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Contents

"I Have Seen The Sea"

J. A. TILLMAN

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design
Theoretical Institute
tillman@mome.hu

Abstract. The sea is the measure of space. It makes the fundamental ratios of the world clear. "The unbroken surface of the sea is the largest plane in nature" (Ratzel 2010, 121). As Darwin had said seeing the endless bays of the Strait of Magellan: "as if they were leading beyond the borders of this world" (qtd. in Ratzel 2010, 121). This is the specific singularity of a sea view; the transcendent space factor most obviously present in immanence. Its surrounding the entire substance of the world, its agelessness, its "undefinability," and at the same time its pervasive, elementary materiality make the sea the widest possible metaphor of existence. The sea may be the indicator, image, carrier of everything: of every type of multitude, and that of the sum of all diversities. This is also why in different texts the sea appears in its metaphorical rather than concrete meaning. The sea has always been a special topic of literature and the arts, among the numerous literary works dedicated to the sea emerging Herman Melville's novel and Jules Michelet's essay. They both have a view that is strikingly different from today's common approach. In the twentieth century the man of European culture gradually prevails over the sea; metaphors of shipping have become metaphors of astronautics. The all-encompassing meaning of the sea was described with unmatchable concentration and, at the same time, unrivaled wealth of detail by J. L. Borges in his short story The Aleph.

Keywords: measure, metaphor, transcendent in immanence, Borges

No one who has never seen himself surrounded on all sides by nothing but the sea can have a true perception of the world and his own relation to it.

Goethe *Italian Journey*

"Isn't it strange, how your thinking and emotions adapt to the horizon when you live near the ocean?", Brian Eno asks, "When you're used to space, you need space to be able to think" (Dax 2011, 56). Of course, experiencing the fullness of space does not necessarily require growing up by the sea; it is enough to immerse oneself in the endless space of music – given the fact that, as the composer George Enescu asserts: "Music is itself a sea. The sea itself is a form of music" (1995, 26).

The sea, however, is not simply one of the phenomena, spaces or regions. Much rather, it is something within which the fundamental features of the world are fully present. The sea has always been a special topic of literature and the arts, and for a long period of time it has also constituted the subject of scientific interest and reflection. Among the numerous literary works dedicated to the sea there emerge Herman Melville's novel and Jules Michelet's essay. Both these works merge immediate experience with indirect knowledge. Melville served as a sailor for years, while Michelet also cultivated the contemporary subject of natural history, his studies on nature focusing not only on the sea, but also on the flora and fauna of mountains. Their great works were written at the middle of the nineteenth century, in an era when navigation expanded to encompass the entire world – and thus a global vision of the entirety of seas became possible (Mack 2011).

They both have a comprehensive view of the world-sea, a view that is strikingly different from today's common approach. Melville's heroes sail across seas and oceans as today's global travellers cross them flying from one continent to the other. Michelet's scientific research encompasses almost every aspect of the sea from geological origins to polar seas and the description of the most varied water-phenomena and storm types.

Not slightly dreaded

While travelling between continents took place by ships, it was an indisputable fact that "the ocean [was] a not slightly dreaded thing for us" (Burke 2008, 68). Edmund Burke arrives at this conclusion at the middle of the eighteenth century in his essay on greatness, where he mentions the ocean as the main carrier of features constituting the specificities of this quality (strength, greatness, endlessness, dread, etc.). This very same atmosphere is intoned by the opening sentence of Michelet's book: "A Dutch sailor, a cool observer impossible to mislead, who has spent his life on the sea, openly confesses that his first impression of the sea is fear" (1987, 16).

Fear has subsided, mainly due to developments in shipbuilding and sailing technology, but is has not disappeared. As late as the middle of the twentieth century W. H. Auden still considers it necessary to mention that the sea "is so little of a friendly symbol that the first thing which the author of the Book of Revelation

notices in his vision of the new heaven and earth at the end of time is that 'there was no more sea'" (1951, 18).

All this despite the fact that around 1960 air traffic rapidly started to replace shipping as the means of intercontinental passenger transport, which in a European context, in the seventies, completely ceased to exist. The once large population of sailors diminished, due to technological developments the crew of transportation and fishing ships was reduced to a couple of people. Even though three-quarters of the Earth's surface are still covered by seas, and from time to time we are reminded of their immense powers through shipwrecks and tidal waves, it seems that in this stage of modernity fear has been pushed into the background.

Nothing illustrates better the paradox in this process than the metamorphosis of the metaphor of shipwrecks. In the nineteenth century – as Hans Blumenberg described it in his *Shipwreck with Viewer* (1979) – the viewer's stable perspective was lost, his formerly certain position ceased to exist, he found himself on the crest of the waves. Compared to this, in the twentieth century the man of European culture gradually prevails over the sea – of course, without having conquered her. This prevailing has happened literally through structures with wheels and wings: first prevailing over the surface of seas and the earth, and then over Earth itself. Metaphors of shipping have become metaphors of astronautics. The image of sailors has been gradually replaced by the travellers of spaceships named Space and Earth. American architect and inventor Buckminster Fuller published a book in 1963 with the title *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*.

Of course, the sea does not cease to be the object of interest and attention; what is more – due to the ever increasing tourism to the seaside started in the nineteenth century – it has become firsthand experience for more and more people. Instead of its fearful and dreaded nature, its other characteristics have come to be defining.

The Perspective of the Horizon

The sea is the measure of space. It makes the fundamental ratios of the world clear. This does not mean that the horizon of the land and the sky arching above does not inform us regarding extension and quantity. Its sight, however, is not as pervasive as the sea's horizon: "The vast expanse of plains might offer the same great sight as the ocean; but could it ever fill our minds with such large things as the ocean itself?" – Burke asks (2008, 68). Not as if the sky could not offer instructions on height and depth, measures and ratios, but in the case of the sea this is more direct and pervading. "The sea affects our senses with the most direct effects" – Friedrich Ratzel, one of the founding fathers of geography, argues, "as an unbroken plane it makes such a spacious view possible that otherwise is impossible on earth. The circular horizon with its bell arching above the sky may only be found clearly and everywhere only at sea" (2010, 125). In his text Ratzel

also mentions that "whoever studies 'the sea's attraction' in himself or in others captured by it, will always find the perspective of the horizon as having the deepest effect in the image of the sea" (2010, 120).

In Ratzel's description what deserves special attention is the way he first offers the description of land morphology in describing the sea, and later when the perspective of the sea appears as a border beyond everything, he gives the word to somebody else, to the scientist of another field:

> The unbroken surface of the sea is the largest plane in nature. Though large plains offer the same spacious circular view as the sea, they never have the same deep effect as this site lacks the unity of material and color, and perfect planes are anyway really rare on dry land. In monotonous steppes and deserts one rarely has that impression that Darwin had, who – while sailing around the Earth – seeing the endless bays of the Strait of Magellan said: "as if they were leading beyond the borders of this world." (2010, 120)

This is the specific singularity of a sea view; the transcendent space factor most obviously present in immanence; a not really negligible element of "the attraction of the sea." The perspective of this horizon keeps raising the existential question that Béla Tábor describes in its spatial relation: it is a question regarding "the meaning, importance, 'practical' worth of the final philosophic, ontological, metaphysical questions – that of speculation, of theory" (2010, 15). At the same time: "Orientation, searching for measurement: search for that space that would dissolve our existence's pressing congestion, that might make offensive reality measurable and thus prevent every petty element's hypnosis that it would be the absolute measure to which we shall subject ourselves" (Tábor 2010, 15).

For ancient Greek mentality "the invisible measure of cognition" (Solon 1940, 46) is what holds everything together. "The measure, foundation and knowledge of everything are swimming on the surface of the sea," Hannes Böhringer writes when interpreting Solon; "the experience base of a measure difficult to reach is the silence of the sea" (2009, 13).

This measure of the sea is given as experience not merely to the man of antiquity, but also to the man of any era: "At sea man's first impression is the gigantic precipice, endlessness, a feeling of his own nothingness" – Michelet quotes the sailor mentioned at the beginning of the book (1987, 217).

Eulogy to the Horizon

The sea and the view from its coast were also defining experiences for the Bask sculptor Eduardo Chillida. Witness to this are first of all his monumental works on the cost of the Atlantic Ocean, his *Windcoms* reaching out from the

seaside rocks, and his *Eulogy to the Horizon*, but his other works and his statements also testify to this.[1] The ocean, the "school of vastness" formed his thinking about space that later, after his meeting Heidegger, also affected his philosophical discourse about space.[2]

In an interview Chillida talks about the fact that "the coast is a place where one can see great distances and the horizon is great. My work, *Eulogy of the Horizon* (1990), is along this coast, in Gijon, and needed that specific great horizon" (Wagner 2012).

His large work reflects on two characteristics of the horizon: its measure and its circularity, the approximately 10x10 meter work surrounds an open space. Thus it creates an opportunity for its visitors to experience their belonging to the land: in ratio and surrounded by the horizon. The horizon surrounds us; it creates a common human bond. "The horizon is very important to me, it always has been – Chillida argues. – All men are equal and at the horizon we are all brothers, the horizon is a common homeland" (Wagner 2012).

Where Endlessness Begins

The eulogy addressed to the horizon shows fundamental features, but beyond all these, the horizon is the place where endlessness begins. Even though the endless obviously does not have a beginning, it paradoxically still appears on the horizon. Its measure compared to us is obviously finite, but beyond it we cannot reach such conclusions. "Wherever one catches a glimpse of the ocean – Michelet writes – it will have a great effect. […] Its endlessness is invisible, but it can be felt, heard, it seems endless, and this makes the impression even stronger" (1978, 23).

Leibniz also speaks about endlessness in the context of this experience: "Every soul gets to know endlessness, gets to know everything, of course, vaguely, like when I go for a walk on the beach and I can hear the powerful roar of the sea; in the meantime I can hear the buzz of every wave but without being able to set them apart" (1986, 301).

Endlessness, this horizon of the sea that points beyond the borders of this world, is characteristic to it not only in the context of space, but also of time. The rippling of the surface, the raising and falling of waves, the continuous change and the permanence of change are characteristic features of waters. For the observer this endless and elementary event of coming into being and passing away raises the question of the relationship between being thrown into time and timelessness. Even if he is conscious of the relative timelessness of the sea, as its lifetime is linked to the existence of the Earth; thus, ultimately, it is not timeless.

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[1] "The sea has been my master and I have learned much from it. When I was young, I would go there instead of going to school" (Wagner 2012).
[2] This meeting led to Heidegger's *Art and Space* (Heidegger, 1994).

For man, however, the sea that has existed for billions of years is permanence itself, untouched by time. This recognition led Hiroshi Sugimoto to create his series of *Seascapes* that represents the utmost level of the sea's photographic reproduction. He spent years photographing the sea – from the Japanese sea through the oceans to all sorts of inland seas. The subject of the black-and-white photos is always the same; there are no coasts visible, no islands, ships or people, only water and sky and between these two – always on the central axis, sometimes blurred, sometimes razor-sharp – the line of the horizon. This unique series illustrates the sea always differently and still basically unchanging: the rippling of the water surface is different, the humidity of the air, and the time of day, thus the light conditions are different; sometimes the sky is brighter, other times the water surface because of the moonbeams it reflects. Sugimoto was searching for something that was the same for contemporary as well as for archaic men; and given the fact that the surface of the earth is changeable, and during the hundred thousands of years even the highest mountains have changed, he could find such views only at sea (Brougher and Elliott 2005). And therefore, he eliminated from his photographs any unabiding form, being or formation.

Compared to the changeability and historicity of the world, for Melville the sea's timelessness became the storehouse of some kind of subconscious historicity:

> There is, one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seem to speak of some hidden soul beneath […] millions of mixed shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulism, reveries; all that we call lives and souls, lie dreaming, dreaming, still; tossing like slumberers in their beds; the ever-rolling waves but made so by their restlessness. (1966, 368)

This type of formlessness and inscrutability of the sea, its inaccessibility for man and its past sunk into the subconscious are also discussed by another great artist contemplating the sea, Fernando Pessoa: "I have spent uncountable hours, series of released moments at the lonely sea during my night walks. Every thought that once made people live, every emotion ever felt by people passed through me as *the dark resume of history* during my meditations by the sea" (2006, 108).

The principle of the sea as the dark resume of history originates from the sea-interpretations of Western culture: "The predominant Western view of the sea might be characterized as that of a quintessential wilderness, a void" – says John Mack in his book about the cultural history of the sea,

> a deserted space only temporarily populated by sailors. [...] The sea, in this concept, is empty: a space not a place. The sea is not something with a "history," at least without any recorded history. There are no footprints left

upon it; it consumes and secretes those who come to grief on its surface and the vessels in which they have sailed. (2011, 16)

For the sailor Melville, however, all this reveals itself differently; his is not a land-perspective, for him the grand waters of the oceans surround the islands of the continents:

The same waves wash the moles of the new-built Californian towns, but yesterday planted the most recent race of man, and lave the faded but still gorgeous skirts of Asiatic lands, older than Abraham; while all between float milky-ways of coral isles, and loving-lying, endless, unknown Archipelagoes, and impenetrable Japans. Thus this mysterious, divine Pacific zones the world's whole bulk about; makes all coasts one bay to it; seems the tide-beating heart of earth. (1966, 368)

I Have Seen

Its surrounding the entire substance of the world, its agelessness, its "undefinability," and at the same time its pervasive, elementary materiality make the sea the widest possible metaphor of existence. The sea may be the indicator, image, carrier of everything: of every type of multitude, and that of the sum of all diversities. This is also why in different texts the sea appears in its metaphorical rather than concrete meaning: "Literature and hymnology are replete with such reflection, rendering the sea a symbolic and metaphorical narrative device rather than a real place" (Mack 2011, 17).

This all-encompassing meaning of the sea was described with unmatchable concentration and, at the same time, unrivaled wealth of detail by J. L. Borges in his short story The Aleph. In this work Aleph is that place "where all places are seen from every angle, each standing clear, without any confusion or blending" (1986, 346). Despite the irony that pervades the whole work – familiar from Borges's entire oeuvre – his description of the world is valid, given the fact that, as he writes about the *Divina Commedia*, "everything that exists in the world is there. Everything, that was, is and will be, that story of the past and that of the future as well, is awaiting us at a certain point of that peaceful labyrinth, every object that I possessed and that I will possess, everything…" (1999, 285).[3]

The vision of *everything* – shown in the multitude of its details and in its entirety – in Borges's description develops from the sea: "I saw the teeming sea; I saw daybreak and nightfall, I saw…" (1986, 349). Then, after having listed in

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[3] "I dreamt up a kind of magical image, an illustration that is a microcosm at the same time; well, Dante's poem is this all-encompassing image" (Borges 1999, 285).

approximately one and a half pages the totality revealed through the multitude of seen objects – perspective –, time-shifts and cuts, he ends the depiction of his vision: "for my eyes had seen that secret and conjectured object whose name is common to all men but which no man has looked upon – the unimaginable universe" (1986, 349).

Borges follows his master not merely in describing the universe, where "the author is painting precise details in varied and inventive ways" (1986, 286), but even in his choice of words: "I saw this Earth – Dante writes – I looked at the ugly, tiny nugget laughing." [4]

Translated by Boróka Prohászka-Rád

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[4] *Divina Commedia* XXII.

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"Where the Place?"
Meanings of Space and of Places in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Géza KÁLLAY

Eötvös Loránd University
Department of English Studies
kallay@ucsc.edu

Abstract. Drawing especially on Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as a text to be investigated in particular and on some philosophical texts on space and time as theoretical background, the paper attempts to show how difficult it is to talk about time without spatial metaphors and how space serves as a device to make time 'real.' In turn, it is also demonstrated how space becomes dependent on time: in *Macbeth*, the significance of a dramatic moment can hardly be established without some specific reference to how that moment fits into the spatial sequence of the plot, and how this effects the formation and disintegration of the character who is in a certain spatio-temporal situation. The paper consists of three parts: in the first, the first scene of the play is interpreted in detail; in the second, there is a brief survey of theories of *space* and *place*, and the third follows the various uses the words space and place are put to in the dramatic text. It is argued that one aspect of Macbeth's tragedy is that he tried the "spatial impossible," inseparable, as usual, from time: he wished to move, to go *and* remain in place at the same time.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Macbeth, space, place, metaphysics, meaning

> "*Where are we at all?*
> *And whereabouts in the name of space?*"
> James Joyce: *Finnegans Wake*

1. The Weird Sisters: *when* and *where*

1 Witch: When shall we three meet again? (1)
                In thunder, lightning, or in rain? (2)
2 Witch: When the hurlyburly's done, (3)
                When the battle's lost, and won. (4)
3 Witch: That will be ere the set of sun. (5)
1 Witch: Where the place? (6)
2 Witch: Upon the heath. (6)
3 Witch: There to meet with Macbeth. (7)
1 Witch: I come, Graymalkin! (8)
2 Witch: Paddock calls. (9)
3 Witch: Anon! (10)
ALL: Fair is foul, and foul is fair: (11)
                Hover through the fog and filthy air. (12) [*Exeunt.*]

"When shall we three meet again?" (1.1.1.) – the First Witch (Weird Sister) asks, this sentence also being the very first sentence of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.[1] This question (as preparation to say farewell, perhaps) containing two time-adverbials ("when" and "again"), is followed by three options, underscoring the "trinity" of the Weird Sisters, the number three, not without mythological significance. The three possibilities are still in the interrogative mood, and they might be read as referring to both space and time: "In thunder, lightning, or in rain?" (2), i.e.: 'are we going to meet *when* there is thunder, lightning or rain?' or: 'are we going to meet *where* there is, or will be, thunder, lightning, or rain?'. The Second Sister answers with an implied statement where only the adverbial clauses of time are explicit: "[we shall meet] When the hurlyburly's done, / When the battle's lost and won" (3-4). The "hurlyburly," as the editor's gloss indicates, is "uproar, tumult, confusion" (Muir 1979, 5). In my reading, it is a kind of 'tohu va bohu,' a pre-creational, pre-

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[1] Throughout this paper I quote *Macbeth* according to Muir (1979). References to the play are according to act-, scene-, and line-numbers in this edition. I also follow Muir (who follows the Folio of 1623, the only available "original" source of the play) in calling the Weird Sisters "Witches" in the above speech-headings but only there. The term "witch" must be handled with caution because it decides about the "ontological status" of these obscure creatures too soon: cf. Nicholas Brooke's interpretation in the Introduction to the Oxford edition of *Macbeth*: "They call themselves the Weïrd [sic!] Sisters, and Banquo and Macbeth refer to them as such; the only time the word 'witch' is heard in the theatre is in l[ine] 6 of this scene [in Act 1, Scene 3], when the First Witch quotes the words of the sailor's wife as the supreme insult for which her husband must be tortured. 'Weird' did not come to its loose modern usage before the early nineteenth century; it meant Destiny or Fate, and foreknowledge is clearly the Sisters' main function. But the nature of their powers is still ambiguous" (Brooke 1990, 3).

conditional state where nothing is yet clear or decided. *Tohu va bohu*, (in fact *tohu va vohu* in the Genesis story), originally means something like 'without form,' 'void,' 'chaos and utter confusion.' Things and persons should have space, place and a stretch of "narrated-dramatised" time in order to come out of the initial chaos: the Weird Sisters are preparing the stage and plot-time, the "where" and "when," for the drama to be performed. However, from the conversation of the Weird Sisters, it is not clear whether the respective time and place of "thunder, lightning and rain" (i.e., a storm) and the 'end' of the "hurlyburly" coincide or not. The terminal point of confusion ("when the hurlyburly's *done*") might serve as a kind of corrective alternative to the possibility of meeting in a storm. So the implied answer might be paraphrased as follows: 'yes, we shall meet in a storm, which is also the end of confusion and void,' or 'no, we shall not meet in thunder, lightning or in rain; we'll rather meet when the uproar and tumult, in fact the battle is over' (the parallel syntactic structures: "When… when…", and even the continuing rhymes, help us to identify "hurlyburly" as "battle").

Moreover, the word *done* sinisterly pre-echoes one of the key-words of the play: for example, Macbeth at the end of the dagger-monologue says: "I go, and it is done" (2.1.62), i.e., 'I will go into Duncan's bedchamber, and I will kill Duncan, and then it is over.' Lady Macbeth, in turn, will comment, before Macbeth comes back after having killed Duncan, on the scenario with: "Alack, I am afraid they [the body-guards of Duncan sleeping in his room] have awaked, / And 'tis not done" (2.2.9-10) but Macbeth, with bloody hands, enters with the famous words: "I have done the deed" (14). Later, when his wife urges him to go back to Duncan's chamber and "smear / The sleepy grooms [the bodyguards] with blood" (2.2.47-48) he says: "I'll go no more. / I am afraid to think what I have done" (2.2.48-49). Lady Macbeth, re-enacting the murder-scene in her sleepwalking, in Act 5, Scene 1, will exclaim (even echoing the First Weird Sister's "I come, Graymalkin"): "There's knocking at the gate: Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone" (3.1.56-58). When the Lady is already dead and Macbeth is practically alone in his castle to face his enemies, he remarks: "I 'gin [begin] to be aweary of the sun, [I am bored by daylight] / And wish th' estate o'th world [the structure of the universe] were now undone" (5.5.47-48). This can also be paraphrased as: 'I am tired of even the sun shining at me, and I wish God had not created the world.' How anything should, and can be "done" at all is of central significance in the play, and I will return to this question shortly.

The battle is spoken of as if the Weird Sister did not know *who* is going to win and lose, and we of course have no idea yet of even the opponents: right now, this is a 'battle in general,' a 'battle as such.' Yet with this formulation ("lost and won") a future-oriented idea of relativity is introduced as well: after all, it is a general truth that in a conflict, what is winning for the One, is always losing for the Other. The Third Sister, making her first contribution now, foretells at least the

approximate time of the end of the battle, and from her words we also learn that – in a play, where a good half of the action, especially the middle of the play, takes place at night – it is most probably still daytime: "That will be ere [before] the set of the sun" (5), to which neither of the other Sisters objects.

Rather, the First Sister starts to negotiate place: "Where the place?" (6), also breaking, with a half-line, the smoothly rhyming series of couplets heard so far, precisely when it comes to talking about *place*. In the discourse of the First Sister, we are, even syntactically and prosodically, dropped out of the series of sentences, hitherto exclusively discussing time, onto a certain *place*. The relation of space and place is severely complicated – not only in the play but in any discussion – and another goal of mine will be to talk about some aspects of this relation. For the time being, I define *place* as a distinctive region of space, a determinate spatial volume which a concrete object or body could, at least in principle, occupy (cf. Rosen 2012).

The Second Sister responds to "Where the place?" with: "Upon the heath" (6) and this rather vague specification of space is further narrowed down with the help of a place-adverbial coming from the Third Sister: "*There* to meet with Macbeth" (7). The sentence, because of the infinitive ("to meet"), is definitely future-oriented, and it brings the proper name "Macbeth" into play for the first time in the play. The fact that after "meet" the preposition "with" is present, suggests that this is a pre-arranged, future encounter, at least on the part of the Weird Sisters (and it will later turn out that Macbeth, indeed, was *not* expecting it, at least not *then* and *there*). Yet, most importantly, "there to meet with Macbeth" ties place and time to an *event*: *meeting* not only with one another, but with the future protagonist of the play as well, in their circle. The Sisters will meet "with" Macbeth in Act 1, Scene 3, yet it is curious that at this initial moment they – like the letter Lady Macbeth receives from her husband and reads upon her first entry onto the stage (cf. 1.5.1-14) – do not mention Banquo. Is this because Banquo will be there anyway but is not worth talking about? Is he a negligible factor? Or will he be an (unpleasant) surprise for the Sisters?

What remains from this very brief scene of not more than 12 lines is resolution: the First Sister says: "I come, Graymalkin!" (8): Graymalkin – as the footnote informs us (cf. Muir 1979, 4) – is a grey cat. This could be the name of one of the Sisters present, but the Second Sister's upcoming laconic statement: "Paddock [i.e.: a toad or frog] calls" (9) makes the reader uncertain: is it so that one of the Sisters – most probably the Third – is called "Paddock" (as such weird creatures were indeed able to take the shape of toads or frogs, just as much as cats, cf. Muir 1979, 4), and now she has started to move and she is calling the others? Or does "Paddock" refer to a fourth Sister (or some kind of persona) whom the Second Sister can hear calling all of them? There is an overall uncertainty, perhaps even a "hurlyburly" here as regards the exact reference of proper names. For the sake of

symmetry, the next in line to speak, the Third Sister should perhaps utter a name as well, but she only provides us with a time-adverbial "Anon!" (10) (i.e., 'in a short time,' 'soon,' originally meaning 'in one,' i.e. 'immediately'). And what is the purpose of Greymalkin's implicit, and Paddock's explicit, "call"? Are the Weird Sisters summoned for a specific purpose? Do they have some obligation to fulfil? Or has this first meeting been their "recess," a "time of recreation" and they are called "home" as children are called home by their parents from the play-ground when it is time to go home? How playful are these Sisters, in the Folio of 1623 sometimes called "weyward" ("wayward," i.e. 'erratic,' 'capricious,' 'unreasonable' [cf. Muir 1979, 14 and Crystal and Crystal 2002, 490]), later reciting chants which can also be performed as a round-dance? How serious are they when they confront Macbeth and Banquo? How serious are they when Macbeth visits them, at the beginning of Act 4?

In the light of the play, I find it noteworthy that the Weird Sisters are summoned without either they, or someone else (Graymalkin, Paddock) giving the definitive purpose of the call. As if still another (and, perhaps, still another…) call were necessary to clarify why they have to go now. This is worth considering because later for Macbeth each goal attained will by itself entail a new goal to be attained: neither being something with a proper name (such as the "Thane of Cawdor," or "the King"), nor being somewhere (in or out of Duncan's bedchamber, on the throne, at the banquet, in front of Hecate, fighting alone against his enemies in his castle) will mean a "promised end." What Macbeth will lack is a sense of a 'real' ending: each "ultimate goal" will turn out to be an "interim goal," the ultimate one remaining shrouded in obscurity. The plot suggests to its protagonist that when Lady Macbeth says: "I am afraid […] 'tis [the deed, the killing of Duncan is] not done" (2.2.9-10), and when she says "What's done cannot be undone" (3.1.58) she is right, on both occasions. For it is never done. Goals are always deferred, nothing is *really* accomplished, nothing is ever finished, nothing is ever over; whatever there is, it flows on, like Duncan's, "the old man's" "blood." Lady Macbeth will even ask in the sleepwalking scene: "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" (5.1.33-34).

One way to sum up Macbeth's tragedy is to say that for him what is done cannot be undone: it is past remedy. However, at the same time, whatever is done, still remains *undone* also in the sense of 'unfinished,' as if significant action with a real purpose had fallen out of time, as if time were rattling along as an empty shell, without any content: "Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow / Creeps in his petty pace from day to day / To the last syllable of recorded time…" (5.5.18-20). What is done cannot be altered, or changed: the regret, the remorse, the despair is there but it will, and has to, remain undone, in the sense of remaining open, like an open wound. The problem is not only that something is over but also that nothing is ever over. What I am interested in, in this paper, is precisely some of the spatial and 'place-al' consequences of this temporal aspect of the play.

Then comes the much interpreted, proverbial couplet (so the lines are rhyming once again), spoken by all the three of them, as a kind of chant: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair: / Hover through fog and filthy air" (11-12). The references to "fog" and "filthy air" (already filthy, perhaps, because of the blood, the smoke and the dead bodies of the battle, on the literal level of meaning) are most probably specifications of the immediate surroundings, but how are we to read "Fair is foul, and foul is fair"? The opposition of "fair and foul" is a commonplace in the language of Shakespeare's time but their identification, their making them 'equal' is not.[2] Further, both – rather straightforward – qualities may be interpreted ethically just as much as aesthetically, yielding the following, at least two possible paraphrases: 'good is bad and bad is good' or: 'nice is ugly and ugly is nice.' Yet the identification of these binary oppositions makes that kind of relativity explicit which was implied in "lost and won": not only is it a matter of perspective whether anything or anybody is good or bad, beautiful or repulsive but there is a serious crisis, an overall deflation of values which makes distinctions futile and nonsensical. Not only are time and space (including, it seems, especially the future) under the circumspection of the Weird Sisters but the possibility of translucency, of distinguishable qualities has been heavily compromised for all agencies in the play: we may recall, in Act 1 Scene 4, King Duncan's interrupted reflection on the man who was Thane of Cawdor before Macbeth got this title: "There's no art / To find the mind's construction in the face: / He was a gentleman on whom I built / An absolute trust—" (1.4.12-15).

It is precisely any kind of "absolute" (as opposed to the 'relative,' the 'relational,' the 'partial,' the 'fragmented') that looks impossible in the play. To appreciate what the Sisters stand for even further, we may also remember how Macbeth, upon his first entry onto the stage, echoes the key-words of the concluding, general statement of the Weird Sisters: "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (1.2.36). Macbeth, at this first, initial stage has not yet identified *foul* and *fair* as the Weird Sisters have done; for him, the two qualities are still in a kind of 'conjoined juxtaposition,' yet with the acknowledgement that they may operate, qualifying "day," simultaneously: not 'foul *is* fair' but 'foul *and* fair.' He may not have seen such a foul *and* fair day because the battle, by nature, was ugly and appalling, but victory was sweet and beautiful, so, indeed, even the winner is a kind of loser, a witness to awe-inspiring and repulsive things. Before Macbeth utters this sentence, we see the Sisters for the second time; the scene (Act 1, Scene 3) opens on the note of place: "*Where* hast thou been, Sister? / Killing swine. / Sister, *where*

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2 Cf. for example the words Brabantio addresses to Othello: "O thou foul thief, where has thou stow's my daughter? […] Whether a maid […] Would ever have […] Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom / Of such a thing as thou?" (1.2.62-71) and, in turn, the words of the Duke of Venice to Brabantio: "… noble signior, / If virtue no delight in beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.288-290); quoted according to Ridley (1986). Cf. also Brooke (1990, 95).

thou?" (1.3.1-3), and the story the First Sister tells about the sailor's wife, the sailor and the "tempest-tost bark" (1.3.24, 25) indicates a considerable (though not absolute) control over space as well.

To conclude the first scene, and to entice Macbeth to step into the magic circle, the Weird Sisters, singing and dancing "hand in hand," wind up the "charm" (cf. 1.3.31, 36). The Sisters' circle is often taken to be standing for the ultimate (and absolute) space of the theatre: the stage itself. I take the relativity of "fair is foul and foul is fair" – especially through the aesthetic connotations of these words – as the play's invitation to see time as something which "hovers through," which 'lingers uncertainly as,' and which 'melts' into, space, as the Weird Sisters do: into "fog and filthy air." Thus *time* becomes a phenomenon which is suspended as, and is constantly 'translated' into, space and place.

It is by working my way through space, "carving out my passage" (cf. 1.2.21) through sites of place in *Macbeth* that I wish to draw some more general conclusions as regards discourses of space. Reading *Macbeth* is not only to narrow a hopelessly vast field down into a more manageable arena of space-discussion; it may have further significance. If – in line with Duncan – we consider Shakespeare to be a 'gentleman on whom we may build absolute trust,' and this trust consists in the hypothesis that a poetic-dramatic genius presents, in his text, space and place in a highly original manner, we may hope for some substantial insights precisely from the poetic-dramatic texture of his play which, of course with due caution, can be formulated on a more comprehensive and abstract level and, therefore, in a conceptual manner. In other words, I will read the particular story of a particular character in a literary piece in hope of some more general, philosophical insights – this is, as far as I can see it, one of the advantages of reading literature and philosophy together.

2. The universalist and the personalist accounts of space, place and time

If, indeed, time is envisaged as "dynamic," "transient" and "flowing," and space as "static," "permanent" and "fixed," then it seems we are revisiting some of the most fundamental and initial problems from which Greek philosophy, and, thus, our Western thinking originated: the problem of the relationship between permanence and change, sameness and difference, identity and relativity, determinacy and indeterminacy, synchrony and diachrony, necessity and contingency. One of the most puzzling philosophical queries of the Western tradition has been how we can talk, simultaneously, about specific, individual phenomena – about "each thing" – and about classes, sets of things, also appearing in the philosophical literature as "universals," "types" (as opposed to particular tokens), "sortal or general concepts." How can I talk about both "the table," or

"tables" in general, and about "this (very) table" (in front of me) in particular? Particular things will always differ from each other (even two eggs will not be totally alike) and it was the temporal aspect of difference, as one of the *causes* of difference, which was first emphasised especially by Heraclitus (~ 535 – ~ 475 BC) at the dawn of philosophical speculation: everything will be in constant flux, in constant motion (cf. Kirk, Raven and Schofield 1995, 181-212). The Sophists famously followed Heraclitus, and claimed that because everything is changing all the *time*, and there will always be a difference between things even with respect to themselves, no knowledge is possible at all: both the thing I wish to describe, and I who try to describe it, change so much even within the very short time it takes to name the thing, that the thing will not even "deserve" the name (and the more lengthy description even less so). It is equally well-known that Plato wanted to solve the question by 'stopping' the constant flux. He proposed that our ability to intelligibly talk about a particular thing and to grasp it conceptually, in other words to create classes, universals, types, sortal concepts, into which we can put particular things in order to interpret them, is possible because our by nature "general" concepts are "backed up" – in a highly complicated and here not further analysable way – by Forms (Ideas) that correspond to our concepts. Forms cannot be moved out of their place because they are fixed in the space of "real" Reality: Forms are unmoving, eternal and absolute. Thus, ultimately, it is Forms that make thinking and (certain) knowledge possible, since they resist movement and, therefore, time. Time, and the particular "amidst" time, was trapped in space, assigning a fixed place to another, generic (universal, typical, sortal) form of the particular (cf. especially Plato, *Cratylus*, 437d-440e and the *Republic*, 514a-526e).[3]

Thus, the relationship between time and space raises, in variously profound ways, some of the most fundamental puzzles of Western thinking. It is not only because of Plato's enormous influence on the subsequent philosophical tradition that we may see why any discourse about space is bound up with talk about time, and vice versa. When, e.g., to observe something, I fix a thing, I fix it in space and assign it to a certain place: place, as defined above, is a determinate region of space, a "here or there." This way place appears to be the space the particular object occupies and if it does not move, we may talk of a "concrete, fixed place," whereas we usually think of time as, nevertheless, "going on," as "passing by" (somehow "around," "above" or "under," or wherever) the object which is fixed in this or that specific volume of space. It is true that we do not experience space or place "separately", i.e., independently of the object: it is precisely the object that

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[3] I give the references to Plato's works according to the so-called "Estienne" (or "Stephanus")-pagination, which is internationally used. An excellent and famous English translation of Plato's oeuvre is Hamilton and Cairns (1982), where *Cratylus* was translated by Benjamin Jowett (421-474) and the *Republic* by Paul Shorey (575-844).

"cuts out" place, a "piece of space" – as Michel Foucault would say – for us (Foucault 1986, 27 qtd. in Casey 1993, 317). But we "experience" time separately "even less," since it is one of the "duties" of time never to stop but to go on-and-on, in an ungraspable manner. If I put an object down, and then lift it up, I can touch the "place" (the "ground") it has occupied. But how could I ever "touch" the time, the "while" when it was there?

The most ardent proponent of the view that time and space, although directly "invisible," are necessary, unconditional and always already present determinants of anything we experience was Immanuel Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. He called space and time "pure forms of intuition" (Kant 1956, B 66)[4] meaning that it is an anthropological fact about human beings that they arrange and order everything they perceive in space and time; space and time are initial "aspects," or "frames" we simply cannot get rid of, and according to which, and in which, we envisage all phenomena; three dimensional space, and time as the fourth dimension (and no "more" dimensions are possible) are in the mind as categories of apprehension and understanding, and they are our most fundamental and direct relations to the world (cf. Kant 1956, B 37-73).

Kant's theory of space (and time) involves the famous "Copernican turn" Kant congratulated himself on most: thinkers should turn the tables on the world, and should not adjust themselves to the world; rather, they should allow the world to mould according to the boundaries the human being discovers in herself (cf. Kant 1956 B xix-xxiv). Thus, Kant's theory of space and time has become a highly original account also in terms of presenting a special "blend" of what we may call the "cosmological" (or "physicalist," or "objectivist") theory of space (and time) on the one hand, and the "personalist" (or "psychological," or "subjectivist") theory of space (and time) on the other.[5] For Kant, space and time are in the mind, it is a genuinely "inner" and human category (and limit). At the same time, neither space nor time is "subjective" in the sense that each of us would have a different apprehension of them; on the contrary, they are objectively *there*, in each mind, as an anthropological necessity. In cosmologist space-talk such questions are discussed as whether space is not more than a bundle of *spatial relationships* between material things – as Leibnitz held –, or whether space – as Newton argued

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[4] I follow the international practice of giving references to Kant's work by using the pagination of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (originally from 1787), widely called as the "B-text". The standard English translation of the *Kritik der reinen Vernuft* is Kant (1956), the quote above can be found on page 66.

[5] It was Paul Ricouer, who, in his *Time and Narrative,* introduced, the respective terms "cosmological conceptions of time" (such as, e.g., Aristotle's) versus "psychological theories of time" (such as, e.g., Augustine of Hippo's). The first is concerned – in Ricoeur's words – with "the time of the world," the second with "the time of the soul" (cf. Ricoeur 1988, 12-22). I think this distinction can be applied to theories of space as well.

– should rather be considered as having *real existence*. For Newton, space is a *genuine entity*, a "vast aetherial container without walls, in which everything else that exists lives and moves and has its being" (Van Cleve 2009, 74).[6] Talk about space not as personal experience or orientation but as "space in the universe," as "space in the world" which would exist even independently of human beings, involved discussion of the possibility of void, of "empty space," and also of geometrical issues, including Euclidean versus non-Euclidean geometries. Since the modern revolution of physics at the beginning of the twentieth century, space and time have been found to be inseparable, and, thus, have been discussed as "spacetime," giving rise to a new discussion of cause and effect relations, of the "asymmetry" between the past and the future,[7] and even of entropy. The philosopher is interested in these – resolute and sometimes bitter – debates to draw some conclusions as regards fundamental metaphysical issues about cause, effect, determinism, and so on, from a field that seems, at least for some thinkers, to be independent of human relations and subjective perception, since geometry and physics have long had the reputation of disciplines where the "laws of nature" would hold even if no humans were present in the Universe.

Others, either convinced that any talk about space and time is hopelessly bound up with human agency anyway, or that we should rest satisfied with a more modest program, have tied the discussion of space – and time, too – to openly "personal" interpretations, where the initial point of departure is the way we ordinarily conceive of space as everyday beings. This does not mean that a personalist philosophical account would concentrate only on extreme and exclusively idiosyncratic views of space. Personalists – mostly, as far as I can see, those working on the problem of space from the phenomenological point of view – also wish to generalise and "transcend" their particular accounts. They tend to treat themselves as examples – as sort of "metonymical samples," standing for many others – whose introspective insights might find resonance in a lot of other people. Where personalists differ from cosmologists most, I think, is that a personalist acknowledges her findings to be the result of conscious reflection on what initially is private experience, originating in an act of consciousness (or, as the Anglo-Saxon tradition prefers to say: in an act of the mind) of her own. A personalist thinks of the experience of space, always already *as reflected* experience which would simply not exist without the observer's consciousness, without her "inner

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6 See further Sklar (2009, 569-574) and: "Space is, in Newton's famous remark in the *Opticks* [sic!] 'God's sensorium', the organ through which God is omnipresent in the world" (Rutherford 1999, 436).
7 "We remember and have records of the past, but not of the future. We take causal influence to proceed from earlier to later events. We think of the past as 'fixed' and unchangeable, but of the future as 'open' and indeterminate in nature" (Sklar 2009, 573).

world." This goes back to the "father" of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, whose revolution in philosophy was precisely marked – among other feats – by considering only those properties of things real which can be experienced in everyday life (cf. Hammond, Howarth and Keat 1991, 5). Consequently, it does not come as a surprise that instead of space, personalists prefer to talk about place, or even of commonplace (the latter including Maurice Blanchot, for instance).[8] Gaston Bachelard, who is rightfully celebrated for having re-annexed place for existential philosophy and for the appreciation of literature, in his famous *The Poetics of Space* grudgingly remarks that philosophers boast that they "know the universe before they know the house," while what in fact they never forget and, thus, genuinely know are "the intimate values of inside space" (Bachelard 1964, 5 and 31), the "house of their own," which is their personality and very existence. Edward Casey, in his *Getting Back into Place,* a groundbreaking study in the phenomenology of place and space, argues that place is never "a matter of arbitrary position. What if the stakes in the game of place are much higher than we think? Where then will we find ourselves? Not in empty space" – he answers the question. "As J. J. Gibson reminds us […] 'We do not live in 'space.' Instead, *we live in places*. So it behoves us to understand what such place-bound and place-specific living consist in" (Casey 1993, xiii). Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist of the seventeenth century claimed that the Cabbalists call even God, the Divine Numen, "MAKOM, that is, Place (*locus*)" (qtd. in Koyré 1957, 148). "Why is God called place? – Shmuel Sambursky asks, in dialogue with a commentary on the Genesis-story. Because He is the place of the world, while the world is not His place" (Sambursky and Pines 1971, 15). God, for the Cabbalists, is not the God of space, space in the sense physics discusses it. He is not only cosmic occasion but rather the place of every occasion. He is the source and limit of the universe and the source and limit of human existence (cf. Casey 1993, 18). If the Cabbalists tied human existence to God as sacred place (sacred place being the most typical place for several thinkers), Martin Heidegger, in his late essays, such as Building Dwelling Thinking, ties "mortals" to "Being" through "dwelling in" and "building" houses, where one is genuinely at home: "Dwelling […] is *the basic character* of Being in keeping with which mortals [human beings] exist. Perhaps this attempt to

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[8] Cf. Maurice Blanchot: "Man does not want to leave his own place (*luogo*). He says that technology is dangerous, that it distracts from our relationship with the world […]. Who is this man? It is each one of us. [...] This same man suffered a shock the day Gagarin became the first man in space. […] In these cases we must pay heed to the man in the street, to the man with no fixed abode. […] It is therefore necessary, up there, for the man from the Outside to speak, and to speak continuously, not only to reassure and to inform us, but because he has no other link with the old place than that unceasing word, which […] says, to whoever is able to understand it, only some insignificant commonplace, but also says top this to him who listens carefully: that truth is nomadic" (Blanchot 1996, 269 and 272).

think about dwelling and building will bring out somewhat more clearly that building belongs to dwelling and how it receives its nature from dwelling. Enough will have been gained if dwelling and building have become *worthy of questioning* and thus have remained *worthy of thought*" (Heidegger 1994, 160). For Heidegger, "place is the phenomenal particularization of 'being-in-the world'", which Edward Casey makes more concrete by interpreting it as "*being-in-place*, i.e., being in the *place-world* itself" (Casey 1993, xv). Maurice Merleau-Ponty argued, in his seminal work, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, that instead of an empiricist or intellectual account of "being-in-the world," we should rather concentrate on the body's awareness of place as *situatedness*, as the body feeling the "life-world" around itself. Abstract movements, such as watching a play on stage in the theatre, involve, on the observer's part, the ability of projection through the possibilities the imagination offers: "The normal function which makes abstract movement possible is one of 'projection' whereby the subject [the observer] of movement keeps in front of him an area of free space in which what does not naturally exist takes on a semblance of existing" (Merleau-Ponty 1985, 111). This is tantamount to saying that even participating in the imaginary originates not so much in what we know but what we, with our bodies, are capable of doing in space, space understood here as a concrete place, a particular situation.

These examples from the personalist speculations about space and place are perhaps enough to show that since these accounts involve a multitude of aspects of human existence, the various senses of space and place will be in direct proportion to this multitude (and perhaps we will, in this tradition, end up even with *too* many meanings of space and place, some of them with rather vague boundaries). Edward Casey, in *The Fate of Place*, which is a "philosophical history" of the problem of space and place (and a sequel to *Getting Back Into Place*), shows how, in the history of thinking the systole and diastole of space- and place-talk changed from discourses about place, for example, in Aristotle's system, to theories of space in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, to return, from late nineteenth century onwards, chiefly to discourses of private places. From among those I have termed personalists Casey devotes special attention to Bergson, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Bachelard, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida, and Irigaray (cf. Casey 1998).

