norms and expectations, in this aspect the hard news story is comparable to other stories or narratives (cf. Bell 1991; Östman 1999, 147–155; Fulton 2005, 218–244; Martin and Rose 2008, 74–82). However, contrary to these, the hard news story is purported to achieve its goal in a manner that seems impersonal and objective. This is, among other factors like reporter's voice, referring to a significant absence of authorial evaluation (see e.g. White 1998), attributable to the generic structure of hard news.

The generic structure of hard news has been described as the inverted pyramid or upside down triangle, according to which information is presented with a decreasing level of importance (Bell 1991, 169; Östman 1999, 92). A similar approach is found in van Dijk (1985, 78–84), who describes the structure of hard news as governed by the principles of recency, relevance, top-down and cyclical presentation of information. The generic structure of hard news introduced by Iedema et al. (1994) and further elaborated on by White (1998) is based on nucleus (headline, lead) – satellite relation, the so-called orbital structure. The nucleus identifies the point of disruption and the satellites specify it in different ways, discussed in greater detail below. According to Iedema et al. (1994, 104, 106), the early identification of the point of significance reflects the process of massification of news and the lack of presumed shared interest and values among large audience; by means of

foregrounding what or who is considered important, the cultural and ideological values are asserted more forcefully.

A significant property of the orbital structure which greatly contributes to its functionality is so-called radical editability, i.e. the possibility to remove or re-order satellites without affecting the textuality of the report. The temporal order of events is dismantled so the text time is not iconic to field time (Martin 1992, 516–523, White 1998, 252–263). Also, the removal of satellites does not result in any substantial loss of content as the socially significant aspects have been already raised in the nucleus (White 1998, 2000). The discontinuous nature of the hard news text results from a seemingly ad hoc order of satellites, fragmented manner of content presentation and a frequent lack of clear resolution or closure (Iedema et al. 1994, 109–137). Apart from enhancing the rhetoric functionality of the orbital structure, the lack of closure could be explained by the lack of resolution in the extra-linguistic reality (Iedema et al. 1994, 105). The fragmented and cyclical nature of the hard news text makes an impression of a piecemeal collection of bits of information clustering around the nucleus; equally importantly, the absence of formal links between individual satellites and frequent shifts in topic offer less space for analytical and in-depth treatment (Iedema et al. 1994, 187). These aspects lie at the heart of the much discussed notion of objectivity of the news story (e.g. White 2000).

The process of massification and the need to address a heterogeneous audience is related to the notion of solidarity (White 1998). This concept is fundamental to the understanding of the functionality of hard news and the absence of closure since it relates to the degree of empathy with divergent social positions and openness to negotiation and interaction (White 1998, 47). White (1998, 376–413) examines solidarity in connection with the system of appraisal, especially the monogloss versus heterogloss dichotomy, but stresses that the need to accommodate different positions also manifests itself in the generic structure of hard news because the fragmented presentation of information and the lack of closure give space to different interpretations. Closure is understood as a moment in the story when the social order is restored or agreement is reached on one interpretation and when other conclusions are discarded (Iedema et al. 1994, 91, Schlesinger 1983, 32). Closure by definition narrows down possible

interpretation and by promoting one point of view it shows lower degree of solidarity.

As explained, the genre of hard news is recognizable by its typical nucleus-satellite structure, characterized by a lack of closure or resolution. Often, the element that seems a suitable candidate for closure is placed non-finally, which makes the report “finish in mid-air” (Bell 1991, 153–4). However, as noted by Iedema et al. (1994) and later White (1998), some news reports deviate from the strictly orbital structuring and provide a sense of closure, roughly analogous to resolution (Labov and Waletzky 1976) or reinstatement of equilibrium (Todorov 1977). These hard news stories do not finish in mid-air but are concluded by a closure of an ideational or interpersonal kind: the former provides a natural end point of the activity sequence, whereas the latter evaluates the event or interprets it within a broader social context (White 1998, 295–296). Though wrap-up provides a sense of closure, it simultaneously functions as a satellite, meaning it still connects back to the nucleus. As opposed to the nucleus, the wrap-up is not so highly conventionalized and may be missing entirely. The content with a closure-providing potential is often placed earlier in the text as one of the non-final satellites and thus fails to round off the text (White 1998, 298–300). Or, due to its newsworthiness, it is foregrounded and placed in the nucleus (Bell 1991, 153–154, Fulton 2005, 236).

The presence of wrap-up impinges on the rhetorical potential of the orbital structure since by providing closure the interpretation ceases to be negotiable, other points of view are closed off and the impression of objectivity is threatened. Thus, the nucleus is no longer the only focus of interpersonal and ideational meaning since comparable concentration of socially significant information is provided in the final section of the report (White 1998, 298). The aim of the paper is to examine the occurrence of wrap-up, i.e. a segment that promotes a preferred reading, in the generic structure that is purported to strive for unbiased, objective treatment and dialogic solidarity with divergent interpretations. The paper tries to ascertain the frequency of wrap-up, the kind of closure provided and the kind of satellites participating in providing closure. As will be shown in the following section, the reports with wrap-up outnumber those without it only slightly and there are noticeable differences between the occurrence of wrap-up in the individual newspapers; nevertheless, given the difference the presence of wrap-up

makes to the rhetorical functionality of the orbital structure, the wrap-up is a phenomenon that deserves attention.

### 3. THE DATA

The corpus consists of 175 hard news reports excerpted from *The Daily Telegraph* (75), *The Guardian* (40), *The Independent* (40) and *The Times* (45) in July and October 2010 and December 2011. Other kinds of media content were excluded. Considering the corpus as a whole, the hard news reports with wrap-up outnumber those without it by 6%. However, in the individual newspapers with the exception of *The Daily Telegraph*, the proportion of hard news with and without wrap-up is reversed in favour of the latter. Out of the total, 93 (53% of 175) stories were rounded off by wrap-up: 40 (53.3% of 75) were found in *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 (42.5% of 40) in *The Guardian*, 19 (47.5% of 40) in *The Independent* and 17 (37.8% of 45) in *The Times*.

Final satellites were classified as wrap-ups if they rounded off a report by narrowing down its interpretation by means of evaluation (interpersonal wrap-up); or, if they specified events that had restored the equilibrium or might possibly lead to its restoration (ideational wrap-up). Though these closures are not identical, they both contextualize an event socially or culturally as they state what an event is like or how it could or should be satisfactorily resolved. Moreover, the function of wrap-up was also associated with a noticeable change in the point of view or angle on the story, for example by bringing in a voice of the ordinary citizen, which sets the final satellite apart from the preceding text. Admittedly, the categories are a bit fuzzy round the edges and may also overlap. Given the low degree of conventionalization, the present paper must be seen as a tentative probe into the issue and the categories open to negotiation and in need of further, more fine-grained delimitation.

### 4. THE WRAP-UP

This section aims to define and exemplify the individual satellite types and the kind of closure they provide. As the satellite types are defined in

terms of their relation to the nucleus, lead and/or headline(s) will be always provided with the satellite/wrap-up. The key words in each satellite are underlined. Since Appraisal is the most frequent kind of wrap-up (38.7%, see Table 1 below), it will be dealt with first. Appraisal is a typical example of interpersonal wrap-up, it evaluates the nucleus in affective, ethical or aesthetical terms (White 1998, 278).

(1) **Lead**

COUNCILS, police and other public bodies are demanding access to private telephone and email records at a rate of one a minute.

.....

**Appraisal**

Eric Pickles, the Communities and Local Government Secretary, said: "Privacy and liberty have been undermined by the abuse of snooping powers by town halls.

"The new Government will protect the rights of law-abiding citizens from Labour's surveillance state, and change the law to end this abuse of state powers by clipboard-wielding bureaucrats."

(*The Daily Telegraph*, July 28, 2010)

In (1), the Lead identifies the source of disruption as institutions demanding private information about British citizens. The Appraisal draws on the system of moral or ethical values and evaluates the event negatively as *abusive undermining of privacy and liberty*; it reinforces its disconcerting nature and acts alongside the nucleus as a second peak of interpersonal prominence. The second paragraph of the Appraisal satellite offers a promise of solution, namely that of *protecting the rights of citizens and changing the law to end the abuse*. Thus even though both paragraphs contain evaluative items, there seems to be a switch in the kind of closure signalled in the first and the second paragraph: whereas the first section provides an interpersonal kind of conclusion, the second is more ideationally determined as it specifies future actions that could potentially rectify the situation and lead to the reinstatement of equilibrium. Rhetorically, the whole structure is reminiscent of a Problem-Solution pattern (e.g. Hoey 2001). Note that the Appraisal is not authorial but brings in the voice of authority in the form of direct speech so superficially the journalist merely reports what others said, and the report retains an impression of objective and impersonal

treatment. Though, consequently, the opinion must be understood as pertaining to one individual and being one of many, it nevertheless closes off the news report by condemning the event in the nucleus as something that is not desirable and has to be eradicated.

(2) **Headline**

Wikileaks disclosures put agents' lives at risk, says US

...

**Appraisal**

Despite anger in Washington at the size of the leak, there is relief that it did not contain more revealing and detailed information.

(*The Daily Telegraph*, July 28, 2010)

Example (2) also evaluates the problem raised in the Headline but not against the system of moral values but in affective terms (*anger, relief*). Though there is a reference to the feeling of anger, the wrap-up seems to round off the report in a comparatively optimistic way by suggesting that the situation could have been worse (*a relief that it did not contain more detailed information*). Again, the affect is not attributed to the author of the report but to an external source.

The second most frequent satellite type in the function of wrap-up is Contextualization (22.6%). Contextualization places elements of the nucleus in a temporal, spatial or social context, states preceding or following events or provides comparison (White 1998, 278).

(3) **Headline**

Gangster death threats force police families to flee French town

...

**Contextualization**

BAC officers were replaced by police from Lyons and Marseilles. An investigation has been opened to trace the source of the threats.

(*The Daily Telegraph*, July 28, 2010)

The Headline draws attention to the issue of death threats by gangsters targeting some members of French police, who, together with their families, are forced to leave the town. The Contextualization satellite specifies the events which followed, more particularly the replacement of the missing officers and opening an investigation. As in the second paragraph of (1), these events attempt to solve the situation

and restore the equilibrium, and so (together with the nucleus) specify what behaviour is considered (un)acceptable and (un)desirable. Example (2), also an instance of Contextualization, is different since the background information coats the reported issue in a more personal perspective.

(4) **Headline**

Mother finds babysitter daughter stabbed to death

...

**Contextualization**

Doreen Fostery 76, who described herself as Ms Wynter's adopted grandmother, said: "She was a lovely girl. She had a bubbly personality and was never in a bad mood."

*(The Times, December 29, 2011)*

The Headline points to a murder of a young girl, a severe transgression of moral norms. In this case the report is not concluded by means of evaluation or partial/hypothetical restoration of equilibrium (e.g. investigation in (3) above and punishment of the person responsible in (6) below). Rather the comments by a close person about the victim's character traits set a more personalized or individualized angle on the story. This kind of closure drives attention from the graveness of the situation to a personal background about the news protagonist, an approach associated typically with soft news, focusing on celebrities or human angle, heart-warming stories portraying an event through the eyes of an unknown individual affected by it (Rudin and Ibbotson 2002, 57, Dunn 2005, 141, Fulton 2005, 238).

A strategy similar to the one in example 4 can be observed in (5), an instance of Elaboration. Elaboration, making up 7.5% of wrap-ups, repeats what is stated in the nucleus or supplies more details and exemplification (White 1998, 278). The Headlines in (5) focus on the changes in the NHS which will help Alzheimer's patients gain access to drugs with positive effects on their condition.

(5) **Headline**

Alzheimer's patients to get access to key drugs via NHS

**Headline**

Effects help to 'lift the fog' and delay onset of disease

...



### **Elaboration**

Chris Hill, a retired geography teacher in March, Cambridgeshire, said his 60-year-old wife Angela, an ex-primary school teacher, had experienced a significant improvement in her mental faculties for months after taking Aricept. “Nice’s decision will delay the advance of the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease. Aricept doesn’t prolong life but it masks the symptoms, so that more of the person’s personality is retained. They are more of the person that they were for longer, and for a relative or a carer - a wife, husband, son or daughter – that’s massive, because Alzheimer’s pulls on your heartstrings, because you witness the decline of your loved one,” said Hill, whose wife’s condition is now so severe that she has been in a care home since the summer.

*(The Guardian, October 7, 2010)*

The positive effects presented in the Headline (*lifting the fog and delaying the onset of the disease*) are repeated and explained in greater detail in the final wrap-up Elaboration (*significant improvement in mental faculties, delaying the advance of symptoms, masking the symptoms* etc.). The non-final Elaboration satellites also expound on the positive effects but mostly by reference to persons of authority, such as doctors and experts in the field. The final Elaboration relies on the voice of an ordinary person without any expertise, who shares direct experience with the illness as a carer and a close relative of an Alzheimer’s patient. Likewise in (4), there is a noticeable switch in the perspective on the situation; this is facilitated by the employment of direct speech as well as the level of personal detail with which the two protagonists are portrayed (*a retired geography teacher, 60-year-old wife Angela* etc.).

Another satellite in the function of wrap-up is Consequence (3.2%). Consequence describes reasons for, consequences or purpose of elements in the headline/lead (White 1998, 278). The Headline in (6) refers to a criminal offence and the Consequence satellite specifies a direct result of the action, namely a court trial and final sentence.

#### **(6) Headline**

White South African students humiliated black staff

...

### **Consequence**

The four are due to be sentenced today.

*(The Daily Telegraph, July 28, 2010)*

Though the Consequence cannot reverse the situation, the end point is based on the social expectation that a crime is followed by a just punishment and thus helps maintain these norms and provides at least partially the desired restoration of the status quo.<sup>1</sup>

Like Consequence, Counter-Justification ranks among the satellites with a marginal occurrence in the wrap-up function (3.2%). Counter-Justification is a kind of textual relation in that it challenges or undermines the assertions in the nucleus (White 2000, 385). The aberrant situation depicted in the Lead is that seriously ill patients will have to undergo medical tests and interviews in order to prove they are too ill to work and hence eligible for social benefits.

### **(7) Lead**

Thousands of seriously ill cancer patients will be forced to take medical tests and face “back to work” interviews, despite assurances from ministers that they would not make it harder for the sick to get welfare, charities have warned.

...

### **Counter-Justification**

The government said that patients would be allowed to prove they were too ill to work with “documentation”, and would not always be asked to undergo a complete assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> As suggested by Jaromír Haupt (personal communication, September 25, 2012), the satellite in example 3 classified as Contextualization could be alternatively interpreted as Consequence. Indeterminacy between temporal and causal meanings has been also noted e.g. for conjunctions (Quirk et al. 1985, 1105). In example 6, the relation of Consequence is socially, culturally or morally determined; postulating a more direct cause-effect relation in example 6 and a less direct temporal relation in Contextualization in example 3 might suggest that the sequence of crime and ensuing punishment of those directly responsible for it may be more deeply entrenched in the value system than the sequence of crime and subsequent attempts at rectification by those not responsible.

A DWP spokesman said: “Our proposals would ensure a person would only be asked to attend a face-to-face assessment where absolutely necessary.”  
(*The Guardian*, December 7, 2011)

In the Counter-Justification satellite the government spokesman tries to deny the accusations made in the Lead by maintaining that such procedures will be avoided and applied only if necessary. Thus, effectively, the satellite denies the existence of the problem raised in the nucleus. Admittedly, it is questionable to what degree the denial of the threat may have the potential to round off a report analogously to ideational wrap-ups specifying events which could rectify the situation. Nevertheless, it could be viewed as not entirely dissimilar to the Appraisal satellite in (2) in that both seem to close the report with a ‘things-are-not-so-bad-after-all’ kind of comment. Still, whether a Counter-Justification satellite can provide closure is connected to a more general question of wrap-up types and the degree of conventionalization in the first place. The following paragraphs examine segments that, though providing closure, are nevertheless not linked so tightly to the nucleus and were thus classified as wrap-ups only.

Examples (8) and (9) were excerpted from two different items of crime news; the Headline in the former identifies the crime committed and the headline in the latter refers to selected circumstances of the trial. The segments classed as Wrap-ups indicate that a closure has not been achieved in the extra-linguistic reality and hence cannot be stated in the report. Such segments are difficult to classify in terms of their relation to the nucleus since they do not appraise, elaborate or contextualize it in the same sense as other satellites do. Rather than trying to forcibly apply the existing set of relations, these segments were left unclassified with regard to their relation to the nucleus but since they provide closure, they have been marked for their Wrap-up function.

(8)     **Headline**

Body armour boss ‘looted £126m from firm’

...

**Wrap-up**

The trial continues.

(*The Daily Telegraph*, July 28, 2010)

- (9) **Headline**  
Emotions must not affect verdict, Lawrence jurors told

...

**Wrap-up**  
The case continues.

(*The Independent*, December 29, 2011)

Such Wrap-ups can be viewed as ‘dummy’ wrap-ups standing instead of wrap-ups ‘proper’. Also, they may signal that the story is a kind of “continuing news” (Tuchman 1978, 56–58) and updated stories are to follow. Though it is impossible to make any strong claims due to their low occurrence (5.4%), the wording seems to a considerable extent formulaic and stereotyped. Also, though the potential of some satellites to provide closure is not always availed of and they are placed earlier in the text, these Wrap-ups are always located finally either in a separate paragraph or attached to a different satellite. The latter were not included in the analysis since they are ancillary to the function of the satellite they are attached to; nevertheless they provide supporting evidence concerning the wording and position of these phrases. A possible explanation of the presence of such dummy wrap-ups, their expected idiomacity and exclusive final position lies in the kind of news they appear in. They are largely limited to crime or investigation news reporting on a court trial or inquiry, the procedure of which is highly institutionalized and readers’ expectations as to the kind of outcome, i.e. the verdict, may be much higher.

Table 1 below summarizes the results of the analysis. In the corpus of 175 news reports, there are 1382 satellites which enter into a relation with the nucleus (except dummy Wrap-ups) and 93 of them work simultaneously as wrap-ups. The left-hand column lists all major nucleus-satellite relations, such as Elaboration, Contextualization, Appraisal etc. The category of miscellaneous satellites includes relations which are rare in the function of wrap-up as well as in the whole corpus and have not been discussed above.

Table 1: Wrap-up

<b>93(53%)/175</b>	<b>Wrap-Up</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Elaboration</b>	7/7.5%	588
<b>Contextualization</b>	21/22.6%	370
<b>Appraisal</b>	36/38.7%	148
<b>Consequence</b>	3/3.2%	84
<b>Counter-Justification</b>	3/3.2%	33
<b>(dummy) Wrap-Up</b>	5/5.4%	5
<b>Ambiguity</b>	10/10.8%	68
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	8/8.6%	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>93/100%</b>	<b>1382</b>

The total frequency of occurrence of each of the relations is specified in the right-hand column. Elaboration is the most common kind of specification (588), followed by Contextualization (370), Appraisal (148), Miscellaneous (86), Consequence (84), ambiguous satellites (68), Counter-Justification (33) and Wrap-up (5), a category not defined in terms of any nucleus-satellite relation. The middle column shows how many satellites of the total serve as wrap-ups and the percentage quantifies the distribution of a particular satellite type in the function of wrap-up. As follows from the data, there is no direct relation between the overall frequency of a satellite type and its occurrence in the wrap-up function: Elaboration rates high in its total occurrence but relatively low in the function of wrap-up (7.5%); Contextualization rates relatively high in both occurrences (22.6% in the function of wrap-up) and Appraisal is the most frequent wrap-up (38.7%) but only the third most frequent satellite. The category of ambiguities represents 10.8%. Segments whose relation to the nucleus was ambiguous have not been dealt with in the present paper, suffice it to say that all those in the function of wrap-up involve the relation of Appraisal and many indeterminacies were found between Appraisal and Contextualization, underscoring the tendency identified in the set of unambiguous cases. The category of dummy Wrap-up, i.e. wrap-ups without a specified relation to the nucleus, counts 5.4%; the categories of Consequence (3.2%) and Counter-Justification (3.2%) belong to the least frequent

ones. The data indicate that some satellite types seem better suited to signal closure than others.

Finally, a note must be made on wrap-ups consisting of satellites which present opposing points of view. (10) shows two adjacent Appraisal satellites expressing divergent views of the problem mentioned in the Lead.

(10) **Lead**

Plane passengers could face a £1 levy on tickets to pay for a scheme to get holidaymakers home when an airline collapses.

...

**Appraisal 1**

The moves were welcomed by passenger groups.

A spokesman for the Air Transport Users Council said: "We believe there is a need for a universal scheme which would include protection for when a scheduled airline went bust. A levy would be the most practical way of doing this."

xxx

**Appraisal 2**

British Airways said it would resist such a levy. "We are a well established airline and it would be unfair if our customers had to fund compensation for those who choose to travel on less established airlines," a spokesman said.

*(The Daily Telegraph, July 28, 2010)*

The Lead introduces a possibility of plane passengers having to pay more for their tickets. In the first evaluative satellite, Appraisal 1, the voice of the Air Transport Users Council expresses agreement (*welcomed, most practical way*), whereas the voice of British Airways in Appraisal 2 expresses disagreement (*resist, unfair*). As in (1), the opinions are presented in the form of direct speech and thus limited to the subjectivity of the respective sources of attribution. Though both Appraisals measure the event against some set of values and thus narrow down its interpretation, placing two opposing views alongside each other diminishes the conclusiveness of the wrap-up. In other words, instead of offering one interpretation and discarding others the concessive sequence provides two different views, presumably in response to the need to accommodate heteroglossically different ideological positions. Out of the total of 93 satellites in the wrap-up

function, 10 concessive sequences were found comprising 21 satellites: 13 Appraisals, 3 Consequences, 1 ambiguous satellite, 1 Contextualization, 1 Counter-Justification, 1 Elaboration and 1 satellite from the miscellaneous category.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Compared to the headline or lead, the wrap-up is not an indispensable part of the generic structure of hard news. Its occurrence in individual newspapers ranges from 37.8% in *The Times* to 53.3% in *The Daily Telegraph*. Looking at the overall frequency of satellite types as well as their proportion in the wrap-up function, some satellites show greater propensity to provide closure than others. Appraisal (38.7%) and Contextualization (22.6%) are the most frequent wrap-ups whereas Consequence (3.2%), Counter-Justification (3.2%) and the relations in the miscellaneous category (8.6%) the least frequent ones. As the kind of specification provided by a satellite is necessarily relational and dependent on the kind of information provided by the nucleus, the distinction in terms of satellite type becomes to a degree relativised and what seems of importance is also the kind of closure provided.

Appraisal satellites (1–2) typically provide an interpersonal kind of closure. However, precisely because of the relational nature of satellites mentioned above, there need not be a one-to-one correspondence between the kind of closure and satellite type. For example, Consequence (6), Contextualization (3) and the dummy Wrap-up (8–9) provide the ideational kind of Wrap-up, specifying events which may lead to the restoration of equilibrium or expressly stating the lack of resolution. Similarly, Elaboration (5) and Contextualization (4) may provide a soft, personalized kind of closure. Still, even though patterns can be found across satellite types, with satellites occurring less frequently in the function of wrap-up it is harder to find patterns and similarities within the satellite category (Elaboration or Counter-Justification), which also leaves doubt as to whether these satellite types can provide closure or fit analogously the pattern established by more frequent satellite types. Such a line of reasoning necessarily leads back to the issue of low or not yet complete conventionalization of the category of wrap-up. Alternatively, the fact that a similar rhetorical

effect is both achievable and achieved by different satellite types may be interpreted as a reflection of their wrap-up function at the expense of the nucleus-satellite relation.

Though not (yet fully) conventionalised, the wrap-up substantially changes the rhetorical functionality of the orbital structure and “pose[s] clear problems for approaches which propose that news items are organized simply in terms of descending levels of ‘importance’” (White 1998, 298). Alongside the peak of interpersonal meaning concentrated in the nucleus, the wrap-up represents another surge of interpersonal values, reinforcing the social significance of the elements introduced in the nucleus. By providing closure, the wrap-up reduces the degree of openness to negotiation and solidarity with diverse reading positions, and promotes single interpretation. This, however, may not completely apply to wrap-ups containing satellites juxtaposed in a concessive sequence (10); though they provide closure, they simultaneously draw attention to different interpretations and thus mitigate the restricting effect of wrap-up. Given that changes in social practice are manifested in and strengthened by changes in genre (Fairclough 1992, 126), there arises the question whether the results can be indicative of a possible ongoing change in the functionality of the orbital structure, the function of hard news and the social practice itself. Other issues not covered in the paper but following from the topics raised are, for example, the relation between the presence of wrap-up and the kind of event reported; or, given that even ideational wrap-ups are ultimately based on social norms and expectations, the distinction between ideational and interpersonal wrap-up may require further examination.

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## II. LITERATURE

## CHANGES IN THE PORTRAYAL OF VAMPIRES – FROM AN OUTCAST TO PRINCE CHARMING AND A CITIZEN

*Diana Adamová*

**ABSTRACT:** The image of a vampire used to be very simple, a cruel creature with terrible features condemned to live at night and feed on the blood of innocent people. That abomination was not supposed to walk freely among people or live during the day and be loved. However, it was just a matter of time before the ugly vampire would change into a daytime creature and especially into a form of Prince Charming. What Bram Stoker (1847–1912) started in his *Dracula* (1897) was developed by his followers and most of all by film makers. They have helped to create a new picture of a vampire living among people, enduring the daylight and feeding on animals. The present paper provides an overview of the development of the portrayal of a vampire from the night creature into a being who loves humans.

**KEY WORDS:** vampires, immortality, sexuality, integration

Vampires belong among fantastic creatures that were created by people to explain any unknown phenomena. The supernatural elements embodied in a fictional person with various characteristics and powers appear in almost every culture under a variety of names. Vampires are usually depicted as hideous, evil, blood-sucking creatures that are actually dead but through blood of their victims they are able to exist for an indefinite time period, leaving their coffins only at night to hunt humans. This paper analyses the development of the character of a vampire in literature and film, concentrating especially on the creation and destruction of a vampire, his appearance, powers and abilities as well as sexual orientation.

The creation of a new vampire involves sucking the victim dry of all blood as was depicted by Bram Stoker in his novel *Dracula*, when the count is feeding on his victim Lucy until her death; after her burial she transforms into a vampire.

There lay Lucy, seemingly just as we had seen her the night before her funeral. She was, if possible, more radiantly

beautiful than ever; and I could not believe that she was dead. The lips were red, nay redder than before; and on the cheeks was a delicate bloom. . . . She was bitten by the vampire when she was in a trance, sleepwalking / and in trance could he best come to take more blood. In trance she died, and in trance she is Un-Dead, too.<sup>1</sup>

The process became more complicated in the novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) by Ann Rice (b. 1941) where she started to differentiate between the human victims and new born vampires.

‘Be still. I am going to drain you now to the very threshold of death,’ . . . I remember that the movement of his lips raised the hair all over my body, sent a shock of sensation through my body that was not unlike the pleasure of passion ... I felt his teeth withdraw with such a keenness that the two puncture wounds seemed enormous, lined with pain. And now he bent over my helpless head and, taking his right hand off me, bit his own wrist. . . . I drank, sucking the blood out of the holes.<sup>2</sup>

It gives her vampire characters certain freedom in the choice of their companions, because during the act of blood exchange a very strong bond is created between the vampire as a maker and their progenies. Blood as a vital fluid began to serve as a medicine for it can be seen to heal humans, give them strength and intensify their emotions during sexual intercourse. Reflecting on modern issues, vampire blood can be addictive like any other drug as introduced in *Southern Vampire Mysteries* (*True Blood*, 2001–2012) by Charlaine Harris (b. 1961), where it is illegal to deal in vampire blood.<sup>3</sup>

Other theories about the creation of a vampire belong more in the realms of the science-fiction genre. The theory of a vampire virus has been very popular, depriving vampires of the possibility of a free choice. In *The Twilight Saga* (2008) by Stephenie Meyer (b. 1973), a new vampire is created by a mere bite which transfers the virus into the

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<sup>1</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London: Penguin, 1994), 240–241.

<sup>2</sup> Anne Rice, *Interview with the Vampire* (London: Sphere, 2009), 22–23.

<sup>3</sup> See *True Blood – Series 1–4*, DVD, directed by Allan Ball (Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2008–2011).

victim's bloodstream causing their death and following transformation into a vampire. Richard Matheson in his novel *I Am Legend* (1954) shows the effects of such a virus that would spread globally. This type of infection creates vampire zombies without emotions, thoughts or other desires than feeding. Still, they represent an important part in vampire evolution.<sup>4</sup> That theory is also slightly hinted at in *True Blood* when the story is spread among the humans that it is not a vampires' fault they became vampires but they are the victims of a virus: "The politically correct theory, the one the vamps themselves publicly backed, had it that this guy was the victim of a virus that left him apparently dead for a couple of days and thereafter allergic to sunlight, silver, and garlic."<sup>5</sup>

Concerning the appearance of a vampire, it differs in various fiction stories and films. Count Dracula is described as a skinny, very pale man with pointed ears and long fingernails, features that are generally connected with vampires in literature as well as in films, e.g., Nosferatu in the film *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979). There is no direct sign exposing the human and the demon part of Dracula, however, he can become younger with enough supply of fresh blood. Also no major change appears in *Interview with the Vampire* and *True Blood*. In books, there is usually no reason for the creation of different human and vampire looks. In the television or film adaptations to make the difference more obvious and spectacular, the script includes the change of a seemingly human character into a vampire involving certain facial modification like e.g., in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003)<sup>6</sup> or *The Vampire Diaries* (1991–1992) by L. J. Smith. Because of the assumption of vampires being demons and children of evil, the portrayal of their evil side has to be also physical, even if it includes only fangs demonstration. The initial reason of that portrayal may have been to prevent people from sinning, which lost its message within centuries, and modern vampire stories include it more for visual effects.

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<sup>4</sup> See Richard Matheson, *I am Legend* (New York: Tor, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Charlaine Harris, *Dead Until Dark* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2001), 3.

<sup>6</sup> See *Buffy the Vampire Slayer – Series 1 – 7*, DVD, directed by Joss Whedon (Los Angeles, CA: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 2000–2005).

An important fact to note is also the age of vampires with regard to their physical appearance. With the revival of the vampire genre, authors tend to introduce teenagers to make their stories more attractive for a younger audience. The trend was started by L. J. Smith (b. 1965) and revived by Meyer, both setting their stories among High school students. There the young vampires are often turned at the age of seventeen, the age that is probably the most attractive for a young audience; the characters are not children anymore but not adults yet either. For the generation that watched and grew up with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the *True Blood* series appeared. It includes adult people, a copious amount of blood and sex to attract a more mature audience who would not be interested in *The Twilight Saga* or *The Vampire Diaries*.

Vampire appearance is closely connected with so called ‘shape shifting’, an ability embedded in vampires since the beginning of the vampire myth creation. Dracula is able to change into a mist, a bat or a wolf quite freely. Shape shifting is a very difficult change and can be performed by the elderly and powerful vampires who feed on human blood. While omitted in the *Interview with the Vampire*, it was revived later in *The Vampire Diaries* when Damon, one of the vampire brothers, is able to change into a crow.

She caught sight of something dark in the branches of the old quince tree in front of the house. It was a crow, sitting as still as the yellow-tinged leaves around it. And it was the thing watching her. She tried to tell herself that this was ridiculous, but somehow she *knew*. It was the biggest crow she had ever seen, plump and sleek, with rainbows shining in its black feathers. She could see every detail of it clearly: the greedy dark claws, the sharp beak, the single glittering black eye. It was so motionless that it might have been a wax model of a bird sitting there. But as she stared at it, Elena felt herself flush slowly, heat coming in waves up her throat and cheeks. Because it was . . . looking at her. Looking the way boys looked at her when she wore a bathing suit or a sheer blouse. As if it were undressing her with its eyes.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> L. J. Smith, *The Vampire Diaries: The Awakening* (New York: HarperTeen, 1991), 6. Original emphasis.

In other stories, the intentional omission of vampires' shape shifting by the authors can serve them to move the vampires closer to humans (readers), and to provide a place for introduction of other characters with shape shifting abilities like werewolves.<sup>8</sup>

If shape shifting is not a common ability for vampires in modern stories, night vision, sensitive hearing and a high speed appear in every vampire story. These are abilities usually connected with wild animals, predators which chase their prey as vampires are supposed to do. Inhuman speed is shown mainly in the modern stories of *True Blood* and *The Vampire Diaries*, where it also helps vampires to run away from their enemies. It is not emphasized in *Dracula* as it would not be suitable for the count, an aristocrat, to run like a common man. Dracula is also known for his ability to influence a human's mind and free will which is called 'to glamour', an ability which is very often depicted in the novels. In *The Vampire Diaries* they explain it by the power of the mind: "We can also . . . feel minds. We can sense their presence, and sometimes the nature of their thoughts. We can cast confusion about weaker minds, either to overwhelm them or to bend them to our will."<sup>9</sup>

This power is a kind of hypnosis influencing human memories, feelings and will in a way that after being compelled by a vampire, they follow his/her orders. It plays an essential role concerning victims who survive so that they cannot reveal the vampire to the public.<sup>10</sup> Speed, strength, supernatural vision and hearing belong among these powers, which are very attractive. Dreaming about unbelievable possibilities and supernatural features, people create their superheroes or archenemies. Nevertheless, vampires have been seen as a symbol of all evil. Concerning the latest development; the authors of vampires stories tend to depict them as heroes.

The closer the vampires are to humans, the more interesting it is for people to become a vampire. It is not only because of the superpowers but most of all due to **their** immortality, the most attractive vampire feature. The human body gets older every day and it is doomed

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<sup>8</sup> See Rick Sutherland et al., ed., *The Everything Vampire Book* (Avon: Adams Media, 2009), 95–97, 99–101.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, *The Vampire Diaries: The Awakening*, 104.

<sup>10</sup> See Sutherland, *The Everything Vampire Book*, 94–95, 83–84.



to die of age or disease, something people try to postpone as far as possible and invent various ways to preserve the body. Even though the possibility of becoming a vampire is solely fantastic and imaginary, it may be one of the factors why vampire stories have been so popular. Yet, there is no creature that would be really immortal, vampires are no exception. There are various ways to destroy a vampire invented either in folklore or by writers. Vampires are mainly afraid of silver, crosses, holy water and sunlight, and can be destroyed by the wooden stake into a heart, decapitation and burning up the body. The cross, holy water and silver are used to weaken a vampire in order to catch and destroy them.<sup>11</sup>

The stake remained as the most effective weapon against vampires with the exception of *The Twilight Saga*: “‘How can you kill a vampire?’ He glanced at me with unreadable eyes and his voice was suddenly harsh. ‘The only way to be sure is to tear him to shreds and then burn the pieces.’”<sup>12</sup> It is not common that a vampire body would vanish after being staked, however, in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* the vampire body turns into dust, and in *True Blood* it bursts into bloody mass. Thus there is no need to cut off the vampire’s head and burn the body, which can be helped also by sunlight.

The sunlight can serve as a symbol for God and good, which goes back to the theory of vampires being the creatures of evil. The necessary development then had to be towards vampires walking in the daylight, like Dracula is able to walk when he becomes younger but still it is not a very common feature of vampires. *True Blood* vampires are unable to walk freely in the daylight, however, later in the series with the introduction of other supernatural characters the so called fairies appear, whose blood allows vampires to survive the daylight for a limited period of time. L. J. Smith in *The Vampire Diaries* moved even further when she introduced special rings made of silver or gold and lapis lazuli stone and enhanced by a witch curse. Worn by vampires, the rings allow them free movement in the daylight, thus creating the first

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<sup>11</sup> See Sutherland, *The Everything Vampire Book*, 112–116.

<sup>12</sup> Stephenie Meyer, *Twilight* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008), 398.

day walking vampires: “Without such a talisman, we die in sunlight as if in a fire.”<sup>13</sup>

The greatest development happened in *The Twilight Saga* where the vampires do not show fangs nor change their facial appearance but neither are afraid of crosses, holy water or the light as they are the closest to humans. They are day walking creatures and almost unrecognizable from humans apart from the fact that their skin glitters in the sunlight so they have to live somewhere without permanent direct sunshine. This concept violates all the myths and rules that were ever applied to the vampires. Meyer introduces vampires integrated into human society that attend school, have jobs, look and behave like any other person except for drinking blood. However, the protagonists of *The Twilight Saga* do not feed on humans but only on animals and call themselves vegetarians.

“I can’t be sure, of course, but I’d compare it to living on tofu and soy milk; we call ourselves vegetarians, our little inside joke. It doesn’t completely satiate the hunter – or rather thirst. But it keeps us strong enough to resist. Most of the time.”<sup>14</sup>

Louis, the vampire narrator in *Interview with the Vampire*, was also dependent on animal blood for some time, but he does not call himself a vegetarian. This novel is better known for introducing homoerotic features of male vampires. Lestat, the male vampire antagonist, has chosen Louis as a companion, connected to him by the blood exchange ritual. Later on Lestat transforms a small girl into a vampire so those three create a family. Homosexual features in vampire stories, however, are not a novelty; the most famous is the novella *Carmilla* (1872) by Sheridan La Fanu (1814–1873) featuring a lesbian vampire, inspired by Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Cristabel* (1800).

There is no homosexual vampire in the modern teenage vampire stories, even though some hints appear in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* but they are part of a parallel universe, and human homosexuals appear very rarely with the exception of two girls practicing witchcraft, who fall in

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<sup>13</sup> Smith, *The Vampire Diaries: The Awakening*, 97.

<sup>14</sup> Meyer, *Twilight*, 188.

love with each other.<sup>15</sup> One homosexual appears also in *The Vampire Diaries* but again he is human. A very different situation is in *True Blood* as it is a series for adults. There are less human than vampire homosexuals because they are not considered as a minority within vampire society. With vampires thousands of years old, their sexual orientation changed during hundreds of years, however, the majority of the new born vampires change their sexual orientation after their transformation. That feature is reserved for the TV adaptation of *True Blood* as in the books there is not so much space for the development of the characters. The script writer probably decided to create an even greater difference between the people of the American South and free-minded vampires, who stick together more as a group than humans, thus ridiculing some of the Southern values.

Nevertheless, *True Blood* introduced a new generation of vampires, those wanting to integrate into human society. Obviously not all of them want to be integrated; only those searching for equal rights and opportunities, usually the younger generation embracing their human part of personality. The eldest vampires only pretend to agree with integration but do not consider humans to be equal; they see them only as a prey. For those who actually want to be a part of human society, the Japanese invented an artificial serum “True Blood”, available in all blood types, and sending a message to humans that vampires are not dangerous for them anymore. The vampire society is divided similarly to the human society with their leaders, laws to follow and speakers for vampire rights. Still they keep aristocratic leaders having the queens and kings, together with the authority that supervises how vampires keep the laws and rules and sheriffs ruling over smaller districts like the human ones.<sup>16</sup>

The main government of the vampires is called The Authority with a magistrate to check the law enforcement and carry out trials and punishments if necessary. Each state has a king or queen as a head, e.g., the oldest vampire Russell Edgington is the vampire king of Mississippi. He is 3,000 years old and the most powerful vampire in existence and probably the strangest, he is not willing to see humans as equal and

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<sup>15</sup> See *Buffy the Vampire Slayer – Series 1 – 7*.

<sup>16</sup> Alain Silver and James Ursini, *The Vampire Film: from Nosferatu to True Blood* (Milwaukee: Limelight Editions, 2011), 314–319.

constantly fights for more power among vampire society. *True Blood* takes place in Louisiana where the head is the queen Sophie-Anne Leclerq, who is 500 years old and has several humans as slaves, companions and food. She likes humans but does not consider them much equal with the exception of her human lover Hadley Hale.<sup>17</sup>

The states are divided into areas governed by sheriffs. Area 5 of Louisiana is supervised by the vampire sheriff Eric Northman, formerly a Viking, existing for more than 1,000 years, who is also an owner of a famous vampire bar Fangtasia.<sup>18</sup> The spokesperson and prominent vampire rights activist is Nan Flanagan of the age 816. Speaking on behalf of the American Vampire League (AVL), she is a figure of authority among vampires with the power to execute fire and appoint sheriffs and monarchs. She is concerned with the representation of vampires in American media.<sup>19</sup> That stratification of the vampire society brings it closer to the human society, and thus the differences between both concerning civil rights, treatment of minorities, keeping traditions and following laws are more obvious.

Vampires used to be described as nocturnal creatures usually blamed for various disasters and anything people were unable to explain. The character of a vampire has undergone a great change from an outcast like Dracula to a citizen, requiring equal rights as any other minority in the society as shown in the *True Blood* series. The authors are reflecting their own wishes and desires as well as those of their audience. Lately, vampires are depicted as young, successful and sexy immortals into whom the audience can project their fantasies, with stories taking place usually at the high schools, e.g., in *Twilight* and *The Vampire Diaries*. The newest trend is to entertain not only teenagers but adults as well, creating various kinds of vampire stories. As the authors are trying to forward the vampire mythology, they change not only the appearance of vampires but powers and abilities as well to be more attractive for the audience. Thus the new generation of vampires may become a minority that actually does not differ from the human population at first sight, because they will follow the human way of

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<sup>17</sup> See Charlaine Harris, *Club Dead* (London: Gollancz, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> See Charlaine Harris, *Living Dead in Dallas* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Silver and Ursini, *The Vampire Film*, 314–318.

living including day walking. That is the case mostly of the vampires in *Twilight* where they do not need any special propriety to walk in the daylight, apart from *The Vampire Diaries* where they wear magical rings. However, it can lead towards the complete destruction of the original vampire myth if they become what humans are. And that would deprive the people of a mysterious dream world full of supernatural beings to where they can escape from everyday life. Moreover, it would also lessen the importance of such classics as *Dracula* or *Interview with the Vampire*. However, the *True Blood* series has been gaining more and more popularity, and it is one of the stories that still keep at least the basics of the original vampire mythology, including aversion to sunlight and silver. The trend might therefore be reversing back to a more traditional and mythical creature.

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# NATURE THE MONSTER OR DID ATWOOD GET IT ALL WRONG: REPRESENTATION OF NATURE IN ALISTAIR MACLEOD'S SHORT STORIES

*Vladimíra Fonfárová*

**ABSTRACT:** In 1970s, Margaret Atwood published a monograph *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), in which she identified essential themes that appear in English-written Canadian fiction and depicted survival as a unifying symbol for Canadian culture. Survival, according to Atwood, is often bound to the portrayal of harsh Canadian nature in all its destructive force where a man's most daring hope is to survive. However, even though Atwood generalized and claimed that the defined themes appear in majority of Canadian fiction, there are authors whose portrayal of nature may be interpreted differently. This paper focuses on selected short stories by Alistair MacLeod, whose life and writing is bound with the region of Nova Scotia and who frequently depicts a canine character, representing the bond between man and nature. The aim of this paper is to analyse this bond and declare whether MacLeod's representation of nature corresponds with Atwood's negative perception.

**KEY WORDS:** Alistair MacLeod, Margaret Atwood, nature the monster, survival, dog, island, representation of nature

## 1. ATWOOD SCRUTINIZED

According to Canadian author Margaret Atwood, "every country or culture has a single unifying and informing symbol at its core."<sup>1</sup> While for America it may be the frontier and for England possibly the island, the central symbol for Canada is undoubtedly survival.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the frontier with its sense of adventure and excitement, and the sense of security that the island can offer,<sup>3</sup> survival is all about staying alive. "Our stories are likely to be tales not of those who made it but of those who made it back from the awful experience – the North, the

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: McClelland&Stewart, 2004), 40.

<sup>2</sup> See Atwood, *Survival*, 41.

<sup>3</sup> See Atwood, *Survival*, 42.

snowstorm, the sinking ship – that killed everyone else.”<sup>4</sup> This is how Atwood, in her monograph *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), introduces what she considers to be a unifying symbol for Canadian culture that presents itself dominantly in Canadian literature. Although the author had no aspiration for the monograph to become an “overnight publishing sensation,”<sup>5</sup> and originally was designed to be one of “a line of user-friendly self-help guides,”<sup>6</sup> it eventually, despite harsh criticism, became a frequently quoted source for many scholars or teachers who studied or taught Canadian literature.

The reasons for criticism were not entirely uncalled for, as Atwood did commit the crime of “sweeping generalization”<sup>7</sup> when she defined several of the basic themes that, in her opinion and according to her research, frequently occur in Canadian writing. The theme that is most tightly bound with the unifying cultural symbol of survival was a negative representation of Canadian nature as a monster that is “dead and unanswering or actively hostile to man;”<sup>8</sup> an entity that presents obstacles and finds resourceful ways to kill. As Atwood claims, when it comes to Canadian writers and their view of nature, “the key word is ‘distrusted;’ they as a whole do not trust nature, they are always suspecting some dirty trick.”<sup>9</sup> Generalization it may be, but the claim is not quite unfounded, as Atwood supported her argument with substantial examples from Canadian fiction. Especially when considering earlier Canadian works, such an image of nature seems legitimate.

Still, there are few actions more dangerous in the literary field than generalization of such magnitude, and Atwood’s theory of nature the monster soon became the target of criticism not only from literary critics but also from other writers. John Pass, a Canadian poet from British Columbia and his wife, fiction writer Theresa Kishkan, expressed open displeasure when talking about Atwood’s concept of monstrous Canadian nature, claiming that her representation differs

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<sup>4</sup> Atwood, *Survival*, 42.

<sup>5</sup> Atwood, *Survival*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Atwood, *Survival*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Atwood, *Survival*, 40.

<sup>8</sup> Atwood, *Survival*, 59.

<sup>9</sup> Atwood, *Survival*, 59.

from representation of authors outside Ontario, even outside Toronto.<sup>10</sup> They claimed that not only do the authors in British Columbia not portray nature as a bloodthirsty monster, they even give it the tribute of being a source of sustenance.<sup>11</sup>

Similar criticism was offered by Paul Stuewe in his monograph *Clearing the Ground: English-Canadian literature after Survival* (1984), in which he openly dismissed thematic criticism as such because “one of the pitfalls of the thematic approach is that it is tempting to treat a theme, once identified, as an existing general concept rather than as a hypothetical idea requiring much further examination of data before it can be provisionally accepted.”<sup>12</sup> The possible conclusion then is that Atwood’s concept cannot be applied to Canadian fiction in general.

## 2. ALISTAIR MACLEOD

Taking into consideration both the criticism that points out the danger of generalization, and Atwood’s examples from Canadian fiction that actually support her argument, there are two ways in which Atwood’s concept of negative representation of nature might not be applicable – the regional and temporal difference of depiction. This paper makes a case study of Alistair MacLeod, an author whose writing is bound by different region than Atwood’s but who is her contemporary; who represents the same generation of authors but whose work emanates from his lifelong inspiration in the region of Nova Scotia and its rich ancestral tradition.

In his short stories, Alistair MacLeod often employs a canine character that assumes various functions in the narrative, but very often the role is connected with the bond between man and nature. The aim of this paper is to analyze this bond in two selected short stories, “The Winter Dog” (1981) and “The Island” (1988) and determine whether MacLeod’s representation of nature corresponds with Atwood’s negative perception, and, should it differ to any extent, identify what is

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<sup>10</sup> See John Pass, e-mail message to author, March 20, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Theresa Kishkan, e-mail message to author, March 20, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Stuewe, *Clearing the Ground: English-Canadian literature after Survival* (Toronto: Proper Tales Press, 1984), 17.



the key to his representation.

“Winter Dog” is a frame narrative in which the male narrator shares a distant memory of his childhood when his family used to own a golden collie that on one occasion saved his life. The boy and his family live in an unidentified place near the sea, however, the description makes it clear that the locale is somewhere up north. The narrator’s memory revolves around an incident when he, as a twelve-year-old, and the golden dog rode a sleigh on a frozen sea, but out of curiosity ventured too far. Because the boy ignored nature’s warnings he almost got himself killed. The dog saved him and helped him return home safely, almost at the cost of its own life.

Nature is a crucial element in the lives of the area’s inhabitants. Described as harsh and cold, it is “a dramatically beautiful setting...and hostile to much human endeavour.”<sup>13</sup> The description of the environment includes stories of how the sea used to spit out “the bodies of men swept overboard and reported lost at sea, and the bodies of men still crouched within the shelter of their boats’ broken bows.”<sup>14</sup> However, despite the element of potential hostility, the narrator does not view it that way. He accentuates the necessity of following certain rules of behavior that will help one survive – not to walk or ride on frozen sea when the wind is off the land (as it blows the ice pack back out to sea), not to walk on it when the tide is falling or always to announce where one is going so one could be found, if anything goes awry<sup>15</sup> – which transfers the responsibility for any misfortune from nature to man. The message here is that as long as the rules are kept, nothing bad will happen to human inhabitants of the area. However harsh the nature seems, people that live in it do manage to find the extraordinary and beautiful in it. The narrator emphasizes fascination and the connection of the inhabitants with the sea – saying that “our land had always been beside the sea and we had always gone toward it to find newness and the extraordinary” (WD, 258).

When describing the potentially deadly ice pack on frozen sea,

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<sup>13</sup> John McGahern, Foreword to *Island: Collected Stories*, by Alistair MacLeod (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001), viii.

<sup>14</sup> Alistair MacLeod, “Winter Dog” in *Island: Collected Stories* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001), 258. Hereafter cited in text as WD.

<sup>15</sup> See MacLeod, “Winter Dog,” 263.

the narrator speaks of it poetically in a way that resonates with fascination – “It drifted down [. . .] bringing its own mysterious coldness and stretching for hundreds of miles in craters and pans, sometimes in grotesque shapes and sometimes in dazzling architectural forms. It was blue and white and sometimes grey and at other times a dazzling emerald green” (WD, 258). The boy feels not only dazzled, but also drawn to the sea – which is the reason he decides to go there to explore the ice. It is the element of mysteriousness that draws him to it, and it is this particular element that makes the nature so beautiful, but also unpredictable and dangerous.

The sea is described as the source of things that inhabitants find useful – furniture and valuable timber from shipwrecks<sup>16</sup> – which creates a paradoxical relationship between the nature and the people; the sea kills someone and the inhabitants profit from it, ergo even the potential deadliness of the environment has a positive side that helps to ensure a satisfied life in it, in symbiosis with nature.

It is not only people who inhabit this mysteriously beautiful world of nature, but “animals too have their own place within this proud and fragile interdependence and are part of a fierce and unsentimental tribal affection.”<sup>17</sup> Characters in MacLeod’s stories are marked by “deepness of caring that binds...man to animal and humanity to kin and landscape.”<sup>18</sup> There is therefore a noticeable bond between people and their animals, notably dogs, and the natural environment.

In “Winter Dog,” the bond between the golden collie and the boy forms a central motif and is symptomatic of the relationship between nature and its inhabitants. Just as nature is no warm and sunny place, the dogs, in the environment of the arctic north, are no cuddly creatures. Just as nature can be dangerous, so can be the dogs. On the afternoon that the narrator recollects, the collie went through the ice and the boy was holding him by the collar. He describes in great detail that particular moment when he was aware of the dog’s razor-sharp claws, flailing violently before his face and he knew that he might lose his

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<sup>16</sup> See MacLeod, “Winter Dog,” 258.

<sup>17</sup> McGahern, Foreword, viii.

<sup>18</sup> Jane Urquhart, “The Vision of Alistair MacLeod” in *Alistair MacLeod: Essays on His Works*, ed. Irene Guilford (Toronto: Guernica, 2001), 40.

eyes.<sup>19</sup> Just as nature might inadvertently hurt people, the dog might hurt the boy, not because it is hostile and bloodthirsty, but because the boy broke the rules of safe behavior. In this way, the relationship between the boy and dog functions as a metaphor for the relationship between man and nature.

The metaphoric function is not the only one that can be ascribed to the dog. It can be also seen as a mediator between nature and man; the one that communicates with both and mediates the communication between them. Thanks to the dog's strength, it is able to "pull the sleigh easily and willingly on almost any kind of surface" (WD, 256) – it can help the man with transport in the wilderness – and when the boy is in serious trouble, the dog helps him find the way back home to safety. Orientation in the nature, even during bad weather, presents no problem for the dog and it willingly shows the way to people should they become lost. When the weather begins to deteriorate while the boy and the dog are still far on the ice, the dog signals that something is wrong – it "was uneasy [...] and began to whine a bit, which was something he did not often do" (WD, 260). It is this very moment when the boy realizes that it has started snowing and that he should be getting back. The signal of the dog comes in the same moment when the nature might become dangerous for the boy. The dog is the one who understands nature and can read its signs and tries to alert the boy to them. The only reason the boy is in danger of dying is that he decided to ignore those signs; and he admits his mistake, claiming that when it was too late, he realized all the obvious things he should have considered earlier.<sup>20</sup> Therefore the narrator emphasizes that whatever happened to him was his own fault, due to his decision to ignore the warnings of nature and, more importantly, the warnings the dog gave him – nervousness, whining and trying to make the boy notice the worsening weather.

Considering these facts, the final representation of nature is not as negative as it may seem at first sight. Even though the boy comes close to becoming a victim of the harsh environment, it is not because of active hostility of nature towards man but because of his failure to understand the environment. The dog, the mediator, tries to enable the communication between man and nature; he functions as the channel.

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<sup>19</sup> See MacLeod, "Winter Dog," 261.

<sup>20</sup> See MacLeod, "Winter Dog," 263.

The second story this paper utilizes, "Island," was written seven years after the "Winter Dog" and it shows how MacLeod's notion of the man-nature relationship developed over the years and to where it has shifted. The plot revolves around the central character, Agnes, a lightkeeper in a lighthouse on a deserted island. She comes from two generations of lightkeepers, continuing in the tradition that her grandparents started and her parents established. When very young, she meets a fisherman, who comes to the island during the fishing season and who wants to marry her and take her elsewhere to live. Their plans are abruptly changed when the fisherman dies, prompting Agnes to remain on the island for the rest of her life.

Similarly to "Winter Dog," "Island" offers a harsh, barren, unidentified setting. The island is the place where, "before the establishment of the light there had been a number of wrecks which might or might not have been avoided had there been a light."<sup>21</sup> Moreover, it is a place where "survivors had landed [. . .] only to die from exposure and starvation because no one knew that they were there" (IS 375). When introducing the environment of the island, a great deal of attention is given to the fact that Agnes is thought to be the only person ever born on the island, even though "there had been a number of deaths" (IS, 373). The image of a hostile, bleak setting is presented before the reader's eyes; the introductory portrayal of the island, which represents nature in the story, seems to be of a place where the occasional flicker of life is as accidental and lonesome as the flashes emanating from the lighthouse, the only landmark there.

Being a place of death or not, the people inhabiting the island are oblivious to the fact and they are fiercely loyal to their environment. Their loyalty stems not only from a steadfast love for their home but also from the identification of the new Canadian environment with their place of origin – Europe. The family inhabiting island is frequently asked about hard conditions and isolation but the answer is that "they were already used to it, coming as they did from a people in the far north of Scotland who had for generations been used to the sea and the wind and sleet and rocky outcrops at the edge of their part of Europe" (IS, 375). This parallel between Canadian and European environments is

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<sup>21</sup> Alistair MacLeod, "Island" in *Island: Collected Stories* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001), 375. Hereafter cited in text as IS.

of major importance, because the image of the hostile wasteland here does not represent hostile Canadian nature but the very same nature that can be found in Europe. Therefore the description that would seem fitting to Atwood's theory of nature the monster loses all its relevance, as the nature being described is no longer uniquely Canadian but has its mirror images elsewhere; and what is more – such nature can be found on the British Isles, a unifying cultural symbol of which should be the island with all the security it can offer.<sup>22</sup> If Canadian nature offers only bad conditions and the threat of death, so does the Scottish one.

Moreover, apart from being potentially deadly, the Canadian nature is also rich in resources and can be extremely generous to people who inhabit it. That is the reason why plenty of fishermen come to the island as there is a plentitude of lobsters<sup>23</sup> and so many mackerel that the water seems to be boiling with them.<sup>24</sup> There is no notion whatsoever that the inhabitants ever suffered from hunger or cold.

MacLeod seems to be pushing the loyalty and love of people for their environment even a step further – he intertwines not only their lives with the nature they inhabit, but also their identities, the very core of their existence – “with the passage of years, the family's name as well as their identity became entwined with that of the island [...] although the island had an official name...it became known generally as MacPhedran's Island while they themselves became known less as MacPhedrins than as people of the island” (IS, 376). Agnes, born on the island, is “defensive, like most of her family, on the subject of the island” (IS, 381), which shows her bond with the place.

One could argue that Agnes planned to leave the island to be with the fisherman but that plan was never fulfilled due to his untimely death. However, Agnes's love for her fiancé and her loyalty to the environment are two different things that are not in opposition. The death of Agnes's husband-to-be takes place outside Canada, in the forests of Maine, so Canadian nature cannot be held responsible for his demise.

Considering the above analysis, the relationship between man and nature in “Island” is based on respect, loyalty and symbiosis. This is also reflected in the role of dogs in the story, which is radically different

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<sup>22</sup> See Atwood, *Survival*, 42.

<sup>23</sup> See MacLeod, “Island,” 377.

<sup>24</sup> See MacLeod, “Island,” 400.

from the role they played in “Winter Dog”.

Dogs in “Island” are omnipresent. The moment readers meet Agnes, they meet the dogs, the silent and ubiquitous companions, lying beneath the table [. . .] following her with their eyes but making no other movement.<sup>25</sup> The way dogs enter the scene resonates with seriousness, calmness and mysteriousness. When it comes to their role concerning the relationship between man and nature, they no longer serve as mediators between the two, as the mediator there is no longer needed. The misunderstanding between man and nature, noticeable in “Winter Dog,” is no longer visible in “Island.” The rules of behavior are not ignored or forgotten, the nature is part of the inhabitants as the inhabitants are part of the nature. Consequently, the role of the dog is distanced from the connection with nature and acquires different attributes.

In “Island” the dogs still mediate, but rather than between man and nature they mediate interpersonal relationships. When Agnes commences her affair with the fisherman, the dog is always present. The fisherman is the only person the dogs do not fuss about and who can quiet them and cause them to be still by just talking to them.<sup>26</sup> It is the dog who lures Agnes out of her bed and leads her to her lover, when she follows its clacking nails as it moves down the hallway.<sup>27</sup> Dogs are also there when, some years after fisherman’s death, Agnes copulates with random fishermen, while the dogs are lying above the water line, panting and watching everything.<sup>28</sup> Dogs seem to be inseparable from humans, they are their counterparts, never absent when humans are present. They are part of the symbiosis between man and nature, forming an equal trinity.

While in “Winter Dog,” the humans were still rather distant from nature and their relationship was based on respect and rule following, for “Island,” Jane Urquhart’s claim is suitable – that MacLeod’s characters are “intimate . . . with the rough beauty of their geography.”<sup>29</sup> The relationship between man and nature in this story is

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<sup>25</sup> See MacLeod, “Island,” 370.

<sup>26</sup> See MacLeod, “Island,” 378.

<sup>27</sup> See MacLeod, “Island,” 383.

<sup>28</sup> See MacLeod, “Island,” 402.

<sup>29</sup> Urquhart, “The Vision of Alistair MacLeod,” 37.

symbiotic, their identities intertwined. People comprehend their environment, the misunderstanding has shifted to understanding. The boy in “Winter Dog” perceives nature as formidable, beautiful, alluring and fascinating, and when he forgets about it being also dangerous, he is reminded of the fact. However, he is learning how to respect the nature and how to understand it – via the mediator in the form of a dog that serves as a connection. In the later story, “Island,” the relationship between man and the nature is openly positive. The identities of man and nature have become one and in such circumstances the mediator is no longer needed. Still, the presence of dogs is pervasive, and importantly so, their role is still that of mediators, but of a different type. They no longer mediate between man and nature, but rather between people themselves. Whenever the main character appears, the dogs are constantly present, which implies a certain identification with humans. Therefore it is possible to say that they serve as people’s counterparts.

Looking back to hypotheses defined, there are authors who resist Atwood’s classification and whose works are infused with the positive presence of nature. Even though many times the works of these authors can be interpreted as stories of various ways of survival, thus supporting Atwood’s theory of survival being the unifying cultural symbol for Canada, their representation of nature is more complex than the simplifying nature as the monster. Even though the supposed monstrosity at times lurks behind, authors like Alistair MacLeod emphasize the need to understand it in order to live safely in it.

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## INNOCENTS ON THE ISLAND: A ROUSSEAUISTIC READING OF *LORD OF THE FLIES*

*Radek Glabazňa*

**ABSTRACT:** There are not many critical or theoretical platforms left from which to contest the widely-accepted notion that when it comes to classic texts of the English canon, there is nothing to add to the existing body of criticism which would illuminate these texts in a new way. The present study argues that this might, in fact, still be possible, and that a productive reading of a classic text, in this case William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, might be achieved by reading it through another canonical piece of writing, namely Jean-Jacques Rousseau's essay called "A Discourse on Inequality". This reading strategy seeks to enable a refreshing interpretation of Golding's novel as well as to stress its continuing relevance for contemporary cultural debates.

**KEY WORDS:** nature, civilization, redemption, barbarism, rationality

Rousseau's classic essay "A Discourse on Inequality" has attracted unwavering critical attention since its publication in 1754 and has had an enormous impact on debates in politics, sociology, education, art and culture. It has been read with both resentment and praise, and its continuing importance has recently been confirmed by a ferocious critical discussion about the legacy of the Enlightenment. To use "Discourse on Inequality" as a magnifying glass to reveal something new about William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies*, a book written exactly two centuries later, is as bold an idea as to claim that Golding's novel can in return shed new light on Rousseau's text. Nevertheless, an unbiased critical interaction of these two pieces of writing can indeed result in a new, exciting constellation, revealing aspects of both texts that have so far gone unheeded. Such an endeavor will require turning the blind eye on certain features of both texts, e. g. Rousseau's treatment of the feminine or Golding's allusions to R. M. Ballantyne's *Coral Island: The Tale of the Pacific Ocean* (1858), and foregrounding of those aspects that better suit this attempt at trans-historical communication between a political essay with a formative impact on modern man and an existentialistic fictional study of human nature.

Looking for the presence of Rousseau in *Lord of the Flies* brings with itself a contradiction inherent in the fictionality of the novel. Rousseau's essay can surely be read as a comment on socio-economic reality, but its use as a philosophical tool for the study of fiction can be problematic. However, John S. Whitley, in his book *Golding: Lord of the Flies*, reads the novel as a voice opposing the Romantic notion of natural goodness of man, thus countering Rousseau's philosophy: "Reacting against the Romantic notion that man is basically noble if freed from the fetters of society, Golding insists that evil is inherent in man; a terrifying force which he must recognize and control."<sup>1</sup> This statement could tempt us to read Rousseau *against* Golding in very simplistic terms of the infamous battle between good and evil. But Whitley himself is aware of other nuances, arising both from Rousseau's firm belief in nature's ability to mould a human being into a noble savage, and Golding's contempt for such a thought:

In terms of these two opposing areas of possibility, the escape from civilization or the triumph of civilization, Golding's boys have the worst of both worlds. When they first land on the island they strike the reader as very much boys from a civilized society, but they do not seem to have learnt from civilization. They cannot exploit nature, only wreck it. On the other hand, nature cannot 'teach' them anything, in the Rousseauistic or Wordsworthian traditions. . . . The child's dream of freedom from the restrictions of adult society mirrors the civilized adult's dream of freedom from the burdens of civilized society. In both cases the dream becomes nightmare. There is no idyll. Individualism leads to regression and brotherhood is impossible.<sup>2</sup>

The reader of *Lord of the Flies* is indeed struck by the hopelessness and glumness of the children's situation. Instead of creating joyful utopia amidst virginal natural beauty, freed from the straitjacket of civilization with its public-school discipline, the boys unconsciously set off on a

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<sup>1</sup> John S. Whitley, *Golding: Lord of the Flies* (London: Edward Arnold, 1970), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Whitley, *Golding*, 17.

perilous journey of self-discovery that gradually brings to light the darkness of the human heart, child or adult.