3. Displaced and fixed Macbeth

"What if the stakes in the game of place are much higher than we think?" – Edward Casey, as we have heard, asks. This is a question we could ask Macbeth to answer, too. It is one of the commonplaces of Shakespeare-criticism that in Early Modern English culture the body of a person, including the actor's body on the stage, was seen as the microcosm, mirroring the Macrocosm. The Macrocosm, as

they knew it, included all the spheres around the Earth with the planets (including the Sun and the Moon, which for them were also planets), corresponding to respective (male) parts of the human body as macrocosm (cf. e.g. Elton 1986, 18-19). Whether this meant trying to find a place – in philosophical treatises, in poetry, in tragedy, comedy, history, etc. – for the human being both in the everyday world and the Universe simultaneously, is difficult to tell. The answer is complicated by the, to me, absolutely not implausibly sounding claim that even whom I call cosmologists have always wished to find a home in the Universe, too, just they started out by adopting a divine standpoint – they tried to look at the scenario from "God's perspective," mostly in the name of "reason" – rather than making their initial steps reckoning with their human limits. This is important to note because Shakespearean tragic heroes can also be seen – among several other perspectives as well – as precisely marking out the boundaries between the divine and the human. King Lear, for example, begins his play as a God-like, mythological figure and ends as a wretched, "poor, bare, forked animal" (*King Lear*, 3.4. 106),[9] mad with grief but also with wisdom, howling over the death of his favourite daughter, Cordelia. Lear, being an earthly father, can, unlike God, give life to a beloved person only once, and cannot resurrect his child, as a Divine Father could.

The transcendental creatures starting *Macbeth* and surrounding the protagonist may get a cosmologist and personalist interpretation simultaneously: the Weird Sisters can be taken as representatives of Fate and as projections – even in Merleau-Ponty's sense of "projection" – of Macbeth's utmost personal imagination. "They met me in the day of success – Macbeth's letter informs his wife – and I have learn't by the perfect'st report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge" (1.5.1-3). Macbeth, intoxicated by success – and having "bathed in reeking wounds" (cf. 1.2.40), and thus drugged by the odour of blood and killing – has to encounter some tangible representatives of his desires and ambition, who at the same time vanish into "fog and filthy air": the Weird Sisters are just as "certain" as any of our inner feelings, thoughts, beliefs, hopes, wishes, and so on. And Macbeth does not only have beliefs about, but believes *in* the Weird Sisters as well. That he talks about "more than mortal knowledge" "*in* them" to me indicates that he already considers them as a kind of "place" where he would wish to be, to dwell, in the Heideggerian sense, but by the time he gets there, they make "themselves air, into which they vanish" (cf. 1.5.5).

As already hinted at while interpreting the First Scene, Macbeth's "being-in-a-place," his *esse in loco* will be one of constant movement: his immediate placement – or, in Edward Casey's terminology: his "implacement" (Casey 1993,

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[9]   Quoted according to Muir (1986, 115).

xiii) – will continuously turn out to be a series of *dis*placements. When Macbeth thinks he is in place, that he has caught up, and has overtaken the Others (including Duncan, Banquo, the Murderers, Malcolm, Macduff, and, first and foremost, the Weird Sisters), he finds himself in a place from which he *must* move out and on. And if we emphasize the *esse* part of *esse in loco*, so if being in a place is really one of the defining features of one's being, then Macbeth's struggle – almost mimicking a kind of crucifixion – will be being torn apart between conflicting spaces. He will constantly have the urge to change places, which Casey calls "place-panic" (Casey 1993, ix). Macbeth's mind, his imagination, in incredibly rich poetic metaphors, tries to interpret this panic and does everything to keep the disintegrating parts of his personality together. When Macbeth writes his report to his wife, he is still something Merleau-Ponty calls the "intellectualist," who tries to explain phenomena from, and through, knowledge (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1985, 122): we do not *know* what the source of Macbeth's "perfectest report" might be on the Weird Sisters having more than mortal knowledge: maybe it is the appearance of Ross with the news that Macbeth is Thane of Cawdor (also recorded in the letter) which counts as strong evidence. But the point precisely is that Macbeth will move, form the intellectual/imaginative plain, which is at the beginning in harmony with the bodily plain, onto a realm where disharmony prevails on the bodily level: until the very end, the body will be, in a way, "in constant flux." The imagination and the intellect will try to structure and order the "moving body," slowly falling apart, in vain.

The word *time* occurs in *Macbeth* 39 times, which is a high record in itself. If we include plurals, derivatives and compounds such as "betimes," "oftentimes," "sometime," "supper-time," "timely," and "untimely," we end up with 56 occurrences. The significance of time in *Macbeth* has, quite understandably, often been discussed.[10] The word "space" occurs only once in the play: Macduff uses it in a rather insignificant context with the semantic content 'country,' or 'kingdom,' or 'world': "Fare thee well, Lord / – Macduff says to Malcolm, when Malcolm pretends to be a treacherous future king – I would not be the villain that thou think'st / For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp" (4.3, 34-36). Macduff's use of "space" instead of, e.g., "country" indicates the vacuous nature of Macbeth's empire. However, H. W. Fawkner, in a much-neglected book on the play, makes some excellent points about place and displacement concerning Macbeth's personal and theatrical plight:

> The reason why Macbeth's displacement from theatrical self-presence is so complex and contradictory is that theatricality itself is a fundamentally two-

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[10] E.g., Kastan (1982, 91-95); Coursen (1995, 158-167); Palfrey (2004, 96-111); Kállay (2004, 332-389).

sided thing in *Macbeth* (and elsewhere). On the one hand, the theatre is the place where meaning is produced; on the other hand the theatre is the place where meaning is subjected to equivocation. On the one hand Shakespeare situates himself firmly inside the tragic West, forwarding its project to turn negativity into meaning, suffering into tragic self-presence; on the other hand Shakespeare situates himself close to the twentieth-century world where the sublation of suffering is beginning to be questioned as a source of human truth. Macbeth, who from the outset seems strangely distanced from the drama of his own tragic fall, can in a wonderful way ride on both of these forces unleashed by the displacement of theatrical truth. Insofar as the theatre is an arena for the production of meaning, Macbeth's disenchantment is the withdrawal of his imagination from meaning and self-presence, but insofar as theatre is the scenario for the staging of equivocation, Macbeth's increasingly anxious withdrawal betokens the fear of the loss of meaning. (Fawkner 1990, 45)

The word "place" occurs 10 times in the play, and 15 times if we count derivative forms as well. It is also significant as a *lack*, when it would be vital to know *where* something *is* (such as Macbeth's dagger). However, it is precisely that which is shrouded into uncertainty. Macbeth, at the beginning of the play, is first talked about as constantly being on the move in the battle: he "like Valour's minion, carv'd out his passage" (1.2.19), and he – with Banquo – is compared to "eagles" and "lions" (1.2.34), who are not renowned for their slowness. Macbeth – with Banquo again – is on his way to Duncan when he is stopped for the first time in the play, by the Weird Sisters, as we could witness to it. In the dramaturgical structure of the play, this is the first instance when he is given a chance to think, to reflect, and it will precisely be this contemplation that will "unfix" him further: "why do I yield to that suggestion / Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair / And make my seated heart knock at my ribs / Against the use [custom] of nature?" (1.3.134-136). He moves on to rejoin Lady Macbeth in his castle – where Duncan will be the chief guest – overtaking the Royal train, for (in Duncan's words) "he rides well" (1.6.23) and even the servant who "had the speed of him" (1.5.35), is "almost dead for breath" (36).

Lady Macbeth does not waste much time to share her plans with her husband: Duncan should never see "tomorrow" (1.5.59). But to kill someone is not that simple, especially because Duncan had pointed out – although he named his son, and not Macbeth as his successor – that Macbeth is among those "sons, kinsmen" and "thanes" "whose places are the nearest" (1.4.35-36), i.e., Macbeth is very close to his heart. It is seeing himself as standing "here upon this bank and shoal of time" (1.7.6) that Macbeth can see a heavenly, transcendental tumult taking revenge for Duncan's contemplated murder: Duncan's "virtues / Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against / The deep damnation of his taking-off [his death], / And

pity, like a naked new-born babe, / Striding the blast [riding on the storm], or heaven's cherubin / […] Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye" (18-24). It is this despair which is in Macbeth's apologetic statement to his wife when she urges him on: "I dare do that may become a man; / Who dares do more is none" (1.7.46-47). Lady Macbeth, as if she was the dramaturg of the play, quickly points out that when Macbeth first reported the arrival of Duncan, he still "durst" (49) (i.e., dared to) do the deed, and then he was a man but then "Nor time nor place," two of the three famous Aristotelian 'unities,' "did adhere" (i.e., 'agree'). The Lady, in a Brechtian manner, reminds us that action and plot on stage requires the right time to coincide with the right place. But Macbeth is not convinced: "If we should fail?" (1.7.59), to which Lady Macbeth retorts: "We fail! / But screw your courage to the sticking-place / And we'll not fail". As Kenneth Muir's gloss explains, the metaphor is either "suggested by a soldier screwing up the cord of his cross-bow," or it is "perhaps from the screwing up of the strings on a viol" (Muir 1979, 42-42). The chief underlying idea in both cases seems to be that courage should be in place, waiting for the right moment, and it should be tightly fixed. When we see Macbeth alone again, it is precisely this fixedness which is missing: Macbeth will see the famous "air-drawn dagger" (3.4.61), which he cannot "clutch" ("Come, let me clutch thee" (2.1.34)): he cannot catch it, he cannot pin it down. It will be denying the sight of the dagger all together ("There is no such thing" (46)) which mobilises Macbeth again and prompts him to go, "with Tarquin's ravishing strides" (55), into Duncan's bedchamber.

The bedchamber is a claustrophobic, closed, fixed place but – very importantly – we are never allowed entry into it; we must see the sight only in our imagination. Yet Lady Macbeth refers to it as "the place," contrasting it with Macbeth's brain, the seat of his imagination: "Why, worthy thane, / You unbend [slacken, weaken] your noble strength to think / So brain-sickly of things. Go get some water / And wash this filthy witness [the blood as evidence] from your hand. Why did you bring these daggers from the place? / They must lie there" (2.2. 42-47). "The place," when the Macbeths are already in bed, will grow into "hell" in the words of the drunken Porter, who is, at the same time, cold in the castle, so he decides: "But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further" (2.3.6). Macbeth's and his wife's deed is indeed so horrible, that – in the words of Ross – "the heavens, as troubled with man's act, / Threatens this bloody stage" (2.4.6), here stage meaning the Earth, but of course also all the stages where *Macbeth* is performed. The Old Man, Ross's interlocutor, agrees: "'Tis [the world is] unnatural / Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last / A falcon, tow'ring in pride of place, / Was by a mousling owl hawked and killed" (2.4.10-13). The falcon, which is not supposed to be killed by an owl that feeds on mice, might be read as an allegory of Duncan, or of Macbeth, providing a further example of a universe falling into chaos.

Yet Macbeth cannot stop. He has been crowned king, and Lady Macbeth queen, but the prophecy of the Weird Sisters to Banquo, namely that he will "get [beget] kings" (1.3.66), so his "children shall be kings" (86) is still in the "filthy air." Macbeth, in the "Banquo-soliloquy" of Act 3, scene 1, is brooding over the prophecies of the Weird Sisters again: "prophet-like, They hail'd him [Banquo] father to a line of kings: / Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown, / And put a barren sceptre in my gripe. / Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand / No son of mine succeeding" (58-63). Macbeth, who, unlike Banquo, does not have any children, has to realise that while he is moving on and on, the story is taking another course: there is a rival plot unfolding in full swing: the story-line of the Weird Sisters. It is the same prophecy that has made him king that seems to place Banquo and Fleance, Banquo's son, into the roles the Weird Sisters have assigned. To have a crown placed on one's head is not enough. Now he should overtake Banquo and the Weird Sisters and place himself before them.

In the course of murdering Banquo, place will gain further significance. Macbeth hires two Murderers to do the dirty job, but when the fatal moment comes, and the assassins are waiting for their victims, a Third Murderer appears. Much ink has been spilt on the question who the Third Murderer might be (cf., e.g., Irving 2008, 147-150). Can it be Macbeth himself? But he is at the banquet, celebrating the crowning-ceremony. There are several arguments for and against Macbeth's ability to be at two places at the same time, for example that *Macbeth* is a poetic drama, where we should not expect the realism of mid-nineteenth century novel to prevail: it is precisely *dramaturgically* possible that Macbeth takes part in the attempt on the lives of Banquo and Fleance (and thus it is precisely Macbeth's fault that Fleance may escape). During the banquet-scene, Lady Macbeth utters a sentence which I take to provide further support as regards Macbeth's presence at the murder scene of Banquo. The Lady says to her husband, telling him off for having been a spoil-sport: "You have displace'd the mirth [the happiness, the joy], broke the good meeting / With most admir'd disorder" (3.4.107-108). Lady Macbeth's ironic, mocking words explicitly refer to the "meeting" but this is the only crux in the play where the word "displace" occurs. Macbeth, as the agency of displacement here, acts as if he had been displaced, too. Moreover, it is nowhere else in the play that there would be so much emphasis on a concrete place: a seat, a chair, a tangible stool. Ross, seated at the table with the other thanes, asks Macbeth: "Please't not your Highness / To grace us with your royal company?" (3.4.43-44). But Banquo's ghost has entered already "and sits in Macbeth's place" (stage direction, 3.4.40). Thus Macbeth responds: "The table's full". Lennox insists: "Here is a place reserved, Sir." "Where?" – Macbeth asks (44-46). (As if Macbeth were echoing the Weird Sisters: "Where's the place?"). For sure, to see a ghost, especially shaking his "gory locks" (50) at the observer is terrible. Yet Macbeth might also be shocked because the second in line he annihilated did not

'just appear' in the banqueting hall, taking a stroll, but has *taken his place*, the royal seat, at the table. Macbeth, who has taken the place of somebody (Duncan) must witness now to having been *dis*placed and being *re*placed by somebody (Banquo). And, perhaps, as a result of his simultaneous displacement, he was/is also present at the murder-scene of Banquo.

In what follows, Macbeth will be more and more cornered, more and more fixed. He will become increasingly lonely: after the banquet-scene, we shall see Lady Macbeth again only in the sleepwalking-scene, when she is already mad and alone, too. Macbeth's last real dramaturgical move is to visit the Weird Sisters for further prophecies. While Macbeth, in the words of the First Weird Sister, "stands amazedly" (4.1.126), various apparitions loom up in front of him. The third apparition talks *about* movement: "Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until / Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill / Shall come against him" (92-94). Macbeth is intoxicated again: "That will never be: / Who can impress the forest; bid the tree / Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good! / […] our high-place'd Macbeth / Shall live the lease of Nature, pay his breath / To time, and mortal custom [Macbeth will live until he meets his natural death]" (94-100). The two contrasting poles of movement *versus* fixedness are set: Macbeth thinks he will remain "high-placed," and the roots of the trees in Birnam forest will remain unfixed, whereas it will happen exactly the other way round. Macbeth will be deposed; the woods will start to move.

Yet for a while Macbeth will remain fixed in his castle. It is, I think, emblematic that whereas Macduff flees to England (cf. 4.1.142), leaving, in Lady Macduff's words, "his mansion and his titles in a place / From whence himself does fly" (4.2.6-8), seeking a "place" not so "unsanctified, / Where such" (4.2.80-81) a man as the Murderer could find him, Macbeth remains in his castle and annihilates Lady Macduff and her little son *via* agents. At the beginning of the play, he moved toward the attackers of Scotland and eliminated them. Now he is waiting for the Scottish and English army to come to him. One of the last scenes of the play starts with Macbeth saying: "They have tied me to a stake / I cannot fly, / But bear-like [like a bear in the arena during one of the entertainments of Early Modern England, the bear-biting] I must fight the course" (5.7.1-2). The last thematised movement Macbeth has to perform is to turn: "Turn, hell-hound, turn" (5.8.3) – Macduff cries out before he kills Macbeth. Macduff will greet the new king, Malcolm, with the words: "Hail, King! For so thou art. Behold, where stand / Th' usurper's [Macbeth's] cursed head: the time is free" (5.9.21). Macbeth's head is now fixed to a pole, as Macbeth "fix'd" the "head" of "merciless Macdonwald upon [the] battlements" (cf. 1.2.9, 23-24). Will this new fixing free time indeed? Malcolm wants his thanes to believe so, trying to restore order: "That calls upon us, [what is still our duty] by the grace of Grace [God] / We will perform in measure, time and place" (5.9.38-39). By referring to performance, and evoking "time and

place," as Lady Macbeth did, and the Weird Sisters had done, at the beginning of the play, Malcolm perhaps tries to gain control over the theatre, the stage and the Aristotelian unities as well. Macbeth's body will be put, like all our respective bodies, into a fixed place, the grave. With his death, the magic circle of time and place, wound up by the Weird Sisters, is broken. We have seen him being placed, moved, displaced, replaced, unfixed, and then fixed and replaced again. Macbeth is a villain, but a tragic villain. One aspect of his tragedy is that he has tried the "spatial impossible," inseparable, as usual, from time: he wished to move, to go *and* remain in place at the same time.

Villains like Macbeth in Shakespeare's culture found their proper place in hell. Where does Macbeth find a place for his audience today?

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"The Baseless Fabric of this Vision"
The Poetics of Space in *The Tempest*

Marcell GELLÉRT

Eötvös Loránd University
Department of English Studies
gellert_m@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract. The paper attempts to survey Shakespeare's "new world" of the stage in search of creative correspondences between the diverse devices of a dramatic reform "bodied forth" in *The Tempest*. The spatial analysis of the play confirms the view that Shakespeare's dramaturgical experiments in his concluding romance aim at rehabilitating the mythical stance of drama through (re)domesticating the fantastic on the stage endowed with creative spatial, temporal and instrumental agencies. The analysis investigates Shakespeare's innovative strategies in the play in order to see how he deploys the combined forces of the stage's art in the new genre to legitimize the fantastic for dramatic use, to reopen the mythical dimension for the theatre through dissolving the limited topical and spatial confines of the Renaissance stage. Focusing mostly on the spatial aspects and constituents of the *Tempest*-world it approaches the play as a pioneering piece of the stage's spatial redefinition, a topical dramatic eutopia where the abstract, utopian space of humanistic ideas, theological, ethical, phenomenological and social conceptions is turned to shape and gains local habitation through dramatic implacement. The inquiry pays particular attention to the poetic qualities of space as instruments of passage between the spheres of fact and fiction, place and space, the natural and the artistic, i.e., the dialectical twin domains of Prospero's magical realm.

Keywords: space, place, dramaturgy, myth, mythtopia

Since G. W. Knight's groundbreaking studies in the romances of Shakespeare the examination and interpretation of the last plays as myths have been an

authorized and legitimate occupation of Shakespeare criticism. Most of the seminal works of this critical discourse from Knight (1929), (1932), (1947) through D. G. James (1937) to N. Frye (1986) focus on Shakespeare's preoccupation with archetypal themes like truth, justice, time, immortality, regeneration, providence, deliverance, mercy, rebirth, resurrection – topoi of religious relevance and metaphysical reference, representative of a proper closure to the oeuvre. Some of them already familiar through modal variations from earlier works, others open new perspectives for drama and its stage representation. The romances in this view, through resounding old themes in new keys and introducing new ones conventionally dominant in other genres, are complex compositions set in the tonic to drive the oeuvre to a conclusive coda that would both conceptually and dramaturgically transcend the finite world of the preceding great tragic sequence. Myth-focused critical studies also emphasize the heightened role of the creative imagination in the romances endowed via poetic means with a dramatic agency that signals the dawn of a new era, promising and promoting a paradigm shift in the history of stage representation. They suggest that it is also through the last plays – most of all, *The Tempest* – that the collective topical myths of the plays and the private myth of their author meet. Nineteenth-century romantic interpretations of *The Tempest* as a personal allegory, besides throwing some reflected light on the enigmatic figure of the playwright, provided a hermeneutical key as well through the solely authorized reading of the play as the ultimate revelation of its author's creed in its self-reflective, self-celebrating and self-glorifying metatheatricality.

The Tempest, at the same time, encourages – with equal persuasive force – a less book-bound, more prospective reading that invites – especially in spatial terms – a different approach to mythology.

Since the age of Hellenism that brought about the decline of theatre in ancient Greece, and buried live mythology, books have been the paramount myth of the western world. For more than fifteen hundred years they have become the tenor and the vehicle, the signifier and signified, the Hermetic containers of the great codes of culture, the literal embodiments of humanism in its temporal and spatial entirety. After the decline of Christian drama – an attempt to call myth to a new life of purely spiritual perspectives – by the end of the sixteenth century, it was the mission of Shakespeare and his contemporaries to reverse the equation and reinvest the stage with its original authority, with the ancient agency of myth-making through the combined forces of presentation and representation. The study of the creative interplay of the two Hermetic media – that of the page and the stage –, however, requires the adaptation of hermeneutical approaches as well. We should give up the diachronic, book-bound interpretation of myth and mythology and turn to the synchronic view of live myth that A. Losev elaborated in his pioneering work on the subject (2000, [1994]). Losev builds up the desired definition through a sequential process of cognitive purification moving alternately backward and

forward on the way. At each turn he removes an attributive layer of historically (via books) related meaning, peeling off the lendings to find the thing beneath. Only after clarifying what it is not (mere fiction, fantasy, ideal state of being, scientific construction, metaphysical abstraction, scheme, allegory, poetry, religious construct, dogma or narrated history) does he reach the final dialectic formula – a substantial compound of four major attributes that embody the object of "real" or "absolute" mythology: "Verbalized miraculous personal history" (2000, 272 [translation mine]). Projecting this quadra as referential matrix upon the play may help us to map up the wondrous world of *The Tempest* in search for further mythical dimensions of its space-world.

The placement of *The Tempest* in Shakespeare's oeuvre is as puzzling as the location of Prospero's island on the map of the world old or new. It is the first play in The Book of Shakespeare, i.e., The First Folio of 1623 and the last for the Theatre. Prologue and epilogue, prelude and coda in one consummating chronotopic match of page and stage for the mutual satisfaction of both parties, the two historical denominations of Shakespeare-worship, the congregations of readers and viewers alike. *The Tempest,* when read, is a book of a play, when seen, is a play of books. The most bookish play of the Bard – even by the scholarly humanistic measures of its age – and the most theatrical one as well, that could satisfy the expectations of the Jacobean audiences of three stages – the Globe of the groundlings, the Blackfriars of wealthy burghers and the Whitehall of the masque-mad aristocracy with an increased appetite for lavish stage entertainment pleasing eyes and ears alike. It is the polyphonic, counterpointed interplay of the two rivalling instruments accorded by the same key in unison. A testamental piece of its author for the posterity evoking through his Will the true spirit of the Bard himself or at least – as Horatio would put it – "a piece of him." The Hamlet analogy is more than telling in this respect as well. The last romance as a sovereign relative of the first great tragedy seems more than kin in spirit and less than kind in body, i.e., by the genre. *The Tempest* revises *Hamlet* through echoing the canonical duplicity of scholarship and art, page and stage. It glorifies the fruitful match of the humanist man of letters and the craftsman of the stage, the master of arts and the artist of voices and visions, the magician of theatrical illusions. The distinguished dramatic role given to books and acting, Hamlet's intellectualism and expertise in playing and stagecraft – confirmed by the crucial role given to the play within the play – make *Hamlet* the tragic forerunner of Prospero's concluding romance. It is only the matter of taking sides in time and place via prospection or retrospection to see the successor in the predecessor's mirror or the other way round. Through visible analogies and sound correspondences the two plays open up a new dimension of the oeuvre confirming thus their mythical status in Shakespace.

If Heminge and Condell, with the graceful support of grandmaster Jonson, did want to erect a lasting monument for the playwright that his fame like the

sonneteer's in black ink too may still shine bright in the future, to open the Book of Shakespeare with *The Tempest* was, indeed, an editorial masterstroke convincing even the most cautious customer that this book of plays was worth buying and perhaps even reading. Ben, Shakespeare's closest peer as *poeta doctus*, *poet laureate*, masque-master and chief of the rhymers' tribe, knew what was at stake when he gilded the beloved author's monument with his shining lines. He had had by then seven years of his self-wrought immortality behind him since the publication of his *Collected Works* in 1616.

Prospero's Book as the first play of the mighty collection occupies a central position in the metonymical sequence of succession, itself being a composition of books without and within the play. Without: the favourite authors of Shakespeare: Virgil, Ovid and Montaigne, within: a cryptic collection of certain volumes from Milan, objects of his secret studies, the Hermetic sources of his art that he "prized above" his dukedom.

The Tempest as a book, the corpuscular manifestation of Shakespeare's art, is no less worthy of such appraisal. Its professional editorial execution must have further increased the prestige and the competence of the medium expecting a future as prosperous as its counterpart's, that of the stage. The reader-friendly features of the Folio-text also justify the inverted chronotopic placement of the Bard's Book of Revelations in his Book of Books soon to become the Bible of the Shakespeare-cult. It is still undecided whether these distinctive qualities – testimonies of exceptional editorial care: its clean text, list of *dramatis personae*, frequent indication of locality, clear structural division and elaborate stage directions – are of authorial origin.[1] We do not know whether they were the playwright-manager's providential gestures in his absence toward his company in lieu of live instruction (maybe even with potential readers in mind), or the strategic contributions of the editors themselves. This way or that, they are formal signifiers of the play's conceptual design in full accord with its bookish occupations and Prospero's humanistic practices in scholarship, political leadership, education and stagecraft.

In *The Tempest*'s case perhaps right this creative duplicity, this polyphonic self-reflection, the counterpointed texture of the two instrumental voices woven into one organic composition is the secret of the play's unique charm and the source of its emblematic status in the Shakespeare-canon. This representative authority accompanied by the muted voices of personal allegory endow the last romance with a mythical quality in perfect unison with the Shakespeare-myths – the one created of him through the worship of a living cult and the one called to life by him in the play.

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[1] Frank Kermode in his introduction to the play in the 1954 edition (pp. xi-xiv) provides a convincing list of textual marks as evidence of special editorial care.

The scholarly attitude, the bookish qualities of *The Tempest* are also apparent in its rich thematic texture. If *Hamlet*, the play, tuned to the spirit of its studious hero, is an open university of lectures and tutorials on diverse issues delivered by half a dozen self-appointed experts, *The Tempest* in its abundance of themes is a lavish banquet of learning, the final revelation of Orphic wisdom, some eschatological truth to conclude a troublesome oeuvre full of dread and doubts. Theme-minded readers may view the play as Shakespeare's dramatic directory of timeless and topical issues. The critically sanctioned list of its thematic occupations is academic matter, standard stuff for introductory literature courses: Nature, Culture, Art, Knowledge, Nurture, Education, Civilization, Colonization, Nobility, Baseness, Crime, Retribution, Illusion, fiction, time, mortality, revenge, redemption, freedom, service, slavery, Old World and New, mercy, magic, rule, power – to mention only a few.

For a less conditioned approach, however, the meaning – the treated topics – and the underlying method, the way they are organized and presented, should be of equal concern. Each and every dominant theme, character, motif, idea, emotion and impression has its counterpart, is matched with its opposite accorded by counterpoint with its antithesis. As if Shakespeare had thus wanted to compensate for the lack of serious drama, a fatal conflict of good and evil, bringing the latter under full control by Prospero's magic mastery. The abundant complex of symmetrically structured binary oppositions (revenge-mercy, slavery-freedom, natural-artificial, primitive-civilized, realism-idealism, past-future, baseness-nobility, ignorance-knowledge, earthly-airy, subhuman-superhuman, seriousness-levity, ugliness-beauty, gloom-joy, sensation-imagination, noise-music, etc.) suggest that this arrangement is not only part of the play's conceptual design, but a dominant device of Shakespeare's dramaturgical strategy as well – a compositional principle and instrument in one that accords the worlds of conception and perception, thought and sense, page and stage. This densely-woven polyphonic texture of antitheses, the all-pervading dialectical dynamism of the *Tempest*-world is also a strategic force of myth-making.

As plays may read ill in the library – a charge occasionally brought up even against Shakespeare's most popular pieces – books may play poor on stage. Shakespeare, being master of both arts, knew how to balance the scales. He knew that books are the past and the future for the scholar and the poet respectively, but the stage is the present for the playwright – the world of the here and now. Prospero with his Hamletian mind of a "large discourse looking before and after" still was a man of his time. As the successor of his master's tragic avengers and the advocate of Shakespeare's reformed faith, he possessed the truth and justice that transcended the finite world of tragic consciousness. He knew that the prime concern of the dramatist who matches memory and imagination is to transcend its own temporal and spatial limitations. If *The Tempest* is the most bookish play

content-wise, overloaded with the topical issues of humanist thought and the current cultural concerns of its age, it is also the most stage-bound piece abounding in self-reflective metatheatrical devices.

The stage in words may glorify knowledge as a way to wealth in soul and mind, in deeds though it prefers practices to please the lower faculties of the audience. Thus even thoughts on stage are meant not so much for scholarly treatment as for artistic entertainment. Prospero is fully aware of both the power and the limitations of language. That "words without thoughts never to heaven go" but he knew too, that the same "words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives." That only the fruitful combination of action and reflection create true dramatic experience, it can produce the desired end, can turn the stage into the promised land of temporary redemption. And who else could be the master of such ritual ceremonies but the omniscient Neo-Platonic mage, the adept of the stage, the director of the "great Globe" itself to whom vision and sight, fantasy and fact, seeming and feeling are one – two sides of the same coin –, Prospero's potent Art prised above his dukedom.

Prospero is maker and make, creator and creature in one, a character who makes himself in a play of his own making. A Nietzschean superman of radical self-reform, who earns through spiritual perfection the right to reform others as well. His sole limitation is the stage, the spatial confinement of his magical practices, a limited world in space and time that he turns into a temporary place of habitation. His utopistic island lies between fact and fiction, the past and the future, the Old world and the New. It is a liminal place where magic can have its day. The *Tempest*-world, through permanent self-reflection, is fully aware of its own nature knowing and showing itself for what it is as if theatre found narcissistic joy in its own reflection winning such a deep delight in its self-forged illusions that it makes us believe the make-believe, that "nothing is but what is not." What makes it live and breathing, however, is not the project itself, the desired end of the performance (nearing the conclusion Prospero's mood darkens, he gets more aloof, melancholic and detached as his "project gathers to a head") but the exhilarating excitement of its making, the Blakean energy of execution that lends life to mere visions, bodies forth the unknown and gives sense to nonsense. This creative autonomy, this self-generating exclusiveness that still includes everything to present a global experience, is a unique quality that drama, again, inherited from its mythical ancestors.

The *Tempest*-world in its chronotopic setting is an idealized utopistic combination of the Hestian and the Hermetic vision turned into dramatic shapes in a state and a way of life: way for the travellers to whom it is a temporary location – the group of the shipwrecked party from Naples and Milan – and state for the natives to whom it is home and permanence – the placial source of their identity. The two protagonists, Prospero and Miranda occupy a central position in between the two poles drawing dramatic force from both spheres. They are not inhabitants

but residents of the Island through a long-term, yet temporary spell – a stage of growth, change, physical, mental and spiritual transformation leading towards a higher, nobler state of being. What is at stake plot-wise, however – keeping in mind that it is a play of strict Aristotelian discipline in terms of observing the unities and the priority of the plot – is more than questionable. The humanistic concept of moral reform is the mere ideology that may or may not work in the long run when applied to human relations in the real world back in Naples and Milan. Prospero's art – its power, worth and validity – is not as sound as it seems. It is undermined by malicious mockery, farcical foolery and apish satire displaying its fallacies and imperfections, and overshadowed by modal changes casting the shadow of doubt and scepticism on the enterprise.

The Tempest as a dramatic utopia is a place-world where governing concepts of religion, philosophy, politics, education and art – the spiritual treasures of humanistic thought – are inseparable from the place of their making and representation. The unique charm, the myth-making magic of *The Tempest* comes as much from the island itself: a place sensually embodying the spatial abstractions of the utopistic mind. The world of the sense – of the Apollonian intellect, form, order and control – is planted deep in the soil of the senses, the Dionysian body of organic life demanding freedom, provoking revolt and displaying the uncontrollable vitality of the Green world. It is a space of poetic implacement,[2] Shakespeare's Neo-Platonic khora[3] called to a mythical life by the interplay of its two creative forces: the art of culture – Prospero's magic – and the art of Nature, i.e., the Island's spell. Nowhere else in the oeuvre can we find another play of such autonomy and integrity. It is a self-sufficient world of its own making defined in its own terms. This sense of completeness comes as much from below, from the genius and *corpus loci* of the island as from above, from Prospero's regenerative magic, from the providential control of his art.

The active and permanent presence of the elements – endowed with both poetic and dramatic agencies – keeps up the keen sense of place, of where-being from the opening sea-storm to the closing lines of the epilogue expecting gentle winds of release and safe homecoming. Beneath the airy apparel of poetic figurations – the patterns of metaphorical analogies – lies a more solid ground, a layer of deeper correspondences that render all characters, according to their

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[2] I use the term in the context elaborated by E. Casey in his seminal study of place and space (*Getting Back to Place*), where implacement signifies modal location, the highest state of spatial being achieved by the accord and creative interplay of body and place.

[3] Plato's khora in Derrida's view as it is presented in his essay entitled by the very term (*Khora* 1993*)*, is the enigmatic third spatial dimension of being beyond the confines of dialectics, that transcends the limits of the perception-conception, logos-mythos type of binary oppositions and thus provides an ideal sphere (connotatively also space, place, region, location, frame, vessel and receptacle) for implacement.

hierarchical position, to the elemental constituents of the Island-world. This richly orchestrated Neo-Platonic harmony of the human, the animate and the inanimate spheres of being is one of the distinct mythical qualities of the play. The earthbound Caliban, the airborne Ariel, the sea-changed voyagers controlled by the Promethean fire of Prospero's Art – all take their share in the topical metamorphosis turning the epilogue's "bare island" into a natural habitat of myth-making – a topia of dramatic implacement. Thus the Island is not a mere topos of fictitious, temporary location but a lived-in place, the fifth element of the Hermetic formula that gives local habitation to its inhabitants and itself becomes a generative force of creation.

Beside the placial definition of belonging and identity, the topographical arrangement of the characters also contributes to the formation of the *Tempest*-world. In spatial perspective they are all carefully arranged both along the vertical and the horizontal axes. The vertical hierarchy – which is independent from social position or dramatic weight – mirrors their moral stature, their level of spiritual nobility or baseness: Prospero-Miranda-Ferdinand-Ariel-Gonzalo-Antonio-Sebastian-Stephano-Trinculo-Caliban. The horizontal arrangement divides them into groups of extant or newly-formed alliances: Prospero-Miranda, Prospero-Ariel, Prospero-Gonzalo, Miranda-Ferdinand, Antonio-Sebastian, Stephano-Trinculo-Caliban. It is also an effective means of dramaturgical implacement, activating spatial relations as an aspect of place-being.

The New World of Shakespeare's utopia is the only place where myth can be reclaimed from the past, from the distant worlds of narrative poetry and fiction, where we can leave the mind's bookish abstractions – space and time – behind to find our way back to place where life itself is rooted.[4] It is the spell of the Island that realizes the fictitious, domesticates the fantastic and naturalizes the supernatural to provide Shakespeare's utopia with a dramatic shape. Without its local charms – thunders and sweet airs, noises and songs, lights, fresh springs, brine-pits, Ariel's spirits and Caliban's fish, flesh and fowl – Prospero's art would remain as barren as the stage he leaves behind in the epilogue.

Myths, like utopias, are chronotopic phenomena of the mind with a keen awareness of space and time. When narrated on page – a way of linear rendering – time takes the lead adapting space to the needs of chronology. When put on stage by performance, by the act of presentation, place gains priority, and embracing time in its complexity, generates a sense of presence – the base of the dramatic experience. This increased need of the time-bound stage for location and placement may explain the unusually – at least by Shakespearean standards – naturalistic rendering of the opening storm. As a scene of overall dissolution it leaves reality behind and opens up

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[4] This contrastive view of space/time and place is in full accord with E. Casey's grounding statement in his book cited above.

the world of fiction – live. It is so lifelike for it is sheer fiction. It is the canonical combination of the two dimensions – time and space – brought to unison that turns Prospero's utopia into Shakespeare's mythtopia – a polyphonic vision of a place-world where the fantastic is the natural, where illusion is taken for granted, where drama – matching the kindred spirits of art and nature, page and stage, logos and mythos – comes home in the choric place of its own making.

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Space Construction in Adaptations of *Hamlet*∗

Judit PIELDNER

Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania
Institute of Humanities
juditpieldner@yahoo.com

Abstract. *Spatial turn* has also taken place in film theory: research orientations dealing with the relationship between film and space, with the construction of cinematic space constitute a significant domain of contemporary film theory. Starting from the space constructing specificities of the Elizabethan emblematic theatre (the absence of realistic illusion, temporal and spatial relations expressed by the dramatic text itself), the study investigates cinematic space, namely the significance of horizontal and vertical space division, the creation of symbolic/stylised/abstract, realistic and simultaneous spaces, the role of scenery in expressing states of mind and in conveying ideological messages in particular adaptations of *Hamlet*, created in various moments of film history, directed, among others, by Laurence Olivier (1948), Grigori Kozintsev (1964), Tony Richardson (1969), Franco Zeffirelli (1990) and Michael Almereyda (2000). An approach to the adaptations of *Hamlet* from the viewpoint of space construction completes the existing thematic, stylistic and generic typologies and highlights those films which, through the exploration of (meta-)cinematic space as a powerful means of creating meanings in the language of the film, go beyond cinematic realism and initiate an intermedial dialogue with the spatial purport of the Shakespeare text and with the (meta-)theatrical specificities of the Renaissance *Theatrum mundi*.

Keywords: (meta-)cinematic and (meta-)theatrical space, symbolic/metaphorical, realistic and simultaneous spaces

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1. Introduction. Film and space

Ever since the past decades, especially since the *spatial turn* took place in several scientific areas, a special attention has been devoted to the surrounding space, to the space created by human perception, reflected on in artworks and being in a continuous process of reconsideration and reinterpretation. Several thinkers, among them Michel Foucault, consider that we live in the age of space, and although space and time are inseparably interwoven categories, still, a greater emphasis seems to be laid on terms related to spatiality and (de-, re-)territorialization in the theoretical discourses of various scientific disciplines. Foucault starts his study entitled Of Other Spaces as follows:

> The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world. The nineteenth century found its essential mythological resources in the second principle of thermodynamics. The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. (1986, 22)

Spatial turn has also taken place in film theory: research orientations dealing with the relationship between film and space, between film space and narration constitute a significant domain of contemporary film theory. The forms of space and their narrative specificities were first pushed to the forefront of film theoretical thinking by Noël Burch in his 1973 volume entitled *Theory of Film Practice* (published in French in 1969). Following in Burch's track, several film theorists have joined the discourse around film space, among them – to mention only the most notable ones – Edward Branigan, Frederic Jameson, Jacques Aumont, Pascal Bonitzer, David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, Stephen Heath and Vivian Sobchack.

The most general research orientation is related to the way the space of action is created in film narration. In their seminal study entitled Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell argue for the modernity of Ozu Yasujiro, based on the relation between space and narration. The authors make a distinction between the space construction subordinated to the narrative and the one pushed to the fore; in the former case, which is characteristic, in general, of the classical Hollywood narrative style, the spatio-temporal structure of the film

primarily fulfills the role of pointing at the cause-effect relations of the story, whereas in the latter case the difference from the Hollywood paradigm manifests in the fact that the spatial structures are not motivated by the causal chain but rather independently of them, breaking the economy of narration. The study suggests that the two modes of space formation can be associated with the realistic vs. artistic motivation, as well as with the notions of closed vs. open space respectively (cf. Thompson and Bordwell 1976).

It is not only the space framed by the film screen that can convey meanings. In his study entitled Nana, or the Two Kinds of Space Noël Burch draws attention to the fact that the analysis of the off-screen space (for example, the space bordered by the four edges of the screen, or the space "behind the camera," that is, everything that we cannot see but we know that they must be there) can be at least as significant in particular cases as the analysis of the on-screen space (cf. Burch 1981).

The study of action space is also of interest in relation to the receiver's experience. Alexander Sesonske makes a distinction between the "screen-space," that is, the two-dimensional rectangular surface of the screen, and "action-space," that is, the three-dimensional space in which the action takes place. In his view, the major characteristic of our cinematic experience is that we experience action-space from the inside, our viewpoint is located within action-space, we enter perceptually into cinematic space (cf. Sesonske 1973, 399-409).

A further research orientation is aimed at exploring the symbolic contents, the abstract/metaphorical meanings of space. In contemporary film theoretical discourses space is approached as a mental, social, gender and/or cultural construct and discussed as such by cognitive, psychoanalytical, gender and postcolonial research trends. Further research possibilities regarding the relationship between film and space open up in the fields of cognitive film theory, focusing on the perception and cognition of film space, of film narratology, examining the connection between film space and narration; besides, a great number of studies have come to light in the past decades, dealing with urban cinescapes, architecture and film, cinema space and memory and the relationship between space and place.

The cinematic modes of space representation can also be investigated in comparison with the space constructing modalities of other artistic media (literature, theatre, painting, photography). In this respect we cannot ignore to mention the classical distinction proposed by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in his essay entitled *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*. According to Lessing, what distinguishes painting and poetry is that the former is extended in space, whereas the latter is extended in time. Similarly, as a twentieth-century response to, and a hermeneutical reconsideration of, Lessing's views, we also have to refer to the unifying viewpoint offered by Hans-Georg Gadamer, who regards the various ways of artistic expression not in terms of their differences but in accordance with the extent to which they partake of the notion of *art*.

Considering theatrical space and cinematic space, Lorne Buchman argues that the action/reaction structure specific to film creates a space distinct from theatre: in film it is possible for viewer to see what the characters see, what is more, to "travel the intimate space between those eyes" (qtd. Hatchuel 2008, 52).

In his study about theatrical space entitled Das theatralishe Raumerlebnis Max Herrmann remarks that there is a fundamental difference between theatrical and film experience, as in the film the real space and the real bodies are absent (2006, 509). On the one hand, this results in distinct modes of reception/perception: especially in the early forms of theatre, the theatrical space shared by the audience and by the spectators presupposed an intimate relationship which the film medium dissolves from the outset by creating an ontologically different space, that of the screen. On the other hand, thanks to this ontological-perceptual difference, the alienating effects of the theatre and respectively, those of the film function in distinct ways. As Sarah Hatchuel states: "Whatever a film director may do, the actors on screen and the spectators in the cinema necessarily remain apart. (...) Meta-cinema is always encountered by the primordial unreality of the movie medium and the inevitable segregation of spaces between screen and audience" (2008, 123-124).

As a consequence, and with reference to adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, several forms of meta-cinematic effects, aimed to comply with the meta-theatrical devices of the Elizabethan stage, are more likely to be swallowed up by the diegetic world of the motion picture than purely preserving their frame-breaking, unrealistic, anti-illusionistic character. It may seem paradoxical, however, that despite this ontologically distinct quality of the motion picture the movie medium has assumed the task of rendering images framed by the screen that often seem even more real than the off-screen "reality."

In his study on The Ontology of Photographic Image André Bazin celebrates photography as the accomplisher of the demand of the art of all times to render reality. By testifying its suitability to achieving an unprecedented degree of objectivity, photography "has freed the plastic arts from their obsession with likeness. Painting was forced, as it turned out, to offer us illusion and this illusion was reckoned sufficient unto art. Photography and the cinema on the other hand are discoveries that satisfy, once and for all and in its very essence, our obsession with realism" (Bazin 1960, 7). Thus, photography relieved plastic arts from under the burden of what Bazin calls "mummy-complex" and created, by carrying the synthesis of the relic and the photography similarly to the Shroud of Turin, the synthesis of the reality of the represented thing and the reality of representation. The film realizes the demand of realism of photography itself, as it is capable of "embalming" time, of recording the changes that occur in time, and in this way it gets closest to the utopia of reality. According to Bazin, what *par excellence* distinguishes the film from the other arts is that the film is capable of displaying reality in a unique and irreplaceable way. It is the medial specificity of the film that

what is seen on the screen has the value of reality to an extent no other technique of representation has ever achieved. The film is a match of showing/realism and representation/language; however, in Bazin's approach, it is the "coefficient of reality" that prevails in it. Space is the most inalienable to film; Bazin writes about space and time treatment in Orson Welles' as well as William Wyler's films that all elements of reality can be eliminated from film except the reality of space (cf. 2009, 183-214).