Commenting on the much-discussed ending of the novel where “Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy,”<sup>3</sup> Whitley raises to our attention the crucial question of innocence and its definition:

Were the children ever innocent? They are never seen as remotely like the innocents of Rousseau or Wordsworth. Golding the schoolmaster has, from the beginning, seen them far too realistically to invoke that myth. In terms of the fable Ralph weeps in realizing his ‘fallen nature’, the reason why he and all men perversely destroy themselves. Innocence is only ignorance.<sup>4</sup>

To stay fair to Rousseau, the equation between innocence and ignorance was not an alien idea to him. He implicitly makes this equation in “Discourse on Inequality” when he praises the alleged practice of flattening the foreheads of infants on the shores of Orinoco, a ritual apparently designed to preserve their infantile innocence and imbecility for life.<sup>5</sup> If we were to seriously consider the implications of Whitley’s words from the quotation above, we should logically conclude that there is no dispute between Rousseau and Golding in their understanding of innocence as ignorance. The crucial difference between the two lies in their definition of what exactly humans should (or should not) stay ignorant of. For Rousseau, who believed that man was essentially good and nature provided everything one needs for life-long happiness, it was civilization with its fraudulent notions of rationality, law, property, and the lot, that has lead the whole human species astray. Golding is much more suspicious of the goodness of human heart and in a memorable scene from *Lord of The Flies* makes his character Simon “inarticulate in his effort to express mankind’s essential illness” (*LOF*, 97). Hence, for

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<sup>3</sup> William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 223. Hereafter cited in text as *LOF*.

<sup>4</sup> Whitley, *Golding*, 54.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), 88-89.

Golding, mankind is not essentially good, as Rousseau would have it, but essentially ill.

But do the two writers really stand in such a clear-cut opposition, or are matters more complex than it would seem at first sight? Perhaps Rousseau never thought of human nature as essentially good and knew all too well how slippery terms like “essence” or “good” could be. Instead, in a polemic with the rather pessimistic Hobbes, he writes:

One could say that savages are not wicked precisely because they do not know what it is to be good; for it is neither the development of intelligence nor the restraints of the laws, but the calm of the passions and the ignorance of vice which prevents them from doing evil. . . . I believe I need fear no contradiction in attributing to man the one natural virtue that the most extreme detractors of human virtue was forced to recognize. I speak of compassion, . . . so natural a virtue that even beasts sometimes show perceptible signs of it.<sup>6</sup>

Hence, Rousseau does not enshroud goodness in pompous words, nor does he celebrate it as a heavenly virtue, but speaks of it as a plain natural instinct. As for Golding, he does not have so much confidence in the arms of Nature, but the intuitive knowledge of the “essential human illness” that Simon tries to communicate in *Lord of the Flies* is also much more complicated than it would first appear.

Let us now have a closer look at the intriguing, ever-elusive character of Simon, who, though Golding textually kills him before we get the chance to find out more about him, emerges as the character who could potentially reconcile not only all antagonistic forces on the island, but also the two opposing voices in our present discussion. Indeed, Simon seems to be the only member of the party who is able to face and subsequently harmonize all aspects of life on the island, and in turn, accept all colours of the human psyche. He can balance the rational with the emotional, the systematic with the intuitive, and the light with the dark. He wisely embraces his own fear, his own “heart of darkness”, his own “Beast” in a hallucinatory scene where he encounters a pig’s head

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<sup>6</sup> Rousseau, *Discourse*, 99.

on a stick – Jack and the other hunters’ sacrificial gift to the much feared beast on the island – and realizes that this symbol of evil, this Beelzebub, this Lord of the Flies, is actually part of himself, something to be neither repudiated nor worshipped, but simply accepted as an element of humanity:

‘There isn’t anyone to help you. Only me. And I’m the Beast.’

Simon’s mouth laboured, brought forth audible words.

‘Pig’s head on a stick.’

‘Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!’ said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all the other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. ‘You knew, didn’t you? I’m part of you?’ (*LOF*, 158)

This uncanny conversation ends with Simon’s epileptic fit from which he recovers as an accomplished human being who has embraced wisdom far beyond the other boys’ imagination. When he frees the rotting parachutist from the grasp of the rocks, his life is almost complete and his violent death under the tearing, punching and scratching hands of the little hunters maddened by darkness and fear does not come as a surprise. By now he has developed into a Christ-like figure, whose personal sacrifice bears in itself seeds of salvation. Simon’s final moments of corporal existence are presented in a beautifully lyrical language with strong mystical overtones that further confirm Simon’s function as the “Christ of the novel”:

Somewhere over the darkened curve of the world the sun and moon were pulling; and the film of water on the earth planet was held, bulging slightly on one side while the solid core turned. The great wave of the tide moved further along the island and the water lifted. Softly, surrounded by a fringe of inquisitive bright creatures, itself a silver shape beneath the steadfast constellations, Simon’s dead body moved out towards the open sea (*LOF*, 170).

Critics Mark Kinkead-Weckes and Ian Gregor point to the same qualities of Simon’s character and call them “comprehensive”. In their

view, Simon's acute sensitivity allows him to reconcile all that may seem irreconcilable in the human soul and the outside world.<sup>7</sup> Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub, authors of *The Art of William Golding*, go even further in their highlighting of the importance of Simon and attribute to him the role of the savior, portraying him as a signifier of sacrifice: "The real savior in *Lord of the Flies* is not the naval officer, but Simon – and his voice goes unheeded, as once again the crucifixion takes place, this time without redemption or resurrection."<sup>8</sup>

We could perhaps argue that Simon is at least textually redeemed by the lyrical beauty of the already quoted scene in which his battered body is gently washed out into the sea, but this kind of aestheticism would seem to add nothing to our discussion apart from rendering the novel much less pessimistic. On the other hand, it could remind us that *Lord of the Flies* is, after all, only a fictional narrative, in which case the aesthetic redemption Simon attains through Golding's writing hand actually equals full redemption. But the obvious and self-aware fictionality of certain sections of the novel should not blind us to some very telling mimetic moments. When Simon frees the lines of the parachute from the rocks and "the figure from the wind's indignity" (*LOF*, 162), he gets entangled with the book's most disquieting, ironic message: that the world of adults, engaged in a bloody war, of which the parachutist is a nagging reminder, is far more barbaric than the situation on the island. Adult world or civilization, invoked by Piggy's absurd sigh: "Grown-ups know things. They ain't afraid of the dark. They'd meet and have tea and discuss" (*LOF*, 103), lies in ruins and the unleashed cruelty of the boys is but a microscopic reflection of the global apocalypse. There is nothing left that the boys could project their hopes of rescue on. Simon knows this, but accepts the fact with dignity. Kinkead-Weckes and Gregor say the following about Simon's newly acquired wisdom:

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<sup>7</sup> Mark Kinkead-Weckes and Ian Gregor, *William Golding: A Critical Study* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 30.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub, *The Art of William Golding* (London: Indiana University, 1968), 40.

The parachutist shows man's inhumanity to man, the record of what human beings have done to one another throughout human history. The children are revealing the same nature as the grown-ups, only perhaps more startlingly because of their age and their special situation. The child world is only a microcosm of the adult world.<sup>9</sup>

The ironic effect reaches its climax on the last two pages of the novel when the puzzled naval officer looks around on the scorched island, the painted faces of the boys and Ralph's near-collapse distress: "I should have thought that a pack of British boys – you're all British, aren't you? – would have been able to put up a better show than that" (*LOF*, 222). But behind him is a trim cruiser and in his hand a revolver.

In any case, how is this lengthy analysis of the function of the character of Simon in *Lord of the Flies* pertinent to our consideration of Rousseau's "Discourse on Inequality" as a lens through which to read Golding's novel? The point of the analysis has been to show that Simon is probably the only character in the novel who really lets nature teach him. His conversation with the pig's head or his communion with the island's fauna and flora speak of his natural sensitivity that can suspend rational thinking when appropriate and take it up again at will. Even his epileptic fit after which he awakes on the grass, seems to have had a purifying effect, as his body suddenly feels one with the surrounding scenery. Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes:

If nature destined us to be healthy, I would almost venture to assert that the state of reflection is a state contrary to nature, and that the man who meditates is a depraved animal. When we think of the good constitution of savages . . . and reflect that they have almost no disorders except wounds and old age, we are almost prompted to believe that we could write the history of human illness by following the history of civilized societies.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike Piggy who, with his strong glasses, asthma and overweight, would represent the worst of civilized society to the Spartan Jean-

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<sup>9</sup> Kinkead-Weckes and Gregor, *Golding*, 38.

<sup>10</sup> Rousseau, *Discourse*, 85.

Jacques, Simon is indeed well-built and even his epilepsy is presented as a strength rather than weakness. Piggy's "scientific" rationalizations of the hell that unfolds on the island would also be anathema to Rousseau. Simon, on the other hand, seldom distances his rational self from the world around and grasps reality with the whole of his body, with his senses and head alike. Yet it would be wrong to claim that Simon is a purely Rousseauistic character. Whereas Rousseau believed that human "faculty of self-improvement", and the closely associated faculty of rational reflection, were to blame for the irretrievable loss of man's innocence and happiness, Simon's actions show that rational thinking cannot be discarded altogether. For example, he uses his common sense to unravel the mystery of the Beast and soon realizes that it is but a dead parachutist on the hill. If, as Oldsey and Weintraub state, the novel demonstrates "how tenuous is the hold of intelligence, reason, and humaneness as a brake upon man's regression into barbarism,"<sup>11</sup> it is mainly Simon (and, to a lesser degree, Ralph) who can hold the brake and avoid the fall into barbarism. Still, his use of reason is much more intuitive and suffused with "natural" sensitivity than the "scientific" reasoning of Piggy. This is a very important distinction, not only in the context of the novel, but also in the development of the Enlightenment thought and all contemporary discussions about it. For our purposes it will suffice to know that Rousseau himself did not make this distinction in his "Discourse on Inequality", but blamed reason or intelligence squarely for "dragging man out of that original condition in which he would pass peaceful and innocent days."<sup>12</sup> Golding distinguishes between the two quite clearly – by contrasting the intuitive intelligence of Simon with its cold, scientific counterpart represented by Piggy – and even though both characters die violent deaths, Simon's final moments are treated with dignity and tenderness, whereas "Piggy's arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig's after it has been killed, . . . and when [the sea] went, sucking back again, the body of Piggy was gone" (*LOF*, 200). Piggy's self-assuring utterances throughout the book, such as: "Life is scientific," are also undermined by Golding's presentation of pointless, irrational butchery on the island, as well as in the adult world, sunk in a bloody war.

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<sup>11</sup> Oldsey and Weintraub, *Art*, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Rousseau, *Discourse*, 88.



F. C. Green, author of *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Critical Study of His Life and Writing*, summarizes Rousseau's natural philosophy as follows: "We need not look for primitive man in history or in some remote corner of the globe. He resides within each of us, though buried under a mass of civilized accretions which may, however, be penetrated by an effort of introspection."<sup>13</sup> Green's words are extremely relevant for our discussion here and a few comments must be spent on them. Both Rousseau and Golding show enormous interest in the aforementioned "primitive man". We already know that Rousseau associated this primitiveness with elegant simplicity of life, good health, and compassion. Golding, in a stark contrast, linked the primitiveness with man's "heart of darkness", with fear, superstition, and cruelty. The reader of *Lord of the Flies* soon discovers in the immature minds of the boys seeds of greed, oppression, and pride. In some of the boys, these seeds will in due course grow into very poisonous plants. Introspection is in fact not required, as in the extreme situation the boys find themselves in, all masks of civilization fall off very quickly and the primitive man in them takes over. But Rousseau, in an argument once again directed against his favourite opponent Hobbes, but easily applicable to William Golding, too, writes: "Finally, all these philosophers talking ceaselessly of need, greed, oppression, desire and pride have transported into the state of nature concepts formed in society. They speak of savage man and they depict civilized man."<sup>14</sup> Could it be that even Golding is actually depicting civilized man? In a way he does and makes no secret of it. We soon learn, for instance, that the boys are very proud of their Englishness. In a very ironic scene – ironic in the light of later development – Jack, the future leader of the hunters and the most dangerous man on the island, says: "I agree with Ralph. We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. We're English; and the English are best at everything. So we've got to do the right things" (*LOF*, 47).

Is it therefore not the fault of this arrogant Englishness, with its public-school discipline and its excessively scientific attitudes that the boys have fallen into such barbarism? Let us, for now, answer in the

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<sup>13</sup> F. C. Green, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Critical Study of His Life and Writings* (London: Cambridge University, 1955), 122.

<sup>14</sup> Rousseau, *Discourse*, 78.

affirmative, and try to find evidence for this proposition. In order to succeed, we need to read the novel against the grain and take an orthodoxly Rousseauistic perspective. Suddenly the rotting body of the parachutist, the naval officer with his gun, or Jack with his patriotism, is transformed into signifiers of a civilization gone mad. They speak of a civilization that has taken certain human tendencies or capacities (namely that which Jean-Jacques Rousseau called “faculty of self-improvement”) too far and ended up destroying itself, not because of an evil tree growing in every man, but on the contrary, because of the irretrievable loss of our natural self that only knows compassion, goodness and health.

William Golding, or so it would seem, refuses to take sides on this point, and writes as if he welcomed discussions of the kind we are engaged in here. When he lets Roger throw stones at Henry in such a way that the former always misses on purpose, the explanation is that “here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger’s arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins” (*LOF*, 67). By adding that “the civilization was in ruins,” Golding opens up the question of the real role of civilization in the novel, thus possibly deconstructing himself. Other questions follow in the train: Do not family, school, policemen and the law actually create the very evil they are meant to suppress? Is not the over-institutionalization of civilized life the root of the Evil and the real reason for the boys’ regression to violence? Rousseau would probably argue that in his “natural” state, Roger would not even consider throwing stones at Henry, let alone calculate how close he can throw them. For Rousseau, it would be the institutions that evolved from the unfortunate rational turn in the human history that created the situation Golding so suggestively depicts:

At first it must be agreed that the more violent the passions, the more necessary are laws to restrain them; but the disorders and crimes which these passions cause every day among us demonstrate well enough the inadequacy of laws to achieve this end; and, what is more, it would be worth considering whether these disorders did not arise with the laws themselves, in which case, if the laws were capable of

suppressing anything, the very least that ought to be demanded of them is that they should put an end to an evil which would not exist without them.<sup>15</sup>

This reading of the novel is actually in perfect accordance with Oldsey and Weintraub's contention that it is far too easy to read *Lord of the Flies* as an allegory of human regression into nastiness and brutality "when the civilized restraints which we impose on ourselves are abandoned."<sup>16</sup> Similarly, if we stay in our Rousseauian perspective, when little Percival chants his "Percival Wemys Madison, The Vicarage, Harcourt St. Anthony, Hants, telephone, telephone, tele - -" (*LOF*, 94), it is civilization's excessive concern for protection and identification of individuals that creates Percival's sense of complete loss and makes him inarticulate. It remains questionable whether Golding intentionally invited this seemingly illogical reading of his novel. Even Oldsey and Weintraub do not know whether to attribute certain aspects of Golding's writing to the "paradoxical power of his weakness as novelist or his ability to make the most of his shortcomings."<sup>17</sup> In any case, there are other factors in the structure and vocabulary of *Lord of the Flies* that allow for a Rousseauistic reading.

Penetrating insights of great value can be achieved, for instance, by a study of the relationship between Rousseau's theory of property and the role of the conch or Piggy's glasses in *Lord of the Flies*. Such a study will also reveal surprising overlaps with the role of the chief (or master) in the novel. F. C. Green, discussing Rousseau's view of social institutions, writes the following:

Rousseau always held, . . . that primitive man had a natural repugnance for organized social life, fearing instinctively that whilst it offered certain advantages, like security, it would perhaps destroy for ever his individual liberty and independence. This is in keeping with the peculiar character of Rousseau's 'introspection'. It blinded him to what Bergson calls the dimorphism of our primitive nature which

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<sup>15</sup> Rousseau, *Discourse*, 102.

<sup>16</sup> Oldsey and Weintraub, *Art*, 29.

<sup>17</sup> Oldsey and Weintraub, *Art*, 27.

makes us alternately pacific or combative, sometimes eager to command, at others just as eager to obey.<sup>18</sup>

Golding's characters, boys no older than 12 years of age, indeed disprove Rousseau's opinions of social organization, namely in their blind obedience to the calls of the conch. How Ralph, Piggy or Jack achieve this effect is never made clear by Golding, but Kinkead-Weckes and Gregor provide a very tenable explanation:

The unliving thing [the conch – author's note] is disentangled and given a new social purpose. It announces man and summons men together. . . . It is his association with the shell rather than his size or attractiveness that makes the children choose Ralph as their leader; and having been established as the symbol of assembly, the conch becomes identified with its procedure, with democracy and the right to free speech. It becomes a symbol of immense suggestiveness. Every time a boy cries 'I've got the conch', he is drawing on the funds of order and democratic security.<sup>19</sup>

In Rousseau's philosophy, suspicious of all models of social organization, the conch would signify an early stage of man's alienation from their nature. As the power of the conch diminishes with the boys' continuing fall into barbarism, other objects grow in importance, bringing to attention Rousseau's theory of property, best articulated in his simple pronouncement that "the first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, thought of saying 'This is mine' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society".<sup>20</sup> Rousseau saw in the idea of property the beginning of human self-destruction, and so property and war were never far from each other in his vocabulary:

As the strongest regarded their might, and the most wretched regarded their need as giving them a kind of right to the possessions of others, equivalent, according to them,

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<sup>18</sup> Green, *Rousseau*, 128.

<sup>19</sup> Kinkead-Weckes and Gregor, *Golding*, 17-18.

<sup>20</sup> Rousseau, *Discourse*, 109.

to the right of property, the elimination of equality was followed by the most terrible disorder. . . . Nascent society gave place to the most horrible state of war.<sup>21</sup>

In *Lord of the Flies*, this “most horrible state of war” starts with the hunters’ usurpation of Piggy’s glasses that give them the advantage of the possession of fire. Property begins to acquire a wholly new meaning on the island – to own now means to have absolute power: “He [Jack] was a chief now in truth; and he made stabbing motions with his spear. From his left hand dangled Piggy’s broken glasses” (*LOF*, 186).

Disdainful of property and war though Rousseau was, he did not entirely oppose the idea of leadership, and, to quote from R. B. Mowat’s book *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, “he distinguished between ‘natural’ inequality which is the result of stature, health and intellect, and ‘moral’ and ‘political’ inequality which is the result of law and society.”<sup>22</sup> In Rousseau’s own words, the distinction is between chiefs and masters. Whereas “people have given themselves *chiefs* in order to defend their liberty and not to enslave them,”<sup>23</sup> *masters* arise with “the last stage of inequality, . . . where subjects have no longer any law but the will of the master, nor the master any other rule but that of his passions.”<sup>24</sup> That Ralph is the chief and Jack the master logically follows from this theory, but it does not do much to explain why all the boys finally fling themselves at the feet of Jack instead of entrusting their fate in the hands of Ralph – the only voice of common sense left on the island.

At this point, a Rousseauistic reading of *Lord of the Flies* starts pressing against its own boundaries. The limitations implied in choosing “Discourse on Inequality” as the interpretive tool for the study of *Lord of the Flies*, have, however, been extremely productive in revealing the fascinating, albeit disorienting complexity of both texts which should on no account be considered dead or barren for current debates in literary theory.

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<sup>21</sup> Rousseau, *Discourse*, 120.

<sup>22</sup> R. B. Mowat, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1938), 158.

<sup>23</sup> Rousseau, *Discourse*, 125.

<sup>24</sup> Rousseau, *Discourse*, 135.

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# REPRESENTATION OF THE ORTHODOX JEWISH COMMUNITY IN A. GOODMAN'S *KAATERSKILL FALLS* AND R. GOLDSTEIN'S *MAZEL*

*Stanislav Kolář*

**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores the image of the closed Orthodox Jewish communities as depicted in the novels of two contemporary Jewish American women writers – Allegra Goodman and Rebecca Goldstein. It focuses on the tension between religious tradition and secular forces from the outside world that influence the life of these communities and break their homogeneity, especially in their intergenerational relations. The paper also probes into the struggle of the Orthodox Jews to reconcile their traditions with modernity. This subject is analyzed in Goldstein's novel *Mazel* and particularly in Goodman's *Kaaterskill Falls*, a novel which gives the reader a rich portrait of the diversity of the Orthodox Jewish community in New York.

**KEY WORDS:** Jewish American fiction, women writers, Jewish Orthodoxy, religion, community, *shtetl*, Allegra Goodman, Rebecca Goldstein

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the fiction of a new wave of Jewish American writers we can observe a distinct tendency to return to Jewish spirituality and its roots. This inward orientation produces literature which differs profoundly from the writings of those authors who focused on the process of the assimilation of Jews in the New World.<sup>1</sup> *T'shuva* – a return to Jewish traditions, history, religion and culture – often manifests itself in the reflection of Orthodoxy in Jewish spiritual life. This appears to be a response to the voices that have questioned Jewish identity in America.<sup>2</sup> However, the interest of the contemporary generation of Jewish American writers in

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<sup>1</sup> This tendency is not entirely new, as we can see in the work of some writers of the older generation, for example Chaim Potok and Cynthia Ozick.

<sup>2</sup> The relativization of Jewish identity became strong especially after World War II. Some contemporary Jewish writers, e.g., Thane Rosenbaum, cannot accept the idea that the only common denominator of Jewish identity is the Holocaust.

the life of observant Jews and Orthodox communities raises certain questions: How to reconcile Orthodoxy with modernity, spirituality with secular forces, and Jewish post-Holocaust identity with the pressure of assimilation? This question inspires writers to examine the viability of Orthodox Judaism.

Since many works of contemporary Jewish American literature are written by women, another question comes to the fore: How to reconcile the needs and interests of modern Jewish women with the traditionally patriarchal structure of Jewish Orthodox communities? This problem is of particular concern for the women writers representing Jewish feminism. Their fiction, depicting their rather uncomfortable role in Orthodox Judaism, attempts to provide a more penetrating insight into the conflicting components of their identity, which may cause much tension. Although Modern Orthodoxy attempts to synthesize Judaism with modern values, women in a more conservative Jewish environment may still see it as a place of confinement and exclusion from full spiritual life. As shown by some works of Jewish women writers depicting the female experience within the Orthodox Jewish communities, their peripheral social status leads them to rebel against Orthodox practice – or at least to the subversion of the rigid roles imposed on them.

Writing about Jewish internal life also brings up the question of its accessibility to the general reader. How to write novels about enclosed Jewish communities while not appearing exotic or even esoteric to gentile readers? In other words, how to remain readable without trivializing the complexity of the topic? Unveiling the “little secrets” of the Orthodox Jewish world is a challenging task indeed for a Jewish writer. There are not many fictional representations of the Jewish Orthodox community in Jewish American literature viewed “from the inside” because, in Ezra Cappell’s words, “it is so difficult for a writer to convincingly depict Orthodox characters without lapsing into caricature.”<sup>3</sup> According to Cappell, another problem is “how to depict a modern Orthodox Jew without that character seeming undifferentiated from an average white middle-class American.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ezra Cappell, *American Talmud: The Cultural Work of Jewish American Fiction* (Albany: State University of New York, 2007), 141.

<sup>4</sup> Cappell, *American Talmud*, 141.



Many contemporary Jewish authors have to tackle all these difficult questions, and it would be illusionary to expect them to resolve the outlined problems in their work. Among the authors who try to cope with these issues are Allegra Goodman (\*1967)<sup>5</sup> and Rebecca Goldstein (\*1950).<sup>6</sup> Their interest in the life of Orthodox Jews is not coincidental; both of them grew up among observant Jews, moreover Rebecca Goldstein was raised in an Orthodox Jewish family. This study focuses on the representation of the Orthodox Jewish community in Goodman's *Kaaterskill Falls* (1998) and Goldstein's *Mazel* (1995).

## 2. JEWISH WALDEN IN KAATERSKILL FALLS

Goodman's novel *Kaaterskill Falls* is set in a rural area of the Catskill Mountains<sup>7</sup> in the 1970s, in a close-knit community of Orthodox Jews of German descent who have created a summer colony in the small town of Kaaterskill in upstate New York. Their insular community, the *Kehilla*, strictly preserves its religious rules and rituals and is led by the rabbi Elijah Kirshner – a founder of this Jewish enclave in the midst of

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<sup>5</sup> Allegra Goodman is the author of the short story collections *Total Immersion* (1989) and *The Family Markowitz* (1996) and the novels *Kaaterskill Falls* (1998), *Paradise Park* (2001), *The Other Side of the Island* (2008) and *The Cookbook Collector* (2010).

<sup>6</sup> Rebecca Goldstein's bibliography includes novels *The Mind-Body Problem* (1983), *The Late Summer Passion of a Woman of Mind* (1989), *The Dark Sister* (1991), *Mazel* (1995), *Properties of Light: A Novel of Love, Betrayal, and Quantum Physics* (2000) and *36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction* (2010), and a collection of short stories *Strange Attractors* (1993). She has also written biographies of the mathematician Kurt Gödel and the philosopher Spinoza.

<sup>7</sup> For more affluent Jewish immigrants, the Catskill Mountains became a popular vacation area in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These immigrants, who mostly came from rural areas in Eastern Europe, lacked contact with nature in the urban ghetto of New York's Lower East Side, and thus they found a haven in the Catskills. In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the mountains became the most popular resort destination for the Jewish population of New York. For further information see Abraham D. Lavender and Clarence B. Steinberg, *Jewish Farmers of the Catskills: A Century of Survival* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1995).

beautiful countryside, dominated by the sublime Kaaterskill Falls. Goodman managed to capture the diverse village community of the Kirshners, as they – devoted adherents of their spiritual leader – call themselves. Each chapter concentrates on a certain character or family; this enables the author to present a multifaceted, non-monolithic portrayal of the world of Orthodox Jews. However, despite Goodman's pluralistic view of the community, her focus is basically limited to four representative Jewish families: Rav Elijah Kirshner and his two sons; Andras Melish with his strictly observant wife Nina and their daughter Renée; Cecil Birnbaum and his wife Beatrix; and Elizabeth Shulman and her devout husband Isaac. Andras is a Hungarian Holocaust survivor who is reluctant to share his traumatic experience with his family because he is skeptical about the possibility of expressing his traumatic experience. Similarly to many other characters of survivors in American fiction on the Holocaust, he is convinced that this experience is untransferable, and thus he keeps silent. In his view, "[y]ou can never fully tell another person what you know. You can't imagine what you don't know. There is no way to conceive, to picture, someone else's life. There is no way to transfer memories."<sup>8</sup>

The novel's protagonist is the whole community; however, in spite of many other minor figures who affect the rather fragmented structure of the work, there is one character which seems to be foregrounded – Elizabeth Shulman. This unconventional woman of English origin embodies a symbiosis of creativity and spirituality. In her attachment to the extraordinary, Goodman conveys her concept of a modern Jewish woman facing the gender restrictions of Orthodox Jewry. As the narrator says, "[s]he is, more than anything, curious, delighted by paradoxes, odd characters, anything out of the ordinary" (11). Although Elizabeth is drawn to the modernity of the secular world, she retains her genuine religious faith. Goodman underscores the naturalness of her approach to Judaism in contrast with the rather dogmatic Nina. As the narrator says, "Elizabeth does not romanticize religion" but "she romanticizes the secular" (*KF* 54) because the secular world is mysterious to her. Throughout the novel, she often balances on the verge of heresy, at least in the eyes of the other members of the

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<sup>8</sup> Allegra Goodman, *Kaaterskill Falls* (New York: Delta Book, 1999), 45. Hereafter cited in text as *KF*.

community; yet, like a skillful ropewalker, she preserves her balance and never falls into the abyss of apostasy.

Although the novel *Kaaterskill Falls* has an almost bucolic setting,<sup>9</sup> its plot is permeated with conflicting situations that are a far cry from the rural idyll. True, the reader can overhear harmonious tones in the scenes of family visits and parties, but the overall atmosphere is full of tension, imbuing the narrative with dramatic features. On the one hand, the *Kehilla* is aware of the importance of traditions and the legacy of the past (the Torah, Yiddishkeit, the *shtetl* life in the Diaspora, the Holocaust). On the other hand the community comes to realize the inevitability of change – which may be either acceptable or unwanted. Exposure to the pressures of modern secular life makes the community fragile, even though its members strive to maintain its homogeneity and self-containedness. Their vulnerability is reinforced by their relocation, as the Kirshners are presented as displaced persons who lived their best years in Germany before the rise of fascism which forced them to flee from their native land. Perhaps this relocation is the cause of their intense feeling of temporariness, transmitted even to the second, American-born generation of the Orthodox community.

One of the major inner conflicts within the community follows from Rav Kirshner's absolute patriarchal power. He determines the standards of his people, making important decisions and giving relevant permission where necessary. Since his community reveres him and accepts him as the mediator of God, his position in its structure seems to be unshakeable. For its members he is a source of safety, a haven, and at the same time an embodiment of traditions and continuity: "They [the community] take for granted that he stands at the center, that he speaks and chastises and controls. They take for granted what he is and has been for almost fifty years: scholar, judge, historian, witness" (*KF* 104).

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<sup>9</sup> Gloria L. Cronin notes that the pastoral mode of Goodman's novel is reminiscent of the Jane Austen village. In her view, Goodman "invokes traces of the biblical utopia of the desert patriarchs, the Puritan search for an American Eden, and more recently the nineteenth-century American Transcendentalist search for the sublime." Gloria L. Cronin, "Seasons of Our (Dis)Content, or Orthodox Women in Walden: Allegra Goodman's *Kaaterskill Falls*," in *Connections and Collisions: Identities in Contemporary Jewish-American Women's Writing*, ed. Lois E. Rubin (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2005), 122.

However, Kirshner does not reciprocate their respect for him. He feels a distance from his people, even harboring certain contempt for the new generation of his followers. From his perspective, their religious life is artificial, not sincere, consisting in false pretense and merely mechanical observances of rituals and customs. His stance is most apparent in the episode when the Rav realizes during his sermon that his congregants are not listening to his words. He often muses about the differences between his generation, shaped by the European experience of losses and mourning, and the second generation born in America:

They don't have a sense of what was taken. American born, they cannot possibly appreciate the loss. For they did not know the great Kirshner synagogue in Frankfurt which stood like a palace, with windows like jewels. The Frankfurt synagogue was a seat of learning and a soaring theater for prayer. Now that place is ruined, and its burning was like the destruction of a new Temple (*KF* 219).

Kirshner sees them as people living in the shadows, not understanding that their piety is an act of mourning.<sup>10</sup> He interprets their inability to appreciate the loss as a degenerative symptom, an “unhealthy” mode, which is one of the reasons why he esteems himself superior to the others in his community hierarchy. He suggests that his American-born adherents know nothing or very little about the magnitude of the losses during the Holocaust and live in ignorance of these tragic events. This explains his emotional indifference and even arrogance toward them.

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<sup>10</sup> In trauma theory, mourning is closely linked with loss. As Sigmund Freud, in his essay “Mourning and Melancholia”, suggested, “[m]ourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which had taken the place of one, such as one’s country, liberty, an ideal, and so on.” See Sigmund Freud “Mourning and Melancholia” (1925), in J. Strachey, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 14* (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953), 243. Dominick LaCapra argues that “mourning might be seen as a form of working through” of trauma. See Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 65. In its essence, mourning is a healthy state, a precondition for potential recovery.

As a matter of fact, Rav Kirshner is presented as a highly controversial character with many negative traits. On the one hand, his scholarship and deep knowledge of religious matters assures him recognition; on the other, his reserved behavior discourages people from becoming close to him because “[h]e is not the sort of Rav to whom men pour out their hearts” (*KF* 99). Goodman’s approach to this character speaks volumes about her critical view of the accumulation of too much power that can be easily misused or used for manipulation within religious communities.

The above-mentioned feeling of transience is strengthened by the fact that the novel records the last years of Kirshner’s life. The Rav’s failing health shakes his congregants’ certainty and arouses doubts about the *Kehilla*’s continuity. His name, Elijah, implies that the community wants to see him as their prophet with the Messianic function of redemption – a role which he, of course, cannot fulfill. He is not a Savior, and what is worse, he even fails as a father in his family. His relationship with his sons is complicated, which is seen especially in the last months of his life when he has to decide which of his two sons is to become his successor. While he values his elder son Jeremy higher for his brilliant intellect, he is disappointed by this son’s alienation from Orthodoxy, caused by his cosmopolitan disposition. He is frustrated by Jeremy’s neglect of religion and, more importantly, by his son’s ostentatious indifference to him. After the death of his mother, Jeremy ceases to feel at home in Kaaterskill; for him “[t]he place is so oppressive... There is a stench about all the old things in the house. They reek. They are like freshly killed birds with the flesh still on them. They have no delicacy, no formal and anonymous beauty; they smell only of death” (*KF* 28). Isaiah, the rabbi’s younger son, is less talented, but he is obedient and always loyal to his father. He endures all the father’s wrongs with patience, carefully assists him in office work, and tends him – along with Isaiah’s wife Rachel, who is jealous of the Rav’s preference for Jeremy. She is critical of the Rav’s mistreatment of her husband, and regards it as a humiliating injustice toward him. Yet Isaiah’s patience is finally rewarded; it is ultimately him who is appointed the spiritual leader of the community. The father’s death, however, fully reveals a lack of unity in his family, strained by their conflict over the inheritance of property.

Conflicts also accompany the other families, for instance Andras and Nina Melish, whose rather unhappy marriage is affected by their different approach to Orthodoxy. While Nina is very conservative, strictly adhering to all laws and rituals, Andras's attitude to Judaism is lukewarm. This difference, which leads to their mutual estrangement, also determines their different attitudes to the upbringing of their teenage daughter Renée. Her overprotective mother Nina tends to solicitously shelter Renée from all non-Jewish elements, but her efforts are in vain since they only serve to stir up her daughter's resistance. Renée revolts against the drab, sleepy atmosphere of the Jewish summer camp and declines to look after its small children. At the Jewish school she feels lonely among her schoolmates, whom she considers rather dull and boring. Her revolt culminates on Thanksgiving Day when she refuses to play the piano for her aunts, a result of her long-term repulsion for this instrument.<sup>11</sup> Here her revolt acquires features of generational conflict – and though it is put down under the threat of punishment, her defiance persists. Like Philip Roth's Alexander Portnoy,<sup>12</sup> she is attracted to the non-Jewish world, embodied by her gentile friend Stephanie, who functions as a subversive element in Renée's life. She is a tempter, luring Renée into activities which are, in the eyes of her mother, inconsistent with the Orthodox religious faith. Through the character of the manipulative Stephanie, Goodman symbolically conveys the penetration of secular influences into the Orthodox community. Andras's more liberal attitude to Renée brings about much tension in the family, and so the girl painfully observes her parents "as though they are not her parents, but independent people, strangers" (*KF* 217) and registers "the unhappiness in her house" (*KF* 217).

Unlike the Melish family, Isaac's and Elizabeth's marriage is more harmonious, although even theirs is not void of tension, caused by

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<sup>11</sup> This rather clichéd form of revolt against parents appears in many books, for example in Amy Tan's chapter "Two Kinds" in her book *The Joy Luck Club* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> See Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint* (New York: Random House, 1969). In this novel, the protagonist is lured by the gentile girls and non-kosher food – much to his mother's displeasure. In a way, Goldstein's overprotective mother Nina may be regarded as a new version of Sophie Portnoy.

Elizabeth's plan to open her own grocery store. Since his faith is genuine, he is tormented by doubts about his wife's decision because he is not convinced that it is in accordance with the principles of the *Kehilla*. He judges all everyday matters according to religious faith; faith is essential for him:

in his daily studies he still strives to understand, identify, take a text to heart, to reach through the centuries of commentary, those layers of responsa, and grasp a meaning that is strong, believable. And when it happens, and the words unfold for him and touch his life, this is a moment of great joy. The burden of decision falls away, and he is free, for he knows what he should do (*KF* 158).

Internal conflicts within the community are not limited only to the family. The *Kehilla* is divided over its relationship to Israel. Goodman shows the rather negative attitude of some Orthodox Jews toward the Jewish state, though she does not illuminate the reasons for their disapproving stance.<sup>13</sup> In the novel, Chani, one of Elizabeth's and Isaac's daughters, is fascinated by everything concerning Israel. She drinks in any news related to this state, e.g. the news of the liberation of the Jewish hostages by the special commando of Israeli soldiers at Entebbe airport in Uganda in 1976. The Holy Land stimulates her imagination, but her fascination meets with the disapproval of her parents who have a very reserved stance toward the State of Israel. In her dispute with her daughter, Elizabeth argues: "But we don't want just a place... You can't substitute bare land for – the mitzvos that must be done, and the transformation of all the lives in every place in the world. ...We're waiting, you see." Chani replies: "But if you just sit around and wait, nothing will get done... So what good is it going to do if we're all waiting over here in New York? Shouldn't we be in Israel now?" (*KF* 175–176).

Furthermore, the integrity of the community is undermined by the greed of some businessmen – in the novel embodied by the assimilated Jew Michael King, a real estate broker, who purchases and profitably sells properties in Kaaterskill without considering the

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<sup>13</sup> Many Orthodox Jews in America regard Israel as an artificial construct of Zionism and argue that its foundation is against the nature of the Torah.

interests of the Kirshner enclave. The effort of the community to forestall changes in its summer colony proves to be in vain. Naturally, the main source of tension inside the *Kehilla* is the clash between faith and doubt, and within the religious faith, the problem of the strictness of observance of the *Halachah*, the entire body of Jewish religious laws. This forms the Jewish identity of the members of the community, overshadowing even national identity – as can be seen in the case of Beatrix Birnbaum who does not consider Independence Day to be her holiday. This character confirms Victoria Aarons's observation that in Goodman's fiction characters face up to "the two often-competing identities of 'American' and Jewish.' In this split between the two defining conditions of their lives, Goodman's characters would seem to be deeply divided. They are divided in generational and familial terms among themselves."<sup>14</sup>

If we return to the second question posed in the introductory part of this essay – concerning women's participation in Orthodox religious life – we can see that Goodman projects her feminist view onto Elizabeth Shulman. Although Elizabeth accepts the role of a housewife, in her restlessness she does not hide her discontent with the position of women in the Orthodox community. She is aware of a lack of opportunities for her self-realization and restrictions that suppress her individuality. She knows that "[t]he Kehilla is a tight world, and a tighter one for women. A narrow place. Always safe and always binding" (*KF* 282). Her critical view does not spare even the Rav Kirshner, whom she criticizes for his misogynist attitude to women and his ignorance of their significance in the community.

From the gender point of view, Goodman's novel is about spiritual yearning. Elizabeth wants to overstep the limits of her community, to cross its boundaries and to move beyond its horizon. She longs for something she does not have. As has already been noted, religion is natural for her, but she is more open to the external influences originating outside the community. She associates her romantic yearning for the secular with art. On the symbolic level, this is expressed in the episode narrating her attendance of a performance of

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<sup>14</sup> Victoria Aarons, "Anxieties in the 'Modern Context': Fantasies of Change in Allegra Goodman's Fiction," in *Modern Jewish Women Writers in America*, ed. Evelyn Avery (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2007), 199.



Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is a creative drive that lies behind her restlessness: "What she wants is the chance to shape something that cannot become anything else, only hers. To truly create something, material, definable, self-limited" (KF 96). Being aware of the limits of her own artistic potential<sup>15</sup>, she finds her creativity elsewhere – in business. To be sure, she does not want to cast off her spirituality and substitute secular values for religion. But she knows that she must do something for her spiritual growth. Her creative act is the opening of a kosher grocery store in Kaaterskill so that the Kirshners need not bring their groceries from the city. Her business is immensely successful, but later on she violates the *halachah* standards by providing food for a young girl's birthday party without the rabbi's consent. After the Rav's death, she is punished by his son and successor Isaiah, who forces her to close her store. This results in her deep personal crisis and subsequent alienation from her community. It is evident that her endeavor to transcend the strict limits of the Orthodox enclave was doomed. This cognition brings her closer to heretic thinking: "Now, more than ever, the outside fascinates her: the people there, the way everyone moves about, the complexity of a world with such loose days and weeks, the time never delineated between work and Shabbes, the food never separated, the men and women mixed together as well; so many decisions made rather than received" (KF 227). For Goodman, the Orthodox world imposes too many restrictions on women and therefore they feel uncomfortable with their marginal position in it. If they are to live satisfactory lives, they should have more space for their self-fulfillment. If they lack freedom, their life becomes empty; after the closure of the store, Elizabeth is unable to enjoy High Holidays and in her despair she suffers from an intense feeling of loss. However, eventually she restores her life drive and returns to business thanks to her husband's support and the encouragement of Andras, who urges her not to be bound by the community. His words addressed to her – "this is the United States of America. You can do whatever you damn well please" (KF 271) – open her eyes.

The gender aspect is highlighted by the motif of the birth of daughters; Elizabeth gives birth to her sixth daughter, and a daughter is

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<sup>15</sup> However, she is secretly dreaming about the artistic career of one of her daughters.

also born to Beatrix, who decides to celebrate the event by throwing a Shalom bat party.<sup>16</sup> For the Kirshner clan this is a very unusual event, but Beatrix knows how to justify it: “I thought it was absolutely barbaric that there are welcoming parties for boys but not for girls” (KF 267). Furthermore, Cecil Birnbaum’s decision to leave the community for England, following his wife Beatrix’s academic career at Oxford University, deviates from the common standards of the community because here it is the man who adjusts to the woman’s vital interests.

It is significant that Elizabeth’s epiphany, her decision to start her own business, happens in front of Thomas Cole’s romantic painting of 1826 “Falls of the Kaaterskill”.<sup>17</sup> Goodman again points out the connection of her creative deed with art:

She has to make something; she has so much energy, she feels so strong. Fearless. She imagines for a moment she could learn to paint, except that she never could draw. She thinks perhaps she could write something. But she’s not that sort [...] Elizabeth looks intently at the painting, that brilliant piece of the world, and gazing at the color and the light of it she feels the desire, as intense as prayer. I want – she thinks, and then it comes to her simply, with all the force of her pragmatic soul – I want to open a store (KF 83).

As Gloria L. Cronin suggests, “[i]t is this painting that encapsulates Goodman’s aesthetics of the sublime, and sense of historical change.” Through the painting “Goodman explores the complex relationship between transcendental utopian communities, art, imagination, historical degradation, religious communities, representation, and the sublime.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Bat Shalom is a name of a Jewish feminist organization.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Cole (1801–1848) was a painter, the founder of the Hudson River School, a movement in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in England and at the age of 17 he emigrated with his family to the United States. He became known for his portrayals of American landscapes. Some of his paintings were inspired by literature, including James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*. Kevin J. Avery, “Thomas Cole (1801–1848),” in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000. 3 November, 2012. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cole/hd\\_cole.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cole/hd_cole.htm).

<sup>18</sup> Cronin, “Seasons”, 122.

According to Cronin, “[f]or Thomas Cole in 1826, for Rav Kirshner and his followers fleeing Germany in 1938, and now for Goodman in 1976, the Kaaterskill still signifies the Edenic sublime despite modern degradation. Like all previous American Arcadias, it echoes with associations of a Promised Land, the New Jerusalem, the New World Eden, and the dream of all golden, gated, utopian, separatist communities.”<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth’s transcendent yearning aims at nature, at “secret forests” (*KF* 13) where she can become a different person. In Lene Schoett-Kristensen’s view, “[t]hese secret forests are linked to an archetypal American theme: they are Emersonian and Thoreauvian forests, symbolic sites of self-reliance and self-renewal,”<sup>20</sup> the values that represent spiritual elevation in Elizabeth’s life. In addition, the association with Thoreau is reinforced by the episodic character of Una, who lives in seclusion in a cabin amidst the woods.

Despite various discords, it seems that many members of the insular Kirshner Orthodox community have found in the Catskills their Jewish Walden. They have found it “to front only the essential facts of life”<sup>21</sup> – some of them like the Rav Kirshner, his son Isaiah or Isaac in religious studies; others, like Elizabeth, in creativity. Or have they? Is this resort for the Rav not merely a surrogate place for a past one that has been lost? And for the Holocaust survivor Andras, an ideal refuge to enable him to forget? If we agree that one of the major themes of Thoreau’s *Walden* is renewal, then Elizabeth can be said to experience her spiritual renewal in creativity. By opening her store, which substitutes for art, she renews herself. The transcendent moment of the sublime is probably best expressed by Regina, Cecil’s sister. Although she lives in Los Angeles, she suggests that restorative power can be reached at home, by which she means Kaaterskill – despite all changes and despite the undermined continuity: “I remember looking up at the falls, and everything rushing and white and beautiful. You looked up there and you felt that that you could do anything. That absolutely nothing could ever stop you” (*KF* 323).

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<sup>19</sup> Cronin, “Seasons”, 129.

<sup>20</sup> Lene Schoett-Kristensen, “Allegra Goodman’s Kaaterskill Falls: A Liturgical Novel,” *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, vol. 24 (2005): 30.

<sup>21</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 90.

### 3. MAZEL LOST AND FOUND: FROM THE *SHTETL* TO NEW JERSEY SUBURBIA

Unlike *Kaaterskill Falls*, Rebecca Goldstein's novel *Mazel*<sup>22</sup> does not focus on the detailed depiction of the Orthodox community. The substantial part of the novel takes place in the circles of freethinking Jewish intellectuals in Warsaw. Nevertheless, the community of the Orthodox Jews still frames the novel and closes the circle, albeit on a different level.

The novel's protagonist Sorel, later on renamed Sasha, a former Yiddish theater star in Warsaw, cannot understand why her granddaughter Phoebe decided to marry a Modern Orthodox Jew. Phoebe's groom-to-be Jason Kantor lives in a Modern Orthodox community in Lipton, the "Jerusalem of New Jersey", as it is known for its high concentration of Modern Orthodox Jews. The name Lipton functions as a 'nomen omen' here, since it associates a brand of tea; this is an allusion to Teaneck, a suburban town in New Jersey, also known for its large Modern Orthodox community. The reason for Sasha's failure to understand her granddaughter's decision to marry into a Modern Orthodox family must be searched for in her past. As a child of a *shtetl* in eastern Poland, she regards it as a step back, as a reversal of her lifelong struggle to break free from the shackles of patriarchal Orthodoxy and the backwardness of the Galician *shtetl* where she grew up. She spent her childhood in a sleepy remote little town called Shluftchev – another significant name, since the Yiddish word "shluf" means "sleep".<sup>23</sup> The town is not dominated by the synagogue but by a stinking puddle which Sorel/Sasha's sister Fraydel imagines as a place where all the evil in the world concentrates, lying under the water. She sees it as the Evil Eye staring up at the villagers. Since "all the memories of Shluftchev had sunk into its bottom"<sup>24</sup> and produce a bad

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<sup>22</sup> In Yiddish, *mazel* means luck. The entire novel is about the clash between luck and *saychel*, or brains, standing for reason.

<sup>23</sup> See Andrew Furman, *Contemporary Jewish American Writers and the Multicultural Dilemma: The Return of the Exiled* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 96.

<sup>24</sup> Rebecca Goldstein, *Mazel* (1995; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 63. Hereafter cited in text as *M*.

smell, the puddle can be approached as a metaphor for the dark past of the *shtetl*.

Similarly to Goodman, Goldstein also projects her feminist view onto her characters – mainly onto her main character Sasha. She is happy to flee Shluftchev because she sees no future in a place where time has stopped.<sup>25</sup> For her it is a place of restrictions that deprive women of their individuality and confine them to the passive role of obedient wives. They are bereft of access to education, denied participation in all important decisions, deprived of spiritual life. She observes how the limitations imposed on women affect her mother Leiba, and her sister Fraydel in particular. Strict Orthodox rules preclude Fraydel and Sasha from realizing their artistic ambitions, though Fraydel finds her own mode of existence, escaping to the interior world of her imagination and making up fantastic stories that leave deep traces on her sister. Similarly to Malamud's Yakov Bok in *The Fixer*, for whom "the shtetl is a prison" and who "rejects Orthodox Judaism, rejects the Jewish Old Testament God,"<sup>26</sup> they perceive their patriarchal community as an obstacle impeding their freedom, a place where women are excluded from a full life. Therefore they revolt against the world of limitations; nevertheless, for the oversensitive Fraydel, this revolt has tragic consequences. Seeing no way out of her doomed situation, she chooses voluntary death in order to avoid an arranged marriage with a man with whom she knows she would not be happy. Melanie Levinson notes that "[i]t is the traditional religion's insistence upon study for boys and marriage for girls that she [Sasha] blames for the death of her beloved and brilliant sister Fraydel."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> She may be seen as a feminist version of Malamud's character Yakov Bok in his novel *The Fixer* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966). He also left a backward *shtetl* for a big city (Kiev). Unlike Sasha, however, his departure did not bring him luck; in the city he became a victim of anti-Semitism, being accused of a ritual murder of a Christian boy. For details, see Michaela Náhliková, *Jewishness as Humanism in Bernard Malamud's Fiction* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Náhliková, *Jewishness*, 67.

<sup>27</sup> Melanie Levinson, "'Wayfinding': (Re)Constructing Jewish Identity in Mazel and Lovingkindness," in *Connections and Collisions. Identities in Contemporary Jewish-American Women's Writing*, ed. Lois E. Rubin (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 115.

In Warsaw, Sasha picks up the threads of Fraydel's legacy, embracing Jewish enlightenment and art. Like Elizabeth in *Kaaterskill Falls*, she desires to actively participate in the advancement of modern society, to move away from the margins to the center of social life. Similarly to Goodman's character, she intuitively clings to art – but unlike Elizabeth, she is artistically gifted. She revives Fraydel's aborted creativity and silenced voice in a Yiddish theater troupe when dramatizing one of her sister's fantastic tales about a girl who leaves her unwanted betrothed to dance with death. She grasps all the opportunities Warsaw offers and in the *mischpochech* of the Yiddish theater artists she becomes a prominent actress.

It was a great effort for Sasha to break away from the old ways of the *shtetl* life; for this reason, in her new home of America, she fails to understand her granddaughter's spiritual decision to return to Orthodox Judaism. Phoebe's decision seems even less comprehensible to her grandmother due to the fact that Sasha's daughter Chloe is a totally assimilated Jew, who knows nothing about Jewishness, and also by the fact that both Chloe and Phoebe have built successful academic careers (both of them teach at highly prestigious universities; Chloe as a classics professor at Columbia University, and Phoebe as a mathematician at Princeton University, where she is an expert on the geometry of soap bubbles<sup>28</sup>). No wonder that in Lipton Sasha proves to be a dissenter, appearing in constant conflicts with the Kantor family and the whole Orthodox community. She considers Lipton to be a *shtetl* transplanted to America and wittily calls it the "reshtetlization of America" (*M* 354). The patriarchal community of the Orthodox Jews, marginalizing women, reminds her of the old Galician *shtetls*, so in her comments on Lipton she does not conceal her irony and sarcasm. She calls Lipton "Shluftchev...with a designer label" (*M* 333). The Lipton community of Modern Orthodox Jews is embarrassed by her theatrical voicing of her disapproval with her granddaughter's return to the old patterns against which she and Fraydel at one time rebelled. But the protagonist feels entirely at home in her rebellious mode, for

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<sup>28</sup> It is worth noting that in her book *Strange Attractors* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1993), Goldstein has a short story "The Geometry of Soap Bubbles and Impossible Love" with a protagonist named Phoebe Saunders.

“everything Sasha *says*, everything Sasha *does*, is with emphasis” (M 22). After all, she is “a woman born to hold center stage” (M 43).

The climax of Sasha’s rebellion is reached during the ritual *aufbruch*<sup>29</sup> when she violates the ceremonial customs by wearing trousers, which the observant Jews interpret as a desecration of the Sabbath. According to Anna P. Ronell, “Goldstein does not seem to make an effort to reconcile Sasha’s rebellious feminism with her Jewishness. Instead, she includes them in her fiction as two equally important forces.”<sup>30</sup> Yet the final scene, in which the representatives of all three generations of the Sonnenberg family are dancing together at the wedding, may be explicated as Sasha’s attempt to achieve a reconciliation with the Kantor family and the expression of an emotional bond among three women with different generational experiences. Alternatively, it also may be seen as a manifestation of a momentary joy, conditioned by the gaiety of the wedding.

What is more important in the novel is the expression of continuity. Phoebe’s return to the roots of Jewishness connects the American Lipton with the *shtetl* Shluftchev, and from the family perspective, with her ancestors. Sasha’s parents were observant Jews, and although they did not interfere in her life, they did not approve of their children’s withdrawal from Judaism. Moreover, Phoebe continues and fulfills the legacy of Fraydel. It is no coincidence that Goldstein underscores their common traits and that Sasha chooses for Phoebe the name Fraydel for the *ketuba*.<sup>31</sup> Also the name of Phoebe’s new-born son Mayer reinforces the family’s continuity, because it refers to Sasha’s late husband Maurice, whose original name was also Mayer. More importantly, in Phoebe Sasha sees “Fraydel returned, given a second chance at life” (M 17). Thus we can speak about the victory of traditions and continuity despite numerous personal and collective traumas.

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<sup>29</sup> The ceremony on the Sabbath before the wedding in which the groom recites the blessing over the Torah in the synagogue. The wife is not allowed to participate in the ritual in order to prevent her from seeing her groom.

<sup>30</sup> Anna P. Ronell, “Rebecca Goldstein: Tension and Ambivalence,” in *Modern Jewish Women Writers in America*, ed. Evelyn Avery (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2007), 164.

<sup>31</sup> A Jewish prenuptial contract forming an integral part of a traditional Jewish marriage.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

We have yet to address the last question: how to write from the inside of Jewish spiritual life without losing non-Jewish readers? Is the world of Jewish Orthodoxy too exotic for the general reader? Both novels discussed above show that the addressees are not only Jewish, but also gentile readers. Although the texts contain many Yiddish and Hebrew expressions and terms from Judaism, whenever it is possible both authors organically integrate the English equivalents into their texts. If not, it is up to readers whether they make the effort to look up their meanings – which, in the age of the internet, is an easy task. What is more substantial is the fact that despite the employment of various devices conveying specific features of the world of Orthodox Jews, both novels have a universal appeal to readers. They attend to issues of faith and doubt, religious fervor and skepticism, creativity and destruction, freedom and confinement, tradition and novelty, and so forth. They strike a sensitive balance between particularity and universality. Of course, the artistic duty of both writers was not to resolve the problems outlined at the beginning of this paper. Nevertheless, it seems that for Goldstein, Orthodoxy and feminism are irreconcilable – almost oxymoronic – notions, whereas Goodman, in her character of Elizabeth, conveys a synthesis of Orthodoxy and Jewish feminism. Her characters tend to adapt to the challenges of the modern world without losing their religious roots. They do not think in terms of either/or – even though we can find exceptions in the rich mosaic of her characters. On the other hand, it would be misleading to confuse the characters with the author's views. We should bear in mind that Goldstein's take included the community of Modern Orthodox Jews who tend to merge traditional Jewish values with the secular world. Be that as it may, both novels remain open to more interpretations, which makes them valuable and rewarding.

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# **PORTIA COUGHLAN: CONTEMPORARY ANTIQUE TRAGEDY**

*Ivona Mišterová*

**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the production of Marina Carr's tragedy *Portia Coughlan* (1996), performed at the J.K. Tyl Theatre in Pilsen under the direction of Martin Vokoun. Furthermore, it examines the dysfunctions of the family macrostructure and microstructure of Portia's inner world. It concludes by drawing a parallel between production and play in terms of its multilayered characters, disruption of linear time, and the inevitability of Portia's death.

**KEY WORDS:** Irish drama, Marina Carr, *Portia Coughlan*, the J.K. Tyl Theatre, reception, psyche, self-denial

## **1. OBJECTIVE AND INTERPRETIVE LENSES**

The aim of this article is to explore the production of *Portia Coughlan* performed at the J.K. Tyl Theatre in Pilsen in 2011 under the direction of Martin Vokoun. It examines the dysfunctions of the family macrostructure and microstructure of Portia's inner world. Furthermore, it pays attention to both the destructive and overprotective role of women in the play/production and to Portia's abnegation of the motherly role, which in Margaret Llewellyn-Jones's view challenges and subverts culturally based stereotypes.<sup>1</sup> It concludes by drawing a parallel between production and play in terms of its multilayered characters, disruption of linear time, and the inevitability of Portia's death.

Working with various interpretive lenses, the article may help to understand both Portia's inability to struggle with the limiting reality of the outer world and the constant clash (or rather blurring the border) between the inner and outer worlds.

Based on this brief recapitulation, three main hypotheses were formulated:

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<sup>1</sup> See Margaret Llewellyn-Jones, *Contemporary Irish Drama and Cultural Identity* (Bristol and Portland: Intellect Books, 2002), 11.

### Hypothesis 1: Deconstruction

The deconstruction of Portia's social identity was revealed through the treatment of psychological processes.

### Hypothesis 2: Distance and Detachment

Portia enforces the distance between herself and others through various, sometimes rather unscrupulous, methods; she defines herself through the link to her dead brother, who in fact dominates her life even after his death. She shows a sense of detachment from both her surroundings and her *self*. She appears to have abandoned herself fifteen years ago, after the death of her twin. She seems to be alive, but *de facto*, caught in the past.

### Hypothesis 3: Self-Denial, Deadness and Death

The prevalence of death imagery in the play represents an equivalent to Portia's *renunciation* of her motherly and wifely roles. Furthermore, she experiences a state of deadness through a close link to her dead brother. Portia's death then symbolises a way of obliterating her social identity and disconnecting herself from the unbearable reality.

## 2. GABRIEL AS A PART OF PORTIA'S PSYCHE

Barbara Schave Klein described the relationship between twins as the ideal intimate relationship stemming from shared feelings, thoughts, and experiences.<sup>2</sup> However, excessive closeness and intimacy can lead to considerable and unwelcome interdependency, often resulting in a lesser ability (or perhaps inability) to *function* without a twin. This was exactly the case with Portia.

Despite her initial attempt to enter the real world by marrying Raphael, she was not able to cope with the death of her brother and to shift her powerful emotions that predominated in her relationship with Gabriel onto her husband and children. Her inability (and perhaps later unwillingness) to respond to reality was expressed by her identification with her dead brother.

Though twins have a specific kind of double identity, as a twin (in an inter-twin relationship) and as an individual, Portia's own words

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<sup>2</sup> See Barbara Schave Klein, *Not All Twins Are Alike: Psychological Profiles of Twinship* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 2003), 107.

suggest that her and her brother's identities and psyches were firmly intermingled, and sometimes even reversed. Apparently, the separation of their identities was not achieved (if ever attempted). Their close bond was, however, misunderstood and perceived as unhealthy and awkward even by close relatives. Portia's mother openly talks about Gabriel's obsessive love for his sister and their fatal life-and-death relationship.

Marianne                      Gabriel was fierce difficult, obsessed with  
himself and you. [...]  
Came out of the womb clutchin' your leg  
and he's still clutchin' it from whenever he is.<sup>3</sup>  
(Act III, Scene v)

Further Marianne and Sly disclose Portia's and Gabriel's intense, erotically charged bond, "I watched yeer perverted activities, I seen yees, dancin' in yeer pelts," the image of which, though in a completely different version, dominates Portia's final confession to Raphael as well.<sup>4</sup> It seems symptomatic that Portia does not show any guilt about these obviously incestuous activities (see below).

Portia                      And I never told anyone this before – ya  
see, me and Gabriel made love all the time  
down and the Belmont River among the  
swale, from the age of five – That's as far  
back as I can remember anyways – But I  
think we were doin' it before we were born.<sup>5</sup>  
(Act III, Scene  
vi)

Portia and Gabriel undoubtedly formed a self-identified and self-contained unit, wherein their personalities intermingled. The great emotional and intellectual intensity of their bond did not go unmentioned by their peers as well.

They had been very close throughout their growing up. It is probable that they were protective of each other and became one other's

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<sup>3</sup> Marina Carr, *Portia Coughlan* (Loughcrew, Oldcastle, County Meath: The Gallery Press, 2010), 62.

<sup>4</sup> Carr, *Portia*, 65.

<sup>5</sup> Carr, *Portia*, 68.

source of love and support, yet also pain. Their bond was strengthened by their mental and physical closeness, revealed as incestuous in nature.

Though interpretations of Portia and Gabriel's real erotic relationship seem speculative, it is conceivable that they were attracted by their similarity, *like birds of a feather*, being indistinguishable even to their own mother, who "couldn't tell them apart in the cradle."<sup>6</sup> However, the twins were interconnected not only in terms of physicality, but also spirituality, resulting in the virtual interchangeability of their physical and spiritual bodies, "Everythin's swapped and mixed up and you're aither two people or you're no one. He used call me Gabriel and I used call him Portia," and sharing one soul.<sup>7</sup>

Portia's words about one soul resonate with Nietzsche's revelation of the *secret* treated in Wagner's opera *Tristan and Isolde*, that is "lying dead in the midst of life, being one in two".<sup>8</sup> The notion of shared soul undoubtedly strengthened their tie and resistance to (or was it rather passivity toward?) an uncomprehending environment. Portia's further interpretation suggests that her spiritual life was terminated at the moment of her brother's death, which brought her to a state of spiritual deadness. In Gabriel's death thus lies the root of Portia's inertia which dominates her life and of which her lack of verbal communication and interest in anything beyond her memories of Gabriel, love affair with Damus Halion, and frequent escapes to the Belmont River are symptomatic. Gabriel's voluntary death thus cut the virtual *umbilical cord* between the twins, though not their strong attachment. It may be furthermore argued that Gabriel's *dying* re-occurs in Portia's mind through his ghost presence, which functions both as a symbolic *memento mori* and threat.

Earlier in the text (III. iii), Portia confessed to Maggie May that she had planned to commit suicide together with her brother; however, at the last minute she lost courage and changed her mind. If we understand their planned suicide as an ideal solution to their troubles, what strong argument might have persuaded Portia to change her mind?

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<sup>6</sup> Carr, *Portia*, 27.

<sup>7</sup> Carr, *Portia*, 56.

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche in Roger A. Nicholls, *Nietzsche in the Early Work of Thomas Mann* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), 119.

Facing a conflict between her intention to die with her brother and desire to live, she chose life. Her reaction confirms that she was able to make an autonomous and rational decision, though Gabriel might have perceived that as a cowardly turn. His hesitation (III. iii) shows that he wished to preserve his life; however, it was too late.

Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer have observed that a planned suicide is usually a result of a combination of self-related and social or other-related reasons.<sup>9</sup> In this view, Portia and Gabriel's decision to terminate their lives seems to correspond mainly with reasons of the first sort. Life as such apparently represented unbearable suffering from which they wanted to escape. This naturally shifts this discussion into an ethical dimension and raises perplexing questions of the justification (if there can be any) of *self-destruction*. Setting aside the taboo on murder in the Sixth Commandment, which might be extended to voluntary death as well, Gabriel's act also shows great courage, if not a certain reasonableness, in light of which death seemed the only way out of *this world*. Though the twins initially seemed to have been fully intent on dying, *planned to do together*, it is not out of question to consider their partly successful (Gabriel) and partly failed (Portia) attempt as a kind of parasuicidal behaviour, which, at least in Portia's case, corresponds with its definition as a voluntary suicidal attempt, that varies by intent.<sup>10</sup> In this view some people thus truly intend to die, but others only wish to send a signal about their emotional needs and express distress. The latter might have been the case of Portia. Gabriel's seemingly stronger decision to die may be attributable to his frustration from the revelation of Portia's sexual affair with Damus Halion.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, both of them might have feared disclosure of their relationship, which seemed to have been unique, albeit complicated and harmful. Despite serious suicidal ideation resulting in Gabriel's suicide, it is conceivable that both young people actually wanted to live. Gabriel's effort to get back to the shore further supports the possibility of such an interpretation.

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<sup>9</sup> Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, *A Companion to Bioethics* (Malden, Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 315.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Ann Boyd, *Psychiatric Nursing: Contemporary Practice* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2007), 257.