The utopia of reality, although it has been repeatedly overwritten by newer and newer forms of expression of the post-media age (Lev Manovich), still haunts in the spectatorial experience. In post-structuralist film theories the relationship between reality and representation meets series of critical revisions, in the light of which the term "reality" can be used merely in quotation marks (if at all!), as "reality" itself is a construct, the result of discursive operations:

> That reality, the match of film and world, is a matter of representation, and representation in turn is a matter of discourse, of the organization of the images, the definition of the 'views,' their construction. It is the discursive operations that decide the work of a film and ultimately determine the scope of the analogical incidence of images; in this sense at least, film is a series of languages, a history of codes. (Heath 1986, 384)

Cinematic space is also the result of discursive operations. The space of film is constructed space, "narrative space", "coherent and positioned space," "the fiction of space" (Heath 1986), "space exists only at twenty-four frames per second" (Branigan qtd. in Heath 1986); thus, space is created in close connection with film narration, and also, space is shaped in the process of reception, during which the spectator recreates, reconstructs the space of the story.

In his study entitled Narrative Space Stephen Heath offers a systematic synthesis of all those discursive operations which create space in film. Among them, the most significant ones are as follows: frame, camera movement, movement of characters, shot/reverse shot structure, changes of frame size, alternation of foreground and background, surface and depth, gaze and point of view. All these elements of film language contribute, in their turn, to spatial coherence and make possible for the viewer to perceive spatial continuity in film (cf. Heath 1986).

Starting from the questions in what way film narration is capable of transcending its material, in what way a world view becomes discernible in concrete spatial elements, Pál Czirják elaborates a plausible method of analysing cinematic spaces (2008, 53). So that we can examine how the world view of the film is formulated in the language of space, what elements of the poetics of space

contribute to forming the layers of meaning of the film, we have to take into account, as suggested by Czirják, the inside-outside, near-far, up and down, part-whole spatial relations as well as the relations of finite, infinite and empty spaces. In the present study I will partially apply these viewpoints, along the question – highly relevant in the case of the adaptations of Shakespeare's plays to be discussed – whether the respective film strives to offer action space also as a symbolic/metaphorical/stylised/abstract space construct and not merely as a set of realistic locations, that is, as an environment hosting the action. In the case of adaptations of *Hamlet* it deserves attention to what extent the film reflects states of mind, represents mental spaces or conveys ideological messages by means of space, and respectively, in what way the film resorts to metacinematic, self-reflexive elements in the spirit of the metatheatrical elements of the dramatic text written for the Elizabethan stage, and what effect these elements have in the context of the film as compared to literature and theatre.

2. From stage to screen, from Elizabethan theatre to cinema

Every attempt of staging or screening the Shakespearean text must necessarily start from its inherent visuality. The Shakespearean text is a complex texture of intertextuality and metatextuality; the tropes and rhetorical figures are to be understood within the context of the whole, what is more, within the context of the Shakespearean oeuvre. The characters' words simultaneously refer to the given situation and bear a wider, more general, existential reference. "Who's there?" Bernardo asks at the beginning of *Hamlet*; the question subtly suggests that the problem of identity – Who am I? – will be central to the whole play. The *double entendre* of the characters' words, especially Hamlet's wordplays, his highly rhetorical and carnivalesque way of speaking will constitute a starting point, a challenge, but above all, a recurrent trap for any staging and screening attempt. Phyllis Gorfain (1998) speaks of "tropes as traps" in *Hamlet*; it is the specificity of the Shakespearean text that what has to be reckoned with during the adaptation process and what is part of the research scope of today's studies on intermediality, namely the relationship between *words* and *images*, between the visible and the audible, is already coded in the text itself.

The world is a stage; the stage is a world – the Shakespearean metaphor works in both ways. The Elizabethan theatre was aimed at representing the whole world as a *Theatrum Mundi*, conceived in its vertical structure, summarized by Sarah Hatchuel as follows: "a roof painted above the stage represented the sky and the divine; a trapdoor under the floor evoked hell. The presentation of the plays showed a constant distancing between the sign and its meaning, as well as an absence of illusionist intention" (2008, 3). The Globe theatre was circular like an amphitheatre; the stage was a large platform without curtains and with a limited

possibility of providing visual aids, objectual scenery, in this way, the task of creating the scenery *in the mind's eye*, the setting and the proper atmosphere fell upon dramatic language itself; spatial and temporal relations were coded verbally. The bare stage of Elizabethan performances was highly flexible and adaptable to the needs of dramatic representation, but far, not only in time but also conceptually, from today's cinematic realism.

Due to the construction of the theatre, in which the stage was practically embraced by the space provided for the public, the actors and the spectators shared a common space and "were united in the same communion of entertainment and imagination" (Hatchuel 2008, 4). In order to maintain the distinct fabric of representation, the Elizabethan public was permanently reminded, by means of embedded/mise-en-abyme structures, plays-within-the-play and masques, of the frames of the space of theatrical illusion. Andrew Gurr notes that out of the main features of staging, such as stage realism, stage business and effects, properties, costumes and scenery, stage realism seems to be the most problematic:

> [...] lacking any proscenium arch to separate players from audience the presentation of illusion as reality for Shakespeareans was inevitably more complicated than in modern theatres or in cinema [...]. The players stood in the midst of the audience and had no facilities for presenting the pictorial aspects of illusion because they were appearing in three dimensions, not the two that proscenium-arch staging or the camera's picture frame establish. Awareness of the illusion as trickery was therefore close to the surface all the time. It was because of this that so many of the plays began with prologues and inductions openly acknowledging that the play which follows is a fiction. [...] Playing is counterfeiting, a continual pretence, so the illusion had to be acknowledged openly as an illusion. From there it was only a slight further twist to develop inductions in which the players come on stage to talk about their play and in so doing actually play themselves, performing what the playwright has written for them to speak in their own personality as if reality and illusion were the same. (Gurr 2009, 221-222)

Attila Kiss argues that the *representational insufficiency* of theatre is consciously thematized by metatheatre, which permanently points to the fact that a representational experiment is going on, breaking thus the illusion of dramatic reality and attempting to create a total experience in this way (Kiss 1999, 68).

In her volume entitled *Shakespeare, from Stage to Screen*, Sarah Hatchuel draws attention to the minor common points and major differences between cinema and the Elizabethan stage:

In the cinema, as in the Renaissance theatre, scenes move on with great rapidity and fluidity. A film, like a theatre production in Shakespeare's time, can go quickly from a battle scene to a discussion behind closed doors inside a palace. Yet, cinema differs from Elizabethan public theatres in the absence of physical interaction between the actors and the audience, and in the high level of realism it can reach. Moreover, while the architecture of Elizabethan theatres allowed the spectators to see the action from different angles, cinema offers a single frontal viewpoint, and, through editing and camera moves, mandates how the action will be seen. (2008, 4-5)

3. Construction of cinematic space in adaptations of *Hamlet*

The aesthetic mode of existence of a masterpiece makes the time factor relative: timelessness also implies that every age produces its own horizon(s) of interpretation. This is especially true for *Hamlet*, the interpretations of which are layered upon one another in a palimpsest-like manner, they complete and counterpoint/undermine each other along the mainstream intellectual and ideological orientations of the successive periods of literary and cultural history. The drama is open to establish an interpretive connection with all times, as the absence of universal order, or rather, the universal absence of order which Hamlet's (speech) acts strive to restore, unveils an existential and crisis experience which is not foreign to any age.

In connection with the spatial material offered by the play itself, Anthony Davies remarks the following:

There is a castle, there are swords, there is a crown and there is poison. But much of the thematic centre of Hamlet is removed from the means of life and death into the area of their respective values and significance. With the abstract kernel of the play so concentrated in the symbolic value of the objects recounted, the film director has very little spatial material to work with. Robert Duffy […] notes the claustrophobic nature of the play and the lack of spatial variety which the action of the play affords as a major adaptive problem for film. (2000, 40)

We can group the adaptations of *Hamlet* according to several criteria. From a stylistic point of view we can make a distinction between classical adaptations of *Hamlet*, focusing on the dramatic action (e.g., Laurence Olivier [1948], Grigorij Kozintsev [1964]) and adaptations emphasizing the setting or transposing the events into other historical periods or into the present (e.g., Franco Zeffirelli [1990], Kenneth Branagh [1996], Michael Almereyda [2000]). From the viewpoint

of fidelity to the original play, we can speak about straight (direct) adaptations (e.g., Laurence Olivier [1948]) and offshoots or loose adaptations (e.g., Tony Richardson [1969]). Harry Keyshian also suggests a generic viewpoint, according to which the specific genre that the respective adaptation forms part of should be taken into account. In this respect, Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet* represents the *film noir*, Franco Zeffirelli's adaptation is an action-adventure film, while Kenneth Branagh's vision follows the cinematic model of the film epic (cf. Keyshian 2002).

The examination below of the modes of space division in particular adaptations offers an additional classification criterion of the adaptations of *Hamlet*. As follows, I will consider the selected adaptations in accordance with their – symbolic, realistic or simultaneous – use of space.

3.1. Symbolic space division. Mental spaces

3.1.1. Vertical space construction: the up and down relation

Pál Czirják notes that the mode of constructing the film's structure based on the opposition between the up and down, on the inherent hierarchical relations can operate a whole film; however, it is more characteristic that in a particular film it appears only at the level of micro-dramaturgy (cf. 2008, 50). In my view the adaptation of *Hamlet* that most innovatively explores the spatial dimension and especially the vertical space division is Laurence Olivier's monochromatic *Hamlet* (1948). Through the exploration of (meta-)cinematic space as a powerful means of creating meanings in the film language, Laurence Olivier's approach goes beyond the spheres of cinematic realism and initiates an intermedial dialogue with the spatial purport of the dramatic text.

By dissolving the boundaries between cinematic and theatrical space, by resorting to the effect of long shots, mobile camera-work and shifts of camera angle instead of editing, furthermore, by employing the *chiaroscuro* effects, the juxtaposition of light and darkness so much favoured by the *film noir*, Laurence Olivier creates a space that may rightfully be regarded as a cinematic equivalent of the Renaissance *Theatrum Mundi*. Olivier's scarcely furnished castle interior, reminding of a studio, consciously avoiding every element meant to construct a photographic reality, also bears resemblance to the bare stage of the Elizabethan theatre.

By making the most of the vertical dimension of space, the film displays a carefully elaborated moral space in which Hamlet's moral and intellectual superiority to Claudius and his court is suggested by the upper parts of the castle as well as by the upper position he occupies while discussing with Polonius, even with Ophelia. The film successfully superimposes Hamlet's (detective) story with the patterns of the *film noir*, thus, Ophelia appears not only as the victim of

Hamlet's mind-game, but also as the victimized female figure of this popular film genre. The alternation of the phallic pillars and gentle archways translate the male-female conflict so much favoured by *film noir* into the language of space.

The opposing dimensions of the up and down determine the structure of the whole film. The opening as well as the closing scene, the ghost scene, the great monologue, in other words, all the crucial moments, take place on the battlements, representing the dimension of moral value and significance.

3.1.2. Horizontal space construction

3.1.2. a) The inside-outside relation

In his volume *The Poetics of Space* Gaston Bachelard notes about the inside-outside relation that it is plausible to start from this opposition whenever we relate phenomena to space, whether in literal or metaphorical sense (1994).

As concerns film space, we can speak about the inside-outside relation in the following contexts: it can refer to the proportion and function of exteriors vs. interiors; it can refer to the fact that the "external" environment serves as the projection of the inner, mental world of the characters (cf. Czirják 2008).

In Laurence Olivier's adaptation the horizontal dimension of space is explored in both respects. On the one hand, in terms of confinement and freedom represented by the castle and the openness of nature: Ophelia is the only character associated with the outside dimension; her death, told by means of the visual paraphrase of John Everett Millais' *Ophelia's Death*, as well as her funeral, are the only episodes that take place outside the castle. On the other hand, Elsinore, with its winding staircases, pillars, corridors and archways, breathing the air of medieval Gothic scenery but also of a Kafkaesque labyrinth, becomes the objective correlative, the visual expression of Hamlet's inner, psychological architecture. By superimposing Hamlet's cerebral convolutions and the rough sea, the film touches the chords of expressionism.

The seawaves and their expressionist rendering can also be encountered in Grigori Kozintsev's 1964 adaptation. In accordance with the Russian film tradition, his *Hamlet* can be characterized by monumentality and visual expressivity: the castle, the halls, the stairs, the sea roaring behind the cliffs all become the projections of Hamlet's state of mind (cf. Király 2010, 97). Unlike Olivier's *Hamlet*, in which space is mainly structured and acquires symbolic surplus along the vertical axis, Kozintsev's adaptation primarily makes use of the horizontal dimension of space, opposing the outside (the seaside as the place of spiritual independence) and the inside (the castle interior, full of falsehood and espionage). The opening scene shows Hamlet arriving home at the news of his father's death; the opposing motion of the drawbridge and the iron grate, shown in a long shot,

becomes similar to a huge jaw swallowing the newcomer. The most poignant, the most emphatic sentence of Kozintsev's Hamlet is "Denmark is a prison," bearing overt allusions to the spirit of the post-Stalin age. In this way, the space construction of the film is meant to illustrate the spiritual confinement of the Khruschev era, Hamlet's figure standing for resistance and unsleeping conscience.

3.1.2. b) The near-far relation

We can speak of the near-far relation in terms of the dialogue between the foreground and the background. Laurence Olivier plays upon this contrast; one significant episode is highly illustrative in this respect, in which in the background the spectator can see Ophelia's figure framed by the arch, looking at Hamlet situated in the foreground of the image; in the following shot Ophelia is absent from the arch frame. The spatial distance between Hamlet and Ophelia, and Ophelia's withdrawal are proper expressions, in terms of space, of their alienation and split. Anthony Davies states: "[…] the spatial exploration of horizontal and vertical dimensions represents in a major structural sense the painful search which Hamlet has to undergo and the final resolution to which he journeys" (2000, 57).

The idea of imprisonment, confinement is also powerfully present in Tony Richardson's 1969 adaptation in the sense that the directorial concept, the "message" raised at the level of world view is expressed by resorting to spatial organization. There is no scene taking place outside the castle, all the sequences represent inside locations, castle interiors, dark and narrow passages; besides, no effort is made to create a realistic architecture.

Tony Richardson transposes an earlier stage adaptation directed by him to the screen and records the sequences in the same theatre; however, in order that the actual theatrical space should remain hidden more or less, the film avoids providing a thorough insight into action space; space compositions are limited by the bodies of the characters appearing in the foreground without revealing the actual spatial dimension of the background. Interestingly, the transformation of theatrical space into cinematic one in this manner – Tony Richardson seems to have made virtue out of necessity – acquires an additional layer of meaning: the camera, exempt from under the task of presenting the environment, can focus on the characters, on their faces, feelings, reflections and reactions, in this way a greater emphasis is laid upon acting, upon their interactions and interpersonal relations.

Figures and faces are mostly presented in close-ups. Béla Balázs regards the close-up as the most specific and the clearest means of expression of film, as the cinema, contrary to the theatre, is capable of directing the spectator's attention to tiny details of long shots, of highlighting the essence, of revealing hidden aspects and, last but not least, of evaluation. He regards the close-up, which makes possible for the reader to pay special attention to particular details, as a naturalistic, but at

the same time also poetic way of expression. Thus, the close-up constitutes a fundamental cinematic code in Béla Balázs's film aesthetics; it teaches viewers to read the score of polyphonic life, to pay attention to the voices of particular details that form the great symphony together (cf. Balázs 2010).

In Tony Richardson's adaptation the close-ups enlarge Hamlet's gaze, at the same time turning inward and being sharp, penetrating, expressive. The role of the "environment" is taken over by the characters, they become each other's "environments;" space is formed by bodies, thus, action space will be constituted by an interpersonal web. Richardson's adaptation concentrates less on the events and more on the influence that the events exercise upon the characters, on the emotional reactions reflected on their faces and on their repressed emotions. In this way the face becomes an "interface" reflecting the characters, a surface upon which the other faces and voices – and also the ghost of the old Hamlet – write their signs (the film does not display the ghost; its presence can be detected from facial reactions and light effects).

Through the avoidance of extreme long shots and through the use of close-ups (in other words, the predominance of the "near" to the detriment of the "far"), the adaptation suggests the discomfort of interpersonal spaces, the trapped existence and the lack of perspectives. Hamlet delivers the monologue "To Be Or Not To Be" in a lying position, foreshadowing the position of the dead body in the closing sequence. In this way the film screens the dilemma of action and inaction, Hamlet's process of dying (cf. Király 2010). Tony Richardson's spaces convey the current aspects of Hamlet's dilemma, the existential attitude of the post-war generation as well as the incompatibilities between the public and the private spheres, the community and individual values.

Let us mention here the relationship between the on-screen and off-screen space (cf. Bonitzer 1990, Burch 1981). Sarah Hatchuel sums up the possibilities of film to create the off-screen space:

> The off-screen space can be constructed in several ways: through the characters' entrances and exits, through a gaze, a gesture or a word addressed by a character (who is seen on the screen) to another (who is not seen but whose presence is imagined). In the cinema, the notion of 'off-screen' comes to replace the notion of 'backstage' and, unlike the latter, extends the space of representation in the spectator's imagination instead of restricting it. If the off-screen remains invisible for the spectators, it nevertheless exists in their imagination as belonging completely to the diegetic world. (2008, 70-71)

The activation of the off-screen space as the spectatorial space can be carried out by the act of the character's looking into the camera, which is in fact one of the taboos of filmmaking, since it breaks the illusionistic effect created by the motion

picture, it breaks the shell of fiction and reveals it as fiction. Tony Richardson's Hamlet (Nicol Williamson) delivers his monologues by repeatedly looking into the camera, breaking the taboo of filmmaking and establishing a direct contact with the viewer's space. This forbidden act, much favoured by early film as well as by the contemporary popular film culture, is also a favourite cinematic tool of the member of the "angry young men" of the English New Wave. In his screening of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, directed in 1963, one source of humour is this very act of the hero's looking into the camera; at a certain point, to add to the humorous effect, Tom Jones throws his hat onto the camera. Of course, in *Hamlet* the looking into the camera does not serve as the source of humour; instead, it has the role of emphasis, increasing the dramatic effect. In Tony Richardson's cinematic oeuvre the two heroes, Tom Jones and Hamlet, although the former is a comic hero while the latter is a tragic one, are linked through their revolting, rebellious attitude and their outspoken directness.

3.2. Realistic space

In their already mentioned study Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell describe the case when space is subordinated to action, to the logic of narration, in two ways: in a negative formulation, space is presented in a way that it should not distract attention from dominant occurrences; in a positive formulation, space serves to present locations, characters and other causal factors important from the point of view of narration. In this mode of narration space serves as setting, and can fulfil the following roles: focusing attention on spatial locations serving as the scenes of the story; making it possible for the spectator to follow the events; characterisation of characters; activating film-viewing schemes. This mode of film narration in which the representation of space does not go beyond the authority of the above-mentioned functions is called by Noël Burch the zero-degree point of cinematic style (qtd. in Thompson and Bordwell 1976).

It is Franco Zeffirelli's 1990 adaptation of *Hamlet* that makes use of this type of space, in which space fulfils the role of the setting, while the camera primarily focuses on the characters, on their shot/reverse shot type interactions, on the events/actions themselves. Zeffirelli's attraction towards realistic cinema spaces already manifested in his earlier films. He chooses a medieval castle from northern Scotland as the location of his *Hamlet*; it may remind the viewer of Laurence Olivier's castle interiors; however, Zeffirelli's castle does not exceed the status of a mere setting in any moment of the film.

Mel Gibson acts Hamlet's role; he activates the film-viewing habits and attitudes of the cinematic intertexts associated with the "semiotic noise" of his person (cf. Keyshian 2002, 77). In Zeffirelli's approach Hamlet is not a meditating

philosopher, but rather an action hero driven by the thirst of revenge, who writes Shakespeare's drama back into the revenge paradigm.

3.3. Simultaneous use of space. Metacinematic procedures

I regard as simultaneous use of space that case in which space is scenery-like, realistic, but at the same time it also renders symbolic meanings. The simultaneous use of space is primarily characteristic of films transposing the story into the modern age, understandably, as in such cases it is important to create suitable modern scenery, and this is usually accompanied by the demand of also resorting to metaphoric, metacinematic ways of expression.

The timeless character of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* makes it possible for the story to appear in the most varied space constellations. Michael Almereyda's adaptation created in 2000 transposes the play into the present in a way that he chooses modern metropolitan locations as the scenes of the play adapted to the screen. The high technological environment forms the background of film narration, perceived by the viewer in its alienating effect: the images of the skyscrapers, created from a low-angle camera position, rise menacingly above the characters. At the same time, Elsinore castle appears as Elsinore Hotel in New York and Claudius appears as the leader of a multimedia association (Denmark Corporation). The key episodes of the story are presented in typical places of the urban environment: Hamlet's great monologue is performed in a media shop; a further monologue is delivered in front of the mirror of the airplane toilet; Ophelia's body is found in the water of a city fountain; the repentant King escapes from Hamlet's revenge while sitting in a car. Nevertheless, the film does not offer itself as a modern parody of Hamlet, but rather as a consistently elaborated game of transposition – supposedly not devoid of didactic purposes either. The superimposition of the modern context and the original dramatic text makes the adaptation dissonant from the outset, in an assumed way; this aspect, as well as the great number of the applied metacinematic procedures, transform Almereyda's film into an interface between the popular register and the postmodernist poetics deriving from high art.

The film also carries out a medial transposition: it systematically links to the film medium everything that is connected to theatre in the original play. As the Shakespearean hero is an enthusiast of the theatre, Almereyda's Hamlet (Ethan Hawke) is a film freak, he keeps playing back the video recordings of the happy times of his past, he also makes video recordings, and the Mousetrap, in accordance with the logic of the film, is not a play-within-the-play, but a film-within-the-film: its role is fulfiled by an amateur documentary film, a collage of heterogeneous images. Besides Hamlet's camera, surveillance cameras follow the events, Polonius makes Ophelia wear a hidden microphone; in this way, the film

approaches the phenomena of mediated identity, espionage, overhearing and misinformation as the problems of modern society.

4. Conclusion

Starting from space construction modalities of the Shakespeare text as well as from the spatial specificities of the Elizabethan stage, I have examined the space division of selected adaptations of *Hamlet* – to mention only the directors that the study has dealt with – by Laurence Olivier (1948), Grigori Kozintsev (1964), Tony Richardson (1969), Franco Zeffirelli (1990) and Michael Almereyda (2000). These films were released in various periods; their modes of narration, ways of expression and subtexts are symptomatic indications of the production principles and the ideological background of the respective film-historical moment.

The analysis of the above-mentioned selection of adaptations from the point of view of the poetics of space draws attention to the diachronic changes of space perception, to the similarities and differences of space constructing modalities in film. The research has been carried out in an open interval in the sense that the versions of space formation displayed by the selected films serve as models as concerns the examination of adaptations of *Hamlet* not included in the present study.

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"The Play's the Thing"
The Dramatic Space of *Hamlet*'s Theatre

Balázs SZIGETI

Eötvös Loránd University
Department of English Studies
szigeti.balazs09@gmail.com

Abstract. In my paper I investigate the use of the dramatic space in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The tragedy will be observed with the method of "pre-performance criticism," which first and foremost makes use of the several potentials a play contains and puts on display *before* an actual performance; it offers, also in the light of the secondary literature, various ways of interpretation, resulting from the close-reading of the play and considers their possible realizations in the space of the stage both from the director's and the actor's point of view, including the consequences the respective lines of interpretation may have as regards the play as a whole. *Hamlet* does not only raise the questions of the theatrical realization of a play but it also reflects on the ontology of the dramatic space by putting the performance of *The Mousetrap*-play into one of its focal points and scrutinises the very interaction between the dramatic space and the realm of the audience. I will discuss the process how Hamlet makes use of his private theatre and how the dramatic space is transformed as *The Murder of Gonzago* turns into *The Mousetrap*-performance.

Keywords: *Hamlet*; *The Mousetrap*; dramatic space; pre-performance criticism

Shakespeare's *Hamlet*[1] does not only raise the questions of the theatrical realization of a play but it also reflects on the ontology of the dramatic space by putting the performance of *The Mousetrap*-play into one of its focal points and

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[1] In the present paper I quote the play according to the Norton Shakespeare edition (Greenblatt et. al. (ed.) 2008, 1683-1784). The locus of the quotation in the title is: *Hamlet* (II;2; 581).

scrutinises the very interaction between the dramatic space and the realm of the audience. In what follows, I will investigate how the mental space transforms into physical stage space in one of Shakespeare's longest tragedies, concentrating primarily on three texts: the Hecuba-soliloquy (II;2), the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy (III;1) and the *Mousetrap*-scene (III;2). In the course of my investigation I will rely on the method of "pre-performance criticism," which first and foremost makes use of the several potentials a play contains and puts on display *before* an actual performance; it offers, also in the light of the secondary literature, various ways of interpretation, resulting from the close-reading of the play and considers their possible realizations in the space of the stage both from the director's and the actors' point of view, including the consequences the respective lines of interpretation may have as regards the play as a whole.

Hamlet's enigmatic "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy has been widely discussed among scholars and several classic interpretations have been put forward. My argument takes its clue from Alex Newell's reading (cf. Jenkins 1982, 485), who emphasises that the text should be interpreted in its immediate context in the play, thus the soliloquy is primarily about the question whether Hamlet should proceed with the staging of the *Mousetrap*.

It is indeed important to observe where exactly the soliloquy is recited in the tragedy. The last time the Prince appeared in front of the audience was in Act II Scene 2, delivering the Hecuba-speech. His last words before the famous starting line of the "To Be Or Not To Be" were: "The play's the thing // Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King" (II;2; 581-582). The exact time that elapsed between the two scenes is not given but Hamlet asked the players to perform *The Murder of Gonzago* "tomorrow night" (II;2; 517); therefore, the time gap between the two soliloquies must be less than a day. The fact that Hamlet asked the players to insert some of his own lines into the performance and that he promised that he would visit them at that very night ("I'll leave you till night" (II;2; 523)) shows that the idea of the theatrical performance is fresh on his mind and preoccupies him to such an extent that the soliloquy delivered in the meantime can hardly be independent of this topic. Hamlet enters the stage in Act III Scene 3 by immediately starting his soliloquy, which might give the impression that the train of thought (and possibly the soliloquy as well) has already started in his mind offstage and the audience can "join in" *in medias res*.

It is important to note that during the soliloquy, Claudius and Polonius are hiding to spy on Hamlet while he encounters Ophelia. This raises the question if they also overhear the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy immediately preceding the Ophelia-scene or if the speech is unheard by them and is only available for Hamlet and the audience. In the first case, Claudius will be the first person in the long queue of the soliloquy's interpreters who will have to come up with a reading to understand Hamlet's behaviour. The general nature of the speech's topic, which

will be a target of a detailed discussion later on, also puts the King on a shaky ground when he makes an attempt to "look into" the Prince's "head." Nevertheless, his words after the Ophelia-scene, in which he gives voice to his doubts concerning Polonius's proposal that Hamlet's disturbed attitude roots in love ("Love? His affections do not that way tend, // Nor what he spake, though it lacked from a little, // Was not like madness." (III;1; 161-163)), might also originate not only from the encounter between the two youths but also from overhearing the ambiguous and, thus for Claudius, also disturbing monologue. If, however, Claudius and Polonius do not hear the soliloquy delivered by Hamlet, the situation will forecast the dramatic pattern of the Prayer-scene (Act III Scene 3), where Hamlet is standing and talking behind the kneeling Claudius, who – seemingly – does not hear his nephew behind his back. Thus, it seems that both possibilities are available for directors. However, there seems to be no evidence that Hamlet would be aware of the eavesdropping men in his presence.

The exact reference of the so often quoted first line of the soliloquy has always puzzled readers of *Hamlet*. In my interpretation, this initial question is a translation of another problem, which is not uttered explicitly but which has most probably occupied Hamlet's mind even before he started to speak aloud. The question may also be read as asking how to make a choice between two conflicting attitudes, namely passive suffering under the circumstances he created around himself, and of active participation. This underlying inquiry is translated into a more universal question about existence because that silent endurance seems to bring survival, whereas active participation might result in death (as it eventually does at the end of the play). Yet, as it was argued above, active participation here may not mean whether to kill Claudius or not but whether to put *The Murder of Gonzago* on the stage or not, or, more precisely, what purpose should the performance serve: if Hamlet directs the play, will the production provoke Claudius, and thus open the can of worms? What is striking in observing the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy is that, in line with its several possible interpretations of great diversity, it does not include any specific reference to the actual situation of Hamlet or to the dramatic context: he does not mention the plan of staging *The Mousetrap*, as he does not specifically refer to the possible assassination of Claudius, or to the suicide of his own, either. This feature of the text makes it possible for productions to treat the exact locus of the speech liberally and move it from Act III Scene 1 and place it somewhere else, where it can still communicate its universal philosophy.

However, it is remarkable that in terms of generality, the soliloquy may be read as having a proxy in the tragedy, namely Hamlet's instructions to the actors in the following scene, which also lacks any kind of a specific lead for the actors as to how to approach the characters they will impersonate in *The Mousetrap*. The question is why we have such a careful avoidance of focus and specific references

on Hamlet's part in the respective texts, which, under my reading, both seem to be connected to the play-within-the-play.

The Mousetrap or in its other name, *The Murder of Gonzago* depicts the central event of the tragedy in question, i.e., the alleged murder of Old Hamlet by his brother Claudius. Although this happened before the play starts and no one witnessed it, including Hamlet himself, through the figure of the Ghost this is the main impulse behind the whole play called *Hamlet*. When the Prince of Denmark decides to put this drama on stage, he finally agrees to take part in his play more actively than he has done so far. The plot of *The Mousetrap*[2] can be interpreted in two fundamental ways: either as a depiction of the past, representing the death of Old Hamlet, or as a prediction for the future where the murderer Lucianus is the stage-equivalent of Hamlet himself (cf. Hamlet introducing the stage murderer as "This is one Lucianus, *nephew* to the King" (emphasis mine – B. Sz.) (III;2; 223)) and the performance shows how Hamlet is going to take revenge on Claudius. In both ways, the purport of *The Mousetrap* is directed against Claudius: he is expected to react to the show and/or receive Hamlet's message. This goal also stands in accordance with the final decision formulated at the end of the Hecuba-soliloquy, i.e., to "catch the conscience of the King" (II;2; 581-582).

However, if we investigate Act II Scene 2 for the purposes of the play-within-the-play, a disturbing factor emerges: by the time Hamlet starts thinking in the second half of the Hecuba-soliloquy about a possible way of getting closer to the fulfilment of his revenge and finally arrives at the idea of the theatre as a "solution," he has already asked the players to perform *The Murder of Gonzago* and told them that he is going to insert some lines into the play ("You could for a need study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines which I would set down and insert in't, could ye not?" (II;2; 517-518)). Both a theoretical investigation and a theatrical production have to account for this discrepancy, i.e., why Hamlet asks for a play about murder and what he wants to insert into it, if the idea of testing Claudius in such a way has not yet occurred to him.

Hamlet gives the assignment to the actors to put a play on stage after he was stunned by the breathtaking performance of the First Player. The Hecuba-soliloquy, which is engendered by this experience and takes place right after the actors leave the stage, starts with a comparison between the Prince himself and the player, including comments on the actor's brilliance:

> Is it not monstrous that this player here,
> But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
> Could force his soul so to his whole conceit
> That from her working all his visage waned,

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[2] For a detailed analysis of *The Mousetrap* see Dover Wilson (2003, 137-198).

Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing.
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? (II;2; 528-539)

The fundamental conclusion initially is that the First Player is capable of creating passion – perhaps even of performing action – Hamlet only desires to have. James Calderwood concludes similarly discussing the soliloquy when he states that here Hamlet complains about being overloaded with passionate potentials "to which he is denied expressive access" (1983, 32). In Calderwood's meta-theatrical reading of the play, Hamlet here is in the role of an actor who is not allowed to proceed with his equipment for revenge: he is constrained by the plot of the tragedy he participates in; yet, outside the framework of theatrical self-reflection, it seems more convincing that it is Hamlet's own personality and doubts which do not let him express his inner state openly and take action against his uncle. However, through Hamlet's comparison between himself and the Player, they become the proxies of each other and the Prince of Denmark can suddenly see an immense potential in the world of the theatre, i.e., he can make something happen on the stage which he cannot yet realise in reality, at least not for a while. He realises that what he is unable to carry out, the First Actor can in fact do instead of him on a stage of the stage, in the framework of fiction: he can turn meaning into presence, into performance.

Importantly enough, Hamlet did not see the murder of his father, he was only informed about it from a source the authenticity of which is never completely verified, and it seems that at first the production of *The Mousetrap* is primarily for Hamlet's own sake: this way he can *see* what he has only heard, he can reconstruct the crime like a good inspector and, most significantly, he can play the revenge plot in a test-tube, observing it from a safe position before he actually goes on realizing it in reality. Yet, such a venture can only be carried out effectively with the aid of professional actors, just like the one who delivered the story of Hecuba in such an excellent manner. This is why Hamlet asks for a play about murder and why he wants to add some further lines to make the play fit his own situation better. Significantly, he does not mention at all that the play is going to be performed in front of the King.

Thus, following the interpretation above, when asking for a performance, Hamlet especially wants this for himself and not for the public, especially not for the King, as he is not prepared for that move at this stage of the events: he only

needs a private theatre to observe his situation from the outside, through the living fiction of the theatre. Yet, throughout the Hecuba-soliloquy, the audience can witness how another idea is formed in Hamlet's mind. Through reflecting on the brilliance of the First Player, the Prince has to face his own inability to act and arrives at the conclusion that this kind of a passive attitude is to be condemned: he is even disgusted by himself: "Fie upon't, foh!" (II;2; 565). This conclusion pushes him forward to reach over the limits of his recent decision, and abandon the idea of his private theatre and engage himself in a more active plan. Yet, Hamlet seeks for such a solution in the framework of his already formulated plan, i.e., in the world of the theatre but this time – as opposed to his original plan – he realises that he needs to stretch out the focus of his theatre and gear it – direct it, in both senses of the word – more towards Claudius than himself:

>   I'll have these players
> Play something like the murder of my father
> Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks,
> I'll tent him to the quick. If a do blench,
> I know my course. (II;2; 571-575)

Significantly, when Hamlet turns from self-condemnation to plan formulation, he refers to his brain: "About, my brain" (565). The word *about* in the given context means an imperative, 'into action' (Greenblatt et. al. 2008, 1731), while *brain* obviously relates to thinking. However, besides the plausible meaning of this half-line, that is 'let's think,' the choice of words probes into deeper layers of the dramatic event. Hamlet here wishes his *brain* to start *action*, he wishes his thoughts to manifest themselves in deeds, to make the inward outward and, in general terms, to reconcile contemplation with action (the significance of which regarding the whole play will be discussed later). This above quoted half-line tangibly represents the shift in the purpose of *The Mousetrap*, i.e., the private theatre (corresponding to the inner thoughts, the brain) should turn into a trap for Claudius by taking action.

However, Hamlet's plan initially seems to be rather naïve and he refers to an unnamed source, when he expresses his expectations about Claudius's reaction.

> I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play
> Have by the very cunning of the scene
> Been struck so to the soul that presently
> They have proclaimed their malefactions. (II;2; 566-569)

Nevertheless, the following lines might explain why Hamlet believes in this effect of the theatre:

> For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
> With most miraculous organ. (II;2; 570-571)

On one level, the subject of the sentence, *murder* refers to the performance as well, which *is* about murder as it is also reflected in its title, *The Murder of Gonzago*. Hamlet's conclusion that murder has no tongue yet it can speak is clearly reflected in the dumb show, where it is performed via mere action. Yet, on another level, *murder* metonymically can also refer to Claudius (the one who committed the deed) and whom Hamlet expects to react to the performance and through his behaviour to 'talk' about his own deed. Thus, Hamlet can see an intimate connection between the two references of the word *murder*, i.e., the plot of the performance and his uncle (as the "source" of murder) in the audience, affecting each other, just in the same way as he saw his own proxy in the figure of the First Player, who gave him the whole idea of making theatre, initially only a "private" one, just for himself. Consequently, what makes Hamlet sure that Claudius will react to the play performed in the Danish court is precisely his own experience he has gone through some minutes before when he saw the Player perform and when he was so moved by his acting that (as opposed to Claudius's *murder*) his own *grief*, "though it have no tongue" started to speak from him at the beginning of the Hecuba-soliloquy.

Some may argue, though, that Hamlet had already made up his mind to use the performance as a trap for the King when he asked the actors to put on the play and his mentioning this idea at the end of the Hecuba-soliloquy is only for the sake of the audience to let them know about his thoughts which had engendered previously (cf. Jenkins 1982, 272-273). Yet, in the constant present tense of theatrical time, it is more effective if the ideas of the Prince get formulated in our present, and it is not only a narration of thoughts, "sitting" already "ready-made" in his mind. In this interpretation, the prepositional phrase part of the above quoted lines: "before mine uncle" is born in the same moment as it is uttered and this is the very minute when Hamlet decides on involving Claudius as an audience as well, in order to test the credibility of the Ghost[3] and to gather evidence against the King. From this moment on, there is a different plan in his head, hence his original intention to insert "a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines" (II;2; 518) is now overwritten from the point of view of the new purpose of the play. Thus, it is unnecessary to make assumptions about the exact loci of Hamlet's insertions since the whole text of the play-within-the-play might have been rewritten by him for the sake of his new goal. The already noted fact that the play has two names, i.e., *The Murder of Gonzago* and *The Mousetrap* becomes significant at this turning point:

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[3] For a detailed account of the uncertainty of the status of the Ghost see Jenkins (1982, 154-155), Greenblatt (2008, 1686-1687) and Hibbard (2008, 34-41).

when Hamlet first ordered a play from the actors for primarily himself, he asked for an already existing play with the former title. However, when the scope of the performance changes and it will be primarily directed against the King, and when the possibility rises that the whole play was rewritten by the Prince, it ceases to be its original version and turns out to be another play, its new aim now metaphorically[4] reflected in its name: *The Mousetrap*.

From the point of view of pre-performance criticism, what is primarily important in a theatrical production in this reading of the play is that the actor playing Hamlet should be aware of the accurate pace of the Prince's thoughts, i.e., to know in each and every minute of the scene what his exact intentions are with the performance of *The Mousetrap*. This is enough to make the acting of the protagonist credible enough; however, the production might further emphasise this transfer of the play-within-the-play's focus with visual representation as well. In a rudimentary sketch for a possible staging, it might be beneficial to direct the scene in question (Act II; Scene 2) in the area where the actual *Mousetrap*-performance will take place in Act III Scene 2, with the chairs of the future audience also present. In such a stage-set, Hamlet listens to the actors from his seat he is going to occupy during the performance later, and can also deliver his Hecuba-soliloquy from there, watching the now bare stage where his "private" theatre is going to take place. By the time the idea of involving his uncle in his enterprise occurs to him, he can suddenly move towards the royal chair of Claudius, which has been situated with its back towards the onstage playing area of the actors and turn it towards the spot where *The Mousetrap* will be realised later on.

Thus the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy is in a way a direct continuation of the end of the Hecuba-speech, discussing the question raised in the latter one on a much more general level. It accounts with the possibilities of his new decision, i.e., to be more active and to go public with the play of the actors. However, it is of utmost significance from the point of view of the interpretation of the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy that for Hamlet the performance of *The Mousetrap* also preserves its original aim besides being a trap for Claudius, namely to create a reconstruction and also a fictionalized, figurative ("tropical") representation of the vengeance for the Prince. At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned Hamlet's too general attitude concerning, in my interpretation, *The Mousetrap*, both in the famous soliloquy and in his instructions to the actors. It seems surprising that the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy does not mention the preparations for the

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[4] Cf. with the following exchange: Claudius, already during the performance of the play, asks (perhaps characteristically) "What do *you* call the play?" (III;2;216, emphasis mine – B. Sz, instead of, e.g., "what is the play called?" or "What is its title?") Hamlet says: "*The Mousetrap*. Marry, how? Tropically" (i.e., as a trope/rhetorical figure, e.g., such as the best-known trope, metaphor, III;2;217, cf. Greenblatt 2008, 1713).

performance by name, whereas the Hecuba-soliloquy was loaded with exact details. However, we have noted previously that *The Mousetrap* performance in a certain way represents the most fundamental event of the whole play called *Hamlet*, namely the execution of murder: both in the past (murdering Old Hamlet and thus generating the whole plot) and in the expected future (taking revenge on Claudius and thus concluding the whole plot). If the play-within-the-play represents the whole play it is hosted in, then it seems understandable that Hamlet's attitude towards *The Mousetrap* is similar to his attitude towards the whole play called *Hamlet*.

Hamlet's relation to his own story and destination is thus enlightened by his two speeches relating to *The Mousetrap* (III;1; 58-90 and III;2; 1-40) and the fact that both the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy and his directions to the actors include almost exclusively general points. This indicates that Hamlet tries to approach the questions of his own plight universally and from the outside. The key to this interpretation is already there in the second line of his soliloquy: "Whether 'tis nobler in the *mind* to suffer (// The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune)" (emphasis mine – B. Sz.) (III;1; 59-60), whereas the line would perfectly be understandable without the insertion of *mind* (cf. Whether 'tis nobler to suffer the slings… etc.), still it significantly indicates that the Prince is desperate to deal with the questions theoretically, i.e., he wants to solve what can be solved in his mind. He also wants to play the whole "game" in his mind and to kill Claudius there and not in physical reality, which explains why he first asked the players to perform a *play* about murder. This preference of Hamlet is further supported by the fact that he has assaulted the King *verbally* several times previously when the Prince was alone: "O villain, villain, smiling damned villain!" (I;5; 106) or "Bloody, bawdy, villain! // Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindles villain!" (II;2; 557-558). Observing Hamlet's attitude towards his own story, it turns out that he wished to have a position of the outside spectator, not mingling with the events directly; yet, unfortunately for him, this position is already occupied by his father's Ghost, who came literally from outside of the boundaries of the play, as he returned from the realm of death into the circle of the living. Significantly, however, he does not move into the centre of events but established a connection only with his son and sends him into the centre of dramatic action, while Hamlet apparently would also prefer the position of the outsider, joining or replacing Old Hamlet.

Some theatrical productions[5] involve Hamlet in the cast of *The Mousetrap*, for example, in the role of Lucianus, the murderer, "nephew to the King," and by doing so they make the connection between the fictionalised murderer and Hamlet even more obvious. Although it might very well clarify Hamlet's intentions with

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[5] For instance, in the *Hamlet*-production of the József Attila Theatre (2009, directed by Sándor Zsótér) and the Hungarian National Theatre (2012, directed by Róbert Alföldi).

the theatrical performance with respect to Claudius, such a solution goes against Hamlet's character as I interpret it. Just as he does not want to actively participate in his own story and longs for an outsider position, his attitude towards the play-within-the-play representing the whole plot of Hamlet is thus very similar. Therefore, it becomes very important that Hamlet should not play a part in *The Mousetrap*: not only because he might not be on the professional level of the Players but especially because he wants to relate to the story externally and observe it from the outside, or, as it has been mentioned, to solve the problem in the *mind*, or, in this case, to project the story onto the stage-within-the-stage and thus keep it within the framework of fictionalised reality. This view approximates that possible aspect of Hamlet's theatre which might be called a certain kind of "fictionalised reality," a phenomenon balancing on the borderline of these two realms. When the action (and in our case, more specifically, murder) is carried out on stage, it happens in its "own reality": we see the murderer during the action, and the victim, too, as he is either struggling before death, or just peacefully drops dead. That this is fiction might be indicated by the actor playing the deceased King finally standing up to take a bow, take the applause, etc. In this world where fiction and reality are neatly separated, neither Hamlet – nor anybody – would be tormented by a guilty conscience, since no one's hand is dipped in blood by directing a play and thereby making a character "die." However, if fictionalised reality is functioning as a projection of the mind of its producer (in our case the Prince of Denmark), the mind can also reproduce lively fictionalised events rooted in reality (in the same way as one uses verbal abuse against someone, here Hamlet against Claudius). If we take Hamlet for the producer (writer and/or director) of *The Mousetrap*, creating it, yet not participating in its production, then even a further parallel between the plays *Hamlet* and *The Mousetrap* will be apparent, namely that Hamlet takes a similar position concerning the latter one as the one his father has regarding the former. From one perspective, Hamlet is given the outsider's position of Old Hamlet with respect to *The Mousetrap*; yet, from another, he is not, since in the course of the performance in Act III, Scene 2, Hamlet starts to involve himself in the play to a greater and greater extent, first through some commentary on scenes. He is thus acting as a narrator ("as good as a chorus" (III;2; 224), according to Ophelia) and to some extent he is an organic part of the show. For Hamlet, it is impossible to remain totally outside of his story, unlike Old Hamlet, who can remain outside of his son's plot (apart from one more return to his wife's bed-chamber) because his – i.e., the Ghost's – story has ended. The Prince cannot avoid going from "tropical" (cf. "Marry, how? Tropically!", i.e., metaphorically, as mentioned above, III;2; 217) to "topical", i.e. into actualization by finally giving a definition of Lucianus as "nephew to the king," where this time the name, Lucianus, seems to be far less important than the nexus to the king, the description: *nephew*. Yet it is significant that his participation ends at this point: he never really

steps over the borderline of the stage during the performance as an actor. Thus, his relative proximity to *The Mousetrap* is a model and indicator of, and, thus, it is in direct proportion to, his relative proximity to the play that bears his (and his father's) name as title: *Hamlet*.

It is worthy of consideration that the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* will be similar to the final performance in another celebrated revenge play of Renaissance England, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, where the producer of the play-within-the-play (and in one person the avenger), Hyeronimo takes part in the acting and actually murders his enemies during the very process of the performance by involving them in the acting, too. The fact that the act of revenge takes place within the performance highlights the fundamental contrast between Hyeronimo's and Hamlet's use of their respective theatres. Since in *The Spanish Tragedy*, the play uses a direct device to fulfil the revenge, it ceases to be a theatrical performance and thus "fictionalised reality" proper, also in line with the classic Aristotelian definition of drama, i.e., that it is (only) the *representation* (imitation, *mimesis*) of action and not the action itself, or, translated into the vocabulary of the revenge play: the representation of murder, and not the murder itself. The contrast with Kyd's tragedy indicates that what Hamlet needs is precisely not action but only representation itself: at this point the Prince does not want real deeds but theory, a fictionalised form of action taking place "in the mind" as noted in the soliloquy and being projected onto the stage as it happens in the production of *The Mousetrap*.

This contrast between theory and practice and indirectly also between universality and specificity is represented in the choice between passivity associated with the "To Be" pole and activity appearing on the "Not To Be" side – the former attitude also associated with potential survival, while the latter one with possible death, as it was discussed above. Thus, the fundamental question of the "To Be Or Not To Be" soliloquy can be translated in Hamlet's case as 'to speak and contemplate further or to carry out the deed,' in other words, it is about philosophizing about what might happen if he stops philosophizing.

The juxtaposition of thinking and acting is, as it has been observed since Goethe, highly characteristic of Hamlet, whereas these two have never been so separated for Claudius. In the case of the King, action and thought are most of the time organically connected, as it is visible if one considers his soliloquies and monologues. Claudius has two major speeches in the play: his inaugural speech in Act I Scene 2 ("Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death // the memory be green"… etc. (1-39) – continued in a reply to Hamlet's *Seems*-monologue in the same scene (87-117)) and his Prayer-scene ("O, my offence is rank! It smells to heaven"… etc. (36-72)) and both of them are linked very closely to action and do not replace it: the first monologue is to justify his new position as the King of Denmark and to deal with his uncomfortable problem with Hamlet, while the

second one is about a deed already committed with a detailed diagnosis of its effects. By contrast, Hamlet acts when he does not think about it in advance and does that on a sudden impulse (cf. murdering Polonius behind the carpet and killing Claudius at the end, when he realises that the King is responsible for his mother's and his – Hamlet's – own death) and fails to act when he contemplates about it, as it happens behind the kneeling Claudius in the Prayer Scene (Act III Scene 3), when again theory (To Be) wins over practice (Not To Be). Still, just as the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy does not reach a final answer for the initial question in the middle of the play, it will be again exactly *The Mousetrap*-performance where the two poles can both appear combined with each other in an *aurea mediocritas* fashion: it is neither the mere contemplation about the duty of revenge, yet nor the direct action exhibited by Hyeronimo's theatre in *The Spanish Tragedy*.

Hamlet's soliloquy directly thematises death already in its fifth line: "To die, to sleep" (III;1; 62). The problem of the nature of death is curiously connected to both sides of the initial question of the speech. As the "To Be" part is primarily connected to the passive suffering in my interpretation, it effectively depicts the situation of the protagonist during the delivery of the "Sullied flesh"-soliloquy in Act I Scene 2 (129-159), where he directly referred to the possibility of suicide: "Or that the Everlasting had not fixed // His canon against self-slaughter!" (II;1; 131-132). By contrast, the "Not To Be" pole is more obviously connected to death as a potential result of taking action (perhaps directly against the King). Thus it is not surprising that the investigation of the nature of death and the life afterwards moves into the foreground; the speaker wants to get to the deepest meaning of the very phenomenon he might be approaching. It is significant that the idea of suicide here appears only as a device of testing *others'* attitude towards death and not as a personal choice seriously considered by the Prince. This alternative of suicide was abandoned upon the effect of the appearance of the Ghost (the "Sullied flesh"-soliloquy is immediately followed by Horatio bringing the news about Old Hamlet) when Hamlet will start to move into an outsider-position to his story (wearing the actor's mask of the Fool, the "antic disposition," for example) though never completely reaching the externality of his father. In the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy, the idea of death only serves to arrive at the conclusion that others are afraid to freely choose death because of the unpredictability of the afterlife and the possibility that thinking (contemplation, reflection) might not cease to *be* even after physical death. There is a characteristic modal change from *may* ("what dreams *may* come…") to *must* ("must give us pause"), from possibility to obligation, yet characteristically skipping the phase (the realm) of "facts," of assurances, of certainties.

It is noteworthy that Hamlet's enumeration of the torments of our life is primarily general:

> For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
> Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of disprised love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of th'unworthy takes… (III;1; 72-76)

This part of the monologue may have certain points of connection with Hamlet's personal history: like "disprised love" may refer to his relationship with Ophelia. Yet, the soliloquy in general remains on the universal level, further emphasizing that the question of suicide is not a serious option for Hamlet but rather a theoretical test to an unanswerable question.

The soliloquy of Hamlet can be divided into three parts. The first one states the fundamental question but in a rather enigmatic way, thus allowing several interpretations to emerge. In my analysis this initial thought gains significance if we consider the speech to be a continuation of the immediately preceding Hecuba-soliloquy and also a text organically connected to its dramatic context, i.e., the preparation for the performance of *The Mousetrap*. In this case, the question is whether to contemplate further instead of taking direct action against Claudius and preserve the production of the play-within-the-play to be only a private theatrical experience to Hamlet in order to visualise the murders (potentially that of both Old Hamlet by his brother and that of Claudius by his nephew) *or* to take action, yet not via the very deed of murder. At this stage, Hamlet is not prepared for that, not only because he lacks evidence ("The spirit that I have seen // May be a devil" (II;2; 575-576)) but also because, as it was noted, in a way for him action is speech (while, e.g., for Macbeth, for the sake of contrast, it is the other way round: speech is precisely action). Yet Hamlet is ready to launch the theatrical performance: this way he widens the spectrum which will involve Claudius as well, while also using the stage as a catalyst to test the credibility of the Ghost (to make him more "internal," too) and, at the same time, he might also be revealing his intentions in front of his uncle. However, this situation also includes the possibility of dying and this generates the second part of the soliloquy, which investigates the nature of death on a universal level. The performance Hamlet is planning to stage is not only a metaphorical mousetrap for Claudius but it is also such for Hamlet, as it would once and for all drag him into the whirlpool of the events and cease his quasi-outsider position, since he has to dig deep down into his own story and taint his hands with the world he looked upon so contemptuously in the "Sullied flesh"-soliloquy (I;2; 129-159). With his potential actions he is going to put people's lives at stake: not only his own but that of Claudius and potentially others – which turns out to be true through the several deaths occurring during the play later on. This way, it is perhaps not surprising that the nature of death "in general" plays such a significant part in the soliloquy.

However, there is a disturbing phrase in the part under discussion, namely when Hamlet identifies the afterlife as the "undiscovered country from whose bourn // No traveler returns" (III;1; 81-82), which does not only "puzzle the will" (82) but also the audience who very well know that the whole flow of events was initiated by a Ghost returning from the undiscovered country. Although here this sentence is primarily important to emphasise the irreversibility and uncertain nature or precise "content" of death, making the train of thought universally valid for those not believing in ghosts, I think that Hamlet's remark here is more significant on another level. Following the interpretation outlined so far, the whole speech is about whether to take action against Claudius with the aid of the theatre, as it was also noted above, the whole problem of death originates, after all, from the order of the Ghost, which denied Hamlet the position of the contemplative outsider, pushing him inside the play and burdening him with the expectation of taking action. Therefore, in a soliloquy philosophizing about this very problem, Hamlet has to reach to the root of his predicament and with one – half-conscious – remark, he perhaps tries to exorcise the Ghost from his story by denying his existence: "from whose bourn no traveler returns" (82). Although still on a highly general and indirect level, this is Hamlet's "real" rebellion against his father, whose proxy, also in terms of the sons' hatred towards fathers and their dissatisfaction with them, is of course, throughout, Claudius (after all, he "asked for it," replacing the real father through murder). In a production this can be emphasised by Hamlet uttering this sentence ("from whose bourn no traveler returns") in a kind of a self-suggestive manner. Hence, the very thing that "puzzles the will" is not only the unknowable nature of afterlife but also the recurring doubts concerning the Ghost, whose existence is too uncertain in proportion with the gravity of the deeds he specifies and assigns. Following this short interlude about the transcendental impulsive force, the soliloquy quickly returns to its main concern and concludes that it is impossible to know death from this life's perspective, and with this disappointing result he turns back to the initial question in the third part.

The last part of the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy starts with the line "Thus conscience does make coward of us all" (85), where *thus* refers back to the train of thought about the nature of death and afterlife (the second part of the soliloquy) but the whole line might be read as a continuation of the first part of the speech and not the second one, which is now put between parentheses. Should the line in question be rooted in the second part, its meaning would be that everyone is too weak to end their own life; yet, as it has been noted, after Act II Scene 2 Hamlet does not deal with the question of suicide. Yet, if the initial line of the third part relates to the first phase, it means that we do not dare to act if our life is at stake because we do not know what to expect in afterlife. As it is now common knowledge in Shakespeare-criticism, the word *conscience* had two meanings in Shakespeare's age: 'the sense of right and wrong' (i.e., in the sense the word is used today) and

'knowledge, awareness' (Kéry 1989, 29) and both of them stand in contrast with action. If we take its first meaning, it is related to the scruples of murdering somebody, moreover, a King and relative, which repeatedly underscores the advantage of Hamlet's fictionalised reality on the stage, where murder can be committed without staining one's hand with real blood. However, the meaning of 'knowledge' is more consistent with the motive structure of the soliloquy. In this case, the line in question gains the meaning of 'knowledge makes us cowards,' i.e., we do not dare to act when we know, which connects back to the fundamental juxtaposition of knowledge/thought *versus* action, dominating the soliloquy as a whole. This line of argumentation is continued in the following lines scattering the major key words of the speech: resolution is thwarted by "the pale cast of *thought*" (87) and the final conclusion is that enterprises finally "lose the name of *action*" (90). Yet, in Hamlet's stream of consciousness, *action* is not entirely excluded by *thought* (although he indeed does not decide to immediately kill Claudius here, or in any of his soliloquies) but the two are combined in order to give birth to *The Mousetrap*, i.e., the *thought* from his *mind* (cf. "my brains" II, 2, 584) is projected onto the stage to depict and investigate *action*.

The fact that Hamlet wishes to occupy an external position with respect to his own story, although this is impossible for him, is very well indicated by the end of the soliloquy. The Prince is alone (or he thinks he is alone, depending on whether Claudius and Polonius overhear him), contemplating but has to interrupt his train of thoughts at the appearance of Ophelia: "Soft you, now, // The fair Ophelia!" (90-91). And it will be precisely the entrance of the girl which will drag Hamlet back from the momentary outsider position of the thinker (keeping a certain distance from others and consequently from the play itself) into the very core of events, into a certain kind of action, namely handling his affair with Ophelia. This way the relation between the "To Be" and "Not To Be' parts (contemplation and action) will be mirrored back in the relation between the whole "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy (contemplating) and the immediately following Ophelia-scene (taking action). Hamlet's harsh attitude towards Ophelia might be a result of the Prince having just been dragged into a situation where he does not feel himself at home, since while he is glad to observe and analyze the situations from the outside, he is afraid, or even disgusted, to sink deep into the whirlpool of actions personally. This is also the reason why he does not stab Claudius during the Prayer-scene: although the Prince now has both the – *almost* – confirmed justification and the – rare – opportunity to take revenge in order to fulfill the deed, he would have to push the blade into his uncle's flesh with his own hands. It is remarkable that Hamlet was very enthusiastic when Claudius left the performance of *The Mousetrap* and believed that he gained unequivocal evidence of the King's sin, but precisely because the Prince is perfectly happy with the *knowledge* of Claudius's guilt, i.e., since he has solved the riddle *in the mind*, now he has to step into a realm which

does not agree with his personality, i.e., that of direct action, which results in his failure of murdering Claudius right after the play-within-the-play. It is also the very consequence of Hamlet's disgust of personal involvement that the Prince does not say anything specific to the actors in his instructions at the beginning of Act III Scene 2. If *The Mousetrap* indeed represents the whole play in which Hamlet is expected to take action, the play-within-the-play has utmost significance for the Prince and condenses all his doubts and fears concerning it, making the production a can of worms. This interpretation can be underscored in the performance of *Hamlet* if the actor in the main part is visibly agitated while he is instructing the actors and he frightfully and deliberately avoids any specific references to the actual plot of *The Mousetrap*, and, consequently, while his mind is apparently somewhere else, he gives universal instructions which are very well known to the players, as it is also tenderly suggested by their polite replies. It seems as if Hamlet were afraid of opening up the shield of generality to touch the particulars. However, the points of connection between his own story and the play-within-the-play may be emphatic exactly by his careful and obvious avoidance of them. Thus, the universality dominating the tone of Hamlet's instructions to the actors, as well as that of the famous "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy is the manifestation of the Prince's fear of involvement and of losing his external position with respect to the plot he is supposed to act in.

Hamlet's quasi-outsider position with respect to his own play may be given a theatrical representation by placing him outside of the stage while delivering the "To Be Or Not To Be"-soliloquy, occupying a position closer to the members of the audience rather than to the other characters of the play. Consequently, while discussing contemplation and action, he is physically looking at the bare stage, just as he can look at *The Mousetrap* representing the whole play one scene later. Hamlet's desire to occupy an external position similar to Old Hamlet's can be further emphasised by situating the delivery of the soliloquy to the same place where the ghost of the father had appeared previously in Act I. The stage, the expected area of action is now empty, action is there via its absence as if the whole tragedy has stopped for a few minutes for the sake of the Prince in order to give him the opportunity to reflect on his position on the general level. The relationship between contemplation and action is further reflected in the relationship between the audience and the stage in the theatre, the former only observing, experiencing, evaluating but not directly participating in the actions provided by the latter, and Hamlet is thus visually roaming on the verge of the two: escaping from the stage for a shorter while and sitting in a seat which is not designed for him and can only host the Prince for just a few minutes. However, by the end of the soliloquy, this frozen interlude is over and the stage is set in motion again by Ophelia stepping onto it. Should Hamlet physically move back to the stage from the vicinity of the audience, Ophelia's and the whole plot's magnetic effect on him would be clearly

manifested. When the Ghost gave the information to the Prince which only the transcendental being returning from the grave can possess, he also provides his son a certain amount of his external position enabling Hamlet to observe the events form the outside, which can be underscored if Hamlet meets his father somewhere outside the stage and occupies the place of the Ghost for a while during his soliloquy as mentioned above. Thus by encountering Old Hamlet, he crosses the boundaries of the magic circle representing the stage of the tragedy he is the protagonist of but it is only possible for him temporarily just as the actor in the leading role cannot perform the whole play from the seats of the audience, outside the dramatic space of the stage.

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Cosmopolitan Outlook as Space of Quest for Truth: William Michael Rossetti and his *Democratic Sonnets*

Zsuzsanna UJSZÁSZI

Independent scholar
Nyíregyháza, Hungary
zsuzsa.claribel@gmail.com

Abstract. Everyday cosmopolitan experience does not lead spontaneously to cosmopolitan outlook, whose crucial core is recognition. The formation of cosmopolitan outlook is a conscious intellectual process, and as such, it can be fostered and shaped, which is justification for a study of its conditions. After discussing 'cosmopolitan' as a term in philosophy and political science, the paper examines cosmopolitan outlook in the private sphere, as a mental space where recognition of cultural, political and moral values takes place. Quoting facts from the life and work of William Michael Rossetti, the investigation is intended to highlight the major constituents of his cosmopolitanism, especially as it is expressed in his *Democratic Sonnets*. William Michael Rossetti was an art and literary critic, who sporadically also composed poetry. His sonnet sequence reads best as the author's commentary on political and social issues while insisting on such values as democracy, freedom, patriotism, justice and commitment to truth. The *Democratic Sonnets* is interpreted as imaging its author's cosmopolitan outlook, realized not only with shifts in relative space (the two-volume sequence is subdivided into countries), but also with transitions between the national and the universal.

Keywords: transcending the national, source space, mental plane, space-time consciousness

Introduction: What is cosmopolitanism?

The term 'cosmopolitan' is commonly associated with transcending the national in favour of the universal human. In our age of increased globalization, challenges to national sovereignty have led to a renewed interest in cosmopolitanism. What is cosmopolitanism? How is it connected with space?

The term 'cosmopolitanism' does not yield to exact definition; not only because it does not denote some one existing entity, but also because through history it has been applied to different concepts. In addition, the word is also used in journalism today as a derogatory term referring to international capital, meaning 'homeless,' 'void of patriotic feelings.' Ulrich Beck, leading theorist of cosmopolitanism in social science, also mentions that the same term may apply to two opposing types: "despotic" and "emancipatory" (2006, 44). Basically, the term allows three approaches: philosophical, empirical and normative, which seems to make possible a distinction between cosmopolitan outlook, cosmopolitan reality and cosmopolitan order. Cosmopolitan outlook is an attitude of mind that attempts to transcend, in the mental plane, its national allegiance with a sense of moral obligation to humanity. The empirical approach focuses on cosmopolitan reality, i.e., on existing transnational aspects of reality, whereas the normative approach describes a utopia, a vision of global governance. The focus of this paper is on cosmopolitan outlook.

The world change from a system of sovereign nation-states to globalization lends special significance to the idea of cosmopolitanism today. Beck identifies two periods of political modernity, according to the legitimacy source of international politics: the first age was founded on sovereign states and international law, whereas the second, cosmopolitan age is, or, rather, will be dominated by the human rights rhetoric. According to Beck, the present is "a muddle between the old order based on international law and the new order based on human rights" (2000, 83). Our age is an intermediate period, since the traditional order based on territoriality, collectiveness and borders is constantly redefined by the new phenomena of globalization. Especially since 1990, the end of the West-East geopolitical division of the world, challenges to the sovereignty of the national state call for the need of establishing an effective international order. In the present period, although most transnational issues are controlled by international law, global (e.g., the UN) and regional (e.g., the EU) governance systems as well as other international organizations as non-state political actors, there seems to be an urgency for comprehensive democratic control at regional and global level, as not all powerful actors of world economy and politics are formal organizations (e.g., international pressure groups). Cosmopolitan order, however, exists only as a utopia at present. The major means proposed to achieve global governance are through constitutionality, i.e., by institutionalizing interstate

cooperation and coordination (Ruggie 1998), or, as imagined by Robert Fine (2007) in a similar vein, through international law and cosmopolitan politics.

Cosmopolitan outlook means more than how the word 'cosmopolitan' is popularly used either as praise meaning 'culturally sophisticated and well-travelled,' or as denigration implying 'living without commitment to the national.' The etymology of the term cosmopolitan refers to cosmos, meaning 'the universe,' and polis, meaning 'state,' which suggests belonging to two communities. Diogenes identified himself a citizen of the universe, and later the idea of cosmopolitanism was maintained in a similar sense by the Stoics, by Res Publica Christiana, a church-centred medieval international order, and by Dante in *De Monarchia*, all claiming that humankind constitutes a single community. Since Enlightenment philosophy, which also maintained the primacy of the universal over the national in man, the ethical perspective has gained ground in cosmopolitanism, and its essential constituent became a concept of justice, equality of rights to individuals irrespective of nationality. For Kant cosmopolitan order was a space based on common humanity that ensures equal rights for every person in relation to his country as well as to others, and in *Perpetual Peace* (1795) he maintains that this higher order space will be achieved not as a supranational authority, rather through a world federation of republican states. In a Kantian sense, a cosmopolitan outlook implies existence grounded in national identity but also living in transition by thinking and acting beyond the local, national boundaries, without causing injury to others. We take cosmopolitan outlook in this sense, as personal ennoblement, a personally held ethical stance, which means a consciousness of universal human values, openness to other ideas and cultures, the capacity and willingness to put oneself in the position of others across national borders – a similar openness of attitude in William Michael Rossetti's view of the world is recognized as a driving force in his cosmopolitanism.

The core concept of cosmopolitanism, the universal aspect of humanity, has been distorted through history several times, by colonial powers, communist internationalism, neo-colonialism and also other hegemonic pretensions of political powers. The attitude of global citizenship, "the ethos of the new cosmopolitan" (Strand 2010, 51), i.e., detachment from cultural patterns and local loyalties, should also be distinguished from cosmopolitanism in the traditional sense. In the nineteenth century, however, the true sense of the cosmopolitan idea was simultaneously rooted in the national and the universal human values. Because cosmopolitanism relates to basic norms, values and principles to be applicable throughout the entire world, like freedom, democracy, culture, equal treatment, etc., cosmopolitan outlook means affirming oneself and others as different and therefore of equal value.

Since 'cosmopolitan' implies a commitment to two communities, this simultaneity allows viewing cosmopolitanism in spatial terms. One community is

in the local, patriotic space, which is territorially bounded, where life in community takes place, whereas the other community is common universality. The latter exists in abstract space, which dispenses with borders, where ideas such as humanity and universal rights could be realized. Cosmopolitanism forces people to develop the art of imaginative crossing of borders as cosmopolitan competence means "both the location of one's own lifestyle within the horizon of other possibilities, and the ability to see oneself from the viewpoint of those who are culturally other – as well as to practice this within one's own experiential space through the imaginative crossing of boundaries" (Beck 2004, 153). It is important to consider this description, as exactly the same is performed by the speaker of William Michael Rossetti's *Democratic Sonnets*.

William Michael Rossetti and the background of his cosmopolitan outlook

A biography of William Michael Rossetti by Angela Thirlwell interprets his activity in the light of cosmopolitanism, which is given definition as follows:

Cosmopolitanism is free from [...] concepts of bipolar national oppositions, as it is also free of any gender implications. A cosmopolitan is an 'inclusivist,' a citizen of the world, equally at home in regions other than his or her native land, not indifferent to constitutions, religions, politics and beliefs but tolerant of other people's rights to hold differing positions. (2003, 255)

Thirlwell mentions bipolar national oppositions because it seems that his birth predestined William Michael Rossetti to become a man of multiple cultural roots. Sibling of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti and Maria Francesca Rossetti, he was three quarters Italian and only one quarter English, as his mother's father was also Italian, Gaetano Polidori.[1] The father, Gabriele Rossetti, arrived in England in 1824 as a political refugee, who maintained contacts with fellow Italians arriving in England (Doughty, 1960). William Michael Rossetti grew up in a multilingual household where the children used English with their mother, learned Italian from their father and could listen to political refugees speaking Italian and occasionally French. Gabriele Rossetti was a Dante scholar teaching Italian at King's College, London, so the children became familiar with Dante as their cultural hero at an early age. From their mother and at school they learned about English culture and most importantly, about the art of Shakespeare (Thirlwell 2003). Although the four children grew up in the same environment, only William Michael Rossetti developed an attitude that can be termed as cosmopolitan. This underlines a certain natural

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[1] Byron's doctor, John Polidori was the Rossetti children's uncle.

disposition in his character, which was only further shaped by social and cultural experience outside the family circle: his great range of contacts with notable personalities, his travels and the impressive variety of his informed interests.

A very important constituent of William Michael Rossetti's cosmopolitanism was his knowledge in the fields of literature, art and politics. Although a talented youth, William Michael Rossetti was denied the benefit of higher education and had to take up a job at sixteen in order to support the family. While working as a government clerk in the Excise Office from 1845 to 1904, where he rose to the position of Assistant Secretary, his industry and energy were divided between this job and his wide range of interests. William Michael Rossetti became a self-taught scholar and critic who acquired his erudition from books, travels and discussions with eminent personalities of his age. As a literary critic, he focused on the Romantics, wrote books on Shelley, Keats and Thomas Moore, and also edited their works. His favourite was Shelley, whose free spirit he admired and whose ideals of political freedom and near atheism he greatly shared. As chairman of the Shelley Society (1886–1895), he lectured on Shelley, and more than sixty of his articles written for the *Atheneum* 1878–1895 were also mainly on Shelley. However, as a literary critic, William Michael Rossetti gave evaluation of contemporary English poets, too, first of all Swinburne, defending Swinburne's poetry against critical attacks, and his merits as a literary critic are also measured by his critical reception of contemporary Italian and American poetry. He lectured on Leopardi at the Taylor Institution in Oxford in 1891, and the first major public reception of Walt Whitman's poetry in Britain owes to William Michael Rossetti's essay in the *Chronicle* of 6 July 1867. He edited Walt Whitman's poems with a *Preface* in 1868, and also Longfellow's poems in 1870 in the "Moxon Popular Poets" series, among the twenty-one selections which he compiled for the series (Thirlwell 2003).

An important source of William Michael Rossetti's wide range of knowledge came from his extensive travels both in England and abroad. He accompanied his mother and Christina to Paris in 1861, Milan and Verona in 1865, which was the only occasion for the two to be in Italy. Most often the destination of his yearly foreign travels was Italy, and the major factor in his visits to Florence, Venice, Rome and other Italian art centres was an intense interest in arts, his ambition to build up expert knowledge by observing art in museums and galleries. Besides Italy, William Michael Rossetti also often travelled to Paris, went to Belgium with his brother in 1863, to Germany on his own in 1870, to Switzerland in 1894 and even as far as Australia in 1897. His home travels were related to friendships, his job at the office, and to his additional role there after 1897 of assessing works of art for tax exemption (Thirlwell 2003).

William Michael Rossetti's two-volume autobiographical work, *Some Reminiscences* reads as a detailed account of how, in relation to his job, interests

and travels, he met an impressive number of personages and also discussed matters of art, literature and politics with them. Thirlwell refers to an occasion when, inspecting the art objects of a Duke, William Michael Rossetti was able to exchange political views with the Duke's wife, one of Queen Victoria's daughters. Another example of his social contacts is that he discussed Shelley with George Eliot when preparing his first Shelley edition in 1869. On the development of William Michael Rossetti's cosmopolitanism, however, rather than contacts with important personalities of his age at home, it was his foreign relations that had a major effect, as these extended the arena of his activity beyond the horizon of the national border. William Michael Rossetti's interpretation of art won the admiration of John Ruskin, who recommended him to the American William Stillman, editor of the New York *Crayon*, as the London arts correspondent for the journal, where his series "Art News from London" was published in 1855 and 1856. In 1856 William Michael Rossetti was asked also to promote an exhibition of modern British art in America, which made it possible for Pre-Raphaelite art to reach the American public. Joining forces with a London art dealer, he organised the American Exhibition of British Art of over 350 art works in the autumn of 1857 in New York, and then the collection travelled to Philadelphia, Boston and Washington (Thirlwell 2003).

William Michael Rossetti's *Democratic Sonnets*

William Michael Rossetti's sonnet sequence *Democratic Sonnets* was written on issues of topical interest, as social and political commentary on contemporary public events and public figures. The poet's motivation was chiefly intellectual, namely, to give voice to his political and moral judgement and thereby provide a true picture of the contemporary world. In his quest for truth about the issues examined in the sonnets, the poet was guided by leftist political and social views and also sentiments against obscurantism, injustice and oppression, so his sonnet sequence displays sympathy for patriotic struggles, revolutions and republics. Most of these sonnets were written in the early 1880s, but if the volume had been published at the time of its composition, on the Eve of the Socialist movement in England, it would have stirred more public and critical interest. Although it was Dante Gabriel Rossetti who encouraged his brother to resume poetry writing and to compose, as it is recalled in *Some Reminiscences*, "a series of sonnets upon topics in which I felt some strong interest, not merely private or personal" (1906, 474), later, when in April 1881 he received pieces written for the projected sequence, it was he who started to have reservations. Dante Gabriel Rossetti found the poems too outspoken and politically subversive, therefore incompatible with a government clerk's position and career prospects (Thirlwell 2003). Nevertheless, William Michael Rossetti continued composing the sonnets and managed to complete

seventy-two by autumn. Finally, however, he gave up the sonnet project, and it was not until 1905 that, at the request of Ford Madox Hueffer, William Michael Rossetti revised the sonnets, and out of the seventy-two which had been completed,[2] he submitted fifty for publication in two volumes under the title *Democratic Sonnets* in 1907. Thus *Democratic Sonnets* was published over two decades after its composition, when it had lost its topicality and was read as retrospective. In addition, it was published in a significantly smaller size than originally planned. The original plan was for the sequence to comprise one hundred sonnets, framed by *The Past* as an introductory sonnet and "The Future" (it was never written) as the closing sonnet (Arinshtein and Fredeman 1971). Compared with the original projected sequence of one hundred sonnets, the picture of the contemporary world is narrower, as fewer nations and fewer issues are encompassed by this smaller sequence of 1907. What makes *Democratic Sonnets* a sequence of special interest?

 Democratic Sonnets was written in an age whose major theme in poetry and art was pure aesthetic beauty, and the arena where attention to social and political subject could be paid was elsewhere, in the essay and in journalism, so the political theme in poetry could only have a less celebrated position. Another reason why William Michael Rossetti's sequence is lesser known today is that for their poetic characteristics the *Democratic Sonnets* are not critically acclaimed as belonging to the first rank of nineteenth-century English poetry. However, measured against the best traditions of political poetry in the English language, the true merits of the sequence become clear. English poetry has always taken up political causes, and the most memorable works were produced by Marvell, Milton and Blake. The greatest romantic poets of the nineteenth century, Wordsworth, Shelley and Byron as well as Browning, Swinburne and Morris, all responded to revolutions abroad and injustice at home. While their works treat the political theme on an abstract level and in combination with other lyric subjects, William Michael Rossetti's sonnets differ in their "specificity and concreteness" (Arinshtein and Fredeman 1971, 254). The sonnets refer in their titles and dates to the events and public figures that inspired them, although they do not comprise explicit descriptions, rather, they are expression of the speaker's intellectual and emotional response. If not for their poetic merits, the *Democratic Sonnets* are acclaimed for their choice and treatment of subject matters as poems written in the spirit of the best democratic tradition and composed not in a sentimental tone but with drama and vigour. In the Irish sonnets (*The Corn Laws, 1846; Irish Famine and Emigration, 1846-1860; O'Connell, 1847; Fenians, 1867*) the poet raises his voice against the

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[2] The list of the projected one hundred sonnets, as well as fair copies of sonnets not included in the published sequence survive in manuscript form and were published in Appendix 1 and 2 of Arinshtein and Fredeman (1971).

effects of English dominion in Ireland. It was a daring act to attack British colonial policy by drawing attention to its dark consequences in Africa in *The Transvaal, 1881*, which "represents the earliest denunciation in verse of the British imperial policy of colonial wars and the annexation of African territories" (Arinshtein and Fredeman 1971, 256).

Space in Democratic Sonnets

In the published volume, the fifty sonnets are arranged into national groups and are not framed by references to the temporal dimension of the presented contemporary geographical-political space. With a scheme that reflects a political consciousness of space, even in the published fragmented form of the original project, spatiality is a key concept. The sonnets are arranged in groups according to countries, and thus the speaker shifts from one location to another in each group. Yet the question arises: how is space conceptualized with a cosmopolitan view, beyond the obvious national, political-geographical perspective? Cosmopolitanism in *Democratic Sonnets* is not only recognized in the fact that the poet transcends the national borders of his own country and takes a view of America as well as of the leading powers of Europe, giving evaluation of some of the contemporary conditions from the political and moral standpoint of a republican and liberal democrat. In its Kantian sense cosmopolitanism is intellectual commitment to justice and the moral equality of all people; cosmopolitanism focuses on the universal. How does William Michael Rossetti reach the universal in the sonnets? How is political-geographical space extended to include the universal, how is it turned into cosmopolitan space?

Countries are clearly visible on a map, but the universal is invisible and, like all abstractions, is imperceptible in any other way but by abstract reasoning. Poetry, however, is an art of transforming the abstract and insensible into sensible experience through imaging. Abstractions can most often be accessed through metonymic and metaphorical thinking and can be represented through reference to the concrete, which involves analogical reasoning. Insensate experience is transformed into sensate cognition in poetry through our ability to project thoughts into another space or space-time and construct new conceptualizations of the subject. Cognitive poetic analysis follows the thought processes of the speaker in order to explore the new concept that an image forms of its subject. The present reality space of the speaker and his subject is called 'ground space,' whereas the new space set up with the purpose of new conceptualization is termed as 'source space.' Both the source space and its link with the ground space are various, but the latter allows classification as projection (perception or creation of similarity), pragmatic function (based on relation other than similarity) and schema mapping (a general schema is used to structure a situation in context) (Freeman 2002).

Space does not only refer to the geometrical qualities of a physical environment and does not only have the dimensions of height, length and depth. It is common knowledge that space also has a dynamic aspect, a temporal dimension, as all entities are in constant movement and change, therefore they exist in relation to space and time simultaneously. In his essay, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (1813) Schopenhauer says: "[...] the representation of coexistence is impossible in Time alone; it depends, for its completion, upon the representation of Space; because, in mere Time, all things follow one another, and in mere Space all things are side by side; it is accordingly only by the combination of Time and Space that the representation of coexistence arises" (1889, 32). Following Schopenhauer's view, this paper proposes to examine some of the *Democratic Sonnets* from the perspective of their temporal references as well.

In connection with a cosmopolitan view of contemporary reality, the major question is how space, the geographically fixed spaces of countries, is turned into cosmopolitan space. The speaker in *Democratic Sonnets* extends national space by establishing connections through time. As each connection creates a new space in which to view and interpret the subjects, many of the nineteenth-century events and public personalities in the sonnets are presented in relation to a wider space-time continuum. The speaker moves from the particular space of a discussed personality or event to another space which he sets up in the mental plane, and it is this mental leap that establishes connection between them. The resulting new concept illuminates the event or public character as an embodiment of the universal, as one following an already existing model in the common heritage of European civilization. What is the structure of such connections? The speaker's shifts along the space-time continuum can be categorized according to their source spaces, and also according to the effects that they have on the structure of imagery and poetic diction. The new spaces affect the poetic diction and imagery in different manners, and considering the extents of their effects, the following types can be distinguished: 1) juxtaposition, where the source space is an extension added to the ground space to exist side by side with it, i.e., the new space does not extend over the entire diction but only governs one or two lines; 2) integration, where the source space is partially integrated in the ground space, and the target subject is interpreted as an individualized link in the common chain of humanity; 3) merger, where the integration of the source space in the ground space is complete, the ground space is 'conquered' and almost disappears.

This paper proposes to examine the source spaces in the sonnet sequence, which produce either analogical or relational mappings, with commentary on how these mappings affect the structure of poetic diction. Among the source spaces in the fifteen sonnets that allow such analysis, the following categories can be identified: 1) Time of Universalism; 2) Classical Antiquity; 3) Other history, myth or fiction; 4) Christian Faith.

Source spaces in Democratic Sonnets

1) Time of Universalism – time of the Universe, of life on Earth and of human history

According to William Michael Rossetti's original scheme, three poems were intended as providing a frame for the sequence: "The Future" was not written, but *Dedication* and *The Past* form part of the published volume and carry their original function. *Dedication*, addressed to the memory of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, connects the ground space of the present with infinite space-time in its second quatrain, which views individual life and death in the larger context of universal human fate:

> While day and night, procession multifold,
> Finite in infinite, their vigil keep,
> And men, ere yet the sickle reaps them, reap
> Harvest of grain and their own deeds untold

The Past follows history of life on Earth from the beginnings up to the present of nation states. Three other sonnets set up, through relational mapping, the mental space of 'time of human history' in their first lines: *Alsace, 1871* ("The wheel is come full circle"), *John Brown, 1859 –1863* ("When centuries shall call this nineteenth old") and *Rome and Italy, 1870* ("More than millennial has the cycle rolled"), whereas in a fourth sonnet, *The Brothers Bandiera, 1844,* a similar source space is established in the closing line ("Nine names inscribed in rolls of earth and heaven").

2) Classical Antiquity

Even when there is no attempt by the speaker to transcend the national, like in the Italian sonnets, where the main concern is appraisal of patriotism (*Cavour, 1861*; *Rome and Italy, 1870; Mazzini, 1870*), the speaker extends the present in three sonnets by introducing a space from the ancient past of Italy through names of characters as space builders. Referring to past events or characters always means representing them in the present, as they become visualized in the consciousness of the speaker and the reader. With such representation the poet's purpose is to evoke the national past, but in this case, the references to the ancient past of Italy can also be read as references to the common historical heritage of European civilization. The purpose is to provide a link by suggesting a model that operates through time and adds significance to the happenings in the present. In *Cavour, 1861*, so as to

illuminate Cavour's[3] true statesmanlike character, the speaker sets up a new space by referring to Curtius.[4] This reference highlights a contrast with the legendary hero of ancient Rome, "Not his to plunge and perish in the abysm,/An immolated Curtius." Although the happenings related to this new space are not represented in detail in the poem, they become visualized in the consciousness of the informed speaker and reader. Similar space builders in the other two Italian sonnets are "Brutus, Camillus and Aurelius" in *Rome and Italy, 1870* and "Triumvir of Rome" in *Mazzini, 1870*, which set up spaces related to the glorious age of the Roman Empire first century B.C. What is noticeable here is how the source spaces work: it takes a leap in time for the speaker to establish a link with the common European heritage, but this also assumes an informed reader who can follow the speaker's leap. In *Mazzini, 1870*, the result of this leap is two spaces existing side by side in the consciousness of the reader: one is Mazzini[5] with his activity as described in the sonnet ("future truth's interpreter," "exiled," "never extinguished," etc.) and the other is the one evoked by "Triumvir of Rome." This metaphorical labelling applied to Mazzini is analogical identification since it evokes Lepidus,[6] a Roman politician who also spent the last period of his life in exile. The juxtaposition of two spaces allows the source space to retain its sovereignty and remain an extension of the ground space in a coexistence of equality. A similar juxtaposition of spaces is produced in the same sonnet through two other images: "The pilgrim Magus bearing nard and myrrh/To Freedom's manger-cradle." The spaces juxtaposed here are thus triple: Mazzini, the Magus[7] in ancient cultures, and the infant Christ (evoked by "manger-cradle"). This suggests that the cause of Italy's liberation is analogous to the promise of salvation which the birth of Christ meant for humanity. Mazzini's situation is viewed through the perspective of these spaces, wider than its own national space-time, as an embodiment of the familiar models of the magus and the birth of the Redeemer.

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[3] Count Cavour was an Italian statesman of 1850s, a non-revolutionary but progressive-minded diplomat who almost managed to unite Italy. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* – abbreviated as EB in the Notes)

[4] According to legend, in 352 B.C. Curtius leapt into a deep chasm which opened in the Roman Forum and was said never to close until Rome's most valuable possession was thrown into it. As nothing was more precious than a brave citizen, the chasm closed when Curtius leaped into it. (EB)

[5] Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872) was a radical politician fighting for the unification of Italy, a leading figure of the Italian liberation movement, who was exiled in 1831 and lived in France, Switzerland and England, where he continued organizing his movement. (EB)

[6] Marcus Aemilius Lepidus was member of the Second Triumvirate with Marcus Antonius and Gaius Octavianus, but was forced into exile, deprived of all his offices by them in 36 B.C. and had to spend his life in obscurity. (EB)

[7] In ancient cultures, the Magus induced transition from normal to a higher state of consciousness through the stimulation of the senses by using psychotic substances (Luck 2006).

3) Other history, myth or fiction

In the following four sonnets the source field of conceptualization is some myth (the myth of Venice as queen of the Adriatic in *Manin, 1849*: "her dimmed sea-crown"), fiction (in *Dickens, 1870*: "Vanderdecken"[8] and "Laputa"[9] as space builders) or history where the new conceptualization relies on reference to a historical character ("Joan of Arc" in *The Brothers Bandiera, 1844*) or a recent event. In *The Red Shirt, 1860 –1867*, for example, a sonnet on patriotism, the forceful imagery owes to references to the recent past of Italy. The red shirt uniform of Garibaldi's legion[10] is pictured as a symbol of bloodshed: "the dripping hands of Italy/Bathed sacred in the drops her martyred sons have shed," "the venomed blood of Tyranny," "like Orsini's[11] trunk-disseevered face." The shirt is not simply red by colour, but on it "a redder trace/Of blood attests the patriot or his doom." Red is also associated with "the conclaved cardinals accurst" who elected Pius IX, [12] an enemy of Italian revolutionaries.

4) Christian Faith

The new conceptualization of the national is most frequently performed through spatial extension involving the domain of Christian Faith through biblical imagery or through reference to biblical events. In *The Brothers Bandiera, 1844*, the poet places the two heroes of the Italian liberation movement[13] higher than merely patriots dying for their country. They are elevated by the phrases "Christian circus-games with tigers," "Martyrs" and "thorn-crown," which establish new spaces transcending the space-time of Italy in 1840s and show the two patriots next to Christ and the Christian martyrs of ancient Rome. In *Mazzini, 1870*, the political leader is represented as a recurring figure of the space-time continuum, as the phrases "pilgrim Magus bearing nard and myrrh/To Freedom's manger cradle" evoke spaces related to biblical time. In *John Brown, 1859 –1863*, the biblical

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[8] This is a reference to the story of the Flying Dutchman, a legendary ghost ship. In a story titled *Vanderdecken's Message Home*, published in the May 1821 issue of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Vanderdecken is the name of the captain of the ship.

[9] Laputa is the name of a flying island in Jonathan Swift's novel, *Gulliver's Travels*.

[10] Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882) was a military leader in the movement for Italian unification, a follower of Mazzini, the leader of the revolt in Piedmont in 1834. (EB)

[11] Felice Orsini (1819–1858) was an Italian revolutionary who was executed for an attempt to assassinate the French emperor Napoleon III. (EB)

[12] When elected to the papacy in 1846, Pius IX supported the Italian nationalists, but later he was confronted both with the revolution of 1848 and the opposition of Count Cavour and the Piedmontese. (EB)

[13] Attilio and Emilio Bandiera, followers of Mazzini, were executed in 1844 aged 33 and 25 for preparing a raid on the Calabrian coast with the purpose to liberate political prisoners. (EB)

space set up in the last line ("This gibbet near a cross on Calvary") allows John Brown[14] to be seen as a heroic victim of humanity, timeless like Christ. In the same sonnet, there is yet another connection through time: the last line of the octave represents a space centuries away in the future, where the present is portrayed from a future perspective through the words of schoolchildren memorizing their history lesson: "John Brown the martyr of black men bought and sold."