<sup>11</sup> Gabriel in fact witnessed Portia's sexual affair with Damus, which affected him more than he had probably expected. He even stopped singing after that.

Gabriel's suicide plunged Portia into mental and physical inertia. The inner deadness infiltrated almost all spheres of her life, including her motherhood. She was not able to take care of her three sons, fearing that she might hurt them. Except for a few rare exceptions, she did not even try to feel motherly feelings.

Portia [to Raphael] I never wanted sons nor daughters  
and I never pretended otherwise to ya; told ya from  
the start. But ya thought ya could woo me into  
motherhood. Well, it hasn't worked out, has it?  
You've your three sons now, so ya better mind them  
because I can't love them, Raphael. I'm just not  
able.<sup>12</sup> (Act I, Scene vii)

The only powerful experience which could revive her emotions was the ephemeral encounter with Gabriel, though his ghost presence did not bring her long-desired peace of mind, but rather disorientation and anxiety. She seemed to have been imprisoned in the realm between life and death, although her ability to behold the spirit of her dead brother and hear his voice indicates that she had virtually entered the realm of death.

As stated earlier, her physical life was marked by inner deadness. She wished to be left alone with her memories of Gabriel, and withdrew from her husband, children, and relatives. In a broader sense we can talk about depersonalisation, "characterised by feelings of unreality, deadness, and depression".<sup>13</sup> In this sense, her aggressive and vulgar communication (particularly towards Raphael) can be interpreted as a call for help, but it is more probable that she was unable to feel happy in her relation with her husband (and lover as well). Her vulgar aggression made her life more bearable. It thus seems likely that she felt like being suffocated by Raphael's, and in fact anyone's, attempts to revive her motherly and wifely emotions. However, it would be misleading at least to deny Portia's endeavour to reach a compromise solution after Gabriel's suicide and shortly before her own death.

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<sup>12</sup> Carr, *Portia*, 37.

<sup>13</sup> Frank Miller and Edmund A. Bashkin in Anna Motz, *The Psychology of Female Violence: Crimes Against the Body* (Hove, New York: Routledge 2008), 155–156.



Despite her attempt to *enter the world and stay in it*, reality was completely unacceptable to her. She thus created a construct of her own dreamy world, detached from reality, though closely tied to the Belmont River, symbolising both life and death. Portia's affair with Damus Halion as well as the mystified version of her sexual intercourse with Goolan Fintan presented to her husband can be seen as a desperate attempt to break family ties and conceal her still-strong bond with Gabriel. Through these lenses, Portia's marriage to Raphael can be perceived as an attempt to re-establish her self identity and integrity, fragmented by the absence of her second self. Her struggle, however, failed.

Portia's behaviour resembles to a large extent a sort of psychic self-violation through which she tried to distance herself from her surroundings. However, it was not a solution, but rather a source of further pain for everyone involved. *Self-inflicted torture*, understood as an inevitable by-product of self-hate, may furthermore be perceived as a relief from mounting feelings of anxiety and despair, emerging in direct proportion to Gabriel's ghost presence.<sup>14</sup>

There is no doubt that Gabriel was part of Portia's life even after his death.<sup>15</sup> We can naturally speculate as to whether he epitomized a (demonic) reminder of death, or simply a hallucination of Portia's tortured mind. At some moments, reality and hallucination seem to have merged together. Gabriel thus became a source of anxiety and dread, a spirit that was pursuing his sister, whom he attracted to himself by his heavenly voice, which seemed to sound so close, so loud and, paradoxically, so vivid. Common sense leads us to the assumption that her confused mind wandering in faraway dimensions created an image of Gabriel, visible only to her. However, in the light of Carr's play such a claim seems unproductive and untenable. If Gabriel's death represented the reality of Portia's (self-)damnation, abnegation of her motherly role, and condemnation to (life in) death towards which she

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<sup>14</sup> Karen Horney, *Our Inner Conflicts* (London: Routledge, 2001), 392.

<sup>15</sup> Shaun Richards talks about "an image of gendered complementarity" and "the yolk and white in the one egg". However, as stated earlier in this work, Portia's and Gabriel's complementarity or integrity can be viewed as that of alter egos. Shaun Richards, *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Irish Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 159.

was heading, Gabriel's ghost image may imply the actual presence of death in her life reality. Thereby she was forced to re-experience his death through his ghost *revelation*. In terms of parapsychology and occultism, Gabriel's ghost can be viewed as a materialized spirit that had a power to manipulate Portia through his singing. Thinking of ghostly representation in *Portia Coughlan* and within the literary canon raises the question of whether Gabriel's intentions were good or evil. Regarding his triumphant voice after Portia's confession that she was not able to forget him, we may come to the conclusion that his unspoken, yet equally persistent message was *come with me/follow me*. In a particular analogy with traditional ballads (e.g. *The Wedding Shirt*, *Lenore*, etc.), Gabriel may be seen as a lover returning from the dead to claim his beloved. Here a significant inspiration from Ibsen's works, both in terms of the mythic content and the psychological portrayal of a woman, comes to the forefront.

Comparing Portia to Ibsen's famous female protagonist, Shaun Richards noted that even "more intensely than Ibsen with Hedda Gabler, Carr challenges the audience to acknowledge in Portia a being freed from the value-laden terms conventionally used to define a female" and further describes her as a woman "whose rage at life exceeds life itself", and who desires to re-establish the "wholeness of unity" with her dead brother.<sup>16</sup> Portia's complicated character, however, opens a small space for at least a theoretical speculation on the multilayered character of her desire, including both her long-awaited reunion with Gabriel and, possibly, her *rebirth*, which may be viewed as a new beginning, conditioned by the investment of energy in order to reconcile with the past and begin to live. However, Gabriel remained in control of both her past and her present life through his ghost presence, thereby reminding her that she should have *left* with him fifteen years ago. In this way we may assume that she suffered guilt and remorse, which altered her cognition of reality and made her unable to integrate into life.

It is beyond the scope of this article to address every aspect of Portia's past and present life, though it seems evident that the problematic incestuous issue in the play transcends the borders of Portia and Gabriel's relationship. Through subtle allusions (i.e. I. v.) and

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<sup>16</sup> Richards, *The Cambridge Companion*, 159.

eventually Maggie May's direct testimony to Stacia, the incestuous relationship between the parents of the twins was disclosed.

Maggie There's few as does. I'm not even sure Marianne knows. Marianne and Sly is brother and sister. Same father, different mothers, born within a month of one another.<sup>17</sup>  
(Act III, Scene iv)

In this respect Anne O'Reilly argues that Portia and Gabriel's sexual relationship mirrors the incestuous relationship between their parents, which in Maggie May's view was the cause of Gabriel's abnormality.<sup>18</sup> Though it is based on good reasoning, the different characters of the Portia-Gabriel and Marianne-Sly relationships should be pointed out.<sup>19</sup> Whereas Portia and Gabriel knew they were related by consanguinity, Marianne and Sly hardly had any awareness of their blood kinship. Moreover, from Maggie May's occasional mentions we learn that Marianne's mother carefully concealed the truth about Marianne's biological father, being ashamed and fearful that her husband would *kill* her, and Sly's mother was, in contrast, too arrogant and conceited to admit to herself that her husband was unfaithful to her. The marriage was thus unwelcome with both Sly's and Marianne's parents. Eventually, the secret-keeping had fatal consequences for the whole Scully family.

In reviewing Portia's family history, it is evident that it was marked by harmful comments, misunderstandings and psychological wounding (though in the case of Blaize, physical violence or marital abuse can be argued as well).

Focusing on Portia and her struggle with both the past and the present, viewed from various perspectives of family insiders and outsiders, Marina Carr depicted a three-generational picture of a family haunted by and finally caught up in its secrets. Though descriptions provided by family members do not always correspond, they gradually

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<sup>17</sup> Carr, *Portia*, 59.

<sup>18</sup> Anne O'Reilly, *Sacred Play: Soul-Journeys in Contemporary Irish Theatre*. (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2004), 149.

<sup>19</sup> Offspring of incestuous relationships are inclined towards abnormality, morbidity or even mortality. Marie Borland, *Violence in the Family* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), 15.

reveal a complex family portrait, composed of individual experiences of distorted family relations. As Shaun Richards notes, “the tortured family history of betrayal, death and bitterness” is exposed during the funeral ceremony, or rather family gathering, after Portia’s death.<sup>20</sup> The hurling of accusations and insults reaches its highest point just after Portia’s death. Although the web of arguments and perspectives seems subjective, confusing and indecipherable, each *participant* has his/her own truth and knows exactly what he/she is talking about.

Returning to our starting point that Carr’s “characters die from a fatal excess of self-knowledge”, we cannot agree more.<sup>21</sup>

### **3. PORTIA COUGHLAN: THE PRODUCTION AT THE J.K. TYL THEATRE**

The premiere of *Portia Coughlan* at the J.K. Tyl Theatre took place on 15 October 2011 with a translation by Olga Bártová. The director Martin Vokoun created an extraordinary story of an extraordinary woman, storied by horror and mythical elements. Andrea Černá managed to capture a large scale of emotions of a woman stigmatized by her bond with her twin brother. Her thirteen-year marriage, which produced three children, her promiscuity and her detachment from the outside world represented side effects of her uneasy, incomplete and transient being on her arduous road to destruction or salvation.<sup>22</sup> The only constant in her troubled world might have been her family; however, its unity and coherence were irretrievably destroyed by mutual hatred and secrets. The course of events was thus paralysed and, ironically, accelerated by the dysfunction of both the family macrostructure and the microstructure of Portia’s

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<sup>20</sup> Richards, *The Cambridge*, 160.

<sup>21</sup> Frank McGuinness, “Masks: An Introduction to Portia Coughlan,” in *The Theatre of Marina Carr: ‘before rules was made’*, eds. Cathy Leeney and Anna McMullan (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2003), 79.

<sup>22</sup> Ivona Mišterová, *Angloamerické drama na plzeňských scénách* (Plzeň: ZČU, 2011), 206.

inner world. However, everything was *a priori* predetermined by Gabriel's promise to return for his sister.

The only bright spot of Portia's present *being* was a relationship with her aunt Maggie May and an empathic, one-eyed friend Stacia Doyle. Jana Kubátová played Maggie May as a practical woman, a former prostitute, who found peace in a relationship with a good-hearted Senchil Doorley (Michal Štrich). Maggie's humorous, yet well-pointed comments concerning Senchil's purity "Senchil wasn't born, he was knitted on a wet Sunday afternoon," reflected her knowledge and experience of a woman who sold her body for money.<sup>23</sup> Through remarks on Portia's psychic condition, her (at least partial) awareness of Portia's state of mind was signalled. Jana Kubátová and Michal Štrich made a nice, albeit a touchingly funny couple, whose portrayal resonated with Margaret Llewellyn-Jones's view of Maggie May and Senchil as "the humanistic point of focus amid monstrous experience".<sup>24</sup>

The production was based on the contrast between the real and the mysterious realms that intertwined and overlapped both on stage and in Portia's mind in a mutual symbiosis. Reality was represented by Portia's relatives: her spontaneous and destructive paternal grandmother (Zorka Kostková), confined to a wheelchair; her parents Marianne and Sly (Zdeněk Mucha a Monika Švábová); her lover Damus Halion (Zdeněk Rohlíček); the rough and primitive barman Fintan Goolan (Jan Malěř); and her distressed and forgiving husband Raphael (Michal Štěřba). However, Portia's universe would not be complete without her mysterious second self, her brother twin Gabriel, with a heavenly voice (Tomáš Drobil). The dramatic effect was magnified by the scenic arrangement. Gabriel, dressed in white, emerged on a darkened stage in a ray of white light, announcing his presence with singing.

Nikola Tempír created a simple, albeit functional and effective set design, allowing for smooth scene transitions. A corrosive microcosm of family relations was hidden as well as exposed through a cluster of narrow strips of white fabric, whose vertical position indicated both the image of virtual bars and wild reed vegetation growing on the banks of the Belmont River. Modern transparent plastic furniture

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<sup>23</sup> Marina Carr, *Portia Coughlan* (Loughcrew, Oldcastle, County Meath: The Gallery Press, 2010), 55.

<sup>24</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Contemporary Irish Drama*, 78.

created the impression of free space and invisibility. Agnieszka Pátá's stylish costumes provided Portia, the heroine as well as the anti-heroine, first with the colour of innocence and later with the colour of blood, which sharply contrasted with the black attire of the mourners.<sup>25</sup> The mysterious atmosphere was illustrated by Petr Zeman's emotive music. The dramaturge has reduced the original three acts into two with a symbolic break during the day of Portia's funeral, which was partially attached to the celebration of her thirtieth birthday (act I) and partly to the moments preceding her death (act III).

In her study focused on transatlantic productions of *Portia Coughlan*, Melissa Sihra noted that stage production of the play should contain an imaginative space, used as a means of overcoming the distance between the spoken and unspoken, between words and their true meanings. In the Pilsen production, this gap was successfully bridged.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This article aimed to analyse the production of *Portia Coughlan* performed at the J.K. Tyl Theatre in Pilsen. It furthermore attempted to verify the aforementioned theses. To examine the given hypotheses, both primary and secondary sources were used. All three presumptions were confirmed in terms of both primary and secondary research; however, some nuances to the second and third postulates have been found. Moreover, the particular assumptions were connected by the issue of Gabriel's death, which represented a logical link among them.

The first hypothesis examined the deconstruction of Portia's social identity with regard to Gabriel's death and his ghost presence. By tracing the complex history of the Portia-Gabriel relationship and their mutual (not only) erotic fascination, their strong symbiotic attachment, even after Gabriel's death, was confirmed. Regarding the circumstances,

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<sup>25</sup> The red color is confirmed in the text of the play. It was the color of the dress Portia was given by her parents as a gift for her thirtieth birthday.

<sup>26</sup> Melissa Sihra, "Reflections Across Water," in *The Theatre of Marina Carr: 'before rules was made'*, eds. Cathy Leeney and Anna McMullan (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2003), 99.

Gabriel's death represented an intense psychological wounding, which considerably influenced Portia's life.

As stated in the second hypothesis, Portia defined herself through the link to her twin brother. Her abnegation of wifely and motherly roles may have been thus perceived as a reaction to the loss of her brother, which *de facto* meant the loss of (part of) her self. It is also quite likely that she felt partly responsible for his suicide, which they had planned together. Consonant with the fact that Gabriel's death constituted the destruction of Portia's identity, her detachment from family life may have been an indication of ensuing tragic events. Her promiscuity, which was not explicitly mentioned in the introduction, however, relates to the second and third hypotheses that may be then perceived as an attempt to revive her life and hide her desire to spend time on the shores of the Belmont River, where she used to be with Gabriel. As the third hypothesis suggests, Gabriel's death and his *posthumous presence* thrust her into a state of spiritual deadness, which she was not able to overcome and which, fuelled by Gabriel's singing, resulted in her voluntary death.

Finally, it is necessary to argue that the bond between the twins set into motion events that led to their death and accelerated the destruction of the family (though it should be noted that the Scully family had already been stigmatised by the Marianne-Sly relationship and by family hatred).

The Portia-Gabriel bond was the centre of attention of the Pilsen production as well. The strong brother-sister relationship represented an ideal of both psychic and physical closeness, which could not have been reached between Portia and anyone else. Portia's uneasy communication of emotions and her renunciation of motherhood thus became comprehensible only against the backdrop of her symbiotic link with Gabriel and his death. The mysterious world of memories and Gabriel's singing was juxtaposed against Portia's real life, or what was earlier identified as spiritual deadness. It is perhaps not too surprising, that Portia preferred the mysterious world. Based on individual reception of production, it may be further argued that, apart from presenting a particular threat to Portia, Gabriel's ghost image allowed her to maintain the illusion that he was still in *this life*. However, the omnipresent symbolic implication of death was evoked through set design, colour, and music.

Although many questions still remain unanswered, this brief discussion on *Portia Coughlan* may be symbolically concluded with Shaun Richards's words:

The antiheroine's reappearance in Act 3 deepens the tragic pain of her life beyond what may be read as the defeat of her suicide. A space is opened up, structurally affirming the privileged centrality of Portia over the demands of chronology: dramaturgy is reshaped to accommodate her, and in the sequence of performance she transcends her own death.<sup>27</sup>

Though the comment concerns mainly the disruption of chronological time in the play, it also offers an insight into the meaning of Portia's life and death.

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<sup>27</sup> Richards, *The Cambridge Companion*, 160.



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## JOHN NEAL AND ANTEBELLUM SENSATIONAL FICTION

*Jozef Pecina*

**ABSTRACT:** John Neal is considered to be the father of subversive fiction in America. In the novels such as *Seventy-six*, *Logan* or *Errata* he experimented with violence and eroticism that would dominate American sensational literature in the antebellum era. Neal tried to create his own literary model which put an emphasis on the American setting, colloquial language and particularly on the emotions of his characters. The article examines the elements of violence and pornography in Neal's works and discusses the role they (these elements) played in the development of antebellum sensational fiction.

**KEY WORDS:** sensational fiction, antebellum era, violence, pornography, John Neal

John Neal (1793–1876) was an interesting figure of American literary scene of the early nineteenth century. This prolific author, today almost forgotten, was for a brief period more widely known abroad than any other American writer probably with the exception of Washington Irving (1783–1859). Although before he turned forty he penned nine novels, a tragedy, two long poems and co-authored a history of American Revolution, only one novel was ever reprinted. Nowadays, Neal figures in literary biographies as a minor writer of undisciplined energies and the “discoverer” of Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849). He, however, played an important role in the development of American sensational fiction.

Sensational novels appeared in the United States in 1830s.<sup>1</sup> Authors of sensational fiction created a distinctly American irrational style, characterized by linguistic wildness, brutal violence, pornography and some of the most perverse scenes in American literature.

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<sup>1</sup> Sensational novels later inspired comic strips, which eventually led to the development of comics. See Michaela Weiss, “From Superman to Maus: Jews in American Comics” *Theories and Practices. Proceedings of Third International Conference of Anglophone Studies*, ed. Roman Trušnik et al. (Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2012), 274.

Sensational literature was not a uniquely American phenomenon; it had its precedents in British criminal biographies which had been in print since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. American publishers pirated these sensational pamphlets and they became hugely popular. In addition to them, in the early nineteenth century journals such as *The American Magazine of Wonders* answered the growing demand for the sensational and disgusting. *The Magazine of Wonders*, first published in 1809, ran stories about topics like cannibalism, live burial, or destructive whales and earned popularity especially among the working class.<sup>2</sup> Working class was also among the most ardent readers of penny newspapers which appeared in 1830s and started to feed the American public a diet of horror, gore and perversity. The interest of working class in the sensational and disgusting and its satisfaction can be traced to this period.

Reynolds divides antebellum sensational fiction into three subgenres, Moral Adventure, Dark Adventure and Subversive fiction.<sup>3</sup> In my article, I will focus on the third one, Subversive fiction. Similarly to the Dark Adventure, Subversive Fiction featured gory plots and social outcasts, but it gradually developed into a literature of protest. Authors of subversive novels took the side of oppressed groups such as Native Americans, women or urban working class and exposed what was seen as the hypocrisy and secret corruption among statesmen, lawyers, publishers or clergymen. One of the main purposes was the criticism of American society.<sup>4</sup> The most famous representatives of subversive fiction are George Lippard (1822–1854), whose *Quaker City* became the most widely sold American novel before *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and George Thompson (1823–c. 1873), the father of American pornography, but the features of subversive literature can be found also in the works of John Neal.

Neal started his literary career in 1817 with a publication of a novel named *Keep Cool*. A year after, he wrote *Battle of Niagara*, a long

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<sup>2</sup> David Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 172-3.

<sup>3</sup> Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 183.

<sup>4</sup> Jozef Pecina, "Antebellum Sensational Novels and Subversion of Domesticity" *American and British Studies Annual* 3 (2010): 138.

poem, and more novels quickly followed. With marvelous rapidity, Neal published six novels in an eight year period and he boasted:

*Keep Cool* was written in hot weather in 1816. *Logan* I wrote in six or eight weeks. *Randolph*, I began Nov. 26, 1821 and finished in thirty-six days; *Errata* was begun Jan. 8, 1822 and finished in thirty-nine days; *Seventy-Six*, begun Feb. 16, 1822 and finished March 19, 1822 – four days off – in twenty-seven days.<sup>5</sup>

Besides writing novels, he also pursued his law studies and wrote for the press. His rapidity is the reason why each of these novels is hectic and unpolished and it is not surprising that Michal Peprník calls Neal “an ambitious Byronic stylist, but otherwise a careless and chaotic fabulist.”<sup>6</sup> His murderous tempo is best illustrated in Lillie Loshe’s observation: “Apart from his general incoherency, his fatal defect was a total lack of any idea when to stop. One has a vision of him gaily writing away until the ink bottle runs dry, and then scrawling in pencil a few deaths and an insanity or two in order to end the matter.”<sup>7</sup>

Neal decided to create a distinctly American style, based on native materials and colloquial language. He rejected both Washington Irving, whom he labeled American Addison and Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851), whom he called American Scott. What he sought in his writing was an American story:

a brave, hearty, original book, brimful of descriptive truth – a historical and familiar truth; crowded with real American character; alive with real American peculiarities; got up after no model, however excellent; woven to no pattern, however beautiful; in imitation of nobody, however great.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Donald A. Sears, *John Neal* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 34.

<sup>6</sup> Michal Peprník, *Rané romány Jamese Fenimora Coopera: Topologie počátků amerického románu* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2011), 9.

<sup>7</sup> Theresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 62.

<sup>8</sup> Donald A. Ringe, “The American Revolution in Romance“, *American Literature* 49. 3 (Nov., 1977): 353, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2924987>.

Neal eventually became one of the most outspoken participants in a debate between followers of polished British prose and those who called for distinctive American wildness, roughness and savagery. It is a paradox that he turned to British form, a gothic novel, when writing his own American story, called *Logan, the Mingo Chief: A Family History*. According to Theresa Goddu, gothic served Neal's aim to attack literary conventions by capturing wild emotions in a forceful language.<sup>9</sup> But *Logan* is Neal unrestrained. Even the twentieth century critics have trouble dealing with this novel. Alexander Cowie states that "Logan is not a nice story. Superstition, supernatural suggestions, brutality, sensuality, colossal hatred, delirium, rape, insanity, murder are the stuff out of which Neal weaves a Gothic tapestry never quite paralleled by Charles Brockden Brown or Poe."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, over the course of several hundred pages, reader struggles through incest, miscegenation, murders and massacres, madmen and mistaken identities, all of which became standard themes for sensational fiction in 1840s.

Excessive violence and brutality that became typical of both Thompson and Lippard, is to be found all over *Logan*. The novel opens with a massacre and this theme runs through the entire story. In opening chapter, the family of Logan, a British noble turned Indian, is massacred by white settlers. Logan then begets a son, who

was nourished with the blood of white men. From his very infancy, even while he was lashed to the tree branch and swung by the tempestuous wind, the scalp of many an enemy blackened and dried within his reach; and often were his little fingers reddened by the trophies torn, by the hand of his father, from the dying white man, and flung, yet fresh and reeking, into the basket that contained the boy.<sup>11</sup>

In another violent scene, Logan struggles with his Indian enemy, whose blood gushes from his throat, ears, nostrils and eyeballs. During an Indian attack on the village, the defenders respond with utmost brutality, and soon, Indian heads are rolling on the ground, scalps whirling to the earth, Indians are cut to pieces with blood

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<sup>9</sup> Goddu, *Gothic America*, 53.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Sears, *John Neal*, 40.

<sup>11</sup> John Neal, *Logan, the Mingo Chief: A Family History* (London, 1840), 3.

spouting like a fountain, everything in the presence of women and children. The author adds few more gory scenes while Harold, the Byronic hero of the novel, is aboard a ship to England. They pass a slave ship from which corpses are thrown into the ocean and they slowly float around; Neal vividly describes horrid details of the fish-eaten bodies. At the end, Neal massacres the entire Logan family – Logan kills his son Harold, Harold's Indian lover Loena dies from shock, Logan is stabbed by his second son Oscar, who dies of his madness and his white lover Elvira dies of broken heart.

Gory details are not limited only to *Logan*, they are also abundant in Neal's war novel *Seventy-Six or, Love and Battle*, where battle scenes are described with details not approached by any other author in decades to come: "When I came to my recollection I was smeared all over with the blood and brains of a poor fellow upon whom I had fallen. I arose and attempted to stand. There were at least thirty or forty human beings about me, dead and dying: the snow all stained and trodden."<sup>12</sup> In every other battle scene of the novel, there are at least severed limbs and rolling heads. Gory violence in Neal's novels serves no other purpose but to heighten the sensational effect.

Another typical feature of subversive novels was their eroticism. Some of them, particularly those written by George Thompson in late 1840s (*Venus in Boston*, *Gay Girls of New York*, *Fanny Greeley; or, Confessions of a Free-love Sister*), are openly pornographic. Sensational authors were rather skillful at inventing scenes in which women were at least partially naked. A dress accidentally unfastened during a scuffle, woman coming out of the bath, sleeping or lying unconscious with parts of her body exposed, a corpse brought before a class of medical students – these and many others were excuses for authors to dwell on the female body, with the emphasis given on the "swelling bosoms", "snowy globes", "White Mountains" or "rose-tipped hillocks."<sup>13</sup> John Neal can be considered a father of this voyeuristic style. In his fourth novel *Errata*, he describes a woman who is wearing "a thin, blue-striped muslin dress; a sort of morning gown - open before, and high in the

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<sup>12</sup> John Neal, *Seventy-six or, Love and Battle* (London: J. Cunningham, 1840), 27, <http://ia700408.us.archive.org/33/items/seventysixlove00nealrich/seventysixlove00nealrich.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 216.

neck; but so very thin, as to show her fine bosom; and, particularly, her right breast, which was surprisingly beautiful and natural – unsustained by any corset or stays, almost as if it had been naked”<sup>14</sup> There are many more examples of similar scenes in his *Logan*.

As I mentioned earlier, Lippard and Thompson, the authors who produced the most daringly erotic fiction of the era, also distinguished themselves by a fascination for savage violence. Their novels present a rather unique combination of gross violence and eroticism. In Thompson’s works, a chapter of orgiastic sex is often followed by a chapter of similarly orgiastic violence. However, decades before him, John Neal anticipated this combination. There is a scene in *Logan* which reflects a really perverted imagination of the author. A governor of the colony is wounded in a bloody skirmish and the surgeon discusses his condition with governor’s wife, Lady Elvira:

“Wounded?” said she, to the old family surgeon who was supporting his head. “No, my lady, I believe not,” answered he, raising his eyes and **dwelling with the rapturous delight of a parent** upon the beautiful proportions of her neck, and the swell of her bosom through the thin muslin that covered it, both rendered visible just then by the action of her arm, as she extended it, and let fall the gathered drapery that had till then protracted her.<sup>15</sup>

Even more surprising than family’s surgeon delight of a parent is Lady Elvira’s reaction, since “she neither blushed nor trembled – he had been her family physician, and she loved him like daughter.” Interesting fact takes place a few pages later, when her husband, the governor, sees “her swelling bosom, which, from the nature of her position...were visible for a moment”<sup>16</sup> and trembles with delight, she is embarrassed and springs from his embrace blushing all over. Lady Elvira has another of her moments when the Indians attack the village, the governor is wounded again, and she rushes towards him with “her dishevelled tresses flying in the wind-her bosom naked-her garments, of lillied

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 212.

<sup>15</sup> Neal, *Logan*, 13, emphasis mine.

<sup>16</sup> Neal, *Logan*, 23.

whiteness, rent and stained with blood.”<sup>17</sup> Partially or totally exposed bosoms combined with blood or violence are to be seen in the novel a few more times.

Sympathy with oppressed groups was yet another standard feature of sensational novels, and the characters of likeable criminals became an influential stereotype of the Subversive fiction of 1840s. This stereotype, however, can be also traced to the works of John Neal. In Neal’s *Logan*, such character is the eponymous Indian chief Logan. Despite all the sadistic violence in his campaign against whites, sympathies of the reader are on his side because of the massacre of his family and a white record of gross injustice to Native Americans.<sup>18</sup>

Neal’s importance for the development of American popular fiction is twofold. Firstly, he was the first American author to demonstrate that the native material and the frontier setting can be used for the purposes of the gothic novel. And secondly, with the use of gory images, stereotypical characters and eroticism in his novels Neal paved the way for the authors of Subversive fiction, whose works became extremely popular in decades to come. Neal’s novels are excessive and flawed in almost every possible way, but they had a great influence on the rising generation of American authors.

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<sup>17</sup> Neal, *Logan*, 37.

<sup>18</sup> See Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 200.



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## TERRY MCMILLAN: LEARNING TO BREATHE

Veronika Portešová

**ABSTRACT:** In most of her books, Terry McMillan (1951) has chosen to portray a supportive community of women and feature strong bonds among them. Her acclaimed romance *Waiting to Exhale* (1992) is supposed to have changed the African American novel forever. In the sequel, *Getting to Happy* (2010), she revisits the same four women protagonists. The objective of the paper is, first, to argue McMillan's position within the contemporary popular African American women writers' voices. Second, a closer look is to be taken at African American midlife women protagonists, as McMillan carries them through their struggles. She shifts from depicting their frustrating search for a good man to reaffirming the importance of friendship and chasing that perennial goal – getting to happy. Having exhaled, the protagonists are trying to learn to breathe.

**KEYWORDS:** contemporary African American women writers, Black, romance novel, sister, sisterhood, gender, female friendship

Terry McMillan's romance novel *Waiting to Exhale* published in 1992 was more than just a bestselling novel; its publication is a touchstone in African American literary history. McMillan's sassy and vibrant story about four Black women struggling to find love and their place in the world touched a cultural nerve, inspired a blockbuster film, and generated her a devoted audience. Not only this author provoked a large amount of women of African descent in the United States to read but also, with this novel, she crossed the colour line, depicting a "universal experience,"<sup>1</sup> that is something millions of women have experienced all over the world. Her importance extended beyond her blood kin; *Essence* magazine even recognized her literary descendents as "Terry's children," those younger writers developing the urban contemporary mode she came up with – for instance Virginia DeBerry, Donna Grant, or Sharon Mitchell.<sup>2</sup>

McMillan, on the other hand, is often criticised for two reasons. First, as Richards suggests, some academics and/or critics claim that

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<sup>1</sup> Paulette Richards, *Terry McMillan: A Critical Companion* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Qtd. in Richards, *Terry McMillan*, 18–19.

McMillan's description of affluent middle-class lifestyles "seems to avoid addressing the political and social issues that African American literature has traditionally emphasized."<sup>3</sup> Second, some scholars label her novels "as improbable or even frivolous because they do not grapple with racial tensions the way African American literature had in the past."<sup>4</sup> In other words,

African American intergender relationships are defined within some particular significant parameters like patriarchy, gender roles, love, and a history of enslavement and discrimination. Current discussions of such relationships miss their complexity when they omit these conceptual perspectives and the unique historical and present-day experiences of African Americans.<sup>5</sup>

Simultaneously, as Prager states, "a central remarkable feature of the American racism is the society's inability to experience black individuality."<sup>6</sup> Giving the audience varied images of African American women to read about is something that only rarely happens in the White mainstream culture.

Therefore, it is the aim of the paper to show that McMillan's ability to depict and appreciate the rich subjective experience of African Americans as distinct from their racial standing<sup>7</sup> does not mean her ignorance of racial issues but represents a kind of effective antiracist tactics

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<sup>3</sup> Richards, *Terry McMillan*, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Richards, *Terry McMillan*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Claudia Lawrence-Webb, Melissa Littlefield, and Joshua N. Okundaye, "African American Intergender Relationships: A Theoretical Exploration of Roles, Patriarchy, and Love," *Journal of Black Studies* vol. 34, no. 5 (May 2004): 623.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Prager, "Self Reflection(s): Subjectivity and Racial Subordination in the Contemporary African-American Writer," *Social Identities* vol. 1, no. 2 (August 1995): 355.

<sup>7</sup> For Patricia Hill Collins, e.g., this attitude means a high degree of ignorance and suppressing of the historical specificity of the African Americans within the US society, though. She continuously uses the term assimilationist "colour-blind racism," explaining that despite the change of the legal climate, new forms of racism are put into practice. *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 46–47.

which has been widely recognized by her heterogeneous audience. In addition, the genre of romance novel<sup>8</sup> itself tends to be underrated for several reasons which are often based on flawed conceptions of what a romance novel should offer.<sup>9</sup> Such lack of respect, however, goes with an enormous popularity among different ethnic backgrounds, at it was suggested above. As a result, the paper also aims to show that the genre – as represented by Terry McMillan today – is not directed to female passivity or powerlessness, compensating for the audience's deficiencies of real life.<sup>10</sup>

In *Waiting to Exhale* McMillan weaves the story around four *sistas*,<sup>11</sup> protagonists who are all in their thirties and support one another through personal and professional challenges and successes. The women living in Phoenix in the late 1980s are savvy enough to manage every element of their lives, except finding fulfilment in love. The book's title stems from their collective anticipation of exhaling only when they have achieved a satisfying relationship with a (preferably Black) man. In their opinion, they do everything possible to enact the change they seek in their lives, but stereotypes and bad habits seem to undermine their efforts.

As far as the narrative situation is concerned, McMillan uses an intriguing pattern of alternating first person voices of two of the protagonists, Savannah and Robin, with an omniscient narrator in individual chapters, giving an account of Bernadine and Gloria's stories. Each chapter simultaneously concentrates on the common story from the viewpoint of the corresponding protagonist but also pays attention to the

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<sup>8</sup> The terms romance and romance novel are consistently used as synonymous, e.g., by Tania Modlevski or Barbara Fuchs.

<sup>9</sup> For instance a romance novel is often seen as simply limited to a book with a central love story which makes the main focus of the novel, and an optimistic ending with the purpose to satisfy the audience emotionally, and sexual love presented in an idealized manner.

<sup>10</sup> For more information about critical points related to romance novels see Pamela Regis, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 3–7.

<sup>11</sup> Various meanings of the word precisely reflect the complex bonds among the characters. In this case, the word does not denote females who have the same parents, but women who are members of the same race, church, and religious group; additionally, it is used as a form of address to women one has strong feelings of loyalty and friendship towards.

rest of the characters, creating a web of events by employing numerous dialogues in vernacular African American English. Savannah Jackson is the leading character of the novel and the one who enjoys the most profound self-development, being gifted with sufficient self-reflexion and given the largest space in the book. Savannah is a middle-class professional African American woman who moves in search of work opportunities and eligible men. In Phoenix she joins her former college roommate, Bernadine Harris, a mother of two children left by her husband John. Robin Stokes, by contrast with Savannah, is a typical naïve narrator whose foolishness and blindness are to be discovered by the readers by means of irony. Gloria Mathews, a single mother and owner of a beauty and hair salon in Phoenix where the other protagonists socialize, must come to terms with her son's adulthood and realize that she, too deserves to be loved.

In comparison with numerous novels written by acclaimed African American women writers at the beginning of the 1990s,<sup>12</sup> McMillan's objective is not to primarily deal with the shadows of the Black past in her romance novels but to portray strong and dynamic women characters who might further encourage her African American female audience. Nevertheless, McMillan does not avoid depicting several phenomena that prevent them from reaching happiness related, with no doubt, to their race, class, and gender. First of all, it is a considerable lack of suitable Black men who would become their partners. Savannah describes her concern about men with the following words. "And I can't lie. Now I worry. I worry about if and when I'll ever find the *right* man, if I'll ever be able to exhale. The more I try not to think about it, the more I think about it."<sup>13</sup> Second, taking into consideration the fact that African American men are more likely to marry outside race than vice versa,<sup>14</sup> refusing to play by the Black men's

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<sup>12</sup> In this respect, for example Paule Marshall who wrote the novel *Daughters* in 1991, Jamaica Kincaid and her novel *Lucy* from the same year, or Alice Walker's *Possessing a Secret of Joy* from 1992 can be mentioned.

<sup>13</sup> Terry McMillan. *Waiting to Exhale* (New York: Viking Press, 1992), 14. Further cited in text as *WTE*.

<sup>14</sup> Maria Root comments, "[m]arriages between black men and white women more than doubled from the figures in the 1970s Census. . . . In contrast, the rate of marriages between white men and black women remained similar." *Love's Revolution: Interracial Marriage* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 184. For more information about interracial marriage patterns and general trends see also pages 6 and 113.

rules, such women take the risk of being alone. Robin's irresponsible boyfriend Troy threatens her, "You know what? You all black bitches are all alike. First you complain that don't nobody want your asses or know how to treat you, and then when a man shows a genuine interest in you, you act simple. And all y'all wanna know why we got out with the white women" (WTE, 241). Third, interracial relationships are perceived as a traitorous act not only for African American women but also a symbolic one for the whole community of sistas. Bernadine's spirit seems to be broken: "[b]ut he beat her to the punch. Not only was he leaving *her*. Not only was he leaving her for another woman. He was leaving her for a *white woman*. Bernadine hasn't expected this kind of betrayal, this kind of insult" (WTE, 25). Moreover, Black men who have lost connection with their folks' community and conform to the expectations of the White majority simply become unacceptable partners. Bernadine's contempt towards John can be seen from these words. "Over the last five or six years, it became apparent to her that John was doing nothing but imitating the white folks he'd seen on TV or read about in *Money* magazine. At first, he thought he was J. R. Ewing, then a black clone of Donald Trump, and finally he settled on Cliff Huxtable" (WTE, 26). African American men's lack of commitment and inability to attach emotionally to their female partners on a long-term basis is another factor that plays role in the discussion of the protagonists' happiness. Savannah makes a very apt explanation: "[t]he deal is men are just pussies. They're scared to make the first move because they're too worried we might want their asses and then they'd have to stop playing games, grow up, and act like men. That's what they're terrified of. It's not *us* . . . it's as if they're automatically assuming they're our next victim, a target we've picket out. (WTE, 196–7).

The second group of factors that influence African American women's happiness simultaneously has to do with the wellbeing of their closest ones. The above mentioned lack of commitment and responsibility prevents Black fathers from becoming role models in their sons' lives.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> An interesting point is made by Gates and Mahalik in connection to gender roles and stereotypical view of strong African American women and their weak male counterparts. "The nurturing components of African American men's gender role are also diminished as a result of economic problems. Feelings of inadequacy in the provider role create stress for these men that leads them to withdraw emotionally, if not physically, from their women and limit their involvement in

Gloria contemplates about her seventeen-year-old son Tarik, “the one who hasn’t broken [her] heart” (*WTE*, 382) unlike other men. “Also, at times like this, she wished Tarik had a father who lived under the same roof. She was tired of dealing with all this puberty and growing-up shit by herself. She should’ve had a man in this house a long time ago. Somebody who executed authority much better than she did” (*WTE*, 183). Tarik expresses his understanding of the situation with these words:

You don’t get it, do you? That man is not my *father*. . . . If he was my father, he’d’a been there to help you take care of me. If he was my father, he’d’a more than drop a check in the mail. . . . I know a whole lot of dudes out here making babies and bragging about it . . . anybody can *make* a baby but it takes a man to be a father (*WTE*, 64).

To make things worse, Tarik’s father David reveals he is gay, which does not add to Tarik’s self-esteem. Besides single parenthood, one more phenomenon is connected with the protagonists’ families from the social point of view and that is the negligence of rather unsuitable conditions in which some African Americans and especially the elderly ones are to live due to the insufficient financial support of the government. Savannah’s mother fights hard to survive on pension and food stamps meanwhile Robin’s father suffers from Alzheimers but her family cannot afford to hire a full-time nurse for him. The last example of how McMillan tackles the topic of social as well as racial inequality are Savannah’s professional aspirations. In order to have a job which would be beneficial for her community, she decides to choose one which is less paid than her previous one. She comments, “They’re not paying me anything. And you want to know why?” Robin’s reaction is, “[d]on’t tell me. Because you’re black.” Savannah concludes, “[t]hat’s only part of it. Of all the areas in broadcasting, public relations is the least respected. It’s all full of women, that’s why. The good old boys don’t see it as having the same impact as, say, the advertising and marketing departments” (*WTE*, 195). It is necessary to point out in this respect that none of the protagonists finds herself recruited to join any prestigious corporation or elite institution only to find

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their children’s lives.” Qtd. Lawrence-Webb, Littlefield, and Okundaye, “African American Intergender Relationships: A Theoretical Exploration of Roles, Patriarchy, and Love,” 630.

herself confined to a new designated place. Social mobility as one of the tangible gains of the post-civil rights era puts a stop to viewing African American women as victims of general social injustice.<sup>16</sup>

Towards the end of the novel, it becomes obvious that a man is not something the four protagonists could not live without. Next to Bernadine's second marriage with James and Gloria's relationship with her widowed neighbour Marvin McMillan juxtaposes Robin who decides to keep her child even though its father is not willing to take his responsibility as well as Savannah who refuses to spend her life passively, *waiting to exhale*.

As a matter of fact, I feel pretty damn good. And I mean that. To be honest with you, I do believe in my heart that I will meet *him*. I just don't know when. I know it won't be until I honestly accept the fact that I'm okay all by myself. That I can survive, that I can feel good being Savannah Jackson, without a man. (...) I can't put myself on hold, waiting for a damn man (*WTE*, 348).

*Getting to Happy* is the sequel that resumes the story of the same women protagonists approximately fifteen years later.<sup>17</sup> The issues of the protagonists' youth have morphed into new ones. Not only they have to deal with these issues such as failed relationships or businesses and second mortgages but there are also their children and grandchildren whose lives are not idyllic either. As for the amount of characters in the sequel, there is an apparent increase. Unfortunately, the amount of minor characters in combination with the appearing and reappearing ones who form members of the protagonists' families results in a somewhat lengthy and less vivid descriptions. Still, the dialogues remain brilliant.

The point of view in this book differs from the previous one in some respects. McMillan keeps the same structure of the book, i.e., the chapters revolve around one of the four protagonists. The story they share

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<sup>16</sup> The opposite is thought by Collins who points at the illusion of social mobility in connection with population movement; as a result, according to her, "this same movement seemingly replicates a long-standing hierarchical power relations of race, economic class, and gender." Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Words* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 13.

<sup>17</sup> As far as the setting in time is concerned, there are direct references to 2005 and several events that marked the year, for instance the Katrina hurricane.



is told by the corresponding first person narrators (Savannah and Robin) or the omniscient one (telling the story with respect to Bernadine and Gloria). This time, however, there are no shifts from the first person to the third person narrator within the chapters. The narrative strategy pattern used is simplified – the previous one would have been too intricate, taking into consideration the amount of minor characters, and therefore literally unsustainable. Still, Savannah is provided with most space again, being the character with the largest capability of insight. After her marriage with Isaac ends on rather friendly terms, she realizes her happiness does not depend on anybody else but her again. Six years before the readers revisit Bernadine Harris-Wheeler, she finds out her husband James (or Jesse, which is his real name) has been married simultaneously to two women. Besides overcoming her addiction on antidepressants, she must cope with the fact that her daughter is a lesbian, but mainly forgive her ex-husbands. Robin Stokes, a single mother, compulsive shopper, and insurance executive trapped in the same boring job, still dreams about getting married in a white dress. The man she rejected in the past due to his looks and lack of attractiveness reappears in her life and turns out to be the one she marries at last. The loss of her job means an opportunity to find out what she likes doing and to discover some more stimulating activities both workwise and in her free time. The only happily married protagonist, Gloria Matthews-King, loses her husband in a local gang gunfight. Her son Tarik is a policeman with three children and a wife of questionable moral stature now. The fact that Nickida, Gloria's daughter-in-law is caught red-handed, cheating on Tarik together with her stay in jail paradoxically cause that Gloria becomes busy with her grandchildren, which heals her wounds.

There is a partial overlap in what prevents the protagonists from being happy in their early/mid-fifties in comparison with the first novel, *Waiting to Exhale*. They enter the sequel experienced enough not to play their happiness on one card. In the author's note, McMillan observes, "apparently exhaling is a relative state that is difficult to sustain."<sup>18</sup> Happiness becomes more than a state of mind to reach but a process and a way of getting to happy one contributes to. In this process, alienation from one another, the healing friendship they once shared as well as loss of

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<sup>18</sup> Terry McMillan, *Getting to Happy* (New York: Viking Press, 2010). Further cited in text as *GTH*.

interest in the group they were a part of<sup>19</sup> lead to their disconnection from the healing Black community. Trying to put the four back together, Savannah claims: “We’ve been friends a long time. I always thought friends tried to do things that make each others’ lives better. I know I run my mouth a lot and I’m an idealist, so you guys can tell me to go straight to hell if you want to. I’m just tired of us feeling like there’s no tomorrow” (*GTH*, 253).

The above described lack of available decent African American men gains a new meaning, especially to those protagonists who are mothers. Robin, Bernadine, and Gloria’s children face similar problems as the protagonist themselves did before. Consequently, the absence of men not only as partners but also fathers also becomes visible in the sequel. Savannah utters true words speaking in jest as a reply at a supermarket to a cashier who asks her whether she found everything she needed: “As a matter of fact, I didn’t. What aisle are good husbands on, Mary?” (*GTH*, 182). Crossing the colour line remains a significant issue they deal with; this time, however, in a more tolerant manner. Robin actually considers dating White men in order to have more men to choose from and her daughter Sparrow explains how beneficial it might be for her as a young Black woman. “I don’t like them because they’re white, Mom. I just like them. A lot of black guys at school aren’t attracted to girls like me . . . [white boys] make me feel special. Unique. To be honest. They make me feel even prouder than I already am to be black” (*GTH*, 24). A new dimension of Black men’s unwillingness to commit in a serious relationship is shown by McMillan. Bitterly disappointed Robin completely gives up the idea of online dating when she realizes how many men put on fake identities there, “this is not a game, Dark Angel. There are millions of women out there hoping to meet a decent man online, and if your behaviour represents what’s out there, I’m bowing out now” (*GTH*, 229). Fake identities that African American men take go as far as to becoming bigamists as in case of James/Jesse. Disappointment in men becomes even more visible when the protagonists discuss it in relation to their youth and expectations back then. Savannah claims,

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<sup>19</sup> The organization of Black women professionals referred to is Black Women on the Move, in the books abbreviated BWOTM.

I think it might weigh more now than it did at thirty-six. So many people think because we're older we should be used to failed relationships and bad marriages, but especially disappointment. How do you get used to it? . . . Back in the 70s I wasn't preparing for the worst that could happen. I was preoccupied with the best that could happen. . . . we were honest. About most things, but definitely our feelings. . . we thought boys would grow up to become decent men who would love us as hard as we loved them (*GTH*, 74).

On one hand, for the protagonists there are more relatives to worry about but, at the same time, these worry but also care about the four protagonists reciprocally, e.g., Robin's daughter Sparrow.

Naturally, as they get older, the four protagonists face the loss of their beloved ones, for instance Marvin as in case of Gloria, as well as health problems they have themselves. Robin suffers from various symptoms of menopause; Gloria fights being overweight and blood pressure after her husband's death. Even Savannah, who has always paid attention to a healthy lifestyle, is diagnosed with diabetes as a partial result of her being overweight and forced to change her way of life.

More serious problems concerning not only the Black youth are also presented in the novel. Savannah expresses her concern about the enormous amount of Black men incarcerated in the American prisons in general, "why prisons are so over-populated with black men. This is how it starts. It breaks my heart how easy breaking the law is for some of us. And how hard it is to deal with when they get caught" (*GTH*, 215). Also Jesse and Russell, Sparrow's father, spend several years in jail. Further, the topics of drugs and pornography are not avoided either. Bernadine has been medicating herself with Xanax for years, Gloria's daughter-in-law and Savannah's nephew smoke marihuana, and Savannah's husband Isaac spends more time browsing the porn web pages than with his wife before their break-up. Teenage pregnancy is also one of the social problems tackled.

All in all, however, the protagonists' ageing goes hand-in-hand with gaining personal traits unavailable at the age of thirty. These include wisdom, experience, patience, and tolerance, a better capability to overcome one's fears and to be grateful for second chances, what they have, and can do. What is more important, they are more likely to open

their hearts and forgive those who did them wrong as well as to learn how to stop feeling like victims because it of no good anyway.

In *Waiting to Exhale*, McMillan celebrates female bonding. Although it is to be read between the lines, girlfriends assume top status in the hierarchy of important relationships for women, being a constant emotional support to one another. These women in their mid- or late 30s provide solace to one another in a way that family members, husbands, and boyfriends fail, partying, crying, and, recovering together ultimately. By contrast, in the sequel, these women face all kinds of contemporary challenges resulting from the existence of elderly relatives, growing up children and even grandchildren, and a changing job market; simultaneously, they have stopped socializing with one another. In addition, their friendship has changed, for they used to “run their mouths on the phone half the night” (*GTH*, 9) but now they e-mail and text each other now and then. In spite of that, suffering, losses, and personal catastrophes paradoxically turn into opportunities to find their way towards one another again, which results in their decision to make their existence rewarding again.

The importance of a female community must be accentuated. As Collins and other scholars observe, Black women’s community work had several gender-specific outcomes in the past. Meanwhile these outcomes have benefitted African Americans as a collectivity, Collins argues these came at special costs for African American women.<sup>20</sup> The opposite can be said about the groups and bonds these particular women protagonists take part in: in the contemporary romance novels, Black women are not taught to see their needs as secondary to those of their community, whether it be their family, church, or neighbourhood. On the contrary, the groups they are active in – in particular the circle of close friends as well as BWOTM – use the model of organizing first around personal advocacy for their own interests. In addition, if their loved ones’ needs represent something the protagonists cannot be in concord with, they dare reject to offer a helping hand as in case of Savannah whose sister Sheila asks her to accommodate her marihuana-smoking son for the summer.

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<sup>20</sup> Collins, *Fighting Words*, 27.

Although it is true that McMillan revisits the genre of romantic novel,<sup>21</sup> the book is much more than a desperate searching for an ideal man or longing for justice. Both books examined in this paper are about personal growth and development of the protagonists to a different extent. McMillan has written an account of professionally successful and personally attractive women who are left wondering why they are still alone in *Waiting to Exhale*. The title of the book might seem somewhat misleading, since the notion of waiting has the connotation of passivity. The four protagonists, however, take an active approach to their quest for fulfilment. In *Getting to Happy* – despite the increase of the amount of minor characters and the resulting complexity of the plot – McMillan has managed not to compromise her characters' identity. The psychic development of all four protagonists is real-to-life and makes both books authentic. On the other hand, the sequel does not offer many surprises. The ladies learn to cope with their vices, to reach a better understanding of their lives, and, through meditation, to breathe. Bernadine teaches them how to do it:

The idea is to focus on each breath. All you want to do is keep your mind on breathing. . . . Your mind is going to jump all over the place. The idea is each time it happens, bring your focus back to your breathing . . . when we inhale, we're breathing in hope and vitality, and when we exhale, we're breathing out hurt and anger. You can breathe in faith and confidence and breathe out doubt and despair. And so on (*GTH*, 357–8).

The anticipated happy ending, which is generally assumed to form an integral part of any romance novel,<sup>22</sup> is reached by various conflicts and events that push forward the action of the book and tragedies that make it possible to close the plot with a reunion of the four sistas.

The difference between *Waiting to Exhale* and *Getting to Happy* basically is that the concept of happiness becomes gradually enriched.

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<sup>21</sup> What is more, Richards sees McMillan as “the foremother of an entirely new genre.” *The Companion to Terry McMillan*, 18.

<sup>22</sup> Ironically enough, happy endings in the form of marriage or engagement which are so typical of romance novels often face the fiercest condemnation of the critics. “The marriage, they claim, enslaves the heroine, and, by extension, the reader.” Regis, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel*, 9.

Meanwhile in the first one to be happy has to do with finding the perfect job or the perfect man, it becomes a more complex notion in the latter one. It metamorphoses into the ability to cope with one's loss, injustice, and addiction. All these are connected with the ability to get rid of self-delusion. The theme of addiction as compensation for lack of something important carries through the sequel: Bernadine's struggle with antidepressants, Robin's trips to the mall, Savannah's too sharp and critical standpoint, and Gloria's struggle with food are all symptoms of the same thing. Their disappointment with others as well as themselves must necessarily transform into understanding and forgiveness.

Most critics and academics are reluctant to rank McMillan among reputable African American women writers; the same, however, cannot be said about numerous reviewers of popular newspapers and magazines as well as television hosts, who are in favour of what she participates in, be it her novels, essays, interviews, etc. She is often criticized for writing outside race and therefore not taking the racial as well as social issues seriously enough. Simultaneously, her settings are purely Black worlds – places where the White presence mostly tends to be insignificant and serves as a mere background to the African American contemporary experience. The White element occurs only as a part of interracial marriages and relationships in both novels.

To conclude, the importance of Terry McMillan is indubitable. As it was mentioned, she has encouraged millions of people to read – regardless of their backgrounds, race, or social status. For years, she has been successfully negotiating the traditional genre of romance novel, using purely Black settings, portraying strong, positive, dynamic, and authentic characters. Despite the fact that the two novels are women centred and male characters are therefore far from being their focal points, McMillan does not take a standpoint of only criticizing the Black males. Instead, she explains what reason might lead them to a particular behaviour. Doing so, she avoids the stereotypical view of abusive Black males on one hand and victimized females on the other one. From the viewpoint of language, she uses Black middle-class vernacular, which gives credibility to the characters. Last but not least, especially in *Getting to Happy*, she has managed to include present-day topical issues related to Black social status, education, work, sexuality, and others. All in all, McMillan liberates them from the strictures imposed on them by the world in which they live as a still somewhat undervalued minority.

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## THE USES OF INTERTEXTUALITY IN GAY YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Roman Trušník

**ABSTRACT:** The authors of American young adult literature regularly make extensive intentional use of intertextuality in many forms, mainly as allusions to other texts, such as literary works, songs, and movies. The paper explores the various uses of intertextuality in three young adult novels: Sandra Scoppettone's *Trying Hard to Hear You* (1974), Larry Duplechan's *Blackbird* (1986), and Michael Cart's *My Father's Scar* (1996). It explores three main uses of intentional intertextuality: defining the setting (including the creation of an atmosphere), characterizing the protagonists, and fighting or endorsing another text. A hypothesis is proposed that these uses of intertextuality allow young readers a better connection with the novels and identification with their characters.

**KEYWORDS:** young adult literature; gay literature; American literature; intertextuality; setting; characterization; Sandra Scoppettone; Larry Duplechan; Michael Cart

A perfunctory look at a more-or-less random but diverse selection of young adult books with gay content will reveal that something strange is going on in this area: Sandra Scoppettone's *Trying Hard to Hear You* (1974) starts in the following way: "You remember *Summer of '42*? You read the book? You at least saw the movie?"<sup>1</sup> Larry Duplechan's *Blackbird* (1986) starts like this: "I dreamed I was dancing the waltz with Sal Mineo. He was young, about the age when he did *Crime in the Streets*, which is about my age now."<sup>2</sup> And Michael Cart's *My Father's Scar* (1996) opens with the following scene: "'WHAT THE HELL!' Professor Hawthorne thunders. And a sudden shocked silence seizes the lecture hall as echoes of his voice bounce off the the back wall – hell,

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<sup>1</sup> Sandra Scoppettone, *Trying Hard to Hear You* (1974; Los Angeles: Alyson Publications, 1996), 1. Hereafter cited in text as *TH*.

<sup>2</sup> Larry Duplechan, *Blackbird* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 1. Hereafter cited in text as *B*.



hell, hell . . . ”<sup>3</sup> Yes, you guessed it, the fictional Professor Hawthorne is an “American literary aristocrat descended from Nathaniel Hawthorne himself – or so campus legend claims” (*MFS*, 5). And these are just the beginnings.

Even though literary scholars will readily identify these quotes as prominent examples of intertextuality, which is not uncommon in works of fiction, the references to other texts, be it novels, books of non-fiction, plays, songs, or movies, are so abundant and so obvious in these three novels that they are easily spottable by all the readers, regardless of their knowledge (or lack thereof) of literary and cultural theory. Indeed, their amount is so significant that it demands an explanation.

Intertextuality can broadly be defined as the presence of one text in another text. Richard Aczel distinguishes two basic approaches to intertextuality: *ontological* (studying the mutual dependence of texts as one of their inherent features) and *descriptive* (studying the relationships between texts as a result of their authors’ intentions).<sup>4</sup> The references to other texts are so obvious in the three texts that a descriptive approach seems to be better suited for the analysis.<sup>5</sup> Such uses of intertextuality may allow the use of the term *intentional intertextuality*.

Thematically, all the three novels are *Bildungsromane* or coming-of-age novels, i.e., “novel[s] that [focus] on the youth of the protagonist and [depict] his transition from childhood to adolescence and young adulthood.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, all of them can be classified as

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Cart, *My Father’s Scar* (1996; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 3. Hereafter cited in text as *MFS*.

<sup>4</sup> See Richard Aczel, “Intertextualität und Intertextualitätstheorien,” in *Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie*, ed. Ansgar Nünning (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2004), 299.

<sup>5</sup> Readers interested in the exploration of the nature of intertextuality (ontological approach), going from Ferdinand de Saussure, through M. M. Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette, Michael Riffaterre, and Harold Bloom, up to postmodern thinking, may be referred to survey texts, such as Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Šárka Bubíková, “Depicting Postmodern Adolescence in American Coming-of-Age Novels,” in *Silesian Studies in English 2009: Proceedings of the International Conference of English and American Studies. September 7–8, 2009, Silesian University in Opava, Czech Republic*, ed. Michaela Náhlíková and Marie Chrová (Opava: Slezská Univerzita v Opavě, 2010), 215.

coming-out novels, in which a person discovers their sexual orientation. Last but not least, they can all be grouped under the heading of young adult literature, a category defined, e.g., by Michael Cart and Christine A. Jenkins as “books that are published for readers age twelve to eighteen, have a young adult protagonist, are told from a young adult perspective, and feature coming-of-age or other issues and concerns of interest to YAs.”<sup>7</sup>

The three novels fit in with the basic pattern of young adult books in terms of the choice of protagonists, setting, and theme. The protagonist of Sandra Scoppettone’s *Trying Hard to Hear You* is sixteen-year-old Camilla, who takes part in a Youth on Stage project in the summer of 1973. She finds out that her best friend Jeff is gay when he falls in love with Phil, a member of the theatrical staff. The crowd treats Jeff and Phil rather harshly, and Phil, trying to prove that he can have sex with a girl, dies in a car crash along with the girl. Only after some time can Camilla and Jeff reconcile and resume their friendship.

The events of Larry Duplechan’s *Blackbird* take place in 1974 in an unnamed town about ninety miles from downtown Los Angeles. The protagonist is Johnnie Ray Rousseau, a black high-school senior who discovered his sexual orientation at the age of twelve and came to terms with it at thirteen or fourteen. A theatrical performance plays a key role here as well. Johnnie Ray auditions for the drama class production of *Hooray for Love*, subtitled “A History of Love through the Ages,” but he does not get the part, supposedly because he could not kiss a white girl on stage in the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, which *Hooray for Love* contains. Instead, he auditions for a play called *The Lockup* at the local junior college; the play deals with a boy imprisoned for the first time and abused by other prisoners, but the production is stopped when the teachers learn about the project. Later in the novel, Johnnie Ray comes out to his family and their road to acceptance is dealt with.

Michael Cart’s *My Father’s Scar* is set at an unnamed university some time in the 1970s. The protagonist, Andy, is a bookworm, i.e., a well-read person, and, moreover, a first-year college student who spends

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Cart and Christine A. Jenkins, *The Heart Has Its Reasons: Young Adult Literature with Gay/Lesbian/Queer Content, 1969–2004* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 1.

his days studying and running. The events of the novel are structured into two plot-lines. The main plot-line deals with a developing relationship: after Andy goes through a one-night stand with Professor Hawthorne, whose purely sexual interest he mistakes for an emotional one, he finally falls for Hawthorne's teaching assistant, who has shown interest in him since he saw him at the first lecture and who warned him against the predatory professor. This line interleaves with another one, narrated in flashbacks and telling episodes from Andy's life from the age of twelve up to the present time, portraying not only his development from a fat bespectacled boy to a skinny runner, but especially his life spent with books: since his childhood, Andy has been an avid reader and his love for books was supported especially by his uncle, a former poet laureate of the state.

Even these short and simplified synopses reveal that these novels are full of intertextual references, which are used for various purposes. Three main uses readily emerge: *defining the setting* (including an atmosphere), *characterizing the protagonists*, and *fighting or endorsing another text*. The following paragraphs list some examples:

### 1. Defining the Setting of a Novel

Allusions to other texts are used in order to define the setting. Duplechan's novel takes place at a secondary school, the main narrative line of Cart's novel takes place at a university, and while Scoppettone's novel technically takes place over the vacation, the characters are mostly high-school students.

In addition to that, the setting of all three novels is quite "literary." Important parts of Scoppettone's and Duplechan's novels take place in a theatrical crowd, preparing a production of a play. This itself entails frequent allusions to other texts. While *Anything Goes*, a musical by Cole Porter based on a book by Guy Boldon and P. G. Wodehouse, is a well-known work in its own right, *Hooray for Love* is a somewhat different piece. The narrator describes it as "a comedy revue – a History of Love through the Ages, or so it was subtitled. There was a takeoff on Adam and Eve, a scene about Captain Smith and Pocohantas [*sic*], that sort of thing. All ending up with scenes of quote love in the Seventies unquote. Think of 'Love American Style' in rerun, and you've

got the general idea" (B, 10). It was written by an old friend of their drama teacher and it was assigned to them instead of *The Skin of Our Teeth*, which the class requested.

On another level, it is also significant that none of the plays in question is identified by its author. While there is a 1935 song called "Hooray for Love," by Jimmy McHugh and Harold Arlen, there seems to be no such play outside the novel. But the above description shows that the play was based on intertextuality and relied on the audience's ability to identify well-known texts in it. In *The Skin of Our Teeth*, on the other hand, it takes a well-read reader to identify Thornton Wilder as the play's author.

In these two novels, the creation of an atmosphere is supported especially by mentions of music, e.g., songs playing at a particular time, songs sung on stage, and so on. The effect may be likened to the use of background music in films, albeit much weaker, as the songs are mentioned only by their names, or, as in *Blackbird*, by quoting a few words.

However, the use of the device is double-edged, as some songs that were popular in the 1970s will certainly be less popular nowadays, which may weaken this atmosphere-creating function of intertextuality. This can be seen especially in *Blackbird*, in which the Beatles song is repeatedly sung by the protagonist, or in Scoppettone's *Trying Hard to Hear You*, in which the individual songs from the play are repeatedly mentioned and will ring familiar only in the ears of those who know them.

## 2. Characterizing the Protagonist

The use of intertextual references is even more pronounced in Cart's *My Father's Scar*. Unlike the other two novels, this one does not include a theatrical performance as a plot element; instead, the events of the main narrative line are situated in a college. The opening scene takes place during a literature lecture, and Andy, the novel's protagonist, shows himself to be well-read. When the arrogant Professor Hawthorne mocks the class and the students' inability to decode his literary allusions, Andy not only knows who Lochinvar was, but he is also able to quote the relevant part of Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion*.

When asked about his secondary education, Andy names his hometown high school, to which Professor Hawthorne remarks: “I smell a small-town outsider who spent his lonely childhood in the company of books. Sound familiar, Mr. Stevenson?” Sascha Stevenson, his teaching assistant for whom Andy later falls, tonelessly replies: “Yeah, ... we’re a dime a dozen, we outsiders” (*MFS*, 159).