The Russian Serfs Freed, 1861 celebrates the abolition of serfdom in Russia, and through biblical imagery the event is represented as one in the chain of recurring happenings in the history of mankind. The images of "age-long cankering collar" and "serfdom's curse" in the sonnet recall Paul instructing the Galatians to recognize the difference between being slaves to the Law and having freedom through faith in Christ and act accordingly, "For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1 New Revised Standard Version). The extension of the ground space of abolition of serfdom in Russia allows the situation in Russia to be seen as a chance of salvation.

In Ireland, the hard situation of the people suffering heavily both from hard labour and from heavy dearth is represented as additional to the universal condition of Man. The poor in Ireland were suffering, while English oligarchs were enjoying the fruit of their toil. *The Corn Laws, 1846,*[15] which takes the form of a dialogue between a poor Irishman and an English oligarch, presents the situation in Ireland as aggravation of the biblical situation of Man, and outlines the universal human condition as life prolonging "its tedious thread." God commanded Man, as it is recorded in Genesis 3:17, to earn his livelihood through hard labour, saying: "in toil you shall eat" and "by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread." This new space, which provides the true perspective from which to view the present in Ireland, is confirmed in the concluding line of the sonnet: "Our Lazarus eats; let Dives dine and whine" – which means that on the Day of Judgement divine justice will take care of the poor and will punish the oligarchs. The source space of the story of Lazarus, Dives and the Day of Judgement in Luke 16:19-3 is integrated into the treatment of the subject, suggesting that the two spaces are analogical and differ only in their time-levels on Earth. The new space makes the situation in Ireland appear as one modern embodiment of the attitude that determined the roles of Lazarus and Dives.

In a similar manner, the situations of the relevant nations in *Poland, 1863* and *Hungary and Europe, 1849* are interpreted in relation to the universal condition of

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[14] John Brown (1800–1859) was an American militant abolitionist, executed for his activity in Virginia in 1859.

[15] 'Corn Laws' were trade laws between 1815 and 1846 to protect grain within the British Isles from lower price foreign import. Its consequence was also that poorer people could not afford to buy proper food, and this had heavy effects in Ireland. The Corn Laws were repealed in January 1846 (Eastwood 1996).

humanity. What is different here is that in these two sonnets the treatment of the subject dispenses with clear references to external realities through visual imagery, and almost the only mention of the facts that motivated the sonnets is their titles. *Poland, 1863* does not give explicit description of the political situation and no specific event or public character is referred to.[16] Instead, through the phrases "curse," "expiated," "plague" and "pest," the speaker, whose purpose is to express sympathy for a nation going through suffering, sets up a mental space of 'mankind under punishment by God,' which is a condition often referred to in the Bible.[17] Poland is called a "plague-spot" in the very first line, and in the lines following this passionate statement, the political situation is represented not in concrete visual images but as an embodiment of a recurring pest that devastates the human world time and again. References to tyranny in Poland are metaphorical, as a pest, a curse (also emphasized in the rhyme scheme: "curse," "murderers," "hearse," "nurse") which breaks forth again and again until it is expiated irreversibly. The poetic diction is saturated with biblical imagery, so the integration of the source space in the ground space is complete.

Hungary and Europe, 1849 was inspired by the poet's sympathy with the cause of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848–1849 and by his compassion for the sufferers of its fall. Thus oppression in the sonnet is political oppression, "the voice" is the voice of the victims of the revolution and "the evil throng" is the oppressors. This is how William Michael Rossetti comments on this sonnet in his introduction to the 1901 Stock facsimile edition of *The Germ*: "This sonnet was composed in August 1849, when the great cause of the Hungarian insurrection against Austrian tyranny was, like revolutionary movements elsewhere, precipitating towards its fall. My original title for the sonnet was, *For the General Oppression of the Better by the Worse Cause, Autumn 1849.* When the verses had to be published in *The Germ,* a magazine which did not aim at taking any side in politics, it was thought that this title was inappropriate, and the other[18] was substituted. At a much later date the sonnet was reprinted with yet another and more significant title, *Democracy Downtrodden*" (Rossetti 1901).

Hungary and Europe, 1849 ranks among nineteenth-century political sonnets as having true poetical merits, and because of its subject, it has special significance for us Hungarians. These two facts are quoted as justification for a closer examination of

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[16] In 1863 after the January Uprising, a revolt against Russian rule in Poland, an oppressive period of Russification and heavy retaliation began with executions, exiles and violence. (EB) In the sonnet, however, the only reference to the actual political situation is the date following the title.

[17] In the Old Testament pests, plagues and all epidemics are regarded as punishment from God. For example, David admits his guiltiness to God, who sends a three days' pestilence on Israel in punishment (2 Sam. 24:15).

[18] The sonnet was published in *The Germ* under the title *The Evil Under the Sun* (Rossetti 1850, 192).

how the national Hungarian situation is interpreted in this sonnet as a case of the universal human condition.

Hungary and Europe, 1849

HOW long, oh Lord?–The voice is sounding still,
Not only heard beneath the altar stone,
Not heard of John Evangelist alone
In Patmos. It doth cry aloud and will
Between the earth's end and earth's end, until
The day of the great reckoning, bone for bone,
And blood for righteous blood, and groan for groan:
Then shall it cease on the air with a sudden thrill;
Not slowly growing fainter if the rod
Strikes one or two amid the evil throng,
Or one oppressor's hand is stayed and numbs, –
Not till the vengeance that is coming comes:
For shall all hear the voice excepting God?
Or God not listen, hearing? – Lord, how long?

In Christian Faith, the Lord's patience with the wicked is regarded as a possibility of their salvation, as God being merciful gives people a chance to turn away from wickedness – though this also allows sin to continue for a time. The octave of the sonnet focuses on the voice of human suffering, which is loud and can be heard not only beneath the altar stone, i.e., human suffering is not confined to the martyrs of religious oppression in the past.[19] The voice of human suffering is present in our world and will be heard all over the Earth until the Day of Judgement, but then, according to descriptions in the Bible, the change will be apocalyptic, sudden and unalterable. The Day of Judgement will mark a sharp turn by putting an end to suffering immediately, "with a sudden thrill," and it will also be the day of great reckoning. The speaker of the sonnet describes this event in the spirit of the Old Testament as merciless and revengeful. The sequence of phrases "bone for bone," "blood for righteous blood," "groan for groan" echoes the biblical phrase "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (Exod. 21:24 and Lev. 24:20). It is impossible not to hear the speaker's desire for divine retaliation in lines 6 and 7. What accounts for his anger? Seeing the wicked prosper often weakens people's faith in divine justice, yet the speaker of this poem has no such religious doubts, and the

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[19] "Beneath the altar stone" is a reference to the ancient martyrs of religion, since it is a custom in the Roman Catholic Church to place the relics of martyrs or other saints in the central part of the altar stone, the table upon which the sacred mysteries of religious faith, the Mass is celebrated.

sounds of human suffering do not make him question the compassion and wisdom of God. His confidence that the Day of Judgement is certain to come is indicated by the present continuous form "is coming," and thus the implication is that until that day, time passing is perceived as the coming of the Last Day. The first two of the concluding questions therefore are not signs of the speaker's uncertainty; rather, they imply the impossibility of God's ignorance or indifference. However, the final question "Lord, how long?" gives repeated emphasis to the human need to know how long it is until the Day of Judgement.

Although the poet's inspiration came from contemporary political events, the sonnet discusses the issue of suffering caused by political oppression in a more universal plane. Through the biblical allusion to the Day of Judgement, the question about victory of the evil becomes one with the age-long human problem, i.e., how long evilness will be tolerated by God. The reference to John Evangelist and Patmos makes the reader think about what happened on the island of Patmos. Revelation records John's visions of the end of the world, which followed the opening of the seven seals of the scroll one by one. The breaking of the fifth seal revealed underneath the altar the souls of Christian martyrs who had been killed because of the witness they bore to the word of God. They cried out in a loud voice, "Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be, before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" (Rev. 6:10). Instead of being told in exact human terms how long they would have to wait, they were told "to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed" (Rev. 6:11). Apparently there is a clash between the human perception of time and its divine concept. From the human perspective, duration is what truly matters, i.e., "how long" it will take. From a divine perspective, however, duration is irrelevant. It is said in the New Testament,

> […] with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. (2 Pet. 3:8-10)

The point here is not only that God is eternal and holy, not bound by time like humans, but that God places qualities first. It is good acts and bad deeds that truly matter, and man is expected to be always ready for the great reckoning. The speaker of the sonnet opposes this implied divine perspective from a viewpoint of compassion with the sufferers of contemporary evilness by identifying with the voice of sufferers asking for divine justice. The source space is established by the

speaker with the obvious intention to make the contemporary evil in Hungary appear as a case of universal human suffering to be endured until the Day of Judgement. The source space is integrated into the interpretation of the subject of the poem, suffering caused by political oppression in Hungary, to such an extent as it replaces its representation and the two spaces merge as one. Thus the specific national situation is interpreted in the mental plane, through Christian Faith, as part of the universal human condition.

Conclusion

Later in his essay Schopenhauer confirms his view of time and space, saying "the intimate union of both is the condition of reality which, in a sense, grows out of them, as a product grows out of its factors" (1889, 32). What follows from this? Without the time factor in our conception of space, the understanding as well as representation of reality is static and incomplete, therefore false. The complexity of reality can be explored and represented by mental shifts between spaces and also in the dynamic aspect of space: time. In my paper I studied William Michael Rossetti's concept of space in his *Democratic Sonnets* and found that this concept of space transcends both the geographical-political boundaries and their temporal relations. The cosmopolitan outlook which aspires to perceive political reality in its true condition has space-time consciousness.

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Translator. Interpretation and Cultural Mediation

Ágnes SOMLÓ

Pázmány Péter Catholic University
Institute of English and American Studies
somlo.agnes@btk.ppke.hu
somloa@t-online.hu

Abstract. All readers of a literary text form their own interpretation of it, and so does the literary translator, a special kind of reader. His professional interpretation requires the skills and knowledge of the literati, the empathy of the creative and performing artist, and an understanding of other fields of life. In short: an overall knowledge of universal human culture as well as of both SL and TL cultures, for the literary translator must look upon the entire world, much as literature does.

Simultaneously, the literary translator's interpretation represents a kind of educational role directed towards the aim, the 'skopos' of translation, which denotes the relationship between translator and reader. Following the translator's special reading, understanding and interpretation, the target language text and the translator's professional interpretation of the knowledge and cultural content and context present in the source language text will be defined, as well as limited, by the scope of understanding of the target audience, that is, its general cultural standard and background.

In what follows I will examine the 'cooperative role' and some of the different aspects of a creative interpretation of the translator as reader.

Keywords: levels of reading; implied and actual, model and empirical reader; horizon of expectations; map of the text; intercultural sensitivity

The main content of my paper is perfectly outlined by the words of Susan Bassnett: "The translator is […] first a reader and then a writer, and in the process of reading he or she must take a position" (2007, 81). We will start from the assumption

that all readers of a literary work form their own interpretation of it, and thus there are an unlimited number of different readings of the text, and we suppose that one of them is that of the literary translator. Before going on, we have to state that there are different levels of reading of which I will differentiate three: (1) first reading; (2) re-reading or critical reading; (3) translator's reading, that is, the re-reading by the cultural mediator. Moreover, there are different meanings and connotations of the word interpretation itself, and we will see that interpretation by a literary translator is more complex than any definitions that dictionaries[1] might suggest.

First reading is determined primarily by the expectation of pleasure and by the reader's personal impressions and appreciation, while re-reading is already a kind of critical reading denoting a more *structured* pleasure of intellectual experience in the broader contexts of the reader's culture. In *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau says that the best reading "requires a training […] books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written" (2009, n.p.). Thus the reader returns to a text focusing on some special aspects, passages or details, tracing patterns and developing ideas, asking questions and perhaps even collecting some additional information about socio-cultural and historical contents and contexts. This critical reading and interpretation used to be, on the one hand, the realm of professionals, literati (critics and analysts of literary texts in our case), and on the other hand, that of education, in which re-reading is one of the most important methods of teaching students to understand and interpret texts in a creative way. At the same time, however, according to Susan Sontag: "Interpretation, based on the highly dubious theory that a work of art is composed of items of content, violates art" (1983, 101). This kind of interpretation reduces the meaning of a work of art to make it "manageable" and, as Sontag notes, "literary critics have understood it to be their task to translate the elements of the poem or play or novel or story into something else" (1983, 99).

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[1] As defined by different dictionaries: (1) an explanation of the meaning or importance of something;(2) a way of performing a piece of music, a part in a play etc. that shows how you understand it and feel about it; (3) the oral translation of what is said in one language into another, so that speakers of different languages can communicate; (4) explanatory information to help people understand what they are seeing or encountering at a place of interest

The online version of Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged (© HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003) defines interpretation as:

(1) the act or process of interpreting or explaining; elucidation

(2) the result of interpreting; an explanation

(3) a particular view of an artistic work, especially as expressed by stylistic individuality in its performance

(4) explanation, as of the environment, a historical site, etc., provided by the use of original objects, personal experience, visual display material, etc.

(5) (Philosophy / Logic) *Logic* an allocation of significance to the terms of a purely formal system, by specifying ranges for the variables, denotations for the individual constants, etc.; a function from the formal language to such elements of a possible world

In literary criticism it was Reception Theory that first shifted focus from the author and the content of the work to the text and the reader. It is, in fact, considered to be "a creative process that occurs in the act of reading" (Kinoshita 2004, 2); that is to say, an interaction between text and reader. Wolfgang Iser, one of the most significant representatives of Reception Theory, says that preoccupation with "the author's intention was replaced by the impact a piece of literature has on its potential recipient" (2006, 60). The fact that there are different readings of the same text seems to prove that the act of reading is not a passive reception. Iser explains part of the process with the stimulating presence of blanks and gaps in the text:

> The discontinuities of the textual segments trigger synthesizing operations in the reader's mind because the blanks lead to collisions between the individual ideas formed, […] These colliding ideas condition each other in the time-flow of reading. (2006, 66)

In this way, a chain of ideas that "emerges in the reader's mind is the means by which the text is translated into the imagination" (Iser 2006, 66). Reception Theory as a model has managed to explain how a text (still in strictly monolingual exchange) can mean different things to different people by throwing light on the artistic and aesthetic faculty of a literary work; the former refers to the text created by the author and the latter "to the realization accomplished by the reader, the interaction of which unfolds the work's potential" (Iser 2006, 68).

At the same time, this new creative role of the reader in the literary process also called for the categorization of the term 'reader' itself, dividing it into *implied reader*[2] and *actual reader*. "The first is the reader whom the text creates for itself and amounts to a network of response-inviting structures, which predispose us to read in certain ways," while the other is defined as the reader who "receives certain mental images in the process of reading," yet these images "will inevitably be coloured by the reader's existing stock of experience" (Selden 2005, 53).[3]

Umberto Eco, dealing with the same problem, makes a slightly different distinction between *Model Reader* and *Empirical Reader*. According to him "every act of reading is a difficult transaction between the competence of the reader (the reader's world knowledge) and the kind of competence that a given text postulates

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[2] The term *implied reader* was first introduced by Iser.

[3] Here we might also mention Kristeva's idea of intertextuality that seems to add to the reader's interpretation suggesting that all texts are linked to other texts – in our case to texts that precede and surround the text in question – both in the reader's mind and in his surroundings. "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotation; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double" (Kristeva 1980, 66).

in order to be read in an economic way" (Eco 1996, n.p.). Thus, when defining the first he says: "A text is a device conceived in order to produce its Model Reader" (Eco 1996, n.p.). In an interview he elaborated on this idea, explaining that in a book "you are building up your readers, you are designing a possible reader, and then the model reader is the one who plays your game" (Eco qtd. in Basbanes 2001, 227). In contrast, the Empirical Reader can be anyone and read in many different ways. Empirical readers "often use the text as a container for their own passions, which may come from outside the text, or which the text may arouse by chance" (Eco 1996, n.p.).

When trying to understand and explain the way different readers interpret a text, a new term, the *horizon of expectations* was introduced by H. R. Jauss. It comprises all the elements, such as cultural norms and other criteria that shape the way in which readers understand and judge a literary work at a given time. Naturally, changes in history also determine the range of meanings that readers of a particular period see in the same work; that is the '*there and then*' of the work as against the '*here and now*' of the reader. Thus, the *horizon of expectations* is formed through the reader's experience, customs and understanding of the world (see Jauss 1982, 39).

I suppose we might try to connect this notion to the term *map of the text,* used by Holmes in describing the translation process, which he considers *a multi-level process*; "while we are translating sentences, we have a map of the original text in our minds and at the same time a map of the kind of text we want to produce in the target language" (Holmes, 1988, 96). Consequently, "each sentence in our translation is determined not only by the sentence in the original but by the two maps of the original text and of the translated text, which we are carrying along as we translate" (Holmes 1988, 96).

Now, all that we have discussed up to this point will come together and converge when we try to define and describe the literary translator's special reading. Although the literary translator is an individual reader, his interpretation is special for different reasons. First, we have to state that the translator interprets a foreign language text that was born in foreign cultural surroundings. This personal interpretation is followed by a kind of '*metatext*' in the '*black box*' comprising both the personal and the professional interpretations of the translator, after which it is recreated and reinterpreted in a different language, the target language and culture.

> The interlingual translation is bound to reflect the translator's own creative interpretation of the SL text. Moreover, the degree to which the translator reproduces the form, metre, rhythm, tone, register etc. of the SL text, will be as much determined by the TL system as by the SL system and will also depend on the function of the translation. (Bassnett 2007, 83)

Let us see how the readings of the translator of a poem might operate on different levels. The first reading of the source language text is to get an impression, to draw the outlines of the *map*. The second level or re-reading will make the translator focus on and select special details such as the form of the poem, its rhyming scheme (if any), the number of syllables to the line and many more, to see the general pattern and add it to the map of the source text and, at the same time, look for relevant options in the target cultural system on all levels so as to be able to draw the map of the target text. This second reading might partly correspond with the reading by the literary critic, the analyst of a literary text, and thus requires the skills and knowledge of a literary scholar, philologist and linguist, as well as the talents and empathy of both creative and performing artists.

The map of the target text will also need some details of the future reader of the translation, and so the translator now moves on to *build up* the Model Reader of the target text. Thus interpretation, the special reading by the literary translator, requires more than his personal reading, more than critical reading, but constitutes a third level, the translator's reading, which requires an in-depth analysis of similarities and differences between the two cultures on all levels of the text. Therefore, the translator's reading should also satisfy the requirements of his role as *cultural mediator,* which is

> performed by interpreting the expressions, intentions, perceptions, and expectations of each cultural group to the other, that is, by establishing and balancing the communication between them. In order to serve as a link in this sense, the mediator must be able to participate to some extent in both cultures. Thus a mediator must be to a certain extent bicultural. (Taft qtd. in Katan 2009, 88)

The latter presupposes a certain amount of *intercultural sensitivity* that is also an integral part of the translator's role as an educator, which

> in a broader sense, is in connection with the role literary translation plays in a nation's culture and in cultural exchange, and it requires the translator to know how much of the foreign and unknown can be incorporated in the target text on all levels. (Somló 2010, 128)

Thus the literary translator, following personal reading, special reading, understanding and interpretation of the source language text on the basis of his overall knowledge of universal human culture as well as of two national cultures – i.e., source language culture and target language culture – will create (recreate) the target language text. At the same time, the translator's professional interpretation

of the knowledge, cultural content and context present in the source language text will be defined as well as limited by the scope of understanding, that is, the general cultural standard and background, of the target audience, the community that the translation, the target text is aimed at, and thus will also provide the frame within which the Model Reader of the translated literary text will be moulded.

We have yet another aspect of reading: the difference between *insider* and *outsider* reading. In system of the three different levels of reading described above, insider reading is by and large the equivalent of the re-reading of the source text by the monolingual reader.

> Insiders have large funds of special information about other relevant claims, received opinion, and previous positions of the writer, in addition, they have an interest in the matter under discussion: they themselves have positions against which they test the argument […] they are in a position to evaluate what is said in terms of what is alluded to, obliquely touched on, or even unsaid. [ellipsis in the original] (Dillon qtd. in Katan 2009, 86)

Most outsiders have none of these, thus the foreign text will remain foreign to them, and will represent a foreign model of the world, which they might try to understand but they are "bound to receive the text according to their own expectations" (Katan 2009, 75), thus their interpretation will be tested against their own model of the world, their own background, their own education and scope of understanding of the foreign culture represented in the text. The translator is somewhere in between the two; he is definitely not an insider, as his knowledge of the foreign culture is based rather on education than on personal experience,[4] but he is definitely able to understand more than the target reader, and so he should try to extend the target reader's

> scope and range of understanding of another culture, and it is (ideally)[5] the task of the literary translator to determine how much of it – represented in a foreign literary text – can be extended by incorporating and interpreting as much of the special cultural, historical, social etc. aspects and content of the source text as possible. (Somló 2010, 128)

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[4] That is why he would also need special empathic capacities to be able to interpret the SL text for TL readers.

[5] Certainly the translator's hands might be tied by the expectations of powers (patrons) outside the literary system that have tended (still tend?) to force a kind of self-censorship on translators here in Hungary. "On every level of the translation process, it can be shown that, if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tend to win out" (Lefevere 1992, 39).

Based on my practice as a literary translator I have tried to examine what a translator should know about a text before setting to work and, at the request of my students, formulate my ideas into some clear-cut thoughts to help them grasp the task but, after all, I found that I came to nearly the same conclusion as Katan. Let me, therefore, quote his words:

> All translators will need to have an idea of the type of text they have to translate and what culture-bound features it may manifest […] how the text operates in the target culture […] what beliefs and values are implicitly carried by the ST, how these are likely to be filtered by the intended target reader; and what the (likely) intentions of the ST author were compared to the actors involved in the translation. (2009, 90 et seq.)

In conclusion the translator, while recreating the text in the target language, should try to build up the model reader of the target text, which might lead to a set of compromises: should it be domesticated or should we rather "let the reader come into direct contact with the difference of 'the other'" (Katan 2009, 88). The task and role of the literary translator's special interpretation by means of the three levels of his special reading is, therefore, finally to create a text in the target language that the target reader (notably our Model Reader of the translation) will be able to interpret in such a way that it activates his creative role in the literary process, and thus the target text eventually enriches the target cultural system and, in due course, becomes an integral part of it.

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Polishing vs Policing the Mores:
A Speculative Approach to Public Space and Literary Criticism in Post-Stalinist Societies[1]

Caius DOBRESCU

University of Bucharest
Faculty of Letters
caius.dobrescu@gmail.com

Abstract. The paper elaborates on a social and psychological understanding of space, by adopting the view that the generation of social space is a mechanism inherent and essential to developing a sense of personal freedom. It also posits that the rules, attitudes, and postures of conviviality could be construed as generating the experience of "space," both social and public. The necessary character of the connection between the manners (including the training in the ways of the acumen) which define the classical ideal of "politeness" and the projection (seminal to the most common notion of "civilization") of protective virtual spaces is tested on a fringe case: the emergence, through the agency of literary criticism, of enclaves of polite debate within the post-Stalinist East-European societies.

Keywords: politeness, conversation, face, distance, publicity

1. Literary Criticism, Polite Conversation and the Public Space

The social strategy the present paper postulates as the most relevant for cohesively organizing and managing social distances is *politeness*. In post-Stalinist East European regimes, literary criticism offered the predilect means of

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configuring/codifying and exercising civility through discourses and conversational habits that induced and modulated social distances.

The idea of interpreting persuasion as the control over the distance between the emitent and the receiver of a discourse is best expressed in the classical study of Wayne C. Booth *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). According to the Chicago theoretician *distance* is an essential and strategic element of literary communication. In Booth's study of the novel, it accounts for the novelist's control over the different degrees of sympathy and trust that the reader confers to the characters of the novel. In a somehow analogical manner post-Stalinist literary criticism, as the first and one of the very few innovative/personalized forms of public discourse tolerated by the Communist censorship, retrieved and continuously refashioned codes of *ancien régime* (i.e., pre-Communist) politeness that could be understood as rhetorical strategies of thematizing and controlling social distances, understood, in Booth's psychological manner, as degrees of empathy/sympathy (but also consistent with the "proxemics" approach advanced in the social sciences by Edward Hall – 1966/1990).

The network of social politeness is normally equated with the most reasonable and refined expression of common sense, which, according to a famous anthropological definition provided by Clifford Geertz (1983) is a "cultural system." But in a situation where two or more such cultural systems interfere and tacitly compete, common sense becomes blurred by ambiguity and politeness could be redefined as an art of prudence that mediates between different social codes and mores.

In the specific case of literary criticism under state Socialism, the strategy of politeness was not oriented towards reducing social ambiguity, but, on the contrary, towards amplifying it. Social distances were not to be well defined and clear-cut, as traditional *statuses* (Weber 1948, 180-94). Clarity was a situation to be avoided, because any "clarification," that is to say, any normative decision that would have replaced spontaneous negotiation, could only bring new deprivations of the exercise of the civic rights – no matter whether felt as natural or as social constructions (Kis 1989). Therefore, the interest of the polite society was to preserve the indeterminacy of social semiotics, while developing the skills and habits to effectively cope with it and instrumentalize it to its advantage.

In order to better understand the connection between the strategies of polite conversation, face preserving, social distancing, and the creation of social/public space, we have to understand that literary criticism (LC) was simultaneously connected to four different playgrounds. The qualities of the generated social space, a space that should be imagined as a texture and a field of forces, varied with the nature of the relationship that called for distancing/differentiation and face-saving strategies. These relationships can be organized in four major categories, and in what follows I will analyze them one by one: a) the relationship between LC and the political power (or the ideological "superstructure" of the

Communist state); b) the relationship between LC and the public; c) the relationship between LC and the person/institution/social function/public myth of the Author; and d) relationships internal to the LC community itself.

2. LC facing the Tyrant/Magistrate

As announced in the above subtitle, I will use two alternative notions for designating the political-ideological authority of the Communist state. Both concepts hint at the speculative reconstruction of the LC perspective on the agents that exercised control over culture and society. On the one hand, I propose the notion of Tyrant, derived from the classical Greek political philosophy and widely used in Western European early modernity for unconstitutional and illegitimate rulers and governments. When I employ this notion, I refer to the hidden nucleus of the social imagination of the counter-elites of the Communist state. On the other hand, I will use the notion of "Magistrate," equally derived from early modern political philosophy (e.g., from John Locke's famous *Letters Concerning Toleration* 1689–1692, Vernon 2010, 3-46), which allows for a rather neutral attitude towards an abstract or theoretical instance of government that is not seen as essentially irrational, and could be construed as a civilized partner of discussion/conversation/ negotiation. The term Magistrate will therefore address the strategy of LC of pretending to take the rationalist and progressive claims of the Communist political authorities at face value.

Returning to my main concern and topic I will posit that the generation of social and public space, when considered in the framework of the relationship between LC and the detainers of the political power, was due to a strategy of taming the crude Romanticism inherent in the totalitarian drive of the Communist ideology. This formulation being an allusion to Virgil Nemoianu's (1984) vision of the "taming of Romanticism" by the bourgeois polite society of the second half of the nineteenth century – a theory in which the Romanian literary comparatist might have nostalgically evoked, from his American exile, the very strategy applied (or only fancied) by LC in Communist Eastern Europe in its intercourse with the softer post-Stalinist version of Communist political tyranny.

Generating social space, in this particular instance, meant instituting a symbolic distance, an imaginative buffer zone between society and the Tyrant. This strategy could be followed in its finest articulation if one were to undergo a monographic study of the notion of "power" in the LC discourse of the post-Stalinist epoch. Power being a metaphor meant to mediate or to cunningly glide between the "Tyrant" and the "Magistrate" mental hypostatizations of the political authority. In analyzing fiction, LC could speak in general, ahistorical terms, and in a cast of mind alluding to the Greek-Latin or to sevententh-century classical moralists, of the temptations and eventual damages brought about by the exercise

of power for Power's sake. The symbolic conglomerate of Power was central in articulating a *public* accusation, and by so doing, in signalling a *distance* (and creating a difference, a mental *space*) between the Communist party and the society it pretended to fully represent and incorporate. But this accusation should be euphuistic, volatile in nature, not pointing the finger toward the one-party system or cadre.

This prudent avoidance, not at all unrelated with the diplomacy of vagueness of the classical moralists themselves, could equally be construed as a strategy described by Brown and Levinson (1987) as "negative politeness," i.e., creating the opportunity for Power to, for instance, reconsider its attitude towards the public freedom of expression, while keeping its "face" (Goffman 1967). Brought a step further, this strategy implies a complete omission of the reference to the all-pervasive political-ideological authority. The omission of *explicit* references to the ideological framework could be construed as to equate with the implicit statement that in a socialist state dialectical and historical materialism had become one with the general culture, that it "naturally" infused the social atmospherics. On the other hand, by "ignoring" the ideological monitoring LC acted as if the graciousness of its discourse had been completely equivalent with free speech, and as if the freedom of public conversation had been taken for granted in a "mature" socialist society. Although LC indirectly "flattered" the Tyrant, implicitly treating it as a reasonable instance that would in all evidence never make use of its brutal force in order to impose on its subjects. This form of politeness opened the possibility for the Tyrant self-styling into a reasonable Magistrate.

Actually, social space was gained through the essential ambiguity of the LC discourse, in its perpetual vacillation between: a) deferring the party, in an essentially deferent manner (where deference was a manner of reshaping the Stalinist compulsory display of submission into a manifestation of discrete civil allegiance) the status of an umpire of the cultural scene; and b) tacitly taking over this office of cultural umpire and exercising so as to increase the autonomy of the cultural public space. The crux of this space-creating strategy lied in intertwining LC's interest in gaining a social face with the Communist government interest in keeping its face. We should recall that in 1975, at the peak of the Détente, the heads of the Communist states signed the Helsinki Accords, as an expression of their aspiration to be recognized as an integral part of the civilized world (Sakwa 1999, 142-149).

At this point of our discussion, we should ponder on the reasons that made LC, rather than literature as such, into the privileged vehicle of the public spirit in the post-Stalinist Communist societies. My argument on this matter rests on matters of principle, not on historical contingencies. By its very nature, the condition of literature as a public discourse is open to controversy. The literary work as such is "dumb" (Frye 1957), and this natural status was consolidated under

the specific circumstances of Communist dictatorships. Having to confront the pressures of a huge mechanism of ideological censorship, both the authors and the critics were interested in emphasizing the above-mentioned paradox of expressivity as non-expression, and of the "speechless speak" of literature. The "muteness" of literature was construed as a paragon of implicitness, as a strategy of *preserving* rather than instrumentalizing the expressive potentiality of the natural language. It was, therefore, the lot of LC to provide for what we could call a *manifest* social discourse. Or, in other words, to test, approximate, and gradually enlarge the confines of what could be publicly expressed in a Communist society. This meant continuously generating, even if at a microscopic level, the essentially mental space of a civic society.

It is also important to note that the generation of public space through the taming of the Tyrant attempted by LC in the post-Stalinist societies has run a course quite opposite to one of the central ideological trends of the Western European post WW II democratic radicalism. The LC of Western Europe was profoundly impregnated with theory, superbly articulated in the interbellum epoch by Walter Benjamin (1939/1968), that the "charisma" of the work of art was part and parcel of the structure of an authoritarian, hierarchic society. In post-Stalinist Eastern Europe the religion of art (the genuine or simulated belief in the "mysterious" origin and nature of, say, the literary inspiration) was consistent with the advocacy for democratic and liberal values.

The apparent paradox of this strategy was that the political pressure towards the display of an adulatory social behavior (which was the main form of expressing social cohesion from the point of view of the Communist political class) was temporarily suspended, or neutralized, in a "homeopathic" manner, by a rival form of adulatory behavior, this time oriented towards the essential incomprehensibility not of the artifacts as such, but of the mental processes that make them possible. LC was turning its attention from the literary works as such, from what they actually said, toward implicitly questioning the "wherefrom" of the arts. And working to make the "origin" even more "mysterious" by the very act of questioning. In so doing, LC deluded the vigilance of the Tyrant, while allowing for a space of quasi-conspiratorial encounters between the "honest," "unregimented" author and a public whose state of mind was actually the one of a nascent political constituency. Which is to say that, in its strategy of dealing with the Magistrate, LC attempted to create a *quasi-political space*, while in its strategy of containing the Tyrant it attempted to generate a *political quasi-space*.

3. LC facing the Public

In analyzing this axis of the social space generation in the post-Stalinist societies of Eastern Europe, we should begin by stressing an important ambiguity.

Under the circumstances of a Communist state, even the most culturally liberal that could be imagined (e.g., the Yugoslav federation), the status of LC – which granted it a limited freedom of expression (or, more precisely, a rhetorical maneuvering space) – oscillated between the condition of a *privilege* and the condition of a *right*. This should come as no surprise since ambiguity infused the post-Stalinist system in most distinctive forms, at almost all imaginable levels and walks of social life. But for the present context it is essential to intimate to what extent the "objective" ambiguity of the LC social status was transferred into a privilege vs. right moral dilemma. It is essential because the possible manners of assuming/instrumentalizing its ambiguity of status directly shaped LC's relationships with its reading public.

Let us begin by exploring the nature of the "privilege." This consisted in the very access to publicity, to mass media of any kind. This access was granted and strictly controlled by the Communist bureaucracy. Being allowed to "plug in" to the network of public expression meant to be ascribed a position in a matrix of influential social positions. That is to say, a place, no matter how modest, in the *Nomenklatura* (Voslensky 1984), or, if we focus on the cultural domain, in the *Priviligentsia*, this being a concept devised by Ioana Macrea Toma (2009) for describing the complex condition of a privileged *intelligentsia*.

By participating in a system of privileges, the "brilliance" of LC was apparently bound to legitimize and reinforce the political status quo. A post-Stalinist attenuation of this condition was the change from ascribing LC a precise place in the bureaucratic hierarchy of party propaganda, to customizing the status of LC as part of a wider system of corporative privileges. This evolution was paralleled by a transformation in the nature of the freedoms granted to LC (but in no way an irreversible one; we should rather speak of a buffer zone of rhetorical ambiguity allowing for occasional transgressions). At the starting point of the post-Stalinist process, LC was granted only a freedom of expression as distinct from the control over the ultimate meanings of its message (Haraszti 1987). The ideological monopoly of the Communist party had to be confirmed and acknowledged, even if the logical-rhetorical manner of doing this could be unconventional or "innovative." But, at the peak of the post-Stalinist liberalization, the freedom of critical expression was tacitly accepted as a means to itself, and even intellectual autonomy could be granted as long as it referred to topics that could be presented as "professional," as having to do "exclusively" with the literary expertise.

But besides all these nuances, as long as the status of LC was conceived as a privilege bestowed from above, its intellectual liberties could be rightly seen as part of a showcase policy. What they implied was the simulation of an intellectual state of "normalcy" through some sort of Communist variety of the talk show. Which, actually, was meant to be only a show of talk. Let to itself, the as-good-as-free exercise of the intellectual expressivity could only institute an arrogant distantiation from a public who was supposed to admire the plays of principled

argument without being allowed to join in. The limits of the public space were meant to be invisible but firm. Laymen were meant to construe the participation to the intellectual polite society as an exceptional if not providential privilege.

The resulting LC strategy of controlling social distances in the relationship with the Public implied the development of an esoteric, specialized language, justified by the participation of LC to a superior understanding of things. The critic paraded as a judge, a Magistrate to itself, who set the intellectual trends and established the value standards.

But on the other hand, the social identity or the "face" of liberal LC was configured by the tacit rejection of the above-mentioned role. LC did not fully and passively accept to act *as if* expressing and confronting opinions in a "normal" democratic society. The critic did not agree to simply simulate the condition of being a representative of the public (or of the civil society), but attempted to give this tolerated form of polite conversation as much ethical content as possible.

Its ambiguous social position allowed post-Stalinist LC to glide between the opportunity that brought it inside the process that was transforming Communism into a society of hierarchical and corporative privileges, and its humanistic ethos which called for participation in the diffuse egalitarian solidarity generated as a spontaneous response to the equidistance that the Tyrant instituted in its relationship to society. The discourse of LC was one of the few means that made possible the fantasy of distancing *from* the Tyrant, of keeping the Tyrant at bay through a tacit solidarity in subversion, through a sense of commonality and cooperation.

From this perspective, LC did not see itself as simply offering a representation for the public, with the consequence of generating or giving course to a process of arrogant vertical social distantiation. This "aestheticization of the political" (political meaning here the inherent organizing/governing virtues of the debate) was due to create a contemplative, admiring distance, and was matched by LC's aspiration of representing the public. This is an attitude which, following the pattern of Walter Benjamin's dialectics (1930/1968), implies the "politicization of the aesthetic" and the use of politeness or civility in an open, inviting, inclusive manner.

Post-Stalinist LC explored the possibility of deriving its legitimacy from the public, not from the party. On the one hand, the public was treated as a ubiquitous partner, as a witness and a *raisoneur*. Actually, the "reader" was a code name for the ideal type of the conversational polite society. On the other hand, the "public" became a concept and a myth widely evoked in the critic's negotiations with the political power. "Public opinion" and "public taste" were construed as real and influential social forces, as forms of latent power that *in extremis* could be opposed to the manifest regulatory power. The stalemate between these forces allowed for the mental experiment of the public space.

In its strategy of *rapprochement* with respect to the "general public," LC freely oscillated between two strategies of implicitness. On the one hand, it practiced a "covert" implicitness, one creating a secret understanding, a tissue of side- and under-meanings between the critic and the public. A network of social communication from which the Tyrant was theoretically excluded (although the self-aware and consensual use of implicitness implied its presence, its threatening watch over all the intellectual transactions of the public space). On the other hand, LC practiced a strategy of "overt" implicitness, tackling some highly sensitive political subjects with an air of spontaneity and acting as if it went without saying that the Communist Magistrate, as a reasonable umpire of political correctness, was totally willing to grant and encourage the free expression of thought.

It should be noted that the most powerful civilizing effect of the process of social distancing is that, by concentrating on their equals, by offering them the highest display of public respect, by subtly distancing themselves from each other, the subjects learn to ignore the sovereign power, or, more accurately, they tend to render their submission to this power purely nominal. So that the public space is not simply space under political circumstances, but it implies a qualitatively new *kind* of space, based on social differentiations that do not impeach, but encourage intersubjectivity (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Hernadi 1995, 28-34). The public space is a dynamic system of distances that create the possibility of a generalized exchange, not only of goods and ideas, but also of horizontal symbolic investitures. By mutually granting themselves social respect, the citizens jointly gain access to a higher notion of self-respect and personal dignity.

With its polite conversation on matters of taste LC paved the way for and in many instances pre-configured the idea of the "power of the powerless" (Havel et al., 1990). And it offered a ground for the intellectual training of a civil society that, later on, will have to negotiate the transition to democracy with the representatives of the Communist party. In many Eastern European countries the exercise of polite conversation with the field of social forces and the social space it generated around itself prepared society for a non-violent transition to democracy.

4. LC facing the Author

Let us inquire now into the ways of social distancing focusing on the relationship between the Critic and the Author as two roles/prototypes fashioned by the post-Stalinist social imagination. During the reign of terror that, for all the Socialist regimes, characterized the phases of gaining and consolidating power, the instance of the Author, perceived as a remain of the bourgeois "fetish" of individual autonomy, was one of the favored targets of the "deconstruction" undertaken by the party ideologists. Actually, the interpreters of the ideological orthodoxy for the field of the arts and letters managed to fully abrogate the

authority of the Author. This is a situation curiously reminding of imperial Rome, where authorship was not deferred to the artist, but to the sponsor, to the person or institution that ordered and financed a certain work of public art (Arendt 1961). In the ideologically radical phase of the instauration of Communism, as a direct consequence of the symbolic and in many ways also juridical suppression of the sphere of privacy, art became public in its entirety.

This went hand in hand with the suppression of the respectful/polite distance between the Critic and the Author. Ideological critics thereby asserted that the creative energy and the skills of the real life authors should be seen as rightfully belonging to the Socialist "commune," which in fact meant that they were considered the property of the Socialist State. The critic was therefore entitled to treat the author as a social asset, as a cultural G. I.

The post-Stalinist age brought a gradual relaxation, allowing for the reinvention of the Critic-Author relationship. This would not be construed anymore as an instance of the social distribution of work patterned on the metaphor of the industrial production chain (an allegory, actually, in which the writer played the part of the actual manual worker and the critic the one of the middle management). The relationship Author-Critic became again, at a public level, a manifestly personal and civil interaction. The critic asserts and even celebrates the identity of the author as a distinct personality. The critical rhetoric, which, as my argument runs, is the epitome of social politeness under state Socialism, was meant to make visible and consolidate the author's *face* (Goffman 1967), his *persona* (Harris Perlman 1986), with the remarkable side effect of generating social space, i.e., the humanizing kind of space, defined not by its extension but by its discrete structure, its texture (or tissue) of human interaction.

This strategy implies the calibration of suggestive/expressive social distances because respect can be manifested and thematized only by a rhetoric of courteous social distantiation. Nevertheless, LC's display of a multifaceted and spectacular respect for the personality of the Author was not spared a certain ethical tension: should the right of being officially sanctioned as a social *persona* be bestowed only upon "creative" personalities, or, even more precisely, over exceptional creators? But it should be understood that the ambiguity contained in this omnipresent even if unasked question was not of a fatal, but in many instances, of a strategic kind. LC intentionally generated and maintained this ambiguity, with the implication that, by celebrating creative personalities, it was actually advocating for the very concept of the "social person," and implicitly for the rights of man.

The main stakes of the critical evaluation underwent a substantial mutation: an author could have been openly charged not for taking refuge in his or her intimacy, as in the acutely totalitarian phase, but for not being personal enough. "Originality" is progressively seen not only as a matter of aesthetic adroitness, but also as a strategy of expressing or at least suggesting a position of moral autonomy.

In terms of social space, critical admiration implied the respectful, face-creating *distantiation* from the performance of an author who in his turn managed to *distance* himself from an attitude of social or ideological conformity (therefore giving a public *face* to the individual, the autonomous citizen). A particular author could, therefore, be charged with damaging the dignity of the Author for devaluing the instruments of literature (which should not only serve personal, subjective means, but also consolidate the public/political position of Subjectivity) by putting them to work for the official collectivist-mobilizationist propaganda.

The main stakes of this strategy that knitted together "face," politeness and a form of paradoxically empathetic social distancing should be looked for in two other main directions. One of these directions is LC's advocacy for the protective space of personal intimacy that an author should be granted in order to be able to create. LC was actually indulging in the strategic confusion between the person and the *persona*: the most intimate nucleus of the creative self, the paragon of its depth and its vulnerability, is paradoxically reversed into an extrovert, militant representation of the creative *power* of the person. The strategy of the Critic of saving the "face" of the Author could be described along the lines of Brown and Levinson's argument in favor of the "negative face" (1987). "Freedom from imposition," assumed by the two researchers to motivate the forms of politeness meant to spare a conversational partner the impression of being "cornered" or forced to do something, could be translated in the context of post-Stalinist LC as a strategy of weaving around the alleged frailty and vulnerability of the "creative personality" the protective veil of praise and admiration. Especially because they are intrusive, the critical proceedings call for attenuating, compensatory, penitent, "negative" strategies of social politeness.

This course of the post-Stalinist LC also implied a social pedagogy hinted at the political authorities, the power holders and the guardians of the Communist orthodoxy: they should be taught to respect the "natural rights" of the personal consciousness. LC meant to induce the Communist Magistrate, through a tactful indirect discourse allowing the addressee to "keep face," the idea that, irrespective of its authority over their "bodies," the personal consciousnesses of its subjects should be conceived of as inviolable.

Another line of development of the space-creating relationship between the Critic and the Author has to do with publicly exposing this very relationship as the interaction between the most intimate cores of two subjectivities. Post-Stalinist LC deployed a sophisticated rhetorical play of reducing or enlarging the distance between the creative consciousness and its observer. What is essential about this strategy is that it exemplifies in a powerful way a form of space that is essentially emergent. But not as a field of forces developed around the focus of a powerful creative personality, but as a field of communicative energy developed between the foci of two human consciousnesses. This confronts us with the paradoxical process

of creating "face" not from the outside, as asserted by the socio-linguistic theory of politeness (Vilkki 2006), but from within, through the work of identifying with the Other. From the perspective of the post-Stalinist social play, it could be said that by configuring/creating the face of the Author, the Critic was actually creating/consolidating his/her own face.