Both Andy and Sascha thus come to represent another pattern, if not a stereotype: the protagonist of a gay young adult novel is not necessarily good-looking, as the British literary scholar Gregory Woods pointed out,<sup>8</sup> but he always seems to be well-read and educated. Johnnie Ray is an Honor Scholar as well, and Jeff likes to give everybody a lot of surprising information, though in a somewhat sophomoric way. A number of similar examples come from other young adult books: the protagonist of Shawn Stewart Ruff’s *Finlater* (2008) takes part in spelling bee contests, the protagonist of Dale Peck’s *Sprout* (2009) takes part in composition contests.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. Fighting or Endorsing Another Text

Another interesting type of intertextuality can be seen when the author uses the events of the story for a polemic about a particular text. The best example can be found in Scoppettone’s novel: after discovering that Jeff is gay, Cam goes to buy Dr. David Reuben’s *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex, But Were Afraid to Ask* (1969), at that time a popular handbook on sex. However, the author openly criticizes the book – she not only quotes at length Dr. Reuben’s condemnation of homosexuality from the book (*TH*, 200) but the criticism is also built into the plot of the novel. Cam believes that a published book written by a doctor must be a correct and authoritative

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<sup>8</sup> See Gregory Woods, *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 342.

<sup>9</sup> Moreover, some coming-out/coming-of-age books that, for various reasons, do not fit into the young adult genre follow the same pattern. One of the most notable examples is Randall Kenan’s *A Visitation of Spirits* (1989), whose protagonist Horace Cross is not only an excellent student but also mingles with the theatrical crowd.

source. When she tries to use Reuben's argument against Jeff, he points out the book's inconsistencies:

Well, if you read the whole book you'll find that the very things he says can't be satisfying sexually for homosexuals are the same things he says are fine and satisfying for heterosexuals. I mean it just doesn't make sense. Anyway, he wrote the book to make a lot of bread – and he did – but nobody takes him seriously. He's misinformed. (*TH*, 207)

As Cam does not believe Jeff, who, according to her, is defending his vile desires, she consults her mother, a psychiatrist. She rejects the book as well: "Trash. ... It was written to make a buck, that's all" (*TH*, 209). Obviously, these scenes tell the readers, who were quite likely to encounter Reuben's book at the time, what to think about it.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, other intertextual references are used to inform the readers about other texts they might find interesting. Thus, when Johnnie Ray in Duplechan's novel tries to avoid his drama teacher, he manages that by doing an independent study project – and it is certainly no coincidence that he submits an essay on Mart Crowley's play *The Boys in the Band* (1968), a famous openly homosexual play.

Because of space limitations the above list is by no means complete and it should serve just as a brief example of selected types of intertextual references in the three texts. But the sheer number of such references confirms that they must be intentional artistic choices on the part of the authors. I argue that the authors used this means as a way to connect with their readers, to flatter them, and to strengthen their interest in the works they read.

Cart and Jenkins's definition of young adult literature, quoted earlier, reveals that young adult literature is "published for" a specific audience, i.e., it is specifically designed for it. Of course, all literature is designed and many authors of literature for adults have mentioned that

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<sup>10</sup> It might be interesting to point out that Scoppettone's novel is only one of the critical artistic responses to Reuben's book, the most famous being Woody Allen's 1972 movie *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex\* But Were Afraid to Ask*.

they were writing for a specific group of readers,<sup>11</sup> but in none of the cases was the construction of the plot and the use of literary means so heavily influenced by the target audience as in young adult literature.

Professor Hawthorne's caustic remark that in Andy he can "smell a small-town outsider who spent his lonely childhood in the company of books" (*MFS*, 159), a category into which Sascha falls as well, may sound stereotypical but is also likely to include a significant percentage of readers of young adult books. As these readers are likely to be relatively well-read, they are also likely to be able to easily decode many intertextual references in the texts.

Allusions thus create a familiar terrain for readers, and an opportunity to connect with a book and its somewhat bookish characters. Such readers are also rewarded by possessing "secret knowledge" which is not shared by everyone. They will thus easily identify, e.g., Thornton Wilder as the author of *The Skin of Our Teeth*, or will know what to think when Johnnie Ray describes a situation as "[v]ery *Midsummer Night's Dream*" (*B*, 33).

While using intertextual references to help define a setting or characterize the protagonists is "only" very convenient, a polemic or endorsement of another text must be, by definition, intertextual. The best example can be seen in Scoppettone's criticism of Reuben's book through events in her novel. This is undoubtedly in accord with the nature of young adult novels, which tend to be quite didactic, sometimes even at the cost of their artistic qualities.<sup>12</sup> Considering the audience of the novel and the year of publication, the criticism is also well placed:

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<sup>11</sup> E.g., at the beginning of his career Michael Cunningham was writing for men with AIDS who had time to read only a few books before they died. See Richard Canning, ed. *Hear Us Out: Conversations with Gay Novelists* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 92.

<sup>12</sup> A typical example can be found in the series of young adult novels by Alex Sanchez, *Rainbow Boys* (2001), *Rainbow High* (2003), and *Rainbow Road* (2005), in which the author's didactic attempts diminished the artistic quality of the novels, while still bearing a strong social potential. See Roman Trušník, "Young Adult Literature as a Tool for Survival: Alex Sanchez's *Rainbow Boys* Series," in *Theories and Practices: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Anglophone Studies; September 7–8, 2011, Tomas Bata University in Zlín, Czech Republic*, ed. Roman Trušník, Katarína Nemčoková, and Gregory Jason Bell (Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2012), 255–62.

Scoppettone's novel was published five years after Reuben's handbook and it was more than likely that the readers of Scoppettone's novel would have encountered or would encounter Reuben's book. Thus a warning against it was quite in place.

Based on three novels, this paper has demonstrated that the extraordinarily high presence of intertextual references in gay young adult novels is not a random occurrence but an important strategy in the authors' construction of their books. However, it remains as an opportunity for further research to find out whether the phenomenon is for some reason limited only to gay young adult fiction or it is a general feature of all young adult literature.

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## GENDER CONSTRUCTION IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *ORLANDO*

*Michaela Weiss*

**ABSTRACT:** The paper analyzes gender construction in a modernist novel *Orlando* (1928) by Virginia Woolf. Under the influence of psychoanalysis and her romantic involvement with Vita de Sackville-West, Woolf presents her view of fluid gender identity and sexual orientation. Various aspects of male/female identity shifts as presented in *Orlando* will be discussed in the context of contemporary gender studies, especially of Judith Butler's concept of performative character of gender.

**KEYWORDS:** Virginia Woolf; *Orlando*; androgyny; gender performance; gender fluidity

The turn of the century with its increasingly urban character and partial return to the Romantic Movement evolved into modernism which freed the Victorian tensions concerning human mind and sexuality. This was a partial result of new debates concerning masculinity and femininity resulting in the rise of the New Woman both in Europe and America. This social reality then resonated in the artistic response to the changing concepts and codes of gender, especially in the modernist works. .

The complexity and fluidity of gender identity is captured in a fictional biography *Orlando* (1928) by Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), where she presents the motifs of androgyny, bisexuality, homosexuality and gender performance in a story of a young nobleman Orlando who lives for four hundred years, unchanged at the age of thirty and during his life turns biologically into a woman. Even now, eighty-four years since the publication these issues are highly topical. Even though the difference between sex and gender was not theoretically known in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Woolf's work openly transcends the borders and rigid classifications of the bi-polar dominant discourse of her time. In her works she repudiated the idea of gender as something fixed and precedes Judith Butler's claim that

gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather it is an identity tenuously

constituted in time – an identity, instituted through a stylized repetition of acts . . . the possibility of a different sort of repeating . . . the breaking or subversive repetition of that style.<sup>1</sup>

Woolf was fascinated by the complexity of gender, her interest encompassed various sexual identities, which were then considered “different” or “deviant”. Moreover, she could discuss all these matters openly within the liberal and sexually transgressive Bloomsbury Group. The story of *Orlando* depicts her relationship with Vita Sackville-West; yet Woolf faced a dilemma how to present their romance without censorship that could lead to her public labelling as Sapphist. As Marty Roth observes:

Because homosexuality has lacked a sanctioned discourse of its own, the “homosexual text” has had to conceal itself within the folds of a dominant discourse and conceal itself so skilfully that it could forestall any insinuation of its presence while still revealing itself through mantling.<sup>2</sup>

That is true not only for a “homosexual text” but for all non-heterosexual identities. Unlike Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) who was living with her partner Alice B. Toklas in Paris and chose an autobiography with a blurred authorial and narrative voice as the expression of their romantic involvement, Woolf, as a married woman, opted for biography and put herself into the role of gender-unidentified narrator. As she discloses in her diary: “Vita should be Orlando, a young nobleman . . . and it should be truthful; but fantastic.”<sup>3</sup> She had to struggle with the depiction of the female body and its expressions, as all women writers, regardless of their sexual orientation. According to Woolf, the author:

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in phenomenology and feminist theory,” in *The Performance Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Bial (New York: Routledge, 2004), 154.

<sup>2</sup> Marty Roth, “Homosexual Expression and Homophobic Censorship: The Situation of the text,” in *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*, ed. David Bergman (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts, 1993), 268.

<sup>3</sup> Qtd. in Sandra Gilbert, Introduction & Note On Illustration to *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf (London: Penguin Books, 1993), xii.

thought of something, something about the body, about the passions which it was unfitting for her as a woman to say. . . . She could write no more. . . . She has to say I will wait until men have become so civilized that they are not shocked when a woman speaks the truth about her body. The future of fiction depends very much upon what extent men can be educated to stand free speech in women.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, the effect of censorship was not restrictive, but partly beneficial as the authors had to explore new ways of expressing the unspeakable in a way that it would (be accepted by the critics. As when it came to gender, Woolf is famous for her celebration of androgyny: "It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man womanly. . . . Some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and man . . . [S]ome marriage of opposites has to be consummated."<sup>5</sup>

Woolf believed that each person's identity contains a masculine and feminine side which have to collaborate and be in harmony; only this balance can be creative. On the other hand, even when the idea seems revolutionary and above-gender, it is in fact not so, as Woolf remained within the Victorian dichotomy and opposition of male and female that she tried to oppose. She still rendered the masculine and feminine as opposites that have to be complemented. And indeed, it was to a large extent the concept of gender of the English language that was imposing upon her such restriction. A similar obstacle was faced by Orlando: "Ransack the language as he might, words failed him. He wanted another landscape, and another tongue."<sup>6</sup> The words have to fail as the language that is based on gender oppositions. According to Helen Cixous:

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<sup>4</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Pargiters: The novel-Essay Portion of the Years* (London: Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), xl.

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own: Three Guineas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 136.

<sup>6</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 45. Hereafter cited in text as *O*.

In fact, every theory of culture, every theory of society, the whole conglomeration of symbolic systems – everything, that is, that's spoken, everything that's organized as discourse, art, religion, the family, language, everything that seizes us, everything that acts on us – it is all ordered around hierarchical oppositions that come back to the man/woman opposition, an opposition that can only be sustained by means of a difference posed by cultural discourse as “natural,” the difference between activity and passivity.<sup>7</sup>

In an attempt to overcome this dichotomy, the biographer is changing his/her attitude and gender with Orlando, neither is being presented as purely a woman or a man. The biographer even makes a step further, taking him/herself out of the opposition by claiming: “let us enjoy the immunity of all biographers and historians from any sex whatever” (*O*, 210).

The blurring of gender which should be clear and “natural” is present already in the first sentence: “He– for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it” (*O*, 11). Here, the biographer uses an illmatching pronoun “he”, and then proceeds with a bodily description of Orlando, which, however, follows the traditional way of depicting women: “The red of his cheeks was covered with peach down. . . . The lips themselves were short and slightly drawn back over teeth of an exquisite and almond whiteness . . . the hair was dark, the ears small, and closely fitted to the head.” Even though it may seem as a minor transgression on behalf of the biographer, in 1920s it challenged the notion of sexuality and literary style alike. Woolf is thus trying to express in language something that is transcending the grammatical structures, yet is reflecting the complex reality without turning her characters into grotesques. She presents what could now be called male femininity, as an opposite to female masculinity. This notion points out the performative character of gender, as femininity is now being performed by a person with a male body.

As all that was beyond the strict polarity between male and female was in the scientific discourse of the turn of the 20th century considered “deviant”. Sander Gilman points to the connection between

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<sup>7</sup> Hélène Cixous, „Castration or Decapitation?“, trans. Annette Kuhn, *Signs* 7 (1981): 44.

racial sexuality and pathology, which was the consequence of the so-called “scientific” exploration of race: “By 1877 it was a commonplace that the Hottentot’s anomalous sexual form was . . . leading to those ‘excesses’ which are called ‘lesbian love’.”<sup>8</sup> An influential German sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing whose work was soon translated into English claimed:

Careful observation among the ladies of large cities soon convinces one that homosexuality is by no means a rarity. Uranism may nearly always be suspected in females wearing their hair short, or who dress in the fashion of men, or pursue the sports and past times of their male acquaintances;<sup>9</sup>

What Kraft-Ebbing calls abnormal (and most of the members of the Bloomsbury Group would fall into that category) was thus interpreted as the consequence of urbanization. That such “deviant” practices were not uncommon, yet heavily sanctioned was manifested in a treatise by British physician and sexologist Havelock Ellis called *Sexual Inversion* (1897):

I realized that in England, more than any other country, the law and public opinion combine to place a heavy penal burden and a severe social stigma on the manifestations of an instinct which to those persons who possess it frequently appears natural and normal.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, such behaviour, except for savage tribes was mainly limited to prisons and lunatic asylums, and to higher society:

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<sup>8</sup> Sander L. Gilman, „Black bodies, white bodies: toward an iconography of female sexuality in late nineteenth-century art, medicine and literature“, in *Race, Culture and Difference*, eds. James Donald and Ali Rattansi (1992; London: Sage Publications, reprint 2005), 181.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Von Kraft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: The Classic Study of Deviant Sex*, trans. F. J. Rebman (1886; New York: Paperback Library, 1966), 761.

<sup>10</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Inversion* (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company, 1901), v.

It is, therefore, among the upper ranks, alike of society and of prostitution, that Lesbianism is most definitely to be met with, for here we have much greater liberty of action, and much greater freedom from prejudices.<sup>11</sup>

A higher level of permissiveness of the upper classes could be, except for the biographical reference to Sackville-West, another reason why Woolf portrayed Orlando as a young nobleman, and not a noblewoman. Though the pronoun “he” is constantly challenged and his feminine features and character are constantly brought up: “Orlando’s taste was broad; he was no lover of garden flowers only; the wild and the weeds, even had always a fascination for him” (*O*, 27).

His attitude and identity is thus continually revealed, corresponding to Judith Butler’s notion of gender performativity: “The first point to understand about performativity is what it is not: identities are not made in a single moment in time. They are made again and again. This does not mean identities are made radically new every time they are made, but only that it takes some time for identities to be brought out.”<sup>12</sup> What is more relevant, perhaps, is Orlando’s passion for persons of the same sex, though they can sometimes in disguise:

when [Orlando] beheld, coming from the pavilion of the Muscovite Embassy, a figure, which, whether boy’s or woman’s, for the loose tunic and trousers of the Russian fashion served to disguise the sex, filled [Orlando] with the highest curiosity. The person, whatever the name or sex, was about middle height, very slenderly fashioned, and dressed entirely in oyster-coloured velvet, trimmed with some unfamiliar greenish-coloured fur. But these details were obscured by the extraordinary seductiveness which issued from the whole person (*O*, 36).

It is thus a person, not a man or a woman Orlando falls for, which reflects Woolf’s notion of androgyny, or even bisexuality, as the most natural and creative state of being. Even though he is engaged to a woman he does not hold any romantic feelings to her and is willing,

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<sup>11</sup> Ellis, *Inversion*, 131.

<sup>12</sup> Vasu Reddy, “Troubling genders, subverting identities: An interview with Judith Butler,” *Agenda* 62 (2004): 116.

when he feels a true and natural attraction to someone else, to forget it completely. He was engaged only to perform what Adrienne Rich calls “the compulsory heterosexuality”.<sup>13</sup> Observing the social constraints he feels a pang of guilt when he realizes that is indeed a man who aroused his interest:

“When the boy, for alas, a boy it must be – no woman can skate with such speed and vigour – swept almost on tiptoe past him, Orlando was ready to tear his hair with vexation that the person was of his own sex, and thus all embraces were out of question. But the skater came closer. Legs, hands, carriage were a boy’s, no boy ever had a mouth like that; no boy had those breasts (*O*, 36).

He is frustrated that he as a man cannot embrace another man because of the social restrictions. Moreover, Orlando’s potential homoerotic desires are revealed in other passages: “He took the hard root of the oak tree to be; or, for image followed image, it was the back of a big horse that he was riding, or the deck of a tumbling ship – it was anything indeed, so long as it was hard” (*O*, 18).

At other times he is admired for his female character and look and almost seduced as a woman by another woman, who was in fact a man cross-dressing as a female: the archdu-chess/duke who visits Orlando claiming he reminds her of her sister who has been dead for a long time. Orlando falls passionately in love with her and has her sent away in a carriage to escape temptation. Yet, later, when Orlando turns into a woman, the archduchess is revealed as a man who dressed like a woman to obtain (then) his love. When he apologizes, they both act out their gender roles: “Orlando sipped the wine and the Archduke knelt and kissed her hand. In short, they acted the parts of man and woman for ten minutes with great vigour and then fell to natural discourse. The Archduchess (but she must be in future known as the Archduke) told his story” (*O*, 171).

After being biologically a woman, Orlando presents himself as male. Once he follows a prostitute into her room where he eventually

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<sup>13</sup> See Adrienne Rich, *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* (London: Onlywomen Press, 1981).



discloses her sex. The woman is not shocked, but starts behaving more naturally, admitting “[she is] not in the mood for the society of the other sex to-night” (*O*, 159). What keeps being emphasized throughout the text is that Orlando remained the same and he was always a combination of both sexes:

His form combined in one the strength of a man and a woman’s grace. . . . The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity. Their faces remained, as their portraits prove, practically the same. His memory – but in future we must, for convention’s sake, say “her” for “his”, and “she” for “he” (*O*, 133).

Paradoxically, after this change it is her masculinity that is emphasized and the pronoun “he” seems hard for the biographer to give up. Moreover, she does not fit the expectations placed on women: is not careful with her choice of dress, detests household matters and has a fondness of drinking and gambling: “Whether, then, Orlando was most man or woman, it is difficult to say” (*O*, 181). Because of her experience of both being a man and a woman she puts herself, like the biographer, outside these categories:

And here it would seem from some ambiguity in her terms that she was censoring both sexes equally, as if she belonged to neither; and indeed, for the time being she seemed to vacillate; she was man; she was woman . . . and was not sure to which she belonged (*O*, 152)

As Orlando does not fulfil social expectations and her past romantic involvements and biological sex are still remembered, her identity is often disputed. She feels equally natural in both male and female body, only the social constructs affecting the gendered behaviour cause her concern.. Hence, gender is seen as a performance, a show, an act, a costume and sometimes even a disguise. It is no longer regarded as a way we are, but rather as a way we behave at different times.<sup>14</sup>

Woolf is carefully avoiding classifying Orlando as gay, or even as transgender. She attempts at blurring all oppositions and boundaries,

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<sup>14</sup> See Butler, “Performative acts”, 154–66. Emphasis added.

even though she is still hinting at the opposition of men and women, overcoming it by repeatedly presenting Orlando's identity as intact and himself/herself untouched by her surroundings.

She had, it seems, no difficulty in sustaining the different parts, for her sex changed far more frequently than those who have worn only one set of clothing can conceive; nor there any doubt that she reaped a twofold harvest by this device; the pleasures of life were increased and its experiences multiplied. For the probity of breeches she exchanged the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the love of both sexes equally (*O*, 211).

Her sex changed far more frequently – more than was revealed by the biographer who admits that his narrative is not complete? Or was it that she was becoming a man and a woman without changing from male to female? As Simone de Beauvoir proposes: “One is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one.”<sup>15</sup> Then anyone could become a woman or man without physical necessity of being one. Moreover, what is implied by her “twofold harvest” is not only the androgyny of mind, but also of sexual behaviour. Orlando is both, a man and a woman and can pass as such.

Even her marriage is rather complex. She falls in love with an American called Shelmardine, a man with a female name. When they confess their mutual love, in one breath they voice their concerns regarding their sex and/or gender:

“I’m passionately in love with you,” she said. No sooner had the words left her mouth than an awful suspicion rushed into both their minds simultaneously.

“You’re a woman, Shell!” she cried.

“You’re a man, Orlando!” he cried (*O*, 240).

Yet, he soon leaves to America and Orlando, being left alone, realized that it was still women she loved:

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<sup>15</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (London: Vintage, 1997), 295.

And as all Orlando's loves had been women, now, through the culpable laggadry of the human frame to adapt itself to **convention**, though she herself was a woman, it was still woman she loved; and if the consciousness of being of the same sex had any effect at all, it was to quicken and deepen those feelings which she had had as a man. For now a thousand hints and mysteries became plain to her that were then dark. Now, the obscurity, which divides the sexes and lets linger innumerable impurities in its gloom, was removed, and if there is anything in what the poet says about truth and beauty, this affection gained in beauty what it lost in falsity (*O*, 154).

Restricted by language and social climate, Woolf does not aim at destroying sexual difference but points out the role of performance and fluidity, thus constantly undermining and transcending the duality and opposition. Presenting Merleau-Ponty's claim: "Man is a historical idea and not a natural species. ... There is no outstripping of sexuality any more than there is any sexuality enclosed within itself. No one is saved and no one is totally lost."<sup>16</sup>

The novel thus openly declares and presents various gender identities and their fluidity in time, such as androgyny, transsexuality and transvestism. All these approaches or methods of achieving a balance between gender and society are considered legitimate. As Woolf is presenting various sexual identities and their expression she tries to untie or bend the language that is, as she is well aware, already gendered.

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<sup>16</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 2002), 198.

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### III. METHODOLOGY

# **DRAMA TECHNIQUES AND BRAIN-BASED LEARNING IN ELT IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY – TRADITIONS AND PERSPECTIVES**

*Andrea Billíková – Mária Kiššová*

**ABSTRACT:** The paper deals with the use of drama techniques in EFL classroom. It focuses on current methodological trends and perspectives which support drama techniques as an efficient, motivating and capturing means which can work very well not only with all types of learners but also of teachers, regardless their extroverted or introverted temperament. The brain-based learning is characterized as a recent way which tries to apply scientific knowledge into pedagogy. Thus, the paper also deals with the points in which brain-based learning and drama techniques meet and – considering the social and technological challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – may contribute to the enhancement of teaching process.

**KEY WORDS:** education, drama techniques, brain, intelligence, cognition, emotion

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The following paper discusses the relevance of drama techniques in foreign language teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its first part focuses on general starting points of current social challenges. This is followed by characteristics of drama techniques in education, their goals and the ways they are linked with modern trends in teaching and learning, specifically with brain-based learning. The paper does not aim to be a scientific contribution to the discussion about brain-based learning but we would like to present drama techniques as complementary to this type of learning and present both as ways to “de-technologize” pupils and students and thus strengthen the focus on the emotional framework of educational process.

## 2. CHALLENGES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

Technological progress which can be seen at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has initiated specific stimuli which influence not only our everyday activities, but also the way we search for, process and learn new information. It is noteworthy to observe how the acceleration of available information and its exponential growth resonate in an attempt to accelerate not only the experience per se, but specifically the process of learning.

Naturally, the challenges which the information age has brought are not ignored by experts in pedagogy and teaching and they often relate the issues of technology to cognitive science and to the processes which occur in the brain. Recent articles (Margaret Weigel – Howard Gardner, *The Best of Both Literacies*. In: Educational Leadership, 2009) and publications such as *Natural Learning for a Connected World: Education, Technology, and the Human Brain* by Renate and Geoffrey Caine (2011) observe how distinct and significant are the changes we experience and how serious consequences they have for the educational practice.

Renate Caine and Geoffrey Caine in their book refer to the findings of Susan Greenfield, a British scientist specializing in the brain research whose publications include *Tomorrow's People: How 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology is Changing the Way we Think and Feel* (2003) and *id: The Quest for Meaning in the 21st Century* (2008). Caine and Caine point out that contemporary spread and use of technologies are the major cause of the following neuro-biological and psychological reactions:

- preference of episodic thinking instead of analytical,
- shortened concentration span,
- preference of communication via images instead of words,
- weakened control of impulses and emotions (2011, 12).

We are convinced that these reactions will have to be definitely taken into consideration as far as the future of education is concerned. What is more, the issues suggested – together with the information availability and its redundancy - are closely related to the role of a teacher whose position in teaching process modifies. The teacher needs to act as a mediator of information instead of the “traditional” role of an information provider; the change which may affect also teacher’s status

and authority. However, even though the learners have an immediate access to information, the role of the teacher is simply not devalued. On the contrary; we claim that the 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching essentially needs to be characterised as “humanistic”, and teacher’s role must be modified so that emotional needs of pupils will be satisfied as well. Here, we do not mean that teachers should substitute for parents but that educational environment should also create conditions which – while considering the complex impact of technology on children – would educate balanced personalities in an intellectual as well as emotional aspect.

The results of the research conducted in Great Britain in 2002 by Andrew Balmford are quite well-known. In his work Balmford found out that British children are more familiar with the characters of a Japanese video-game Pokémon than with some specimen of insects and plants native to Britain. These results may seem characteristic for the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century children: they know more about those things that they spent more time with. Nature has been replaced by technology. Considering the results of the research, significant success of the 2005 book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* by Richard Louv suggests that parents and educators realize the changes as well as the need for balance. Here, Richard Louv presents “nature-deficit disorder” as a main cause for health and social problems (e.g. attention disorder, depressions, etc.) that modern children face. These two examples imply contemporary reality that educators, teachers and parents are well familiar with: the impact of technology as a captivating means of entertainment – as well as a source of information - with vast consequences for the way we learn, act and behave.

### **3. PLAY - DRAMA TECHNIQUES – EDUCATION**

Michael Fleming relates the potential for the use of drama and drama techniques in education to the understanding of child play as “a valuable method of learning” (2004, 186). In play, children use the language imaginatively, in contexts which are characterised by a high degree of interaction and motivation. Brian Boyd in his book *On the Origin of Stories. Evolution, Cognition and Fiction* mentions that while the phenomenon of play can be found among animals, the element of “as if”



(pretending) is typical only for people. It is remarkable how a twelve-month-old child is able to manipulate objects in such way as if they stood for something else (see Boyd 2009, 181). Boyd further describes how the phenomenon of play – and also the perception of reality linked to it – changes as a child grows. First, the things are only “objects” which can be manipulated, moved and examined. Slowly, they become “persons”, a child personifies them. At the beginning, these personified objects are passive, later they turn into active entities and at the end the child even attributes human knowledge and thinking to them (2009, 181). Play as such is natural and inevitable for child development and its deficiency in childhood may result later in psychic and social disorders. For this reason also, drama techniques can be understood on one hand as an attempt to “prolong the playfulness of childhood”, yet on the other hand they can be naturally and easily used in the teaching process.

Fleming further explains that if the language is “embedded in action which has more genuine motivation, it is less likely to be mechanical and carry more emotional content and meaning” (Fleming 2004, 186). Generally speaking, the use of drama can be justified and explained as an attempt to create or evoke situations that a pupil or student can hypothetically encounter in real life. However, - and this is also in agreement with our view on the use of drama techniques in foreign language teaching – its significant contribution is the elicitation of “otherness”, expansion of “poetic view” and fantasy. Drama techniques are used not only to stimulate quasi-real situations, but they can contribute to the development of abstract thinking and imagination of a child. What is more, as it is evident from experience and scholarly studies, drama techniques can be also used in emotionally tense and difficult situations (see for example the study of Adrian Curtin: *Engaging Death, Drama, the Classroom and Real Life*, 2011, 206-210) and with learners with disorders (Hvozdíková 2010). For us, the use of drama techniques in ELT represents an efficient and motivating way to engage learners in natural and authentic communication.

#### **4. GOALS OF DRAMA TECHNIQUES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Before we mention specific goals of the use of drama techniques in detail – and will discuss the key question WHY to use them, we would like to comment on the role and position of a teacher. If approached inadequately, the application of drama techniques has little value and benefit for students. There are a few characteristics a teacher who wants to work with drama in ELT should have: creativity, non-authoritarian approach to students, effective management skills in conducting the lesson, ability to improvise and a certain sense of playfulness and motion in space. We intentionally do not list “the talent for drama”, since primary goals of the use of drama in ELT are related to language and not to acting. Mentioning the role of the teacher; drama techniques can also intensify emotional contact between students and teacher. As Willingham remarks, emotional relations – the way how students perceive their teacher in terms of his/her personality – seems to be crucial in educational process (Willingham 2009, 65).

The goals of educational drama from a pedagogical point of view and the goals of the use of drama techniques in foreign language teaching are closely related. Both emphasize cognitive as well as non-cognitive development of personality; i.e. linguistic, intellectual but also social development. According to John Dougill, both, educational drama and drama in foreign language teaching are based on the imitation of reality and enhancement of self-expression (1991). The difference is that while educational drama “enhances value judgments”, drama in foreign language teaching “allows for experiments with language” (Dougill 1991, 4-5). They both enhance verbal intelligence and lead learners to acquisition of new language via contexts related to everyday situations.

We agree with Kovalčíková who emphasises the significance of dialogue in educational process based on humanistic approach to education. According to her, dialogue is a key aspect of role plays in which participants try to resolve some conflict and tension. The solution leads to “liberating catharsis on both sides. Metaphorically, the process of humanistic teaching can be likened to a process of structured dialogue which solves, discovers ambiguities and conflicts of the physical and social world” (Kovalčíková 2000, 6). Kovalčíková considers it natural that we try to use and integrate active social-artistic

learning via drama education to educational process. In other words, we try “to teach dialogue via dialogue” (2000, 6).

The main goal of drama techniques in foreign language teaching is to provide learners with as many possibilities for authentic communication as possible. Contrary to guided dialogues in course books and text books – often used repeatedly and aimlessly – “dramatic” characters communicate in defined space and time and – what is definitely important – in specifically defined status. Status creation is in our view fundamental in communication per se. The importance (and inevitability) of status formation is also mentioned in Michael Gazzaniga’s book *Human* in which he refers to a famous quote about conversation statuses by Samuel Johnson: “No two people can be half an hour together, but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other” (2008, 73). Due to its significance, various attributes of status, its formation and use should not be ignored in education either.

Besides the defined space, time and status, there may be also emotions and the use of linguistic and non-linguistic means included in any communicative encounter. Taking all these into consideration, there is an apparent need to teach pupils/students to communicate and lead dialogue not only in static terms of a course book (A/B/A/B structure) but to show them the communication in a natural way. By “natural” we mean a dialogue, in which, according to Tandlichová, the roles of the speaker and the listener alter, they are not permanent. The speaker is not the only one who initiates communication but also reacts. Similarly, the listener gives some feedback, makes a gesture, or joins the conversation in any other way in order to maintain it (2001, 27).

Drama offers space for communication in real time and depends on the interaction of participants (see Hevešiová 2007, 47-53). Through drama we change formal setting into informal/ non-formal, non-authentic into authentic. As the aspects of “real” communication are often overlooked at the lessons of foreign language and in course books, we cannot be surprised if some students do not succeed and even those who are “successful” in class need some time to adjust to out-of-class communication.

Acquisition of foreign language via drama techniques is based on creative solving of unexpected problems. Learners communicate in a spontaneous way and they have specific reasons to be attentive (see for example Hevešiová 2007, 94-99). They try to search for and apply such

strategies which can help them to express, specify information or to “cover up” things which they are not able to articulate via the use of verbal or nonverbal means. According to Dougill, drama techniques enable weaker students to “compensate for lack of language ability by use of paralinguistic communication such as body language and general acting ability” (1991, 7).

Drama techniques also serve as a means to practise conversation-managing strategies; for instance, how to start or finish conversation, how to change the conversation topic, how to maintain listener’s attention and so on. All in all, drama techniques teach us to be attentive to ourselves, to our surroundings and to be emphatic to others. These social benefits of drama have been also proved in scientific research. For example, Michael Gazzaniga mentions research which was initiated by Glenn Schellenberg at the University of Toronto to find out the connection between musical training and intelligence. The statistical analysis of the research included full-scale IQ: Verbal Comprehension, Perceptual Organization, Freedom from Distractibility, and Processing Speed, Picture Completion, Information, Coding, Similarities, Picture Arrangement, Arithmetic, Block Design, Vocabulary, Object Assembly, Comprehension, Symbol Search, and Digit Span. Another version tested Mathematical Applications, Reading Decoding, Spelling, Reading Comprehension, and Mathematical Computation. The overall results suggested that though drama lessons did not increase intelligence of children, they enhanced their social behaviour (in Gazzaniga, 2008, 241).