It is worth noticing that this strategy of controlling distances, of activating the mobility of the Critic-Author interstitial space, was actually two-fold. The respectful, face-creating distancing was balanced by the possibility of a disquieting closeness inducing, through extremely refined rhetorical means of suggestion, a sense of shame or guilt to those authors who gave in to the integrative pressures of the official ideology. The strategy of allusive culpabilization is itself indicative of the invention of a flexible, reactive, vivid and vibrant social space.

5. LC as a Peer Community: The Company of Critics

The last of the walks of the *social-space-as-public-space* generation in the post-Stalinist societies that is left to explore is the one referring to the mental intercourse within the LC community. The most important characteristic of these internal connections was that they both illustrated the idea and advocated for the value of intellectual pluralism. A diversity of opinions, knit together in the fabric of urbane conversation, indicated towards a deeper postulation of doubt as foundational for polite society. Actually, the positive attitude towards diversity of opinions was derived from the idea that politeness, as both a social code and a social philosophy, is the direct expression of understanding social cohesion as a community of doubt. This might be a proper manner of describing the essence of what is more commonly known as the "civil society."

Under these circumstances, the toleration or even the celebration of literary pluralism became the quasi-overt indication of a certain disposition of consciousness, of the commitment to polishing one's own self. Politeness, as expressed in a skeptical practice of refined observation and nuanced distinctions, functioned as a perpetual transgression from an aesthetic to an ethical perspective along the continuum of intellectual subtlety. In other words, politeness appeared as the correct/proper *form* of doubt, as the "orthodoxy" or rather the "ortho-morphism" of doubt. And it has to be noticed that LC was especially well-placed in order to uphold such views because if the Communist ideological monopolists could not admit even the slightest public philosophical disputation over social or political matters, they were more comfortable with the apparently inoffensive judgments of taste and with the peaceful coexistence of a plurality of interpretations of a literary (master)piece.

On the other hand, the value of pluralism was advocated by LC as an expression of "creativity," of intellectual "fecundity," that was acceptable for the

official post-Stalinist cultural policy since it might have been construed as demonstrating the "fullness" and "richness" of life in a Socialist society. An advocacy for intellectual diversity had to simulate the most natural harmony with the post-Stalinist version of the "pursuit of happiness," with the ideal of a multilateral realization of individual aspirations and potentialities harbored by the Communist authorities.[2]

Actually, what the post-Stalinist censorship tolerated was a limited and strictly controlled plurality of the means of expression, without any relativization of the core tenets of the official ideology (Haraszti 1987). But literary criticism hosted a cluster of strategies hinted at tacitly transgressing the Communist party project of a strictly controlled, mainly ornamental political liberalization. The idea of diversification was suspended/bracketed from within the ideological discourse. Especially in the critical practice, plurality was construed and deployed as touching not only on the form of expression or analytical methods, but also on the substance of opinion and conviction. The eminently benevolent rituals and mannerisms of the critical polite conversation gradually promoted pluralism not as a means to an imposed common end, but as a finality to itself.

LC could make an open theoretical connection between diversity understood as a community of doubt and diversity understood as the celebration of intellectual dynamics and creativity under the provision that this connection was inserted in the official ideological framework. The official Marxian epistemology claimed that, given its indisputably material essence, the world is entirely cognizable. But given the Marxian commitment to the dialectical method, the totalization of knowledge can never be definitive. Therefore the philosophical subtleties of dialectic materialism allowed for a metaphorical use of the notion of "mystery," understood as the unknown that lays ahead of the cognitive consciousness, submitted to objective laws that are material and predictable in nature but which, for the time being, have not been discovered by human intelligence. Indeterminacy is conceived as provisional and transitory. It is not objective, it is only an effect produced by the temporary limitation of the data available to the cognitive subject. But even so, "indeterminacy" could be admitted in the vocabulary and mental frame of the official Socialist epistemology.

This allowed for the generation of an imaginary *prospective* public space, configured around a definition of doubt as a strategy of approximating the future. Cognitive doubt, seen primarily not as a confrontation of opinions, but as an open process of interrogation and self-interrogation, could simultaneously be construed as

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[2] E.g., Article 13 of the Constitution of the slightly liberalized 1965 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Romania: "In the Socialist Republic of Romania all state activity is aimed at the development of the system and the prosperity of the socialist nation, the continual rise of material and cultural well-being, the assurance of liberty and human dignity, and the multilateral assertion of the human personality." (Translated in Simons 1980, 320)

the major means of adapting to uncertainty. LC promoted the intimate connection between intelligence and uncertainty, the "future" (a matter of consensual concern, if not of consensual solutions) being itself defined as a field of tensional (inspiring) uncertainties. The last representation of the generation of public space that could be attributed to LC is embedded in this projection/exploration/imagination of the future: a public space defined by a dynamics of uncertainty and by a certain freedom of hypothesizing, a social space born from a break in the prophetic self-confidence (i.e., the pretense of controlling the future) of the official Communist ideology.

5. Speculative conclusions for a speculative undertaking

This survey of the intricate condition of literary criticism in post-Stalinist Eastern European societies allowed me to test the theoretical potential of a couple of concepts such as "polite conversation" and "polite society," which in Western Europe are generally seen as fully historicized (in the sense of having become history, of having been fully metabolized by the dominant social culture). I also attempted to retrieve the classical notion of "politeness" from the stock of concepts of the school of discourse analysis. Pragmatists place it in a system of reference that connects a theory of basic psychological needs with rational choice theory and with a rather ahistorical and transcultural perspective on the communicative interaction that reduces it to the one-sided acception of "face." My use of it was meant to return the concept of politeness to its classical richness and to its "natural" cultural and historical embeddedness. My agenda has been to regenerate the notion of politeness also by associating it to other notions such as "public space," "civil society," and, last but not least, "literary criticism."

But the most important result of the above exploration has been the typology of space-producing strategies associated with the post-Stalinist practice of literary criticism. In my opinion, the qualitative differences between the forms of social space created through these channels are as important as their similarities. I distinguished: a form of space whose actual fabric consists in the play of deferent interpersonal communication; a form of space created by the "self-absorption" of Power (or by luring Power into restricting itself, into deferring society a minimal dignity/autonomy); a form of space generated through the oscillation between interpretations, attitudes, value perspectives, through a strategy of deliberate ambiguation, of creating semantic indeterminacy (a space undistinguishable from the intersubjective vibrations of an allusive, double-coded communication); a form of space generated by aesthetic admiration that neutralizes forced admiration for spectacle of political power (the distantiation imposed by the maintenance of a secular charisma of the work of art, which is opposed in form, but not necessarily in its broader democratically pro-active meaning to the concept of the critical "estrangement" as advanced by Brecht (see Robinson 2008); and finally a form of

prospective social space, generated as a consequence of representing the future as a field of co-present and interconnected mental experiments.

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Constructed Spaces in Liviu Rebreanu's *Ion*[∗]

Béla BÍRÓ

Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania
Institute of Humanities
bbela@planet.ro

Abstract. The study offers an analysis of Liviu Rebreanu's novel entitled *Ion* based on the viewpoints of the narratology of space. It examines whether a narratological approach based on distinct terms of space is capable of revealing such aspects of narration which other narratological methods fail to provide access to.

As space construction (more precisely, the restructuring, thought as radical, of traditional space concepts) is also one of the central themes of the novel, the analysis provides the opportunity for the author not only to identify the different variations specified by the narratology of space and their narrative functions respectively, but also to examine the narrator's narrative strategies from viewpoints which would remain unexplored for traditional methods of analysis.

Rebreanu, who initially imagines his career of an intellectual as a Hungarian writer, but because of an affair as a military officer has to leave the country, has to be in hiding in the strongly nationalist political atmosphere experienced in Romania. His dual attitude (his powerful literary vision and his nationalism arising from the mentality of the Romanian community of the time) leads him to create a complex narrative structure, which – apart from minor contradictions – makes possible two consistently justifiable, but radically differing readings, namely a nationalist one and one which overwrites the former through irony, also reinforced by satirical elements.

In this way, in the reading created with the contribution of the unbiased reader, even today an exciting and modern textual corpus unfolds from the complex relationship among

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the (demonstrably nationalist) empirical author, the model author (weighing things in a much more complex and objective manner) and the narrator (converting the debate of the former two into a narrative text), revealing the more profound theme of the novel, that of a narrative remapping of the ethnic, social and political spaces of Transylvania, and respectively, the author's hidden concerns related to this.

Keywords: ethnic, social, political, narrative spaces, empirical author, model author, nationalism, assimilation, nation-state, heterotopia

"National" space – national spaces

The spaces in the *narrated world* outlined by the *narrator* are categorized into four main types in narratology (based on the criterion of *unfolding the plot*): *intrinsic spaces*, *target spaces*, *liminal spaces* and *taboo spaces* (Krah 1999, 8). This category system is suitable for analysing Rebreanu's novel, as one central theme of the novel is the very act of reinterpreting-remapping the *geographical*, *social* and *metaphysical* spaces, what is more, the novel itself is one of the most noteworthy culture-historical documents of this process. It is not only the protagonists of the novel, but obviously also Rebreanu, the empirical author, moreover, model author of the novel,[1] who consider the radical transformation of the spaces determining their individual or community existence as the main purpose of their lives, and regard the given space constructions as *liminal* (more precisely, transitional) *spaces*.

The *spaces of narration*, which in Rebreanu's case are always created from the viewpoints of the particular characters, based on their imagination and senses, are subordinated to the space constructing efforts of the *model author*, creating the narrator and "subconsciously" guiding its speech acts. Similarly to the heroes of the novel, he also strives to construct a new individual and/or community space against the desired or actual space conception(s). The *geographical*, *family*, *citizen*, *social*, *cultural* and *metaphysical* spaces in which the lives of the novel's heroes take place are determined by the Hungarian state framework forming part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, with its historically grounded social, demographical and cultural processes and with the tensions of its present. The "valid" national doctrine, which shapes the relationship between the cultural ("national") and social groups of society, is the theory of the Hungarian "political nation," according to which the culturally non-Hungarian citizens of the state are the "foreign language speaking" members of the Hungarian nation, who have to acquire the Hungarian language and culture at a native speaker level – for the sake of integrating into the

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[1] Concerning the terms empirical author/empirical reader and model author/model reader see Eco (2002, 33, 38-40) and Lintvelt (1989).

Hungarian national culture –, which they can "enrich," so to say, with the elements of their own cultures and linguistic universes. Otherwise, this ideology does not differ in any respect from the national ideology on behalf of which today's western societies strive to "integrate" the "foreigners" (the non-majority "natives" or the "immigrants"). The "cultural approach" is particularly unilateral in the case of Hungary of the time: the state does not prescribe for the Hungarians co-existing with Romanians to know the language and culture of the Romanian (and Serb, Slovak, German, Jewish) community – being in majority locally, whereas in minority at a national level. It also belongs to truth, of course, that those Hungarians who are in connection with the minority community acquire its language and culture spontaneously. They speak Romanian or they speak broken Romanian. There is no hero in the novel (living in a Romanian environment) who does not know – at least at a level suitable for his place in the system of social relations – also the language of the local majority. And those Romanians who need the Hungarian language speak it or speak broken Hungarian. Those non-Hungarians, however, who lived all their lives in a Romanian community (as the most sympathetic figure of the novel, Zaharia Herdelea, the schoolmaster from Pripas), are not able to acquire the "language of the state" at a "native level," in spite of their intellectual status and their best intentions. In their youth this was not needed, the "minority" children could learn in their mother tongue also in the state school, and the state did not even claim the knowledge of the Hungarian language from them, entrusting them in a way to learn Hungarian – if they felt necessary.

In the beginning the local representatives of the educational administration after the 1867 Settlement are also aware of the difficulties of learning the Hungarian language, which can be rarely used in confined peasant communities – and this is why it is far from live communication. Inspector Csernátonyi, a man of the old stamp, still highly appreciates Herdelea's work (merely aiming at the acquisition of the basics of Hungarian language). The schoolmaster can thank him even the secure state job (and his bees also highly appreciated by the inspector). Until the 1880s the Romanian myth of the thousand-year-old Magyarization efforts does not have much ground. For centuries the "official language" of the country is Latin. In this way, until the Reform Age it is out of question that the state should force anybody to speak Hungarian, which is only one of the vernacular languages…

However, this symmetry, operational for centuries, is gradually overthrown by the national ideologies of the Reform Age – imported from developed European states – and by the 1879 law article no. XVII. created in the spirit of these – concerning teaching the Hungarian language in state schools –, then by the Aponyi laws (1907). The latter make the knowledge of the Hungarian language compulsory for every minority pupil, while they do not prescribe even optional (not to speak of compulsory) "minority" language knowledge for the Hungarians living together

with minorities. However, in the case of a pluralist nation concept (somewhat analogous to the one from Switzerland[2]) – adjusted to the real structure of society – only this would have been *reasonable*, that is, natural. But the Hungarian state was not willing to make a distinction between the terms of "citizen nation" and "culture nation" in the same way as later the successor states of the Monarchy and earlier France, England and the United States of America. The Romanian minority, differing from the Hungarians also in its religion, in addition, linguistically-culturally related to the populations of one part of Europe's most powerful states, France, Spain and Italy, could not take the Hungarian assimilation claims for granted. One reason for this was that there could have been a more attractive alternative for them, namely the German. For in the officially bilingual state the Romanian communities were also living together, almost everywhere, with Saxon, Swabian and Austrian ethnic groups.

Thus it is understandable that the nationalist heroes of Rebreanu's novel do not object to asymmetry (as it would be natural and reasonable), but they *reject* learning the "state language," which in the moment of finishing the novel (in 1920) is already prescribed also by the Romanian state after the Treaty of Trianon, what is more, forced, even more violently than by the Hungarians, upon the members of Hungarian communities from Transylvania as well. Even where the latter – similarly to the Romanian community from Pripas – are in absolute majority.

The reason for the fact that the heroes of the novel oppose to the efforts of the Hungarian state, instead of the alternative of mutual multilingualism, the claim of their own monolingualism, and implicitly (though only tacitly) that of disannexing Transylvania from Hungary, of establishing the monolingual-monocultural Romanian state, lies in the ever more violent (that is, more "western") politics of Magyarization of the Hungarian state. National unilateralism necessarily generates national unilateralism. As a consequence of the Hungarian coercive measures, gradually also those Romanians seclude themselves from the use of the Hungarian language who otherwise speak it excellently (Titu Herdelea, Belciug). Not to mention the fact that – as I have already tried to prove it in two other studies – the members of Romanian – basically peasant – communities cannot really be assimilated into the Hungarian nation "inherently" of noble character. Or if so, only in exceptional cases. At least as citizens of equal rank (Bíró 2011b, 79-89). But in this way no other solution remains for the Hungarian state, but to try, by suppressing the Romanian (Serbian, Slovak, German) national resistance(s), with more or less openly violent means, to create *fait accompli* (similarly to the French and the English). Entirely without any chance, as this effort also forces the ethnic

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[2] In the nineteenth century the ethnic composition of the population of Transylvania is almost perfectly identical with that of Switzerland: two third Romanian, 20% Hungarian and 5% German. In Switzerland: two third German, 20% French and 5% Italian.

groups to find solutions to their problems outside the framework of the Hungarian state. (To which there are opportunities in each case.)

The national efforts based on mutual distrust, moreover, on fears instead of mutual trust, put in motion processes – aiming at the reshaping of the cultural and implicitly the political space – which, *clearly*, *mutually exclude each other*.

Rebreanu's novel is the precise and objective representation – with a few exceptions – of these processes. And since objectivity, in Rebreanu's case, is also accompanied by a type of narration called *personal* in the German specialist literature on narratology (Stanzel 1993, 39-52), which formally excludes the narrator's person from the narrative discourse itself, a surprisingly profound and thought provoking textual corpus can be formed. For in this type of text, which is close to the *immediacy* of dramatic form, narration is determined in each case by the characters' viewpoints, emotions and thoughts. The narrator himself rarely comments, evaluates or analyses. He rather leaves all this to us, readers. Of course, never fully, as the choice of topic, the characters of the narrative, the choice of the model reader, etc., already take place along value preferences, in other words, the model author confronts the reader with *fait accompli* in several respects already when he employs a *personal narrator*. What is more, the narrative situation created by Rebreanu the model author is made strongly *ambiguous* also by the fact that the major elements of the story of the novel's key figure, Titu Herdelea, coincides with the events of Rebreanu's youth. And this may create the impression in the well-informed reader (who largely knows Rebreanu's biography at least) that Titu's ideological development, his desires and fantasies are identical with the views, desires and fantasies of the (typologically *authorial*) *narrator*. Point-blank, Titu is a kind of spokesman of Rebreanu's.

Nevertheless, Titu's character and behaviour immediately contradict this appearance. And not only his. As I have also pointed out in an earlier study (2008), all the heroes mentioned as Romanian nationalists in the narratorial text (Belciug, Spătaru,[3] even Grofşoru) are doubtful figures; Belciug, for instance, is also a strongly selfish, malevolent, unscrupulous character, and the narrator adopting the viewpoints of the heroes cannot do anything other than describing him like that. But in this way Titu's emotions, desires and fantasies, assertively assuming the nationalist[4] title, viewed with the objective reader's eyes (who is not blinded by the

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[3] Spătaru is also a vindictive, prejudiced character. After the Hungarian Madarassy rebukes Ghiţu, who is indignant at the singing of *Deşteaptă-te, române*, considered as irredentist by the authorities, he enthuses like this: "Sir, let me kiss you! You are a great man! – he added, and staggering to Madarassy gave a smacking kiss on his cheek. – We know well that the renegades are to be blamed for all our persecution! ... The renegades, the Jews and the rest of the villains!" (152)

[4] In the narrated world *nationalism* does not have a perjorative meaning (it is a kind of synonym of today's term patriotism); only the term *chauvinism* is associated with a perjorative value meaning (even in Mrs Herdelea's discourse, more biased than the average in national terms).

Romanian national idea), are forced into ironical brackets in spite of their essential grounding.

In my view, the complexity and, moreover, contradictoriness of this irony can be clarified by the very analysis of the processes of space construction. The model author can see three theoretical solutions to the reorganization of the ethnographic, social and cultural spaces of Transylvania, mostly inhabited by Romanians, but historically forming part of the Hungarian Kingdom.

The first possibility, namely *the concept of the homogeneous Hungarian political nation* – as I have already referred to it –, is completely and obviously unacceptable from the viewpoint of the Romanian intellectuals. But for Rebreanu (first lieutenant Olivér Rébrán), having reached the threshold of definitive assimilation (Bíró 2011b), who knows the Hungarian concept regarding the future of the Hungarian state not only from the viewpoint of the outsider, but also from the inside (as a live reality) and so he cannot have any illusions even with respect to the most liberal and minority-friendly Hungarian intellectuals, the second solution, namely *the federal restructuring of the Hungarian state*, cannot be viewed as a real alternative either. Not even in spite of the fact that this alternative has supporters in certain layers of the Romanian intellectuals, and in a favourable case it could have supporters also in wider circles of the Romanians. In 1905 (in the period immediately preceding the plot of the novel) Aurel C. Popovici publishes a federal proposal in German in Leipzig, in which Szeklerland figures as the 12th member state of the confederation (1997). However, Rebreanu knows too well that the Hungarian intellectuals of the time are not willing even to consider such an alternative (which now seems like a dream). Apart from a few parliamentary reactions, indeed the proposal remains without an echo in the Hungarian publicity. It is true that Popovici's proposal also has its shortcomings (Bíró 2011b, 89-98). Besides his strong anti-semitism, he himself is not willing to take notice of the Transylvanian Hungarians living outside Szeklerland. While (in order to win the Austrian and German power circles over to his side) he proposes autonomies for the German communities, of much smaller number, in the future Romanian member state (embracing the part of Transylvania outside Szeklerland), he would deprive of this right the Hungarian population of Câmpia Transilvaniei, Ţara Călatei, Banat, Ţara Bârsei, Satu Mare and Maramureş. To quote him, he would doom them to assimilation, "well deserved, but without violence."

Thus, for the *empirical author* (Liviu Rebreanu), whose assimilation fails as a consequence of the embezzlement of one part of the sum kept in the regiment's chest, and consequently the failure of the military career and the flight to Romania, nothing else remains but the third alternative. That is, the *unification* with the "homeland" (namely Romania, recently formed from the unification of Moldova and Ţara Românească). Obviously, this is the alternative that the narrative alter ego of the empirical author, the creator of the narrator of the novel, the *model author*

also identifies with. It is true, however, that this alternative is explicitly referred to, even from among the nationalist heroes of the novel, only by Spătaru, he himself doing it in a heavily drunken state. But there is no need of it: at the moment of finishing the novel this alternative is already part for reality. The presentation of it as a Romanian national effort would be not only unnecessary, but it could also confirm retrospectively the Hungarian charges referring to the irredentism of the Romanians from Transylvania (then still vehemently denied by the Romanians).

Space construction as a narrative

Rebreanu – as testified by his confessions and memories – strived from the "start" to write a *national epic*, embracing the problems of each region inhabited by Romanians. The novel *Ion* would be the first volume of this novel series. However, the main purpose of Rebreanu's model author is not the justification of the Treaty of Trianon in the case of Transylvania, as this was already outdated at the moment of rewriting the novel (which had already been largely completed before the end of the war), but rather the (unavoidably incoherent, as we will see) "justification" of the policy of the new Romanian state towards the Hungarians. As this policy does not differ in any respect from the policy of the Hungarian state towards the Romanians. On the contrary! In several respects it is more radical and "more consistent." So that this policy can become acceptable for the Romanian and the non-Romanian reader, the model author has to reshape the ethnic and social spaces of Transylvania. Thus it is not accidental that one central theme of the novel will be the relationship between the geographical space and the Romanian community, and within, the *matter of the land*, both in national and social terms.

The novel starts with presenting the surrounding of Pripas, which will be the main scene of the action; however, in Rebreanu's novel space construction is itself action (also in this respect). The text personifies the road itself. Still, this procedure does not seem naïve, as the reader can perceive that in fact the personification converts the road memories of the walker approaching the village into stylistic figures.

> From Cârlibaba to Cluj and even beyond, a highway meanders near the Someş, either on the right or on the left bank of the river, and above Armadia a white road starts from it, leading through the old wooden bridge covered with mossy shingle, bisecting Jidoviţa and heading for Bistriţa, where it meets another highway descending on the Bârgăului pass from Bucovina.
> Leaving Jidoviţa, at first the road laboriously clambers up among the squeezed hills, but then it advances merrily, smoothly, playing hide-and-seek among the young beech trees of Pădurea Domnească, resting at the Cişmeaua Mortului, from which cool spring water flows day and night, then it suddenly

turns under the Râpele Dracului and immediately arrives at Pripas, hiding in a curve of hills. (9)[5]

The description starts with a bird's eye perspective and the narrator narrows the angle to the house of the Herdelea family. From here the quasi-memories of the wanderer arriving from Armadia to Pripas, offered as a contracted narrative give way to a simultaneous description. The images of the schoolmaster's house, the sultriness trembling in the summer hot spell, the dog slumbering on the side of the road, the cat sneaking in the dust of the road are already epic snapshots. The description finally stops at the images of the Sunday Hora (a specific Romanian circle dance) taking place in the centre of the village. But the enlargement continues also here. At first we can see only groups of people, later on, during the elaboration of the scene the later heroes of the novel will mark out from these. As one of the expert analysts of the novel (Săndulescu 1976, 158-159) states, everybody who will play determining roles in the threads of the plot – running in parallel from now on – is present in the scene.

The image embraces the largest possible view. The road comes from the infinite, and in the final sentences of the novel it opens again to the infinite, typographically marked by the three dots. The members of the Herdelea family definitely move to Armadia, and in perspective they merge into the infiniteness of the successive generations. The younger daughter, Ghighi, however, leaves only temporarily, she is expected by her future husband, Zăgreanu, who is at the same time the successor of the retired schoolmaster. After the inauguration of the church building, marking the centre of the narrated world, the space turns, also explicitly, into space-time in the Bakhtinian sense (2008), into chronotope...

> It seemed as if nothing had changed in the village that they left behind. Some people died, others took their places. Time passes by the bustle of human life with indifference and removes all traces. Suffering, passion, desire – whether small or big – are all swallowed by the painfully deep sea of secrets, as a fine noise is swallowed by the roaring storm.
>
> The Herdeleas are silent, all the three of them. It is just their thoughts that are racing steadily forward, thoughts fed by hope that never dies out. The horses' hooves are clapping hard on the tamped road, the cart's wheels rattle monotonously, monotonously as the passage of time.
>
> The road bisects Jidovița, goes through the wooden bridge of the Someş covered with shingle and disappears in the big highway coming who knows from where... (484)

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[5] In the case of quotations from *Ion* the numbers in brackets refer to the respective page of the 1967 Hungarian edition of the novel (Rebreanu 1967).

This specificity of space construction, as it is also referred to in Săndulescu's small monograph, is rooted in Rebreanu's concept of the *sphericity* of the novel form. "Each element has to form a unity, they have to become round in order to give the impression of a universe in which the beginning and the end merge into each other. This is why the novel has a spherical shape, which ends as it has started" (qtd. in Săndulescu 1985, 155).

However, the *sphericity* of *Ion* is not a mere adaptation of a narrative scheme. The space construction of the novel is an organic consequence, an expression of the archaic Romanian peasant world view, that is, the narrative replica of the *invariability* underlying the troubles and tragedies of the natural and social world, burdened with inner contradictions, renewing in the eternal bustle of birth and death. In the closure of the novel a metaphysical vault is formed above the geographical, social and cultural spaces, unifying the parts in an organic construct. At the most significant turning points of the novel, through the mystery of birth, marriage and death, the action comes into contact with this metaphysical space dimension. In the closure, however, the archaic myths of folk culture will be overlapped with the elements of national mythology, of intellectual roots, of the modern age (not devoid of contradictions and impertinences either).

The heterogeneity of the novel's spaces

Under this metaphysical-mythical horizon, considered as invariable (and in the absence of an ironical interpretation seeming a little anachronistic today), surprisingly modern space structures are formed. Everything is in the state of change, of transformation. Formally, those dividing lines which separate the spaces that organize society are still valid, but nobody accepts them as being indeed valid any longer.

In principle, spaces are transgressable in every direction. This transgressability, however – and it is this that the actual tragedy of society lies in –, with a few exceptions (peripheric from the viewpoint of social trends), is perceived by everybody as a threatening danger rather than as a possibility, and this is why they want, instead of exploring the advantages of transgressing the boundaries (in the widest sense) and of dissolving the seclusion, to modify the boundaries – both in the literal and figural sense of the word – to their own advantage and to the detriment of the other. That is, the determining figures of both communities would like to adjust the ethnic boundaries to the current or desired political boundaries.

Each ethnic group would like to interpret the social trends as a transition towards an idyllic ("national") unity, regarded as organic. In Rebreanu's universe the temporary spaces are themselves merely transitional; their unilateralism is marked by strong taboo spaces on both sides (Krah 1999, 8). Both Belciug and Titu think that speaking in Hungarian means the betrayal of the Romanian community. The one

who speaks in Hungarian is a renegade. Titu, who is more and more caught up in the wave of the nationalist ideology of the age, tends to regard even his father as "slightly renegade" in certain moments, although he generally accepts his father's concessions, about which he knows that they are forced, with understanding.

On the other side, Horváth, the new school inspector is not willing to utter a word in Romanian in a purely Romanian community either, and he would also expect that Herdelea, employed by the Hungarian state, should talk in Hungarian even at home, with his family members. It is in this spirit that the Hungarian schoolmaster of the state school from Gargalău forbids his pupils to talk to each other in Romanian – even in the breaks.

It is only the old Herdelea, the forest engineer Madarassy and the school inspector Csernátonyi, a man of the old stamp, who create some connections among the cultural spaces mutually tabooing each other. However, socially they are all on the periphery and passively suffer the changes of the times.

In my interpretation the central figure of the novel is Zaharia Herdelea.

The old schoolmaster is also depicted by the narrator – viewing the world with his heroes' eyes – as a decent Romanian man, who finds himself in awkward situations due to politics, but who does not become, even despite this, unfaithful to his cultural or citizen community. The schoolmaster possesses not only healthy national feelings (in the cultural sense of the term), but also healthy civic sentiments (in the Western European sense of the concept of nation). Although he does not approve of the way Spătaru, the teacher of Greek calls Ghiţu, the district administrator a renegade in the banquet in Armadia, "deep in his soul" he admires the "audacity with which the teacher decries the district administrator and the Hungarians" (153). His attitude towards the Hungarians does not arise only from compromise either. By his built, Herdelea is an understanding personality, capable of weighing the other's viewpoints. He is a worthy peer of the Hungarian Madarassy, viewing the Romanians with honest and disinterested sympathy, understanding their endeavours. The fact that Herdelea is the only Romanian hero of the novel – capable of true empathy – is clearly certified by his thoughts about the indifference of the elder girl, Laura:

> Herdelea had a moment of anger, but he tempered himself quickly. Children are like that, when they grow up and become estranged. Wasn't he like that too? He went to the funeral of his father, but he never bothered how long he had been staying in bed, seven weeks. And it was not far off, the fourth village. Whenever his mother comes here, he honours her with sweet brandy. But apart, it is as if she didn't exist. He keeps his concerns and love for his home. Then why should he wonder that Laura no longer cares about his problems? Life is like that. It is sad. Who could change its sense? Life overcomes the old and the weak. Life belongs to the young and strong. Selfishness is the basis of life. (328)

Indeed, every kind of irredentism is foreign to the schoolmaster's personality, as in his view, *by his built*, the problem of the Romanians from Transylvania is solvable, on condition of readiness to compromise on both sides, in the Hungarian state as well. He does not only believe in the future of the Romanians, but also in the Hungarian state, in the possibility of justice and fairness. This is why he assists Ion in appealing against the decision of the Hungarian judge of the district court.

Madarassy's views are not thematised by the text. However, the way he silences Ghițu, the district administrator, who officially calls the people singing *Deşteaptă-te, române* chauvinist (151), also makes his opinion unambiguous...

The moment of space construction in which the nationalism of the *empirical author* considerably influences the choices of the model author directing the narrator from the background (more precisely, from the "subconscious") is the reshaping of the ethnic map of Transylvania. There is a strong asymmetry in the presentation of the co-existing communities. It is only the members of the Romanian community that appear as a community. The non-Romanian heroes of the novel are only "foreigners" living in a Romanian environment. Even Madarassy!

The narrator describes in detail Titu's fantasies and day-dreaming in the night of Luşca:

> He imagined the wonderful day in advance, and was caught up in the stormy waves of imagination… There he is in Cluj, where he was only once, years ago. One can hear only the Romanian language everywhere... And what language! As if everybody were speaking "as in the mother country," sweeter than the engineer Vasile Pop from Vărarea, who has wandered all over the whole territory of Romania... The inscriptions of the shops, the streets, the schools, the authorities... everything, everything is Romanian... […] But he was carried, flown further by the wings of imagination… Look, Sibiu, Braşov, Oradea, Arad, Timişoara! … Proud national flags were fluttering on each fabulous palace… (312)

This episode also has a corresponding scene: travelling to the appointment of the Astra Romanian cultural association, from where he will emigrate to Romania, he contemplates the landscape from the train window:

> Titu could not get enough of the land of Transylvania, which got distanced, curved, stretched far away, then came close again... And the train was passing proudly by the Romanian villages, bisecting some of them, as a cruel tyrant, and rarely rested for a while, the stops were signalled by staccato Hungarian voices, hastening or scolding the travelling peasants, men-in-the-street. Titu saw the same peasants everywhere, humble, brave, patient: on the white roads, along which they were working industriously in the yellow fields

grubbed by their arms and watered by their sweat in-between the poor, languid villages. Where there was work, one could see only them. Then the big railway stations, the anterooms of the towns followed, and the peasants could no longer be seen. But then the hurrying, noisy and impatient townspeople appeared, speaking, in a commanding tone, only in a foreign language.

'We work so that they can have fun!' Titu thought, choking with an ever bigger revolt. 'This is the illustration of the injustice and oppression exercised on us!' (441)

The narratorial text treats with distance both episodes. It is obvious that these are the fantasies of a young man insulted in his national feelings, thus with a broken spiritual balance. After the first scene Titu himself comes round: "What is with me? Am I delirious?" (312) Further on, the second scene can be put into ironic brackets not only by the metaphor of the train bisecting the Romanian villages "as a cruel tyrant" or the epithets exaggerating on the love of work of the Romanian peasants (as compared to the Saxons or Hungarians), but also by the reader's existing or acquirable knowledge. As the major part of the Hungarian and Saxon population (the overwhelming majority in the case of the Szeklers) – amounting to one third of the population of Transylvania – are also peasants. And they too, just like the town workers, work hard; a significant part of the economic achievements of Transylvania (in any case, more significant than their proportion) is the result of their work.

Under the given circumstances (irrespective of the supreme state power) they would also be worthy of respect, in other words, for Transylvania the *natural* solution (again, irrespective of the supreme state power) would be multilingualism. Irrespective of which community constitutes the majority in the country, that is, whether Transylvania politically belongs to Romania or Hungary. At least, in the present time of the action, the Romanians officially fight for such kind of bilingualism. In the present time of finishing the novel (according to philological data, of its rewriting in fact) it is already the Hungarians and the Germans who would fight for the mutual bilingualism (that is, also for the free use of their native language), and it is the Romanian state which, similarly to the former Hungarian state, rejects this claim – based on historical arguments.

Rebreanu's narrator, however, does not perceive this contradiction (at least explicitly). The tacit acceptance of the (anticipated) reshaping of the ethnic boundaries would serve that the reader might not perceive it either. And the nationalist reader does not perceive it, as for him even Madarassy's attitude confirms that the Romanians are fully and unilaterally right and the Hungarians are all exploiters and enemies. To the extent that this has to be admitted objectively

even by a decent Hungarian. Thus, Madarassy is an (illustrative) exception which reinforces the rule itself.

But, I insist, Rebreanu's model author is an incomparably better writer than ideologist. The objective and sociologically and also aesthetically authentic depiction of the relations within the Romanian community prove that he cannot regard this black-and-white way of seeing as authentic, not even in relation to his own group. But if the Romanian community is also a mixture of decent and indecent people, then the question may rightfully rise in the reader: why the decent members of the Hungarian community can be denied what would be the legal due of even the indecent members of the Romanian community, namely the right to preserve community identity? And this question, although it cannot be thematised in the strongly nationalist atmosphere prevailing at the time of writing the novel (and in the following decades of the inquestionability of the French idea of the nation-state), can hardly be excluded from (the empirical and model author) Rebreanu's consciousness.

Thus, the fact that those heroes who represent the German or Hungarian national viewpoints (perhaps not less biasedly and passionately as Titu or Grofşoru give voice to the Romanian ones) are squeezed out of the Transylvania-space of the novel turns into a *positive fact* of the narrative. It "relates" that for the Romanian community, which the narrator and model author of the novel is also a member of, these considerations do not exist. More precisely, they *cannot exi*st. The ideological space in which these considerations could appear as the components completing the Romanian viewpoints would have to appear, in terms of the "national idea" sanctified by the political practice of modernity, as a *taboo space* for a "decent" Romanian. Just as the space of the actual national (see: cultural) pluralism is a *taboo space* for the Hungarians.

In this case, however, today's objective reader (carefully distancing from the obsessions of nation-states) may perhaps ask the obvious question: why is what the Hungarians do not correct if the same thing is correct when done by the Romanians? As the problem of Pripas and Armadia cannot be modified to the least extent by the fact that two thirds of the population of Transylvania are Romanians. As, similarly to Pripas and Armadia, it does not change the problem of the almost exclusively Hungarian Vârghiş and the neighbouring small town, Baraolt (to remain on my motherland) that only one third of the population of Transylvania are Hungarian. And, of course, it could not have changed in the past either if both communities could have lived their own changing lives freely, not restricted by the state.

Surprisingly, the narratorial discourse does not exclude the *raison d'être* of these questions.

Social spaces

In a *sharp contrast* with Titu's daydreamings and nationalist obsessions, the novel's social spaces are not formed along ethnic boundaries. The reason for the fact that Ion does not have land is not that the Hungarian power deprives him of the possibility of acquiring land, but rather because his father, living for the clarinet and for revelry, has frittered away the lands. And Pripas's large farmers are themselves not Hungarians, but Romanians. Baciu and Toma Bulbuc, George's father are also Romanians. The tragedy of Ion, loving the land almost with sensuous love, would not change even if it took place beyond the Carpathians. (If the Romanian peasant from Old Romania could possess considerable lands at all.) As the revenge of the Hungarian judge of the district court is not an essential element of the conflict between the schoolmaster and the priest either. And there is no proof for the fact that in a similar case a primary school teacher from Old Romania could get off easier. On the contrary!

As we could also see above, Titu's suppositions regarding the global division of Transylvanian society are mostly mistaken. To mention only one example, well known to the Romanians as well, János Hunyadi rose from being a Serb-Romanian small noble to member of the Hungarian peerage. And he was not the only one. In the case of proper services, the Hungarian peerage was open also for non-Hungarians (Borsi-Kálmán 2010, 67).

Of course, it is a fact that in the centuries of the Middle-Ages the major part of the Romanian community are indeed serfs. As the most part of the Hungarians are, too. And the Romanian peasants are not without exception serfs either. After the termination of serfdom, however, the peasant communities also underwent a strong division process. Nevertheless, there are significant differences among the Hungarian and Saxon and, respectively, the Romanian peasants, but these cannot be traced back (or at least not exclusively) to the politics of the Hungarian state hostile to minorities, but rather to the traditional order of the particular communities. The living conditions of the Romanians from Old Romania and those from Transylvania also differ significantly (and the reader can precisely know this fact from Rebreanu's novel entitled *The Uprising*), although the latter cannot exploit anybody at all! The wealthy peasant from Pripas gets rich from his work and preserves and augments his fortune in the same way as his Saxon or Hungarian fellow. The descriptions of the large farmers Baciu's and Bulbuc's farmyards belong to the most beautiful chapters of constructing the *physical space* in the novel.

It is not proved in the case of Gargalău, with a mixed population, either that the economic differences could be traced back to national oppression. What is more, Titu's thoughts, also here just like in the train episode, are conveyed by the narrator in quotes, indicating distance: "'Here [at the periphery of the community – B. B.] we,

the oppressed and poor, live, while there [in the centre of the community – B. B.] they swank in wealth' – Titu thought" (204).

The myth of the *Hungarian* noble and *Romanian* peasant, which constitutes the ground of Titu's fantasies, is an intellectual construct which has little to do with reality. Titu is the member of a new intellectual layer which grounds the concept of nation – in accordance with the logic also represented by the plebeians of the Hungarian 1848 – upon the "nation" interpreted as "peasants." It is, of course, also a fact and thus contributes to the formation of the Romanian myth that in the case of the Hungarians, after the Settlement (and partly as its consequence) an idea of the nation also based on the mythical ideal of the "nobility becoming middle class" and "middle class becoming nobility" respectively becomes prevailing (Borsi-Kálmán 2012, 241-250). However, the former Romanian intellectuals, although due to their situation they are undoubtedly closer to them, despise the peasants in the same way as the Hungarian aristocrats do. Mrs. Herdelea's gestures, having recently risen from peasant existence (70), as well as the "ladylike" pretences of the Herdelea girls speak for themselves.

Physical spaces

The physical spaces function mostly as the scenes of the action. Since the narrator of the novel perceives the world with the heroes' eyes, his space perception is also adjusted to the heroes' space perception. Thus, the mode of vision of the latter is determining also from the viewpoint of space construction. Those elements of space structure are always pushed to the foreground which are determining from the point of view of the heroes' experiences or from that of the actions carried out by them.

The spatial position of the heroes represents that point of origin which determines the various space directions. The descriptions are laconic, but the narrator activates the reader's visual imagination with an excellent sense. In the majority of the cases the reader can also see in front of his/her eyes fixtures, parts of buildings and landscape elements which are absent from the description, but which are involved by the visual elements appearing in the narrative as organic accessories. Rebreanu often suggests instead of explicitly depicting.

The *enigmatic character* of the representation is also assisted by the fact that the physical spaces always have a powerful social dimension. The house of the Herdelea family, the Glanetaşu property, the parish house, Baciu's house, Avrun's inn, the inns from Jidoviţa and Armadia where the aristocrats revel, the building of the district court, the ballroom of the school from Armadia are important social spaces as well, separated by sharp boundaries. Ion does not have access to the ballroom of the school, not even as a gaper. He is allowed to go to the Herdeleas only because, as the schoolmaster's favourite pupil, he is regarded as belonging to

the family, at least he is perceived as being different from the other members of the peasant community.

From the point of view of the members of the Romanian community the spaces of power are always represented as Hungarian ones, whereas the spaces of heavy drinking as Jewish ones. After the warnings of the Hungarian schoolmaster ("Only in Hungarian!... In Hungarian!... It is compulsory in Hungarian... In Hungarian!...") the spectacle of the Hungarian school building from Gargalău will acquire symbolic significance in Titu's eyes:

> Titu's whole being was transformed in an instant: nothing else remained in him but the bottomless hatred against the schoolmaster. He felt an irresistible desire to dash over and to make his threatening words freeze on his lips… But then the bell started to ring, the noise calmed down and the schoolyard became empty in seconds. Only the school building busking in the sun was looking around with an even more ostentatious and derisive gaze, like a beast which had devoured its prey and, being full, was licking its lips. Titu had never experienced that even an inanimate object could drive one into ultimate despair. He felt that the opposite brick-red building, with those shiny big windows, wanted to insult him, to despise him. It infuriated him and reminded him again of the old woman, tormented by sufferings (whom he got to know during tax collecting – B.B.). 'Well, should I take away even the soul of that wretched so that they can cry even more haughtily: only in Hungarian!' (208-209)

The spaces of Jewish inns also acquire symbolic meaning: in the eyes of the heroes and of the narrator conveying their views they function as the spaces infecting the innocent peasant world, being profoundly foreign to it as the spaces of immorality. And this is, of course, not an invention by Rebreanu. It is (also) a recurrent motif of the Romanian literature of the time (Bíró 2011c).

As concerns the Jews, it is also Herdelea who feels and thinks in a more subtle manner. Contrary to anti-semitism – universally characterising the heroes of the novel –, regarding the Jews as the agents of capitalist destruction (Bíró 2011c) and representing the Jews as the enemies of the Romanians of equal rank with the Hungarians,[6] Herdelea's attitude towards the Jews is also empathy. We can learn from Grofşoru's thoughts – also conveyed by the narrator – that the Jews from Jidoviţa trust him so much that this trust can even bring votes for the one who wins over the schoolmaster to his side. After the suspension of the schoolmaster the

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[6] The – basically liberal – assimilation strategy, also influentially represented by the Jews in the Hungarian political publicity, virtually eliminates the strategy of the Romanians (and the other ethnic groups) based on sovereignty, autonomy and – if no other possibility remains – separation from the state. Thus, Romanian anti-semitism, much more visceral than the Hungarian one, has not only religious and cultural, but (also) strong political-ideological foundations.

lawyer supports Herdelea mainly for this reason, and it is only later that he starts playing nationalist chords.

The opening up of the social spaces of modernity paradoxically forces the communities which perceive their existence threatened to seclude themselves. The majority of the heroes of the novel are the captives of these secluded spaces. Not only the schoolmaster's wife, whose living space is the family home, but also the priest Belciug, who in spite of knowing the Hungarian language is not willing to speak in Hungarian, or if he is, only in order to enforce his interests. Ion feels that he is suffocated by the perspective of having no land. He hates his father, who squandered the lands on which he could live as a satisfied and respectable peasant. Florica, who is in love with Ion, is also captive of her social situation. However, she cannot even think of stepping out of the social frameworks. She binds her life – almost as a being without will – to the men whom destiny puts her in touch with.

Titu, with aspirations of becoming a poet, also experiences his exiles to Gargalău and Luşca with frustration. The spaces of the notary office and respectively, the spaces opening from these, called *experiential* in narratology (Dennerlein 2009, 170) appear as personality shaping factors in his case. Using another specialist term, they function as *spaces of initiation*, catalysing the determining processes of personality development. The rightful emotions against the schoolmaster from Gargalău lead him to a realisation which will radically transform his personality:

> He raised his look above the school, up at the sky, which spread like a clean linen coat onto the infinite. In his thoughts he walked all over the village as on a huge map laid-out. He entered the beautiful, rich, well-kept houses, the ornate dwellings of the minions of destiny, there he was roaming in the spacious courtyards, he met proud Hungarian peasants with twirled moustaches, who were wearing such baggy pants as skirts and were talking loudly… Then his thoughts, as the magic steeds of fairy tales, quickly and easily walked around the village and stopped at filthy huts, among other kinds of peasants, living in privation, oppressed by both God and man, dried up by hard work and poverty. 'And still the future is ours – Titu's soul cheered up – their fortress is besieged by a barefoot army! In vain does the threatening school defy us, in vain does the cock crow on their church tower… Our pressure never loosens! Our multitude constantly advances… Their well-built villages shake and decline, once the breath of our lives in chains touches them… The farmers fear their servants! And the servants – we are them! Theirs is the past, but ours is the future!...' (208)

The allusion to the baggy pants makes it clear that Gargalău is a village in Ţara Călatei, as in Transylvania this traditional costume can be found exclusively in this

region. However, in this period Țara Călatei is still such a homogeneous Hungarian enclave as Szeklerland. Thus the model author of the novel would have the opportunity to present, at least briefly, a non-Romanian ethnic community (what is more, a whole region) which is homogeneous, similarly to Pripas. But he does not do it. In other words, his allusions to the Romanian-Hungarian (hierarchical) relationship can be accepted as objective only with serious reservations. And as the narrator does not comment on Titu's untrue statements (and he cannot comment on those of the model author), he does not only manifest as an *unreliable narrator* (becoming fashionable in late- and postmodern narrative), whose assertions have to be corrected by the reader – also based on fiction signals –, but to a certain degree the model author creating the narrator also proves to be *biased*. This partiality-unreliability is moderated to some extent by the fact that the text part under discussion – differently from the preceding consciousness representation formulated in free indirect discourse – already appears in quotation marks (which can be valued in itself as a fiction signal). That is, although the narratorial discourse is built on the elements of the hero's interior monologue also in Titu's case, the narrative text renders certain parts of the text systematically in quotation marks. (As I have already referred to this several times.) In a nationalist reading this procedure may indicate the narrator's authenticating intention, whereas in a non-nationalist reading it can rather be interpreted as the sign of the narrator's distancing intention. In other words, it can direct our attention to Titu's sheer exaggerations – hardly acceptable also for an unbiased Romanian. So much the more that the narrator adds the following paragraph to the quoted passage (again in free indirect discourse and also in quotes):

> A happy satisfaction was tingling in Titu. Self-confidence expelled from his soul the dilemmas and dark thoughts, he remembered that in Săscuța, about ten years before, when he had gone to Bistrița, only the herdsman had been Romanian, he had stayed in a hut at the end of the village, but then, without school and without church, half of the community was Romanian. 'There other farmers are gradually superseded by the oppressed but lively servants!' – Titu thought and he felt very happy that he belonged to the race of the oppressed. (208-209)

The subtle irony of the last sentence cannot be ignored by the unbiased reader. As the hero's self-scrutinizing comments ("What is with me? Am I delirious?") or the narrator's allusions in the scene ending the "reveries" from Lușca cannot either ("The moon laughed through the open window" [313]). However, there is an element which seems to function as evidence also for Rebreanu (the model author), but from our present viewpoint it could be accepted only as an ironical hint, and this is none other than biologization – occurring already in Zaharia Herdelea's thoughts –, according to which: "Life overcomes the old and the weak. Life

belongs to the young and strong. Selfishness is the basis of life" (328). This argument (not foreign to Marxism either) will be applied here by Titu as well, when he contrasts the "vitality" of the "young" *Romanian servants* to the "inability to life" of the "declining" *Hungarian farmers*, confirming in this way the "natural" *raison d'être* of the dictatorial endeavours of Romanian nationalism.

However, the *transitional spaces* experienced in Gargalău and Luşca cannot become places to live for Titu. These space segments are, with Marc Augé's term (1992, 79-115) non-places (*non-lieux*). They are the "places" of a man without a home, Foucauldian heterotopias, which cannot be nested into any kind of coherent space.

This lack of space and place is even more emphasized in the case of Ana. She can find her home neither beside her father nor at Ion. The warring men literally despise her, what is more, they channel their aggressive emotions towards each other through her, often with extreme brutality, characteristic of the lower social strata. She keeps moving between the two houses, carrying the messages as a stray dog, due to which both men maltreat her. The extent to which Ana means only the lands for Ion is indicated by one great passage of the novel. To the elder Herdelea girl Laura's question (tacitly also touching on Florica, Ion's love): "Tell me honestly, Ion, do you love Ana?," Ion hesitates, then answers with an embarrassed smile: "Well... I love her, miss... why shouldn't I love her?" But a few moments later, hearing the flute and the croaking of frogs from the direction of Gârla Popii, he "sighed deeply, passionately embracing the sleeping lands with his eyes, and conversing with himself he whispered: 'What should I do?... I must marry Ana!... I must!'" (76). Ana, regarded as a mere tool by both men, adrift between the *emotional spaces* of happy love and undisguised hatred, remains alone to such an extent that she will be able to find a shelter only in death, in the metaphysical space opened up by Avrum's suicide and by Moarcăşi's death.

Titu cannot escape from the feeling of foreignness, homelessness either. Adrift between Pripas and the warmth of the family home and, respectively, the humdrum world of notary offices, he does not see any other solution to his problems than stepping out (in his hopes only temporarily) from the Transylvanian world. But this does not seem to be the real solution either. The passages of his letter written from Bucharest, the "great foreignness," especially if we also consider the elated expectations, speak for themselves:

> But my sanguine hopes are slowly evaporating. Life is only life everywhere, with the same vanities, with the same illusions and mostly with the same scary countenance which breaks the momentum. The dreams are just as priceless here as on the other side. Only that one is happy who does not have dreams, as he is the only one who can enjoy all the pleasures of life.

But it is not excluded either that I am the only one to blame for this bitterness which gnaws my soul. No heaven can be so beautiful as the one that we have created in our souls. One's heaven can be the other's hell. Happiness is built on everybody's imagination, and fitted to everybody like a dress. It appears that I am a clumsy tailor, this is why I will never be able to make the desired dress... But in the place of dashed hopes there always grow new ones: even more rosy, even more angelic hopes, which open up new perspectives for us, and plant new desires into our hearts. The unknown future is the only serious motivation in this world, as it conceals all those secrets that give meaning to life […]

So, while I am expecting the future – I console myself with the past. This big turmoil I happen to find myself in turns my thoughts backwards ever more frequently. Until I find a modest little place for myself in the new world, I long for the old one which I left behind. Please, write to me often and much about everything that happens at home, as now every trifle is more important for me than when I lived among them. My soul strays here in a desert without a place to rest, like a bird which has lost its nest... (471-472)

These paragraphs remain highly ambiguous. The Romanian nationalist-minded reader, who already knows the future and those "secrets" which "give meaning to life," will tend to play down Titu's state of mind as it is only "temporary." After the realization of national unity the hero can surely, and in all respects, *find his home*. The euphoria of unification washes away the bad feelings. However, the objective reader (whether he is Romanian or not) also has to know in the back of his mind that the victory over the Hungarians is in itself not enough for the Transylvanian spirit to "find its nest" in the great foreignness. Inevitably the notary Friedmann's (coming from Romania and settling down in Transylvania) words will come to his mind:

Well then, I would like to meet you after you have known Romania better!... You will surely find freedom and happiness there, you, who are constantly criticising and rebelling here. I will even ask you to send me a small postcard... Do you promise? […] Do you happen to know that in your Romania nobody and nothing is stable? If by any chance the boyar doesn't like your eyes, the next day you will be laid off... There is no law, no administration there as in this blessed country, which you are defaming everywhere. No, sir! There the whims of the *ciocoi* rule over millions of ragged slaves… Please don't talk to me about Romania, because I know it better than you! I spent there three years when I was young, but as long as I live I won't forget how much I suffered during this time. (209-210)

And if the reader did not trust Friedmann's words, he had better open the author's other novel with a peasant topic, entitled *The Uprising* [*Răscoala*], in order to consider the notary's words more seriously. It is obvious that Rebreanu's (who regards peasantry, as we will see, as the pledge of national conservation in his academic inaugural speech) alter ego cannot feel at home indeed in the country in which the 1907 peasant uprising (Europe's last large-scale peasant uprising) was suppressed with an almost medieval brutality.

With respect to the feeling of foreignness of the Transylvanians in the Greater Romania, Béla Borsi-Kálmán, in analysing the recollections of the members of the great generation creating the Romanian nation-state, also sets out a number of evidence (2012, 39-63), nevertheless we also have immediate evidence. We can read in Rebreanu's work entitled *Confessions*:

> I came to the country after the peasant uprisings, where the Romanian horizon was stained red by the flames of manor houses put on fire and by the hotly bubbling blood... The cries have just died away. From the train window I saw heaps of ruins in the places of the former boyar farms or peasant villages. In some places, at the edge of villages fresh graves with white crosses aligned. Traces of a national tragedy.

> In literature peasant romanticism prevailed, in the spirit of elections. The leading motifs were greedy tenants, melancholic boyars, idyllic peasants. The uprising gave birth only to a few anecdotes with doubtful humour. The horror […] passed unnoticed. There remained the legend and an increased contempt and hatred against the peasants. I came to write about this specifically Romanian tragedy. (1987, 651)

Titu, enthusiastic about the Romanian peasant, just like Ana, in love with Ion, cannot feel at home in either "Romanian world." Nevertheless, the parallel between Ana's and Titu's situations also urges us to think further.

Narrative spaces

Structurally the novel is divided into two main parts. The first part is entitled The Voice of Land, the second one's title is The Voice of Love. The titles primarily allude to Ion's tragedy. In both cases the "voice" can be interpreted as a kind of a siren's voice, which irresistibly overcomes the hero and ultimately causes his destruction. The hypothesis of enchantment is also reinforced by the basically sensual relationship which binds Ion to the land. Earlier I quoted a passage which reveals that even Ana's femininity appears for Ion as the sensual attraction of the lands. However, in his referenced volume Alexandru Săndulescu also offers a whole series of other examples of this peculiar sensuality:

Rebreanu depicts the mad desire of becoming one with the land with a thick chalk, almost materially: "He wanted to feel the black earth under his feet, to see as it stuck to his spats, to breathe its narcotic scent, to absorb its colour…" The "naked" land which got rid of the snow cover seems for the hero's visionary eyes as "a beautiful girl who strips off her shirt and lets her seducing naked body be seen." The attraction is not only physical, but also profoundly emotional: "The black, sticky earth fettered his feet, and got stuck to them as the fiery woman to her lover," the "fresh, soury and fertile scent inflamed his blood," hence the inducement of embracement. The metaphor unifies the elements of dread, cold shudder, dark presentiment ("The sticky, black soil stuck to his hand as gloves") and the pleasure pervaded by an invisible, mysterious light: "Then with a pious, slow motion, almost unconsciously, he leant down to the ground and pressed his lips to the wet ground with a lusty desire. And from the kiss dizzying, cold chills ran down his back …" (1985, 25-26)

Ion's passion towards the land occurs in front of the reader's eyes already in its mature state. However, Titu's passion towards the Romanian Transylvania and towards its poor, politically underprivileged people turns into an emotion almost similar to the passion of love before our very eyes.

In the evenings he was lying in the darkness on the sofa used as a bed and made dozens of plans for the future – one was more magniloquent than the other. Sometimes he saw himself with a torch in his hand, as he was leading a huge mass of peasants in the liberation war, other times he was wandering from village to village, carrying balm to the wounds of the tortured ones, teaching them how to make their fate easier and stirring in them the flame of good hope; sometimes he was leading a group of soldiers, under the three-coloured flag fluttering in the wind… He imagined the tortures that he would heroically endure for his people, and he often dreamt that he was staying at the bottom of a cellar, tied in chains and, still, happy in his heart, feeling like a martyr, who had to acquire the victory of the great masses by sacrifice. And these imaginations filled his soul with unprecedented pleasures. (227)

The two stories are related to each other only metonymically. At least apparently. However, in the universe of Rebreanu's novel things are always related. The interwovenness of the threads of the plot is based on the *issue of land* and, implicitly, on the *analogy of the individual and community egoism*. We know that from the viewpoint of the novel's genesis it is Ion's story that is of primary importance. This is clearly indicated also by the chapter titles of the novel's two

books, The Voice of Land and The Voice of Love respectively. There is almost no allusion to the story of the Herdelea family either. The intellectual story, whose main character is Titu – and the conflict between Belciug and Herdelea is only its tension creating element – is built into the basic story only later, as it can be deduced from information deriving from the author, and, in this way, it has a specific, in a certain sense subordinated function in the complex structure. It offers guidance of crucial importance for the reader in the interpretation of the national novel remaining open from a narrative aspect. It is transformed into an embedded story, into a kind of *mise en abyme* (Dällenbach 1980).

The basic difference between the peasant novel and the intellectual novel is that while in the peasant novel the drama of the land explicitly leads to the drama of private life, in the intellectual (national) novel the *dénouement* of "the drama of the land" (that is, the unification of Transylvania with Romania) can acquire completeness only through the reader's historical knowledge. The novel structure appeals to the reader's imagination even more in finding the national analogy of the drama of private life, even its incipits are suggested at the level of obscure (though hardly misunderstandable) presentiments and anxieties, in the form of worries whose *raison d'être* can be grounded by the very analogies with Ion's story.

The question may rise even in the unbiased Romanian reader: If the great unification takes place in the same way as Ion's unification with Baciu's lands, can't it have similar consequences as in Ion's case? If the Romanian intellectuals from Transylvania and from Old Romania proceed in the same way as Ion, characterised as a "reduced personality" by literary criticism, that is, national egoism is be their major cause, can the tragic consequences be avoided? Won't the Romanian intellectuals from Transylvania, whose main representative in the novel is Titu, put themselves in peril when in exchange for the land they become unfaithful to those whom they wish to represent, to the Transylvanians? As by assisting in not *fitting* Transylvania as an autonomous unity, but simply *assimilating* it into the rest of Romania, in terms of an idea of homogeneisation taken over from the Hungarians, the Romanians from Transylvania will also lose not only their identity, but also their sovereignty in a political sense. While they do with their former masters the same as these did with them formerly, don't they expose themselves to "foreign" powers? Will they manage, under such circumstances, to reduce the many-colouredness of their Transylvanian Romanian identity to a unique and exclusive "Romanian" identity without distorting the latter, in moral and spiritual terms, into self-dangerous nationalism (with the novel's terminology, chauvinism)?

These questions, however, cannot be formulated in the Romanian readers of the time, stupefied by the exclusivity of the national idea. And I am afraid that they cannot be formulated in the overwhelming majority of today's Romanian readers either. So much the more that the Rebreanu text, at least apparently, makes possible

also an approach that reduces the narrative complexity of the novel to a nationalist reading. If we regard Titu as Rebreanu's spokesman, and we disregard the ironical overtones of the narratorial voice and the satirical components of character formation (similarly to the traditional Romanian literary criticism and literary history writing),[7] this reading may even seem authentic. But if we regard the text in its complexity and we follow the hidden but well explorable fiction signals, this reading, almost exclusive in school education (Bíró 2008, 60) can hardly satisfy the initiated reader.

Inside-outside

This hypothesis also seems to be supported by another aspect of the spaces thematised by the novel. One key term of narrative space construction is, according to Bachelard (1994), then Van Baak (1983, 50-55) and also Lutwack (1984, 37-47), the opposition between the *inside* and the *outside*.

This specific space orientation, characteristic only of central (that is, in their ultimate consequences, circular) spaces, is also an essence-determining feature of the space structures of *Ion*. The Romanians from Transylvania feel (rightfully) that they cannot have access to the political, cultural and economic spaces operated by the Hungarian state without giving up their identity. These spaces are thus foreign to them. With Van Baak's words, the "warm, safe and educated intimacy" of the spaces of the own community is opposed to a world that is "cold, insecure and out of law," to a world which threatens the *spaces of intimacy* with collapse. Thus, the experience of discriminatedness is accompanied by that of *threatenedness*.

Ion feels discriminated for other reasons. He had to experience the gradual lowering from the well-to-do peasant status to poverty, the trauma of losing the land providing security. It is his obsession-like dream to get back to the lost intimacy. But for this he does not only have to manipulate Ana, that is, to intrude (unauthorised) into the girl's feelings and thoughts, but he also has to get into Baciu's house. It is of symbolic significance that he makes Ana pregnant at arm's length from the drunken father.

For Ana, who has lost her mother as a child, and who is disregarded by men for her ugliness, Ion represents that world of intimacy and love which she longs for with all her being and with such an intensity that she is not willing to take notice of the most apparent facts; and when she cannot help facing them, then there is no other escape but suicide.

In Titu's case the situation is even more complex. He is raised by his parents to adapt to the situation. We can learn from the narrator's chance hints that he

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[7] The statement should be applied not only to *Ion*; the author's oeuvre also contains a satirical series of works (already starting with those written in Hungarian), with which criticism again does not know what to do.

disposes of the language knowledge, education and *feeling of being at home,* which would apparently make possible for him to find his feet in the foreign world. Still, he has to realise that this is impossible anyway. We can even know why from the biography of his real alter ego, Rebreanu. The successful assimilation also presupposes a proper economic background, which the peasant environment cannot guarantee for him, not even the status of schoolmaster of his father (Bíró 2011a, 79-89). Or if it can, then only in exceptional cases.[8]

Zaharia Herdelea, in spite of the fact that he speaks only broken Hungarian, is *simultaneously both inside and outside*. This fact, as I have already mentioned several times, arises from the characteristics of his constitution, from his inborn empathy and tact. He is the only figure of the novel who is honest from tip to toe, in the case of whom even the narrator allows himself only mild irony at most (see the innocent assumption of the role of a martyr, or the not less innocent boastings with the "ministerial" letter!). His sense of reality and his impressively benevolent character are the bases of the moral measure of the narrative.

This is not accidental at all, as Rebreanu, implicitly the model author creating the narrator, similarly to the old schoolmaster, is himself simultaneously inside and outside. It is this specificity of his personality that is the source of the exceptional complexity and nuancedness of the novel's language and narrative structure. This nuancedness is clearly indicated not only by the depiction of the moral constraints of the heroes labelled as nationalists, but also by the above mentioned nuancedness of the narrative function of the free indirect discourse and of the marked quotation. It is also indisputable that in Titu the model author sees and has the narrator depict his former self. But already from *the outside*. It is this simultaneous existence of the inner and outer points of view that raises the novel to the level of an aesthetic achievement of universal value.

We can only regret that Rebreanu is compelled to become a writer in the age of mutual unilateralism. In a more balanced period the specificities of his built, also suggested by *Ion, Forest of the Hanged* and *Iţic Strull as a Deserter*, could have made him capable of achievements to be paralleled to the works of the greatest authors of world literature.

All the more because Rebreanu does not give up his Transylvanian identity even when he settles down in Old Romania. He does not see Transylvania only with the eyes of the Romanians from Transylvania, but also with those from Old Romania, what is more, with those of the Hungarians. Just as in the explicit or implicit evaluation of the conditions in Old Romania or Hungary, he always has an *outer* point of view in store. However, the unilaterally nationalist world of the beginning of the twentieth century makes it impossible for him – as a member of

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[8] Rebreanu's brother manages to become a military officer, his fate and inner drama becomes the theme of another masterpiece by Rebreanu, the novel entitled *The Forest of the Hanged*.

the "Romanian national community" constructed by the Romanian intellectuals during the nineteenth century – to create any form of *completeness* unveiling the opposing truths. Still, this completeness is implicitly discernible in his whole life work and in *Ion* to the most extent. In objectivity, the Rebreanu of the novel *Ion* goes to the outermost boundaries imaginable in those days. It is often obvious that he regards even himself, his former (or later) ideas, with irony.

This explains why the novel *Ion* can become for us, Hungarian readers, of determining significance. As the most objective and the most thought provoking depiction of the Transylvanian reality of the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, it can create a unique possibility for us to face a shockingly precise image of the Romanians, and in this way, to form a much more exact and objective image of ourselves, too.

The chronotopes of transition

I have already mentioned that the spaces created in the novel are transitional in all respects; in other words, in line with the fourth principle of Foucault's definition of heterotopia, they also dispose of a significant temporal component (1986).

In Ion's passion towards the land we can also meet the heterogeneous mixture of the ancient instincts and modern individualism, which, due to its contradictory character, threatens the order of the community – still archaic in several respects – with collapse. When it comes to lands, Baciu and Ion tread underfoot the most elementary requirements of humanity. The scenes of Ana's mistreatment, depicted with Zola's naturalism, illuminate the depths, unparalleled in literature, of inhumanization, of the impassivity towards the sufferings of the other.

In a certain respect Ion surpasses even his father-in-law. To repeat the statements of my earlier study: at that time Baciu got married out of interest too, but later he passionately fell in love with his wife, as he could not forget that he owed everything that he had and that he could become, to his wife. His love towards his wife became so strong that Baciu simply could not bear her absence, in his suffering and pain about the loss he started drinking. Ion is no longer capable of such love with an archaic aura. He is already a modern individual, an ego pushed as far as paroxism... As Herdelea's best pupil and a transitional secondary school learner he has already tasted the culture whose basic value is the individual. And he also understands that the actual soil of this individualism is economic power, and ultimately, money. This is why he returns to the land, to the only thing he has good knowledge of.

Rebreanu accurately detects that at the end of the century Transylvanian society, just like European society, passes through profound changes. The relationships between production and consumption, majority and minority, men and women, peasants and intellectuals change. The peasants become more and

more the tools in the hand of the nationalist intellectuals, thirsty for power, more precisely, unrestrainedly egoistic. The intellectuals want to reinforce and extend their political influence by raising the so-called national sentiment, the cultural egotism converted into political doctrine. Csernátonyi still understands the Romanians very well and does not believe that it would be the interest of the Hungarian state to expect a native level of Hungarian knowledge from the children of the Romanians living in compact communities. Horváth, the "ardent" Hungarian nationalist, however, is unable even to try to consider things reasonably. And it is in this way that he betrays the interests of the nation. Just like his Romanian comrades. Since, as an aftermath of the trends in the novel, it is not only the Hungarian Kingdom that falls apart, but – in terms of the national exclusiveness (also) "sanctified" by the traditional interpretations of the novel *Ion* – Transylvania will also be lowered to the level of the Balkans. Instead of the old Romanian Kingdom (the so-called *Regat*) rising to the cultural, economic and political level of the Transylvania from the Monarchy.

However, serious biographical arguments and written documents can be set against the above presented possibility of interpretation. Based on these, it could be easily proven that Rebreanu, the physical person in a narratological sense (the "empirical author") is undoubtedly nationalist (in today's pejorative sense of the term), that is, supporter of the Romanian national exclusivity. But in the respective period practically every Romanian is nationalist. There could be not even one person in the public sphere who would raise his voice against the Anghelescu-type of laws of the beginning of the 1920s which label Szeklerland as a "culture zone," fill it with Romanian primary school teachers, subject the Hungarian state employees to degrading language examinations, in other words, reproduce in all respects (and what is more, even more intolerantly) the national oppression from Pripas, Gargalău and Luşca.

What is more, by the 1940s Rebreanu, as a significant part of his Hungarian contemporaries, assimilates the category system of the German national socialism (*Blut und Boden*, *Lebensraum*). Publicly he never becomes a fascist; he remains devoted to the citizen nationalism of liberalism until his death. Still, he writes in this manner: "The Romanian living space enclosed by our boundaries is not the result of arbitrary conquests; on the contrary, it is the clear expression of the Romanian national essence... We are created by this land, in its own image and likeness" (Rebreanu 1984, 305).

For today's ear several other statements of Rebreanu's sound rather awkward: "Our cities are not the expressions of national essence – he said. – The city, which was most often created and developed by needs different from the Romanian ones, has not adapted to these needs yet, to be able to become the source of clear Romanianness…" (Rebreanu 1984, 313).

In his laudation of Rebreanu's academic inaugural speech the academic I. Petrovici states with good reason: "the substance of the conclusion of the discourse that we heard is not very new, on the contrary, we could say that it is widely spread nowadays, sometimes even on the verge of sliding into dangerous exaggerations," that is, Rebreanu is inclined to "crumbling the unity and universality of truth into distinct national compartments" (1984, 332). Of course, those national truths that Petrovici refers to are, according to the mentality of the time, *not universalities completing each other* (as we regard them today), but *mutually exclusive particularities*.

As if he had wanted to confirm his opponent, in an article from *Familia*, entitled *Transilvania 1940*, Rebreanu wrote: "Romanian justice is so evident that we did not consider it necessary to prove it or we were not capable of proving it. Only those who are not right have to struggle, to lie and to cheat in order to create appearances as opposed to evidence" (1984, 331-333). It is obvious that, similarly to the Hungarian nationalists, he is not capable of getting out of the vicious circle of the obsession of the nation-state ideology and implicitly that of moving the frontiers either, since he is utterly unable to see – also as a twin brother of the Hungarian nationalists – the part of truth of the other party.

However, in his quality of the model author, and especially as the authorial narrator of the novel, he cannot exempt himself from the writerly constraint of at least implicitly acknowledging the alternative truths of the other party. Even in the absence of explicit confessions the supposition is imposed that Rebreanu, starting his career as a Hungarian writer, will take into account also later the valuable opinions of his possible Hungarian or German readers. Not to mention the conscious or unconscious considerations stemming from his ambitions to world literature. He writes about the *Forest of the Hanged*:

> My hero is not a hero in the common sense of the term, as in the *Forest of the Hanged* I depict the origin and increase of the disruption of moral equillibrium. He is basically weak as everyone, he is thirsty for love, which he finds with a Hungarian girl – though this may seem improbable for a specialist in literature –, and under the gallows he is mourned also by a Hungarian man, Ilona's father. I think all this is more human in this way, and a novel which does not throb with life full of terrible things and contradictions – even if it is successful – has no chance of survival. (qtd. in Săndulescu 1985, 146-147)

The embedded sentence ("though this may seem improbable for a specialist in literature") betrays a lot. It indicates the distortions of the literary conscience that the writer of the time had to confront with. These distortions may simultaneously indicate the *concealment* of the model author and the narrator, but also the systematic

ambiguities of the narratorial discourse, the sustenance of a (presumable) alternative of interpretation – more acceptable for the non-Romanian reader.

Not to mention the fact that Rebreanu's narrator has to comply with the democratic rules of the game well known also by Rebreanu himself. Literature is the space of the *completeness* of truth (unattainable in real life), the space in which artistic truth, thanks to its very mediality, can never be unilateral (as in the "national" historical sciences) or "absolutely" objective (as in natural sciences), it rather has to be formed as the complex and often contradictory unity of the more important points of view.

The more profoundly a writer understands the criterion-character of this complexity and contradictoriness, the better chances he has to create a really lasting work. As also testified by his great works, Rebreanu is aware of the importance of this criterion. Even if irreconcilable oppositions stand between the empirical author and the model author.

In the author's literary legacy we can find a whole series of dramas, short stories, drama and novel fragments written in flawless, sophisticated Hungarian. These texts undoubtedly prove that in a certain period of his life their author considers the possibility of a career in the Hungarian literary publicity not only attractive, but also feasible. (Implicitly certain forms of assimilation are not unimaginable for him either.) It is hardly believable that this could have disappeared also from the subconscious of the reading public only within a few years. For a person belonging to the "minority," the success obtained as a minority in the "majority" publicity constitutes a social-psychological instinct that is hard to easily surpass anyway. Even if in the meantime he does not only turn away from, but also turns against any form of assimilation.

Temporality, however, has another aspect of crucial importance in the novel. The novel is basically *realist*, what is more, its spaces, *naturalistic* in several respects, are transformed into unambiguously *idyllic* ones in the closure of the novel, into the specific *space* of national *mythologies*, where all conflicts, misunderstandings, moreover, all contradictions cease to exist and the fellow nations, similarly to the lovers of fairy tales, live happily ever after. The novel ends with a so-called "story ending prediction" (Lämmert 1955, 312-321). Ion, breaking the norms of co-existence of the community, dies tragically (not to say that he obtains his "deserved" punishment). Belciug, who has built the church representing the togetherness in God of the community, will mend his ways; what is more, he will almost become the saint of the national idea. The excellent lawyer, Grofşoru, assumes the defense of George, who has killed Ion. The Herdelea couple will find a new place in Armadia and the younger daughter, Ghighi, and Zăgreanu will move to their house from Pripas. And also, Zăgreanu himself, inspector Horváth's fellow, seems as if he "took a vow" when parting from the Herdelea couple. Obviously, he

will also devote his pedagogical career to educating the pupils in the Romanian national spirit.

That's all, folks! – Rebreanu could have written at the end of his novel. Still, he did not do that. The novel ends with an unusual dedication: "To the many humiliated ones!" Dedications are usually placed at the beginning of the work, as ulterior dedications do not make much sense. It can hardly be accidental that Rebreanu (or the editor?) puts it to the end of the novel. We could also say: the dedication had to appear at the end of the novel in order "to avoid misunderstandings." To ground, so to say, the improbable perfectness of the idyll. For in the final rounding the reader may have the impression that it is the irony of the ending of novels like *Tom Jones* that (repeatedly) permeates the story ... The characters like Belciug do not usually mend their ways in real life... Rebreanu's narrator as well as the first readers of the novel are obviously also aware of this. The dedication has to counterbalance this *heterotopical* sense of reality in Foucault's sense of the term (*de facto* opposing the *utopical* one), having the only function, by asserting the motif of national humiliation, of draining away the sensitivity towards the ironical overtone aroused by the improbability of the idyll, in other words, of putting out the sense of humour. In the case of the reader of the time, powerfully socialised to nationalism, this can easily be obtained. As nationalism in itself is nothing else but the chronic absence of the sense of humour. At least in a national sense. (The Caragiale-phenomenon could also be compensation, at the rank of world literature, of this absence.)

Irony, however, as proved by Compagnon (1998, 74-105), presupposes some kind of authorial intention in any case. In Rebreanu's case this "intention" seems to be instinctive rather than conscious. It may arise from Rebreanu's writer self, from his narrative subconscious.

Translated by Judit Pieldner

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The Frontier as (Migrating) Space in American Social Thinking

Tamás VRAUKÓ

University of Miskolc
Department of English Language and Literature
t.vrauko@chello.hu

Abstract. In my paper the American frontier is described as a moving zone, a social, historical and economic as well as geographical phenomenon. The frontier experience determines American art, literature and social thinking to a large extent even today. The paper deals with the frontier as a moving space in historiography and literature. The essay consists of three parts. In the first part the concept of the frontier as a moving space is outlined. In the second part the relevant works of some American historians are – very briefly – analysed, from the aspect of the frontier as migrating space. The third part deals with a selection of literary works – novels and short stories – that show how the frontier is described by prominent and well-known American prose writers.

Keywords: frontier, regional historiography, frontier in literature

> "*The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession,*
> *and the advance of American settlement westward, explain*
> *American development.*"

Frederick Jackson Turner

Frontier: The "Migrating" Space

The frontier experience, the slow movement of the borderland towards west, is deeply rooted in Anglo-Saxon socio-cultural myths. It is not only an American

phenomenon; Canada and Australia were also conquered by the British from the East to West.

The frontier, or borderland, is in that case the border of civilization – behind that border there is the unknown. Hostile terrain, hostile natural scene and hostile natives – all these things were supposed to be conquered, to be brought under control, in order to further extend civilization.

In the American social myth, the process of advancing civilization westward developed the heroes adequate to the task. The settler, the brave hunter, the pioneer, the cowboy, the stockman, the mountaineer, the trapper are but some of the characters that have emerged since the first days of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, populated the new space opened up for them, upheld and advanced civilization.

John Gast's famous painting of 1872, called "American Progress," depicts the idea of the frontier in a symbolic and condensed way. Native Americans and wild animals retreat before the civilizers, who are coming on foot, on horseback, in stagecoach and railway, and immediately begin to cultivate the land. The painting is full of dynamism and motion, the way people imagined the frontier of the new country.

The first borderland stretched along the Appalachian Mountains, partly because the wilderness of the mountains was hardly penetrable for the few settlers, and partly because the king prohibited settlement west of the mountains:

> The East has always feared the result of an unregulated advance of the frontier and has tried to check and guide it. The English authorities would have checked settlement at the headwaters of the Atlantic tributaries and allowed the "savages to enjoy their deserts in quiet lest the peltry trade should decrease." (Spark 2010, 1)

At that time, the American hero was the colonizer, like John Smith, and the brave hunter, like the protagonists in James Fenimore Cooper's novels. Natty Bumppo, one of the first White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant heroes, was at home in the wilderness, used its potentials and resources skillfully, and lived in harmony with the Indians, identifying with one tribe, and took part in their own tribal wars against other tribes.

When the space between the ocean and the Appalachians was finally outgrown by the population, they ventured through the mountains, acquired new territories from the French, and realized that their own frontier was not the only one. There was the frontier of the French, a large part of which the new country acquired from Napoleon, and there was the frontier of the Spaniards, who had arrived earlier than the English. Don Juan de Oñate had organized Spanish

administration in what is today New Mexico several years before Jamestown, Virginia, was established.

With the defeat of the French in the French and Indian War, and the Lousiana purchase, the French ceased to be a rival for American expansion, but the Spanish and the American frontiers moved on collision courses: the Spaniards came from the southwest, occupying territories from the Pacific coast inwards, and the Americans were moving towards the middle of the continent from the east. The U.S. government attempted to purchase land from Mexico, but what had worked with the French did not work with the Mexicans. As the frontier moved slowly but continually westward and new space was needed for settlement and animal husbandry, war seemed to be the only way of obtaining the desired territories. After winning the Mexican War, new opportunities opened up for American settlement, new, vast spaces became available for the people who were ready to occupy them. And there were many who were ready. Immigrants from Scandinavia and Central Europe poured into the newly conquered areas, hungry for land and wishing to escape misery, religious intolerance and political oppression. The characteristic pioneer on the chuck waggon appeared, to find a land suitable for a farm. In the period after the Civil War, the areas between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean were virtually deprived of law and order. The saga of the Wild West began, with new heroes, such as the cowboy or the popular outlaws, like Jesse James, Billy the Kid and others.

Being a cowboy was a lot more peaceful occupation than it is often suggested by the movies and cheap pulp fiction. In popular culture the cowboy's main activity was apparently nothing else but shooting each other and fighting rustlers. The cowboy was a character in the new space acquired by America important enough without shooting with his sixgun or rifle all the time. The cowboy kept entire industries in motion – cattle breeding in the south, and meat packing in the north. The cowboy therefore moved perpendicularly *across* the line of progress of the frontier. The grazing lands were in the south, mostly in Texas, and the slaughterhouses and meat packing factories in the north – from Wichita all the way to Chicago. By driving the cattle at a slow and leisurely pace from south to north, the cowboy was the only occupant of immense areas for long periods of time. The life of the cowboy was hard, and so was the life of the settlers and planters arriving in the new west. The "migration" of the frontier zone continued at a larger scale after the Mexican War and after the Civil War as well. The process is described by Turner at the beginning of his book in the following way:

> American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. American social development has been continually beginning over on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity

of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. (1986, 2)

This statement is of key importance in understanding the nature of the frontier, and also in understanding some of the basic American values. When the cowboy roamed the prairie, driving the cattle north, the personal values, competences did not include any former education – schooling was not needed. Being sturdy in the saddle, being able to ride perfectly, often under extreme circumstances was, on the other hand, indispensable. Being a marksman good enough to fight off outlaws and to kill wild animals was also required. Those who lacked these competences simply perished.

This is how Walter Prescott Webb, the outstanding historian of the prairie, lays the foundations of the romantic image of the cowboy:

In the old days the cowboys had ways… of testing courage. [He] had first to prove that he could ride; that made him useful. Then later he had to prove his courage; that made him a member of the brotherhood of strong men, a safe man to take along. (1981, 246-247)

Courage as an indispensable quality is, however, not a romantic exaggeration here; being brave was simply a matter of life and death for those who lived there. Similarly to what the cowboys needed for survival, self-reliance, resourcefulness in finding a way out of trouble, the ability to defend oneself, finding the tracks of animals and humans in the wilderness, the ability of providing basic first aid, finding medicine in nature were skills absolutely necessary for farmers and settlers, when one's nearest neighbour lived forty or fifty miles away.

As the people living along the American borderland were exposed to the "simplicity of primitive society" over and over again as the frontier proceeded, the same qualities were required regularly from time to time until American expansion reached the gold fields of the Sacramento Valley in California or the Klondike in Alaska. It is therefore not surprising that these values are deeply rooted in American thinking. In the country that possesses some of the finest technical and other universities in the world, formal school education is still not very highly esteemed. In popular culture – movies, books – physical skills, sturdiness and fighting abilities are appreciated much better than education acquired at school. What can be acquired through practice or physical exercise is more attractive than knowledge found in the books.

Discourses of the "Migrating Space" 1: the Frontier Historians

The "significance of the frontier in American history" was recognized by historiographers relatively early. Frederick Jackson Turner wrote his famous book in 1893, when most people did not even realize that a major period of American history was over, and the borderland ceased migrating any further. Some of Turner's points are disputable, but his early recognition of the significance of the frontier and his valuable contribution to late-nineteenth century historiography make his work a very useful starting point for any analysis of the history of the American frontier.

Although Turner speaks about the availability of "an area of free land," the land was far from being utterly unoccupied. French *voyageurs* surveyed the Mississippi Valley, opened for trading posts and lead mines. There were the Native Americans roaming the prairie and the Rocky Mountains, and the Mexicans in the southwest.

One of the first prominent American historians who dealt with the French presence in the territory of what is today the U.S. and Canada was Francis Parkman. He wrote an impressive seven-volume work on the French colonization in North America. Parkman never became as popular and well-known as Turner, because he wrote in an arid and strictly scientific style. His friends made efforts to persuade him to use a more popular and more easily digestible style, but Parkman did not seek popularity; he was a scholar first and last. His work has been an important source for generations of historians studying the colonial period of North America.

Angie Debo, white historian of the Indians, "received a long life from Manitou," and during her 98 years she personally saw almost half of the U.S. history. In *A History of the Indians of the United States* she describes what the migrating space of the frontier meant for the Indians as follows:

> With the approach of the Civil War, pressures… were building up against the Cheyennes and Arapahos. According to the Horse Creek Treaty, rip-roaring, fast-growing Denver and all the Colorado mining camps…, the ranches spreading out along the trails, were squatting on their land. Federal agents therefore called them in council at Fort Lyon and persuaded a few peace chiefs… to sign a treaty on accepting a small reservation in southeastern Colorado. (1983, 190)

As the space of the whites kept rolling westward, the space of the Indians shrunk. Debo's other book, *And Still the Waters Run*, dealt with how the "life-long" treaties with the Indians were corrupted, by-passed and betrayed. The book was written in the 1930s, but many of the politicians who were involved in taking

away the land of the natives were still alive and active, and a strong political pressure prevented the publication of the book for several years.

Herbert Eugene Bolton was a historian who believed that it was not possible to study American history in separation from the histories of other nations that had positions in North America. Bolton focused primarily on the Spanish colonies and Mexico, and discussed the geographical discoveries and explorations of the Spaniards in today's Western United States. His work was continued by John Francis Bannon, a Jesuit and a twentieth-century historian. The title of Bannon's principal work is *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier 1513-1821*. Using both the terms "borderlands" and "frontier" in the title suggests that what he talks about is more than a simple political border; it is an oscillating cultural-social-civilizational-political phenomenon as well. It is likely that being a Jesuit contributed to Bannon's interest in Catholic Spaniards and Mexicans; it is certain that few historians approached the topic with the same empathy and sensitivity. The characteristic civilizational outpost of Spanish colonization was the mission; California was colonized through a chain of missions, and Bannon describes how the Spaniards proceeded towards the interior of the continent as follows:

> Not all Spanish activity in Texas during… the eighteenth century was concentrated in central and eastern areas of the province. There was some attempt after earlier exploration, to hold missionize, and civilize the rugged area on both sides of the Rio Grande southward from El Paso del Norte to San Juan Bautista. Out of this came the beginnings of the development of the La Junta country around the point of juncture of the Rio Conchos with the Rio Grande. The Presidio del Norte was established there to protect the missions on both sides of the Rio Grande. (1993, 139)

That is how the Spanish frontier moved slowly to meet the American one in the middle of the continent. The importance of the Spanish presence in the territory of what is today the U.S. was also recognised by the great historian of the prairie, Walter Prescott Webb, who also discussed the relationship of the Spanish colonizers and the native Americans: "Considering the Spanish frontier system itself, we find therein several subsidiary factors which throw much light on the problem of the relation set up between the Spaniards and the Plains Indians" (1981, 118). The space of Indians shrank from both directions. Webb also uses the term "frontier" in reference to the complex but transitory cultural-civilizational situation along the lines of Spanish civilization in North America.

Webb describes how the Anglo frontier proceeded west, after taking over the territories of the Indians and Spaniards: "the wire fences continued to creep westward. Long-headed cattlemen… began to acquire all the land they could, and

to fence all they dared and were able. Their fences often included their own land, leased land, government land which they could not lease…" (1981, 238).

Discourses of the "Migrating Space" 2: the Frontier in Literature

In the long process of the conquest of North America a set of mutual stereotypes and negative clichés developed in the competing peoples, Anglos, Mexicans, Indians, Mestizos, French and others. Here is an example from George Emery, showing how the Anglos looked upon the Mexicans: "A ragged, dirty Mexican, whose matted hair was a model of cactus-fence, whose tattered blanket served to make more evident his nakedness, an unmistakable, unredeemed 'greaser'" (1971, 35).

Many such descriptions about dirty "greasers," that is Mexicans, are found in Anglo literature. The Mexicans and Indians – and also some Anglo authors – condemned the greedy, ruthless, insensitive capitalism of the Anglos, who took away the land of the Natives and of the Spaniards/Mexicans as well.

But no matter what they thought about each other, there was one thing in common in the literary descriptions of the land. The frontier, the space in which people existed, is beautiful – a land of enchantment that attracted immigrants like a magnet.

Emery himself described California as an earthly paradise. Helen Hunt Jackson in her *Ramona* also provides similar descriptions about California:

> Between the veranda and the river meadows [...] all was garden, orange grove, and almond orchard; the orange grove always green, never without snowy bloom or golden fruit; the garden never without flowers, summer or winter; and the almond orchard, in early spring, a fluttering canopy of pink and white petals, which [...] looked as rosy sunrise clouds had fallen, and become tangled in the tree-tops. On either hand stretched away other orchards, peach, apricot, pear, apple, pomegranate; and beyond these, vineyards. Nothing was to be seen but verdure or bloom or fruit, at whatever time of the year. (1970, 19)

The mild and pleasant climate of California, the beauty of the land surprised the newcomers who arrived from the East, and that, together with the opportunities in mining, hunting, farming, industry and recently in the service sector, continues to attract immigrants from Mexico and other countries even today. Richard Dokey in a short story describes the arrival of a Mexican immigrant to the Sierra Nevada in the following passage:

> '*Adónde vamos*?' Eugenio had asked. 'Where are we going?'
> '*Bellísima*,' Juan replied. 'Into much loveliness.' (1971, 73)

The "loveliness" of South California was in sharp contrast with Juan Sánchez's original home in the dry, dreary, hopeless Mexican semi-desert. It is, however, not only California that is praised in a similar manner. From the earliest descriptions the natural beauty and the vastness and the wealth offered by the new continent are admired by the traveller. John Smith talks about Virginia in his *A Description of New England*:

> if an Angell should tell you [that] any place yet vnknowne can afford such fortunes; you would not beleeue him, no more than Columbus was beleeued there was any such Land as is now the well known abounding *America*; much lesse such large Regions as are yet vknowne, […] where were courses for gentlemen […] more suiting their qualities… (1990, 10)

The land of opportunities, offering a wide variety of fish, game and fruit to those who "for the most part had little but bread and vinegar" (1990, 10), and offering land to those who had never had a patch of land of their own, offering political and religious peace to those who had been persecuted in Europe, Asia or elsewhere, the stretch of land between sea and shining sea has remained the most attractive space on Earth for centuries.