## **5. WHERE DRAMA TECHNIQUES AND BRAIN-BASED LEARNING MEET**

It is a generally known fact that we have learnt more about the brain in the last twenty five years than in the last two hundred and fifty years (see Willingham 2009, 1). An increased interest in brain-based *learning* might be observed since the 1990s when the brain research started to cover the relations between learning, memory, emotions and functioning of the brain to a larger extent. Its popularity is thus closely linked with the discoveries and findings in the field of the rapidly progressing brain research, which the educators want to put into practice in order to make

learning more effective. In general terms, brain-based learning is a theory of learning based on the functioning and structure of the brain. For an overview of brain-based learning, we recommend Eric Kaufman's document also available online and listed in bibliography: *Engaging Students with Brain-Based Learning*, 1994. Considering the impact of the brain-based learning within contemporary pedagogical/teaching practice we would like to point out how drama techniques are compatible with it and in the following, we would like to highlight their common framework.

Brain-based learning is one of the most popular but also one of the most controversial approaches in pedagogy today. Authors such as Robert K. Greenleaf (*Brain Based Teaching: Making Connections for Long-Term Memory and Recall*, 2005), Eric P. Jensen (*Brain-Based Learning: The New Paradigm of Teaching*, 2008), David A. Sousa (*How the Brain Learns*, 2011) and James E. Zull (*The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning*, 2002) advocate the need to reflect recent findings of the brain research in teaching practice. On the other hand, sceptical voices such as Daniel Willingham's *Why Don't Students Like School?* try to question fast adoption of ideas and refute some myths which appear in the discussion about brain-based learning. Basic criticism of brain-based learning implies, first of all, that scientific knowledge is applied to practice incorrectly, or, that the research results are misinterpreted. Another point argues that brain-based learning does not bring anything new and that it is only a summary of best practices in teaching which experienced teachers are well-familiar with and do it intuitively. At this point it is important to mention that though a teacher might have been teaching efficiently – using his/her intuition; we think systematic knowledge and *understanding* (i.e. awareness of doing things consciously) may strengthen teacher's professionalism and assurance. This is of course relevant for all fields of teaching (for specific relation between brain-based learning and ELT see, for instance, Judy Lombardi's study *Beyond Learning Styles: Brain-Based Research and English Language Learners*, 2008, 219-222). Critical voices also comment on the fast and accelerating changes in research as well as on the disagreement between scholars in the field. Eric Jensen, in his article *Brain-Based Learning: A Reality Check* (2000, 76-80), refutes the claims but he also stresses the need for critical evaluation of research

findings before they are integrated into teaching practice. He also admits that brain-based learning is not a magical medicine which would fix all problems of education; however, “to ignore what we do know about the brain would be irresponsible. Brain-based learning offers some direction for educators who want more purposeful, informed teaching” (79).

Regarding the information about brain-based learning we would like to highlight two myths also explained and mentioned by Jensen (2000, 78-79). The first one is about the level of stress, the second one about memorizing:

- It is not true that low level of stress always creates optimum environment for learning. The stress intensity is related to a particular situation and conditions for studying. In other words, there are situations when higher level of stress is beneficial.
- Memorizing does not contradict brain-based learning. Certain amount of information is essentially needed to communicate and memorizing is in this sense useful and inevitable. Daniel Willingham also alerts that a teacher should be aware that his pupils acquire/ learn and thus have relevant *background information* which can be further used and referred to in the learning process. Background knowledge is a fundamental basis upon which critical thinking and other higher cognitive processes are based (2009, 29). It is also obvious that one understands an issue better and easier, if he/she has already some knowledge of the problem; and this also presupposes background knowledge (2009, 35).

Before we specify complementary aspects of brain-based learning and drama techniques (specifically in ELT), we would like to present general characteristics and assumptions that brain-based learning covers. Renate Nummela Caine and Geoffrey Caine (1994) suggest a list of twelve principles for this type of learning. The principles refer to attributes of the brain and we will try to highlight its aspects as related to the process of learning:

- The brain is a complex adaptive system.

It is important to emphasize that though our knowledge about functioning of the brain increases, its complex system still remains a mystery. As it is shown in the paper by James E. Zull, to understand how the brain works also means to understand how we learn and comprehend things (2006, 3-9). Naturally, complexity of the brain also

means that the system includes a wide spectrum of processes; both conscious and unconscious since the brain is in constant interaction with the environment. The mentioned processes cover thinking per se, imagination, memory, physiological attributes, etc.

- The brain is the social brain.

The brain is modelled and formed according to the social interaction of an individual. Man is a social being and his existence is related to the net of interpersonal relations.

- The search for the meaning is innate.

The whole philosophy of education is based on the assumption of “desire” to know and inner satisfaction if the answers to the questions are found. In terms of biological explanation; every successful solution of a problem brings a dose of dopamine to the brain which stimulates its function.

- The search for meaning is based on the patterns.

In psychological perspective, all learning is based on associations. We learn some things which are stored within specific structures and these structures become more complex. We have already stressed the importance of the background knowledge which helps us to see connections, relations and to build higher structures and principles. A teacher must not forget that pupils’ knowledge is limited and new information must be connected to that which has been already acquired. As Daniel Willingham observes, “[w]orking on problems that are of the right level of difficulty is rewarding, but working on problems that are too easy or too difficult is unpleasant” (2009, 13).

- Emotions are crucial for the creation of patterns.

Emotions influence learning to a great extent. Yet, one cannot either overemphasize their relevance and the statement should be slightly modified: “Things that create an emotional reaction will be better remembered, but emotion is not necessary for learning” (Willingham, 2009, 58).

- The brain perceives and creates connections between parts and wholes at the same time.

This characteristic is related also to various memory aspects (visual, kinaesthetic, tactile, etc.)

- Learning is based on intentional as well as peripheral perception.
- Learning involves conscious and unconscious processes.

- People have at least two forms/ types of memory

Basic division of memory is into short-term and long-term. Long-term is divided into declarative (episodic – deals with specific events perceived in time; and semantic – information and facts) and procedural (knowledge of procedures of activities) (see Daniel Schacter, *The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers*, 2002).

- The brain constantly changes and develops.

Man's personality is shaped by all his activity. In the teaching/ learning practice, everything which the teacher brings to the process of teaching is relevant and influences future formation of pupils' personalities, preferences and activities. What is more, the finding that neurons are formed throughout life regardless the age, has contributed to an optimistic view upon learning even later in life.

- Complex learning is enhanced via challenges; effects of learning decrease under stressful situations and conditions.

Psychologists use the term “relaxed alertness” to name an optimal state for effective learning. Relaxed alertness means that students feel relaxed yet there is specific level of tension, alertness present which prevents them not to pay attention to things presented.

- Every brain is unique.

The range of stimuli affecting each human being preconditions unique characteristics of each brain. It is interesting that this aspect is presented as the last one; since if viewed in a wider context, it actually questions all that has been said. However, we understand it as a crucial point since it creates possibility and need for an individual approach in teaching and represses schematic and forced application of theories and scientific findings in educational practice.

We have already noted that the main aim of the application of the brain research into educational practice is to make learning more effective. This naturally includes the use of such techniques which stimulate workings of the brain. Focusing specifically on the process of learning, this needs to put into practice in all stages of the teaching process (from the thorough preparation of lesson plans to the environment in which learning takes place).

In our view, the principles of brain-based learning correspond to the application of drama techniques in many ways. Here, we list five major points of correspondence:



- The aim of the drama techniques in education, and specifically in foreign language teaching, is to create favourable conditions which enable effective communication. This aim is achieved through such activities which stimulate the brain in an active way; the first and foremost being *motion* (see for instance the benefits of the use of motion found in the research conducted by Charles Hillman at University of Illinois when physical activities contributed positively to the results of eight to ten-year old pupils in mathematics and reading, in Greenfield, Susan 2008, 169).
- Drama techniques use a wide spectrum of stimuli which address different types of learners and their learning strategies.
- When drama techniques are applied, the state of „relaxed alertness“ is evoked as interactivity of such activities is crucial and requires constant attention of a learner.
- Drama techniques are often characterised as “expressive”, focusing on the “outer” world. However, we would like to emphasize that their main contribution is their aspect of socialization which shapes pupils and students as emotional beings which is almost exclusively internal. This is achieved though the learning through experience.
- The contribution and major benefit of the use of drama techniques which is stressed out also in the brain-based learning is an individual approach. A competent teacher who uses drama techniques effectively can create such learning environment and will possibly modify their material in such way which will address and appeal to all learners, even those who are introverted.

## 6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, we are convinced that the practice of teaching – as it had existed until recently – will have to be modified in order to meet new demands of current reality and the question of *what* we learn as well as *how* we learn in the information age must be dealt with in the sphere of educational inquiry and reflected in pedagogical trends, approaches towards education and teaching. The term brain-based learning might

sound misleading; it is obvious that *all* learning is brain-based. However, this approach emphasizes *biological* aspects of the brain functioning. Cognitive scientists agree that the brain research has only started and there are many further discoveries to be made. Interestingly, new information often only supports and justifies practices which teachers have been using intuitively, without knowing about their scientific validity. This also fosters that last observation we would like to make. An optimal way is to be informed about recent scientific findings yet the humanistic should precede the biological since education involves the mind as well as the body.

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# **PRAGUE MODEL UNITED NATIONS –SIMULATION PROJECT INTEGRATING GLOBAL ISSUES INTO UPPER-SECONDARY CURRICULUM: A CASE STUDY**

*Jana Němečková*

**ABSTRACT:** The article briefly introduces current trends in Czech and European education policies, focusing in particular on foreign language teaching (FLT), and presents the global simulation, an innovative method of FLT. Drawing on this theoretical introduction, the paper reports on the Prague Model United Nations (PRAMUN) simulation project and on the results of a research carried out during PRAMUN 2012. The research was conducted both among 198 secondary school students of 30 nationalities and among their teachers. It focused, among others, on uncovering the motivation for participation and on its impact on partakers. The research data show that global simulations have the potential to fulfil goals of foreign language teaching in terms of development of both linguistic and intercultural skills, and to attract students' attention to global issues.

**KEY WORDS:** innovative methods of FLT, global simulation, global issues, citizenship education, project-based approach, research data

## **1. GLOBAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS IN EDUCATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING – TRENDS IN EDUCATION POLICIES**

In less than two years' time, the Czech Republic will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of its entry to the EU. By entering this and other international organisations, possibilities never dreamed of by earlier generations have opened up for Czechs, Europeans, and other nations. These include increased international mobility, not only of people and goods, but also of information and technologies. The globalisation process nevertheless brings along negative aspects as well, such as homogenization of cultures, uneven economic growth, or "simple" inability of citizens to make use of the given opportunities because of their lack of knowledge or skills, be it language or professional ones.

As these issues have become notoriously known to both politicians and scholars, they have been addressed in a number of education policy

documents, most of which call for a systematic **education for democratic citizenship, global education and multicultural education** as key aspects necessary for a close and successful cooperation of the countries and nations involved, be it in education, culture, science, trade, or industry. According to the Council of Europe, a means to face the challenges caused by globalisation is to „promote methods of modern language teaching which will strengthen independence of thought, judgement and action, combined with social skills and responsibility“ (Second Summit of Heads of State, quoted in CEFR, 2001, 4). The Council did so by, *inter alia*, introducing the ‘Common European Framework of Reference for Languages’ (2001), well-known to Czech teachers for the reference levels of linguistic competence. According to Gouveia, the Framework is a “fundamental instrument, whose purpose is to contribute with the full expression of citizenship, the development of democracy and the mobility and integration of citizens to a pan-cultural Europe” (2007, 6); thus, the Framework interconnects citizenship education with foreign language teaching (*ibid*, 5). Similar ideas are expressed in key language policy documents of the EU, namely ‘White Paper on Education and Training: Teaching and Learning’ (1995) and ‘Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004 – 2006’ (2003), which both stress the need to educate citizens for European identity/citizenship and multilingualism, and to foster multicultural awareness and competences.

The Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MEYS) reflected these issues in the **curriculum reform** introduced in the ‘National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic: White Paper’ (2001). This includes several innovations, such as the stress on foreign language teaching, on citizenship, multicultural and human rights education, on key competences, and, moreover, on subject integration and cross-curricular links, most of which is embodied, among others, in the newly introduced cross-curricular subjects. According to the Czech national curriculum for general upper-secondary education (‘Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Education - Grammar Schools’, 2007, 8), education at this stage should employ “approaches and methods stimulating the pupils' creative thinking, resourcefulness and independence“, and utilise „differentiated instruction and new organisational forms“.

As has been mentioned above, one of the new features of the Czech curriculum is the introduction of **cross-curricular subjects** (CCS), which focus on current problems and issues. CCSs include e.g. Moral, Character and Social Education; Education towards Thinking in European and Global Contexts; Multicultural Education; and Democratic Citizenship. Compared to the “traditional” subjects, which are rather content-based, CCSs aim at developing students’ attitudes, values and behaviour, as well as various competencies (ibid, 65). The CCSs can be realised in various ways, such as in the form of separate subjects, as part of other subjects, or via different projects.

The CCS which this article is concerned with is ‘**Education towards Thinking in European and Global Contexts**’ (ETEGC), which covers a wide range of topics, dealing with economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental aspects of globalisation. Moreover, it aims to help students “penetrate the nature of European integration and understand oneself in this context“ (ibid, 69). Even though this subject matter is traditionally included in other subjects, in particular Social Sciences, the authors of the curriculum emphasize that ETEGC goes beyond the limits of traditional subjects and call for “the application of innovative and non-traditional educational procedures, techniques, forms and methods, cooperation between pupils, the preparation of projects, [and] employment and support of extracurricular forms of learning and extracurricular activities“ (ibid).

## **2. SIMULATION AS AN INNOVATIVE METHOD OF FLT**

What are these “innovative methods” and “non-traditional educational procedures” that are called for? Unfortunately, none of the documents described above provides any definition of what an **innovative method** is. Nevertheless, summing up various sources (Blumenfeld et al. 1991, Choděra and Ries 1999, Davis 2004, Dupuy 2006, Levine 2004), this term refers to methods which may display some of the following characteristics: are student-centred, enable students to work autonomously, empower them; use the problem method / experiential learning; support cooperation and development of social skills, encourage peer-scaffolding; engage students in authentic, not “school-like” tasks; make use of intrinsic motivation, often of the flow

motivation; focus on learning, rather than performance; involve topics that are interesting and relevant; develop creativity; contextualize learning. The list is by no means conclusive or definite, nor do the innovative methods in this understanding necessarily share all or most of the characteristics.

There are many methods that claim to be innovative, one of which is **global simulation** (GS), the object of this article. GS, according to Jones (1995, quoted in García-Carbonell et al. 2001, 482), is “an event in which participants have (functional) roles, duties and sufficient key information about the problem to carry out these duties without play acting or inventing key facts.” This enables students to bring their “own personality, experience and opinions to the task” (Livingstone 1983, quoted in Lee 1991). In FLT, these events are typically set in the target language country (e.g. ‘L’Immeuble’ (‘Building’), in which students of French “inhabited” a building in Paris, Dupuy 2006).

GS can also be described in terms of **project-based learning**, “a comprehensive approach to classroom teaching and learning that is designed to engage students in investigation of authentic problems” (Blumenfeld et al. 1991, 369). A **project** stands for a “relatively long-term, problem-focused, and meaningful unit of instruction that integrates concepts from a number of disciplines” (ibid, 370).

As a language teaching method, GS has been used rather infrequently, and predominantly at the tertiary level (Levine 2004, c.f. Black 1995, Davis 1996, García-Carbonell et al. 2001). In the Czech context, it is scarcely used at universities (e.g. Smejkalová 2005) and at the secondary level (e.g. European Youth Parliament). The promoters of the method claim that GS offers many inherent advantages, predominantly those we have above attributed to innovative methods. FLT GS is also said to emphasise **culture learning**, “the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture general knowledge, skills and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individual from other cultures” (Paige et al. 2000, quoted in Dupuy 2006, 10), and can thus facilitate the development of intercultural competences which help the speaker to “operate at the border between several languages or language varieties, manoeuvring his/her way through the troubled waters of crosscultural misunderstandings” (Kramsch 1998, quoted in Risager 2007, 197). What is more, such an approach to culture learning brings along a deeper understanding of



one's own culture, as it is necessary to relate new findings to individual's existing knowledge, i.e. of his / her culture (Kramsch 2003, quoted in Dupuy 2006).

### **3. PRAGUE MODEL UNITED NATIONS**

How does this all link to the European and global issues cross-curricular subject introduced earlier? GS as presented in the previous section of the article can simulate not only non-existing companies and organisations, but also real ones. As the name suggests, PRAMUN is one of the many simulation models of the United Nations (MUNs).

#### **3.1 WHAT IS MUN?**

MUN simulation project is largely known among American high-school students. It is, nevertheless gaining more popularity also in Europe, where there are several big MUN conferences (e.g. Hague International MUN). The **aim of MUN** is to get young people involved in the discussion of current affairs, world-wide problems, and to teach them about the real UN and its agenda. Nevertheless, the MUNs are not only about gathering information and extending knowledge, but also about forming opinions and values, meeting other like-minded people from other parts of the world, and about learning “the importance of being able to see world as other see it” (Reitano 2003, 4).

During the event, student-delegates represent selected countries or NGOs in various committees and in the Security Council; the bigger conferences also simulate e.g. sessions of International Court of Justice. The MUNs often deal with the same questions and issues which are on the UN's agenda in that particular year. The official language of the European MUNs is usually English, although there are many non-native speakers among participants.

#### **3.2 PRAMUN – CONFERENCE DESIGN AND PROGRAMME**

The PRAMUN conference took place for the first time in 2009 and has been annually hosted by a Prague grammar school Gymnázium Jana Nerudy ever since. In 2012, there were over 200 delegates from 15

schools, including another Czech grammar school and an international school, both based in Prague. The event has a strong multicultural feel as the participants come from literally all over the world, including Egypt, Cameroon, Uganda, Turkey, USA, Germany, Italy, or Russia.

The conference takes place over the course of five days in January. The session starts off by **Youth Forum**, an informal meeting in the committees, whose aim is for students to get to know each other through discussions of personal topics – 2012's topics included a quote by Rousseau: "Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains."

The following three days are spent partly working in the committees and partly with the **cultural programme** which includes e.g. guided tour of Prague or topical evening on Czech history. During these events, Czech students serve as guides for foreign delegations, taking over the responsibility for e.g. accompanying the groups from their hotel to the conference venue or solving practical problems that arise. In this aspect, PRAMUN is unique.

PRAMUN features the following **committees** (example of a 2012 topic in the brackets): Human Rights (The rebuilding and refinancing of Libya); Economic and Financial (Creating an international fund to finance and assist in natural disasters); Environmental (Plastic pollution in the world's waters); Social, Cultural and Humanitarian (The refugee problem in the Mediterranean region); Disarmament (NATO involvement in Afghanistan); Security Council (The question of Palestinian statehood). Each committee is typically chaired by a presiding couple (a foreign chair and a Czech co-chair, both experienced MUN delegates), whose primary task is to enforce a special parliamentary procedure. The result of the discussion of a particular committee topic is a **resolution**, a policy statement which is voted on. Resolutions which are passed in the committees are later voted on in the **General Assembly** session, which is the climax of the whole event.

### 3.3 PRAMUN – PREPARATION

The conference cannot possibly take place without a thorough preparation, which is different in every school (see also section 3.4.2.2). Below is a description of the preparation undertaken by a participating Czech grammar school, linking ELT and ETEGC.

The preparation is realised by means of a voluntary **seminar** with regular 90-minute meetings, taking place once a week. As the preparation needs to cover both **linguistic and content issues**, the linguistic curriculum of the seminar includes vocabulary work, intensive listening and speaking practice (developing both discussion and presentation skills), and writing practice (resolution paper writing and formal writing). From the content point of view, students get acquainted with the countries they are about to represent and with committees and topics (selected according to their personal interests). Major part of the preparation is done through researching authentic sources, working with sample resolutions or analysing video interviews with former delegates. A great amount of stress is placed on collaborative work in teams (countries, committees) and on sharing research results with classmates through presentations. The seminar is attended by first-time delegates as well as by experienced ones, which supports peer-scaffolding.

There is also further aid in form of a seminar **booklet** including various activities dealing both with linguistic and content issues, and a seminar **webpage** used for e.g. listing links to useful sites and keeping track of the syllabus and assignments. Moreover, thanks to cooperation with the host school, both delegations meet typically once a month during autumn for practice **debating sessions**.

### 3.4 PRAMUN 2012 RESEARCH

In order to find out what kind of students is drawn to activities as these, what their motivation for taking part is, and what they gain from MUN participation, a research was conducted among PRAMUN 2012 delegates. MUN directors (teachers both preparing the students for the conference and accompanying them there) were also asked about their personal and professional profile, school profile and MUN preparation.

#### 3.4.1 Research design

There were two parts to the research – 1) research among the student-delegates and 2) research among MUN directors. In the research, various types of questions were used – open-ended, semi-open, closed,

and yes-no questions. Moreover, in some sections, statements rated on five point Likert scale<sup>1</sup> were used.

#### 3.4.1.1 Student-delegates

198 student-participants, out of the total 226, took part in the research designed as a quantitative study consisting of four sets of questions:

**1) Delegate personal profile** consisting of open-ended, semi-open and yes-no questions, covering basic personal data (age, gender, mother tongue, nationality, prior attendance to an MUN conference, native vs. non-native speakers of English).

**2) Motivation for taking part in MUN** aimed at finding out whether intrinsic, or extrinsic motivation prevailed. The design and statements were selected and modified from TUSMS Questionnaire 2 (quoted in Afzal et al. 2010), which sub-divides intrinsic motivation into ‘self-exploration’ and ‘altruism’, and extrinsic motivation to ‘career and qualifications’ and ‘social enjoyment’ (selection). Two statements were selected for each of the four categories and were graded on Likert scale.

**3) General impact of MUN participation**, in terms of political and civic engagement, multicultural awareness, academic and professional orientation; this part consists of 10 statements rated on Likert scale.

**4) Linguistic impact of MUN** on non-native speakers of English; this section again made use of five point Likert scale, on which 10 statements were rated.

#### 3.4.1.2 MUN Directors

Six MUN Directors took part in the second part of the research, designed as a qualitative study comprising of four sets of questions:

**1) MUN Director personal and professional profile** consisting of open-ended questions surveying directors’ age, gender, attendance to MUN conference, motivation for participation, and experience with other simulation projects; open-ended questions were employed.

**2) School profile** gathering information about the participating schools in terms of their type, legal status, staff size, and number of students; only closed questions were used in this section.

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<sup>1</sup> scale with five levels: strongly disagree – disagree – neutral – agree – strongly agree

**3) MUN preparation** investigating (through open-ended questions) how the individual groups prepared for the conference.

**4) Impact of participation on students**, investigating what MUN Directors think about the impact of MUN participation on students (e.g. development of skills); again, open-ended questions were used.

### 3.4.2 Commented research results

Below is an overview of the research results, with comments on some of the findings.

#### 3.4.2.1 Student-delegates

##### **Delegate personal profile**

198 participants took part in the research, i.e. 113 girls (57%) and 85 boys (43%). The average participant age was 15,96 with girls being on average slightly older (16,01) than boys (15,93).

Participants of altogether 30 nationalities were involved, with Americans (84, i.e. 42%) and Czechs (26, i.e. 13%) being the biggest groups. Other big groups included Turks (11, i.e. 6%), Moroccans (10, i.e. 5%), Russians and Egyptians (both 7, i.e. 4%). Moreover, there was a diverse group of participants (17, i.e. 9%) who identified themselves as “mixed”, i.e. having two nationalities (e.g. American and German). The rest of the nationalities had 4 nationals (Indian), 3 nationals (Dutch, South Korean), 2 nationals (German, Swiss, Kazakh, Hispanic, Israeli, British) and 1 national (European, Pakistani, Brazilian, English, Filipino, Bangladeshi, Norwegian, Serbian, Spanish, Austrian, Iranian, Jordanian, Thai, Cuban).

The high number of nationalities represented in the research is probably due to the fact that many of the participating schools are international ones, attended by both locals and foreigners. That might also be the reason why 42% of participants were American, even though only one school based in the USA took part.

The overview states nationalities as indicated by the students. Therefore, an interesting finding is e.g. two students stating they are British while another one declaring English as his/her nationality. Moreover, another student regards him/herself as European.

Out of the 198 participants, 108 (55%) were native speakers of English; the rest included all Czechs (26) and other non-native speakers

(64), predominantly the Turkish, Moroccans, Russians, and participants of mixed nationality.

For the majority of participants, PRAMUN 2012 was their first MUN experience (70%). A significant number of participants have also taken part once (32, i.e. 16%) or twice (19, i.e. 10%) before. Only 8 participants took part in an MUN three or more times (a total of 4%).

## Motivation for taking part in MUN

Table 1: Motivation for taking part in MUN

	<b>Statement “I took part in MUN ...”</b>	<b>Cz (26)</b>	<b>EU (11)</b>	<b>Am (84)</b>	<b>total (198)</b>
I: AL	...because I genuinely want to help others (AL1)	3,08	3,46	3,46	<b>3,5</b>
	...because I want to help solve society's problems (AL2)	3,5	3,55	3,79	<b>3,74</b>
	average – both <b>AL</b> statements	3,29	3,51	3,63	<b>3,62</b>
I: SE	...because I want to explore new ideas (SE1)	3,88	3,73	3,81	<b>3,88</b>
	...for my personal growth and development (SE2)	4,15	3,73	3,99	<b>3,99</b>
	average – both <b>SE</b> statements	4,02	3,73	3,9	<b>3,94</b>
<b>total average – intrinsic</b>		<b>3,78</b>			
E: CQ	...to gain valuable skills for my career (CQ1)	3,73	3,73	3,63	<b>3,74</b>
	...so I can get a better job (CQ2)	3,08	2,82	3,32	<b>3,14</b>
	average – both <b>CQ</b> statements	3,41	3,28	3,48	<b>3,44</b>
E: SO	...because it's a fun place to be (SO1)	3,73	3,91	3,85	<b>3,83</b>
	...because it's a great place to meet new people (SO2)	4,08	3,64	3,88	<b>3,98</b>
	average – both <b>SO</b> statements	3,91	3,78	3,87	<b>3,91</b>
<b>total average – extrinsic</b>		<b>3,68</b>			

Abbreviations: Cz = Czech; EU = EU nationalities excluding Cz; Am = American; I = intrinsic: AL = altruism, SE = self-exploration; E = extrinsic: CQ = career and qualifications, SO = social enjoyment. NB: In the actual questionnaire, statements were shuffled.

As can be seen from the table, in general, intrinsic motivation is slightly more important for MUN participation than extrinsic motivation. Nevertheless, when studied separately, SE is by far the most important one, with most participants agreeing with the statements (N.B. especially the significant score of 4,15 by Czech in SE2). What seems to be just slightly less motivating is the social contact. Note also the fact that even though students find the MUN experience challenging, at the same time they believe it is fun to be there. What the author finds quite surprising is the low score of CQ, contradicting the fact that MUN participants often tend to be ambitious and performance-oriented.

### General impact of MUN experience on participants

Table 2: General impact of MUN experience on participants

<b>statement</b> <b>“Taking part in MUN ...”</b>	<b>Cz</b> <b>(26)</b>	<b>EU</b> <b>(11)</b>	<b>Am</b> <b>(84)</b>	<b>total</b> <b>(198)</b>
...has made me think more about global problems and issues.	3,73	4,64	4,36	<b>4,24</b>
...has made me more attentive to news about politics and government.	3,27	4,09	4,13	<b>3,9</b>
...has motivated me to get engaged in community and / or volunteer work.	2,81	3,64	3,25	<b>3,24</b>
...has motivated me to get engaged in politics in the future.	2,65	3,55	3,42	<b>3,21</b>
...has provided me with extended knowledge and better understanding of foreign countries and cultures.	3,77	4,18	4,3	<b>4,11</b>
...has helped me see the world as others see it.	3,31	4,09	3,98	<b>3,78</b>
...has helped me improve my own learning.	3,31	4	3,99	<b>3,83</b>
...has motivated me to study foreign languages.	3,62	3,45	3,29	<b>3,28</b>
...has motivated me to study abroad.	3,65	3,73	3,7	<b>3,62</b>
...will have an effect on my choice of studies and / or job in the future.	<b>3,38</b>	3,31	3,45	3,5

The table shows that MUN has the capacity of attracting students' attention to global issues (score 4,24) and developing their multicultural understanding (score 4,11), even though Czech students score slightly lower. At the same time, the MUN experience does not motivate them for political or civic involvement (denying Andolina 2003).

### Linguistic impact of MUN experience

Table 3: Linguistic impact of MUN experience on participants – speakers of English as second or foreign language

<b>statement</b> <b>“Taking part in MUN ...”</b>	<b>Cz</b> <b>(26)</b>	<b>other</b> <b>(64)</b>	<b>total</b> <b>(90)</b>
...has improved my individual speaking / presentation skills in English.	3,85	3,63	<b>3,69</b>
...has improved my discussion / communication skills in English.	3,81	3,83	<b>3,82</b>
...has improved my comprehension (reading and listening) skills in English.	3,42	3,44	<b>3,43</b>
...has helped me broaden my vocabulary in English.	3,69	3,7	<b>3,7</b>
...has helped me improve my general self-confidence in English.	3,62	3,75	<b>3,71</b>

The non-native speakers have, on the whole, improved their linguistic skills, in particular discussion and communication skills. What is also important is the improvement in their self-confidence in L2.

#### 3.4.2.2 MUN Directors

**Personal and professional profile:** The typical PRAMUN 2012 Director was 44 years old; there was an equal number of men and women. An average director had an extensive MUN experience, having been to an MUN conference 8 times on average, preparing MUN delegates for a corresponding number of years. Most of the directors teach Humanities and Social Science subjects: English, Social Studies, History, Geography, Political Science, Anthropology, and Religious Studies; two of the directors stated that they teach “Model UN”.



When asked about their personal motivation for taking part in MUN, various reasons were mentioned: directors find their participation “energizing”, “motivating”, or “enjoyable”.

Directors had taken part in various other simulations, such as International Student Leadership Conference, Model United States Congress, etc., often as delegates themselves. Moreover, directors mentioned using debates and simulations in their own classes.

**School profile:** The participating schools were secondary schools or international schools, with private schools outnumbering public schools. Most schools had over 51 members of staff and over 500 students.

**MUN preparation:** In most cases, the MUN preparation is conducted by means of an extracurricular class, taking place once or twice a week over the course of ca. 15 weeks (September-December), each session lasting 90 minutes. Teachers often use “a variety of materials collected from different sources” and/or make use of websites of big MUNs and other internet sources; some teachers mentioned creating their own websites where both them and the students upload materials. Some of the teachers work on their own; others cooperate with colleagues or even with other schools. When asked about the percentage of students attending the MUN, the answers varied from 3% up to 20% of the total number of students in the school.

**Impact of participation on students:** Directors mentioned various assets of the simulation: “developing greater understanding of the world and varied cultures”; “development of critical thinking, problem solving, listening, public speaking and research skills”; “exploring global issues from a different perspective” (“I think MUN is by far the best way to integrate contemporary issues.”); “developing leadership, responsibility”; “great college preparation”. Directors also pointed out the value of personal experience of meeting other young people from foreign countries and cultures (“I can’t think of a short-term opportunity that does as much for bringing the world along to a better place.”).

When listing drawbacks, teachers mentioned students being nervous, and lack of facilities for MUN preparation.

## 4. CONCLUSION

As the presented article attempted to demonstrate with the support of the research data, global simulations, such as MUN, have the potential to fulfil the goals of foreign language teaching in terms of development of both linguistic and (inter)cultural skills, while sharing many aspects of innovative methods. Moreover, the data has shown that MUN is a promising means of attracting students' attention to global issues and thus a possible way of integrating ETEGC.

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