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Native American and Catholic Spaces in Leslie Marmon Silko's The Man to Send Rainclouds

Boróka PROHÁSZKA-RÁD

Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania
Institute of Humanities
boroprohaszka@yahoo.com

Abstract. My paper looks at Leslie Marmon Silko's short story The Man to Send Rainclouds as an emblematic text representing the intricate and complex relationship between two cultures and sets of values: the Native American and the Catholic. "They found him under a big cottonwood tree" – the story opens propelling us *in medias res* into the liminal sphere of a ritual that foreshadows a clash of the two cultural spheres. My reading proves how within this ritual space and time of old Teofilo's funeral the two seemingly hermetically closed cultural spheres yield to the subversive power of liminality and open up if not towards each other then towards a long-forgotten, or rather repressed common ground symbolically represented here by "the blue mountains in the west."

Keywords: Native American, Catholic, clash of values, ritual, liminality

I propose a discussion of Leslie Marmon Silko's The Man to Send Rainclouds in the context of the topic of our conference, discourses of space, for in my reading this short story displays the intricate and complex relationships of the multicultural and multireligious sphere of the Native American reservation illustrated in the liminal time and space structure created within the text.

I.

Talking about ritual processes, I rely on Victor Turner's theory of ritual dispersed throughout a huge number of his published volumes and studies. In his research and description of the African Ndembu society, Turner gradually turned toward defining and analyzing ritual as symbolic action that involves "prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine" (1967, 19), initiating and performing the passage of an individual from one state to another, from one identity to another, a transformation that is effected by the maneuvering of symbolic gestures, words, stories, and objects. Turner's interest lies predominantly in the middle phase of the ritual, defined by van Gennep as the liminal stage.[1] In *The Ritual Process* Turner argues that:

> The attributes of liminality or of the liminal personae ("threshold people") are necessarily ambiguous … Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon. (1969, 95)

Accordingly, those going through a liminal phase are considered to be different, outside the structure, even dangerous or contagious, "dead" from the point of view of the given social order. Liminality is perceived as a "no longer, not yet" state where ritual subjects are secluded and isolated (an isolation that might manifest geographically and socially). According to Turner, subjects of a ritual process are often hidden or disguised , said to be "in another place" as "they have physical but not social 'reality,' hence they have to be hidden, since it is a paradox, a scandal, to see what ought not to be there" (1967, 101). Ritual subjects are structurally invisible and ritually polluting, and their isolation and separation marks not only place but termporality as well. The time of ritual must be perceived as a period out of the ordinary flow of time, out of the chronological structure of quotidian social activities – a period when the supernatural invades the natural. Liminality means withdrawal from normal modes of existence and action. As rituals represent a passage from one position to another, they may be seen as possessing temporal structure; but as Turner suggests, the threshold phase is portrayed by its actors as being timeless where "the structural view of time is not

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[1] The term "liminal" comes from the Latin "limen" meaning "threshold."

applicable" (1974, 238), what Mircea Eliade calls "a time of marvels" (qtd. in Turner 1974, 239).

Ritual subjects "have physical but not social 'reality,' hence they have to be hidden" (Turner 1967, 101), they are ambiguous, and therefore, as Mary Douglas argues, society necessarily views them as ritually unclean and polluting (1966, 9). Threshold people "are not only structurally 'invisible' (though physically visible) and ritually polluting, they are very commonly secluded, partially or completely from the realm of culturally defined and ordered states" (Turner 1967, 98).

Rituals aim to reinforce order within a community by demonstrating – through various symbolic means and processes – its structure, mechanisms, and fundamental values. However, liminality representing a marginal, threshold state, one also has to take into account that, as Douglas argues, all margins are dangerous but also desired as being on the threshold is an empowering position: it is there that the liminal persona acquires "gnosis," a state of instruction where the one to be initiated reflects on the conditions and values of the centre (thought of as structure) revealed through the view from the margin, from a position of anti-structure. Thus, liminality not only reinforces the structure, but may also function as a state of meditation on the structure, on the quotidian order of things within the community, and might lead to a reassessment and re-evaluation of this given structure, recognition of its shortcomings and to a transformation of the entire order.

II.

"They found him under a big cottonwood tree" (Silko 1969, 33). With these words the story propels us *in medias res* into the action with an abrupt intrusion, and carries us in a fast rhythm through the events of one day, a narrative refracted by the division of the story into four cinematic snapshot-like episodes.[2] By the third sentence we are told that the old man in his faded Levi jacket and pants in the wide and sandy arroyo "had been dead for a day or more," and thus we enter a situation that requires ritualization in all cultures. The dead old man found near the

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[2] The use of the number four in the division of the text is emblematic and carries symbolic significance, four being the holy number of Pueblo Indians, the tribe Silko comes from. Pueblos regard the number four as being the organizing principle and, in a certain sense, a force. Space is divided into four parts, there are four directions, time is measured by four units – day, night, month, year. Plants also have four parts, and there are four elements of the sky – the sky itself, the sun, the moon and the stars. In their philosophy, human life is also divided into four periods: childhood, youth, maturity and old age; men have four fundamental virtues: brevity, power to endure, generosity and fidelity, and so do women: skillfulness, hospitality, loyalty, and fertility. Pueblo Indians believe that there are four caves, four levels in the depths of the earth. People come from the deepest, darkest of these levels, and in order to reach the light, they have to travel through all these four levels of caves (cf. Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1994, 28-33).

sheep camp becomes the subject of a ritual of separation of the dead from the community of the living, and both the time and space of the action to take place transform into the period and setting of such a ceremony. Ken and Leon step into the secluded area of the small grove and once they find the body they immediately become active agents of ritual liminality performing the elements of what Turner calls "the prescribed formal behavior" of such a rite.

In *The Forest of Symbols* Turner differentiates among the components of such liminal behavior the "communication of the sacra" that involves the exhibition of sacred object ("what is shown"), as well as actions ("what is done"), and instructions ("what is said") delivered by the active agents of the rite (1967, 99-108). Accordingly,

> Leon took a piece of string out of his pocket and tied a small gray feather in the old man's long white hair. Ken gave him the paint. Across the brown wrinkled forehead he drew a streak of white and along the high cheekbones he drew a strip of blue paint. He paused and watched Ken throw pinches of corn meal and pollen into the wind that fluttered the small gray feather. Then Leon painted with yellow under the old man's broad nose, and finally, when he had painted green across the chin, he smiled.
> "Send us rain clouds, Grandfather." (Silko 1969, 33)

This description of what is shown, what is done, and what is said, most emphatically what is said, namely "Send us rain clouds, Grandfather" illustrates the complexity of this ritual. Seemingly paradoxically, the future is strongly associated with the dead person who has a duty to fulfill.[3] Throwing pollen into the wind, and later Louise's and other clanspeople's sprinkling of corn meal around the body, the instruction given to the departed "Send us rainclouds" and their asking the Catholic priest to sprinkle holy water upon his grave so that he might have plenty of water and thus be able to follow these instructions suggest from this outset of the ritual that within this belief system and ritual process the dead are perceived in a different manner than by Christianity, and more specifically, Catholicism. This type of intermingling of a funeral ritual with elements obviously linked to rituals of purification and fertility shows that the aim of the ceremony is not simply separating the dead from the living, or purifying the space of the living from the pollution occurred by the death of a member of the community, but linking the living with the dead and strengthening their connection to the land. For Native Americans believe that the departed souls are always within and part of the people

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[3] Throughout the story, allusions to the future are continuously linked to old Teofilo: "So he won't be thirsty," "we just want him to have plenty of water," "he thought if he could remember he might understand this," "now the old man could send them big thunderclouds for sure."

on earth, that they still bear responsibilities towards those still living on earth and that they often come back in the form of rain to bless the land and their people (cf. Allen 1983, 132).[4]

The universe that we enter reads as the "wide, sandy arroyo" with the sheep camp, then we move with Leon, Ken and the body of old Teofilo to the sandy Pueblo road with grey dust on it, and later in the graveyard we step onto "the dry cold sand of the New Mexico mesa." All these elements of space are related to each other by their dryness and dustiness. This is a landscape, a suggestive background of the story that is not very generous: the soil is frozen, yellow, dry tumbleweeds to be seen everywhere, and a cold, dry wind blowing, a ground so dry that the holy water sprinkled on the grave "disappeared almost before it touched the dim, cold sand" (Silko 1969, 35).

When discussing the complexity of the funeral ritual interfused with elements of fertility rites, and within such geography it is important to specify that Native Americans do have a special relationship to the land, they believe in the unity of person and land. "We are the land" – is the fundamental idea that permeates Native American philosophy, belief, mentality and life. The land is not really a place separate from people, where one would act out the drama of his/her isolate destiny. For Native Americans the earth is being: aware, palpable, intelligent, alive (cf. Allen 1983, 128). Not only the story discussed here, but Silko's entire oeuvre centres around this relationship.[5] The barrenness of the land is always associated with or doubled in the illness or existential crisis of people, and healing occurs when men realize and act out their fundamental unity with the land. Her *The Storyteller* is a collection of poems, stories, photos and ethnographic texts that grow out of each other never breaking the strong interrelatedness of the different genres and always focusing on the threefold structure of land-story-people that

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[4] Rain is the universal symbol of heaven's influence upon earth, being at the same time a symbol of fertility which explains the enormous number of rites to bring rain. In Native American traditions rain is the semen of the god of thunder, it is the fertilizing sperm in the Sky-Earth relationship. Rain will fertilize the earth and purify the soul and the body of humans; thus, death is a blessing upon people and not their destruction.

[5] Her first novel, *Ceremony*, is the tragic story of the Laguna Pueblo Reservation that lies near Los Alamos where in the 1950s uranium was discovered. Companies were sent there to test radio-activity and atomic bomb tests were done there. The Native American tribes living near Los Alamos received money to compensate for the damages caused by the pollution. *Ceremony* deals with this situation placing Native American myths in contrast with contemporary American culture, which is blamed for destroying the Earth, but also suggesting that Native American culture, myth, legend and belief hold the possibility of healing. In *Ceremony* the protagonist's illness is a result of the separation from the ancient unity of person, ceremony, and land; while his healing is a result of his recognition of this unity. The land is dry because the earth is suffering from the alienation of part of herself: her children have been torn from her in their minds.

Another rather grim Silko text is also located in Arizona, in Tucson: *Almanac of the Dead*. It shows Tucson as a land burned by atomic experiments and drugs from Latin America.

forms an organic entity. She motivated this interrelatedness in an address delivered at the yearly meeting of the Modern Language Association arguing that "where I come from – thus according to Pueblo beliefs – the words most highly valued are those spoken by heart. Written words are suspect" (qtd. in Allen 1983,). Silko follows the pattern of oral tradition of the culture of her people adopting thus a synthetic, unifying perspective, not a structuralist one, a perspective including the whole of nature, creation, and history. Hers is a pragmatic approach, which says that words are not alone, they are not isolated by the speaker, but are always in context in the stories. These stories bring people together, Silko asserts, emphasizing the importance of storytelling, which is seen as a means of cohesion, a way of exchanging experiences with past generations. In *Ceremony* the healing of the protagonist and that of the land result from the reunification of land and individual; the protagonist is healed when he understands that his existence is one with the existence of the land. And this understanding occurs slowly as he lives the stories – those ancient and those new alike. He heals through the process of making the stories manifest in his actions, for the stories and the land are interlinked: in fact, stories are the communication device of the land. Through stories the gap between isolate human beings and lonely landscape is closed (cf. Allen 1983).

Furthermore, Laguna Indians perceive the land as being feminine, but not simply equating earth-bearing-grain with woman-bearing-child. Lagunas associated the essential nature of femininity with the creative power of thought, so the equation is more like earth-bearing-grain, goddess-bearing-thought, woman-bearing-child. This thought is the kind that results in physical manifestation of phenomena: mountains, lakes, creatures; it is a kind of thought-force. The goddess thinks all into being:

> Thought-Woman, the spider
> named things and
> as she named them
> they appeared.
> She is sitting in her room
> thinking of a story now.
> I'm telling you the story
> she is thinking. (Silko 1977, 1)

The fragility of the world results from its origin and existence as thought. Both land and human beings partake in the same kind of existence, for both are thoughts in the mind of the goddess. And her thoughts are expressed in stories which become thus ceremonies of cosmic significance.

Within the above context, old Teofilo's funeral ritual bears major, existential importance. The dryness, the illness of the Pueblo becomes thus the symbol of the

existential crisis of people living on this land; while the rain, water as the origin of life, the life element, a purifying and, at the same time, fertilizing element would offer healing not only to the dry arroyo, but also to people.[6]

After Leon and Ken's return to the Pueblo with the body of the old man, the ritual continues in the house of old Teofilo's family, with its screen door. This hermetically closed area now opens up for family and clanspeople for the Native American funeral that we are informed of in the form of flashbacks:[7]

> … the neighbors and clanspeople came quietly to embrace Teofilo's family and to leave food on the table because the gravediggers would come to eat when they were finished.
>
> Three
> The sky in the west was full of pale-yellow light. Louise stood outside with her hands in the pockets of Leon's green army jacket that was too big for her. The funeral was over, and the old men had taken their candles and medicine bags and were gone. She waited until the body was laid into the pickup before she said anything to Leon. She touched his arm, and he noticed that her hands were still dusty from the corn meal that she had sprinkled around the old man. (Silko 1969, 34)

Aiding old Teofilo from one state to another, from this between and betwixt position will also mean aiding the land and the community. This transformation is to be enacted and effected by the maneuvering of symbolic gestures, words and objects that the gathered Native American community performs stepping out of the conventional structure of the Pueblo, as Turner argues, into a sphere of ambiguity, of anti-structure.

The second component of liminality is identified by Turner in the ludic deconstruction and recombination of familiar cultural configurations, the exaggeration or distortion of characteristics of familiar objects, deviant or grotesque representations of states and identities, and strange appropriations of roles. These force the ritual subjects to think about their society, they provoke them to reflect on the basic values of their social, cultural and cosmological order, urging self-reflection and transformation of behavior and/or identity. Louise's suggestion that Leon should ask Father Paul, the young Catholic priest of the Pueblo to sprinkle old Teofilo's

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[6] For a discussion of rain as a symbol of purification and fertility, see Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1994, 107-117).

[7] The flashbacks also refer to other Native American rituals and ceremonies: Leon observes the moccasins that old Teofilo had made for the ceremonial dances in the summer; standing near the grave, the young Catholic priest of the Pueblo wonders if this whole ceremony is not "some perverse Indian trick – something they did in March to ensure a good harvest." (Silko 1969, 35)

grave with holy water implies her deconstruction of the strict exclusive behavior and customs of her clan and her desire to exaggerate those symbolic gestures that would assure the success of the ritual, not considering the fact that it would distort thus a rite of the Catholic church:

> … I had been thinking about something.
> About what?
> About the priest sprinkling holy water for Grandpa. So he won't be thirsty. (Silko 1969, 34)

Even though originally Leon discards Father Paul's inquiry of old Teofilo's whereabouts with simply saying "We were just out to the sheep camp. Everything is O.K. now" (Silko 1969, 33), in order to assure themselves of the success of the ritual, they open towards another sphere of the Pueblo physically, geographically, socially and culturally just as isolated and closed as theirs. This space is represented by the house of the priest with its carved door with symbols of the Lamb – a subtle allusion to the correlation between old Teofilo, the shepherd, and the young Catholic priest as the pastor, the shepherd of God's herd –, the patio and the nuns' cloister with heavy curtains on the windows impossible to see through, and the church the entrance of which is so low that one has to stoop to fit through it. The relationship of these closed areas (the first one representing the closeness of the milieu of the reservation, the second symbolizing the isolation of the priest and nuns from the community of the Pueblo, as well as the rigidity of Catholic dogma) may be best represented graphically:
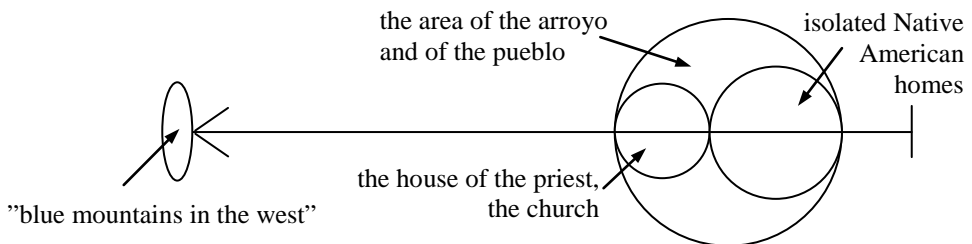
Father Paul, formerly excluded from the seclusion of the funeral ritual's space, is invited into this betwixt and in-between sphere and asked to actively partake in it by performing a symbolic gesture. First the young priest is reluctant and rigid, unwilling to step into the liminal experimental space of the Native ritual, referring to Catholic ritual as the "prescribed formal behavior" of his own religion and culture: "You know I can't do that, Leon. There should have been the Last

Rites and a funeral Mass at the very least" (Silko 1969, 33). But realizing his ultimate failure to connect to the community (as his own statement proves in the very first episode of the short story: "I hope I'll be seeing you at Mass this week – we missed you last Sunday. See if you can get old Teofilo to come with you" (Silko 1969, 33), and given the fact that death as a polluting factor requires his assistance – in his own culture as well – in the separation and purification of his "parish," he decides to venture into this threshold marginal sphere where authority does not lie with him. Turner identifies the third component of such liminal spheres in the simplification of the relations of the social structure characterized by the authority of the ritual instructors and the submission and passivity of the initiands. In this funeral ceremony Father Paul becomes himself a neophyte who is to submit and subject himself and symbolic elements of his own set of rituals to the authority of a Native community.

Through the compromise that the priest is willing to make, and this intermingling of the elements of the two separate religions, we witness a change in the spatial structure of the Pueblo that proves the inverse of what usually characterizes processes taking place in ritual settings: while normally within a ritual we witness the seclusion, separation, isolation of the ritual subjects and a clear demarcation and separation of the ritual space, here liminality as a period of ambiguity and experimentation, induces an opening of the isolated grounds of the two cultures, they yield to liminality's subversive power:

Catholic sphere   Native American
                                   sphere

"blue mountains in the west"
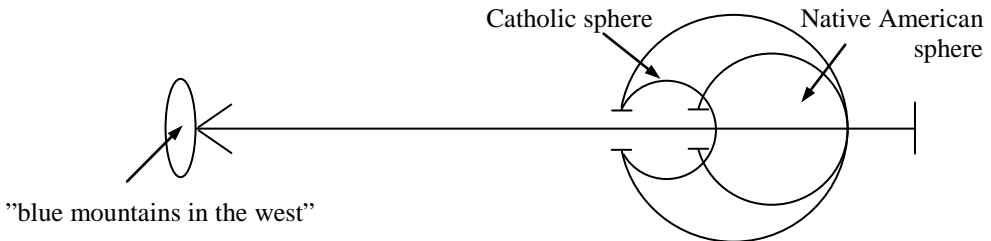
Once Father Paul steps into the ritual space of the graveyard, he is overtaken by the ambiguity and indeterminacy, as well as the grotesque manifest in this liminal process. In conformity with Turner's argument about ritual subjects needing to be hidden or disguised, socially invisible, Teofilo, the subject of the ritual has been represented as shrinking throughout this process: "He looked small and shriveled, and after they dressed him in the new shirt and pants he seemed more shrunken" (Silko 1969, 34), then the only thing remaining visible are "the new moccasins… nearly hidden by the red blanket" (Silko 1969, 34). By the time the priest is to sprinkle the grave and the dead with holy water, he seems to have disappeared leaving Father Paul wondering:

He looked at the red blanket, not sure that Teofilo was so small, wondering if it wasn't some perverse Indian trick – something they did in March to ensure a good harvest – wondering if maybe old Teofilo was actually at sheep camp corralling the sheep for the night. But there he was, facing into the cold dry wind and squinting at the last sunlight, ready to bury a red wool blanket. (Silko 1969, 35)

Though hesitant, conscious of the fact that Leon and Louise regard this rite as a means of assuring themselves that old Teofilo will have enough water and will send them rainclouds, that they consider it an element of their burial-fertility ritual; even doubting whether or not there is a corpse he takes part in the process and enacts the symbolic gesture, still remaining an outsider among his parishioners "in shadow," "a pile of jackets, gloves, and scarves in the yellow, dry tumbleweeds that grew in the graveyard" (Silko 1969, 35).

This outsider position seems to suggest the ritual's role in strengthening the given structure of the community, a reinforcement of the mechanisms of their coexistence without any real interaction, lacking even the willingness on either side to understand, accept and collaborate with the other. However, as Turner and Douglas argue, the margin, the sphere of rituals within which the ordinary flow of time is suspended and where space metamorphoses into a between and betwixt position, into the sphere of anti-structure, always also yields to the possibility of questioning, reassessing and re-evaluating the given social order and one's position and relationships within it, of reflecting upon and rearranging the given community's values and ordering principles. This is the space where the supernatural invades the natural, where the obscure and ambiguous will dominate and subvert the concrete and seemingly finite.

As the time structure of the story about the dead Teofilo paradoxically showed us an opening towards the future exactly in and through the figure of the dead, we also notice a continuous reference in the space structure towards an outer space, namely the west. The term "west" appears quite often in the text – always connected with the sky or the "blue mountains": "high and northwest the blue mountains were still deep in snow," "the sky in the west was full of pale-yellow light," "the sun was approaching the long mesa where it disappeared during the winter," "only half the sun was visible above the mesa," "there he was… squinting at the last sunlight," "Leon turned to look up at the high blue mountains in the deep snow that reflected a faint red light from the west."

These blue mountains have a special symbolic significance within the liminal sphere created in the text. The colour blue, besides being the colour of the "sky stone" of Native Americans, the turquoise, is the symbol of divinity, it dematerializes everything; but, being the colour of the Virgin, it also stands for Catholicism (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1994, 79-82). At the same time, taking into

account also Thomas Mann's argument, according to whom "the sea and the mountains … are not earthly territories but in their final and desolate greatness they are elements" (1970), we may assert that the mountains as such do not form a real landscape, they are out of time, they open up towards endlessness. Man's relationship with the mountains is not an intimate one; they raise the feeling of fear and respect. The "blue mountains in the west" symbolize, in fact, divinity, the transcendental, a complex spiritual sphere: on the one hand, Native American spirituality, on the other hand, Catholic belief.

Within the ritual of Teofilo's funeral the Native American milieu opens towards this "western" spiritual sphere with the aim of finding healing (in the form of rain). And once Father Paul, with his eyes squinting in the last sunlight of the west, sprinkles holy water onto the grave of the old Indian, he is reminded of something which "he tried to remember … because he thought if he could remember he might understand this" (Silko 1969, 36) – the whole sphere opens up towards these "blue mountains in the west," a symbol shared by both value-systems and beliefs.
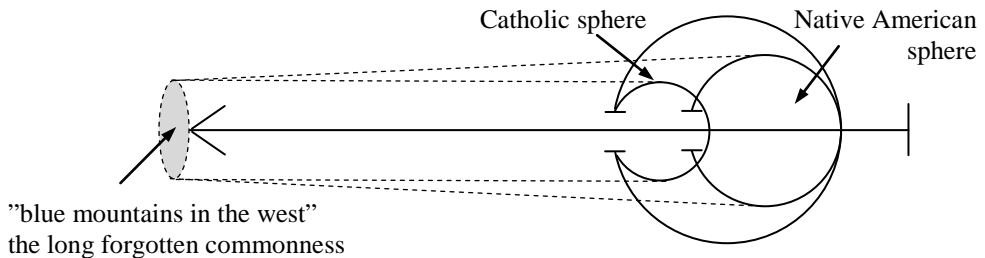
The priest senses the presence of something buried deep in unconsciousness – personal, cultural, of humankind – that if remembered could help him understand the whole odd situation. And as liminality is the sphere within which liminal personae acquire "gnosis," where they test and analyze the conditions of the "centre" and might come to the recognition of a need for change, we may conclude that in the image of the "blue mountains in the west" Silko creates a space where Teofilo's ritual of separation and his funeral might lead to a reintegration more profound than Leon or Louise might think of, that Father Paul though senses, does not understand: a long forgotten commonness, a transcendental universality of human nature.

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Space, Travel, Freedom:
A Comparative Reading of African American and Hungarian Roma Narratives

Tamás DEMÉNY

Budapest Business School
Institute of Languages and Communication
demeny_tamas@yahoo.com

Abstract. African American life narratives have been shaped by the traditional structure of slave narratives, revolving around a well directed movement from the South to the North in search of freedom and well-being. Some twentieth-century African American autobiographers use the same structure to emphasize the continuing lack of freedom, while others self-consciously reject this structure to claim their freedom in different ways. Roma life narratives are backgrounded by the traditional travelling lifestyle. Travelling and movement thus become signs of freedom and independence in some narratives, while others reject these images and claim their space and belonging within the majority society's structures.

Keywords: Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, Menyhért Lakatos, Hilda Péliné Nyári

1. Introduction

My comparative study of African American and Hungarian Roma life narratives is centred on images of space, as traditional notions of escape and travel are used, rejected, and transformed in twentieth-century literature. The existing rich literary scholarship on African American literature can be used to better understand Roma narratives and their grapples with issues of travel, space, and freedom. This comparison, therefore, is not based on any – real or imagined – cultural or social similarities, but purely on the literary techniques of utilizing images of space for expressing quests for freedom and equality.

African American literary traditions developed in the American context, therefore, a short introduction into the understanding of space and travel in American literary tradition is necessary to understand the structure of slave narratives, which in turn background all twentieth-century African American life narratives. For further study, I chose Richard Wright's (1998) and Zora Neale Hurston's (2006) autobiographical writings, titled *Black Boy* and *Dust Tracks on a Road*, respectively. Both of these authors wrote in the 1940s about living conditions in the American Southern states during the first half of the twentieth century, beset by the so-called Jim Crow laws of legal racial segregation, as well as other forms of discrimination and racial intolerance. Both Wright and Hurston are well aware of their literary backgrounds, but they use different approaches to talk about their searches for freedom. Wright's book follows closely the slave narrative structure, centring on images of bondage and attempts to escape. Hurston, on the other hand, attempts to find her own assertions of freedom and equality within the confines of the Southern space itself.

From among Hungarian Roma life narratives, I have chosen Menyhért Lakatos's *Smoky Pictures* (2000) and Hilda Péliné Nyári's *My Little Life* (1996) in order to study their use of space and travel in formulating their experiences of freedom and ethnic relations. They also describe growing up in the first half of the twentieth century, backgrounded by various Gypsy traditions, but experiencing the economic and social tensions of the 1930s. Lakatos's narrative revolves around notions of travel – recalling images of travelling Gypsies – but only to assert his own very different search for freedom, centred on education and intellectual work. Péliné, much like Hurston, insists on creating her own space of freedom within the confines of her world's realities.

2. Space and freedom in the American context

In *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison (1993) examines the role of the Africanist persona in constructing American notions of freedom and opportunity. Early immigrants to America believed in a future of freedom unprecedented in the world. The continent offered the material and social opportunities that promised genuine freedom, unprecedented wealth, and a pure society to make God's law manifest. "One could be released from a useless, binding, repulsive past into a kind of history-lessness, a blank page waiting to be inscribed. Much was to be written there" (Morrison 1993, 35). But the sudden abandonment of European rules, history, and social order also created a sense of fear: "Americans' fear of being outcast, of failing, of powerlessness; their fear of boundarylessness, of Nature unbridled and crouched for attack, their fear of the absence of so-called civilization; their fear of loneliness, of aggression" (1993, 37). And nothing was more perfect to develop the exploration of this fear associated with sudden "freedom" than slavery: "The concept

of freedom did not emerge in vacuum. Nothing highlighted freedom – if it did not in fact create it – like slavery" (1993, 38).

Considering the same issues of early notions of freedom in America, Myra Jehlen (1986) emphasizes the importance of the continent's geographical dimensions. In Europe, historical transformations of the society have made any social system relative: "the bourgeoisie could only claim to rule it *better* – and thus already in laying its claim conceded its relativity" (Jehlen 1986, 9). In America, on the other hand, the previously "empty" continent "did not connote society, or history, but indeed in its natural parameters, geography; [thus,] incarnate in the continent, the elsewhere embattled ideal of liberal individualism established itself in America as simply a description of things not only as they are but as they manifestly need to be" (Jehlen 1986, 5). This "incarnation" of the new ideals and social order into the American continent is based on the possibility of growth without change: A large enough space can accommodate all sorts of people and ways of life, without having to renounce any one of them. Transformation that takes place over time necessarily replaces one system with another, while changes in space can be added to the already existing principles. This enables theories, in this case the belief in free individualism, to survive even in the face of opposing practices: "[O]utside of time, opposites can cohabit indefinitely, unchanged and independent, if only their common space can be made large enough" (Jehlen 1986, 12).

Myra Jehlen's idea of American freedom based on the "expandability" of the continent and Morrison's theory of American freedom being defined against black slavery are not opposites but complementary. From Jehlen's argument, it can be seen how Southern slavery could exist without compromising principles of individual freedom. But it was not a simple cohabitation of differing ideas. White freedom, as Morrison argues, was defined against black slavery. But this was only possible by limiting slavery not only to blacks but also to certain well-delimited spaces. The geographical division between the free North and the slave-holding South *theoretically* made freedom a possibility for all. Just as an escape from Europe established the freedom of the traditional American individual, an escape from the South could free the African slave. The most important element of freedom was thus assumed (pretended) to be not racial, social, or gender privilege, but rather the ability to place oneself in a free geographical space. The social injustices of Europe and the slavery of the South, as bad as they were, were confined to specific locations. Freedom, on the other hand, was based on the possibility of infinite expansion in America, on the ability to move to one's most advantageous place of abode. The problem of slavery was thus confined geographically, allowing the universal principles of individualism to flourish even in its midst.

While slave narratives describe a genuine search for freedom, these accounts generally conform to the definitions of freedom just highlighted. The geographical travel from the slave-holding South to the free North is coincident with a journey

towards freedom described in other stories of rugged individualism. Beth Maclay Doriani explains that in the male slave narrative "the narrator traditionally built his story around a presentation of himself that emphasized, for the most part, the qualities valued and respected by white men: courage, mobility, rationality, and physical strength" (1991, 203). It was a story of humanity lost and then regained, humanity being defined by the prevailing concepts of American male identity, valorising rugged individuality, physical strength, and geographical mobility. As the escaping slaves "claim their humanity by separating themselves from other slaves and fleeing to the free northern states" (Foster 1993, 95), they do not simply undertake a geographical journey towards freedom, but also – unwittingly – reinforce the system of slavery which is dependent upon this geographical division. While an escape is certainly an economic loss to the owner and a victory for the hero, it does not disturb the basic set-up of the situation.

Many twentieth-century African American autobiographies build largely on the structure of slave narratives, in part because of the cultural background and in part because economic and social conditions inspired many blacks to migrate from the South to the North, most notably during the 1920s, the years that became known as the Great Migration. And while Northern cities provided jobs and more equality to most African Americans, the mass migrations to the North had far-reaching consequences both in shattering Southern communities and in increasing racial intolerance in Northern cities with changing ethnic ratios. It is in this context that both Wright and Hurston describe their lives, dominated by issues of discrimination in the South and the ever-present lure of possibilities in the North.

3. Wright: "I am completely free, I have no roots"

Richard Wright's *Black Boy* is structured after slave narratives: the quest for freedom is played out in the spatial arena of what is called "Southern Night" in the first half of the book, with the hero's desire and ambition to move to the more positively perceived North. His well-planned and adventurous "escape" to the North is followed by descriptions of life there. Dubek considers the book a "revision of the slave narrative" (2008, 537), while Butterfield notes that "all the elements of slave narrative structure are present" (1974, 156). Using this structure, the author does not only align himself with the literary tradition of nineteenth-century black writers, but also suggests that the South of his time is not much better than it had been under slavery. However, the story eventually veers away from this traditional structure, as Richard does not find freedom in the North. His first contacts with the Communist Party are described in terms similar to the slave narratives' descriptions of the abolitionist and Quaker societies, experiences of truly equal and brotherly communities. Ruptures and tensions within the Party, however, force Richard to realize not only its political downsides, but also rampant discrimination and racial

prejudice in Northern communities. His further travels take him to France, but the geographical search for a free space is ended. He successfully deconstructs the notions of escape and free areas by celebrating his rootlessness and turning to art in portraying issues of race, discrimination, and freedom.

Even though rampant racism and discrimination warrants the parallels between the slave-holding South of the nineteenth century and the South of the early twentieth century, the role of space within the South itself has undergone much change. Walter Benn Michaels traces the shift in the perception of race in the United States between 1890 and 1920. The strict divisions existing under the system of slavery had ensured that there would be no danger of crossing boundaries even if familiarities were allowed between blacks and whites (1992, 662), or extra rights were granted to "quality niggers … just as stuck up as their masters" (1992, 659). But the abolition of slavery and the rights granted to blacks during the Reconstruction Era did away with the absolute category of race; thus, it had to be redefined into a cultural category, the limits of which (both in geographical and social terms) had to be constantly strengthened (1992, 668). Michaels states that this led to "an insistence on racial inequality […] that] dissolved the sectional differences between North and South and replaced them with the racial difference between black and white, thus making possible the transsectional, white nation" (1992, 670).

Hence, we can see that the world described by Wright does not correspond to the spatial and racial set-up of the world of slave narratives. This introduces a number of tensions within the book, calling attention to new types of problems faced in the South and the different world of the North. The South is shown as a world where racial differences are indeed constantly reinforced. As spatial divisions between blacks and whites became less pronounced, common areas became increasingly more dangerous for blacks. They had to learn how to behave according to racial expectations at all times, since interracial meetings could take place anywhere. Race had to be interiorized. This is the process that Wright describes in *Black Boy*. For example, one day when his bicycle had a flat tire, Richard was offered a ride by a group of young white men. They even offered him a drink, which he declined by saying, "Oh, no!" This seemingly innocent sentence caused them to beat him up with the explanation: "'Nigger, ain't you learned no better sense'n that yet?' asked the man who hit me. 'Ain't you learned to say *sir* to a white man yet?'" (1998, 181). At another time, the police stopped him unexpectedly in a white neighbourhood. After searching his pockets and packages at gun-point, they explained, "Boy, tell your boss not to send you out in white neighbourhoods at this time of night" (1998, 182). Besides the terrible and violent aspects of these and other incidents, Wright does not fail to portray Richard's bafflement at the situation: "it was simply utterly impossible for me to calculate, to scheme, to act, to plot all the time. I would remember to dissemble for short periods, then I would forget and act

straight and human again, not with the desire to harm anybody, but merely forgetting the artificial status of race and class" (1998, 184-185). In Butterfield's words, with Richard "the process [of racial acculturation] does not 'take'" (1974, 158). While other blacks "laugh and talk," Richard openly states that "there's nothing much to say or smile about" (1998, 182).

The South from which Wright escaped was thus different from slaveholding times primarily because of unstable boundaries and unpredictability. Nevertheless, Wright maintains the slave narrative structure as Richard's "restless movement takes the form of flight to the North" (Butterfield 1974, 167). Robert J. Butler also links Wright to an earlier tradition: "the journey across the River Jordan celebrated by the spirituals, the odyssey down the road extolled by the blues" (1983, 5), but calling attention to the futility of escape as experienced by Wright: "conflicting images of motion and stagnation [are] presented in Wright's *Black Boy*" and "Wright's outer journey takes the form of a series of apparently random moves which end in paralysis" (1983, 9).

This paralysis is fully experienced in the North, as it does not deliver the coveted freedom from discrimination and racial prejudice. Rather, Richard has to experience discrimination even among his friends, who would not provide him with accommodation during a conference in New York. Wright describes his images of the North as an unfulfilled dream that had "symbolized to me all that I had not felt and seen; it had no relation whatever to what actually existed. Yet, by imagining a place where everything was possible, I kept hope alive in me" (1998, 168). The original published ending of *Part One: Southern Night*, emphasizes this even more: "I was now running more away from something than toward something. But that did not matter to me. My mood was: I've got to get away; I can't stay here" (1998, 412). These experiences and feelings of Richard correspond to the way Butler characterizes northward journeys during the Great Migration: "with bittersweet images […] moving vaguely North in search of new lives which may or may not be available to them" (1983, 5). The hopes and dreams the distant North meant for Wright and many of his Southern contemporaries had to be unlearnt. The image of America as a sprawling land of possibilities gave way to what Wright describes as a "sprawling land of unconscious suffering" (1998, 267). The traditional reaction of escape to freedom was replaced by the knowledge of limits:

> Slowly I began to forge in the depths of my mind a mechanism that repressed all the dreams and desires that the Chicago streets, the newspapers, the movies were evoking in me. I was going through a second childhood; a new sense of the limit of the possible was being born in me. (1998, 267)

The replacement of movement towards freedom by introspection about how to live with the limits is best illustrated by Wright's behaviour immediately after having been thrown out of the Chicago Communist Party:

> I sat alone in my narrow room, watching the sun sink slowly in the chilly May sky. I was restless. I rose to get my hat; I wanted to visit some friends and tell them what I felt, to talk. Then I sat down. Why do that? My problem was here, here with me, here in this room, and I would solve it here alone or not at all. Yet, I did not want to face it; it frightened me. I rose again and went out into the streets. Halfway down the block I stopped, undecided. Go back […] I returned to my room and sat again, determined to look squarely at my life. (1998, 383)

Thus, Wright uses the slave narrative structure in order to undermine the notion that one can escape to a free space. He gives up on finding a space where black people can be equal to whites, but he does not give up on freedom. For him, freedom becomes the inner independence of any tradition and any space, enabling him to "look squarely" at life and express himself in intellectual and artistic productions. Interestingly, he reaches back to the "history-lessness" studied by Morrison and Jehlen, but defines his freedom not through the American space but through being rootless: "At the close of a lecture in Paris, he once told a student: 'You see, the difference between the two of us is that I am completely free, I have no roots, whereas you are bound by European history and the tyranny of the place'" (Fabre 1985, 77).

4. Hurston: "Travel dust around the doorstep"

In Hurston's autobiographical writing, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, the notion of space plays a very important role, although in a manner very different from Wright's. Hurston self-consciously rejects the slave narrative paradigm from the outset by refusing to move away from the South. Rather than vying for an escape, she describes herself as a homeless wanderer, who nevertheless stays within the confines of the Southern space. In this way, she admits to the oppressive nature of her society, but she finds the fissures that allow her to explore her creativity and create her own home. Ultimately, she becomes an ethnographer in her own hometown, thus simultaneously staying at home and becoming a distant scientific observer. Annette Trefzer calls Hurston's appropriation of the oppressive Southern space for her own uses a "floating home" and an "unhomely home" (1998, 73). These expressions refer to the noticeable fact that "being at home in the South means to realize that the safety of home is an illusion, that within the protected boundaries of home there is poverty, violence and even terror … that the Southern

home − or any home − is never a matter of choosing safety over terror, or romance over reality; it is always both" (Trefzer 1998, 74).

Hurston's attitude to space and motion can best be described by notions of wandering. In Will Brantley's words, "the image Hurston creates of herself [is] a 'wanderer'" (1993, 195). And indeed, Hurston describes her childhood self in the following terms:

> The strangest thing about it was that once I found the use of my feet, they took to wandering. I always wanted to go. I would wander off in the woods alone, following some inside urge to go to places. This alarmed my mother a great deal. She used to say that she believed a woman who was an enemy of hers had sprinkled 'travel dust' around the doorstep the day I was born. […] I don't know why it never occurred to her to connect my tendency with my father, who didn't have a thing on his mind but this town and the next one. (2006, 23)

Even in this first description of her wanderings, we can see its provocative and dangerous nature. The mother is alarmed at Zora's restlessness, and with good reason, as the traditional American image of the dangerous woods suggests in the text. The comparison with her father only adds to the concern, as the book suggests elsewhere his infidelity and wayward character. This "inside urge" thus is "a challenging of the social constrictions of both gender and race [that also] implies a certain aimlessness" (Brantley 1993, 195). Later in life, Hurston does not revel in wandering. She emphasizes its painful nature, for example, after her mother's death: "That day began my wanderings. Not so much in geography, but in time" (2006, 89). Wandering thus becomes an image of both her strength and the South's inhospitableness.

Some critics view Hurston's descriptions of the South through her wanderings as a way of avoiding racial confrontations and obtaining popularity among white readers. For example, Pam Bordelon writes:

> "[s]he does not disclose in *Dust Tracks* how she felt the bitter divide of segregation, of having to share 'separate but equal' accommodations. […] To do so would have alienated her largely white audience. Instead Hurston was picking her way carefully through a loaded mine field of racial feelings, both hers and her liberal white readers." (1997, 16)

The image of picking her way carefully across a loaded mine field is an apt description of her wanderings and her writings, that are shown to be self-conscious, calculated, and careful. Lori Jirousek also notices an attempt to be at peace with whites: "Rather than salvaging a supposedly fading African American culture,

Hurston writes a hybrid text to reveal a hybrid and multi-directional cultural movement that far from threatening national stability, rather could enhance it" (2004, 418). However, what neither of these critics notices is that Hurston avoids open confrontations with race issues not in order to accept them, but rather to show her ability to wander around the obstacles raised in her path, and thus reinforce her freedom.

That wandering is as much defiance as a careful strategy is best seen in the incidents concerning her job search: "I was out of a job again. I got out of many more. Sometimes I didn't suit the people. Sometimes the people didn't suit me. Sometimes my insides tortured me so that I was restless and unstable. […] [A]imless wandering was on me" (2006, 97). So, her joblessness was sometimes caused by not being accepted, and sometimes by her not accepting others. By this, she suggests that her environment was not always hospitable, but neither did she give up all of her agency to shape it according to her wishes. Moreover, there was a torturing inside, suggesting both a strong self and a strong suffering. Two passages from the book further illustrate that rather than acquiescing to racial discrimination in the South, Hurston's text attempts to reclaim the Southern space, even within the confines that "sometimes" did not suit her.

The first passage is about the enclosed space of a barber shop, an iconic example of Jim Crow laws of racial segregation at work. While attending Howard University in Washington, Hurston worked at this shop, owned and operated by blacks, but catering solely to white "bankers, Senators, Cabinet Members, Congressmen, and Gentlemen of the Press" (2006, 131). One day, a black man entered and demanded a hair-cut and shave, in an obvious attempt to exercise his "right to be waited on wherever [he] please[d]" (2006, 135). Banks, the black manager, with the help of *all* the black employees, threw the black customer out of the shop. Serving a black person in a "whites only" barber shop would have meant losing all of their business. In a reflection that might seem a careful treading through mine fields of a hybrid text that enhances national stability, Zora Neale Hurston agrees with the manager's decision to maintain the status quo:

> It was only that night in bed that I analyzed the whole thing and realized that I was giving sanction to Jim Crow, which theoretically, I was supposed to resist. But here were ten Negro barbers, three porters and two manicurists all stirred up at the threat of our living through loss of patronage. Nobody thought it out at the moment. It was an instinctive thing. That was the first time it was called to my attention that self-interest rides over all sorts of lives. […] One sees it breaking over racial, national, religious and class lines. Anglo-Saxon against Anglo-Saxon, Jew against Jew, Negro against Negro. (2006, 135)

During her reflection at night, Zora wanders around the issue without coming down to a decisive but probably reductive "solution." She states, "[m]y business was threatened … I could leave school and begin my wanderings again" (2006, 136). Here, she mentions wandering with a negative connotation, showing that wandering is not her goal, but rather her way of going about achieving goals. During this wandering of her thoughts, Hurston certainly faces the issue head-front, opening herself up to the criticisms that she is being a conformist. By revealing the "torture" of her own contradictory feelings, she clearly illustrates a very important consideration: the pain that necessity imposes upon blacks. Unlike Wright, who "could not laugh and talk like the others," Hurston aligns herself with other blacks who act according to their instinctive defense mechanisms. And if Hurston's person in this passage – "giving sanction to Jim Crow" – is seen as similar to how everybody else acted, then her inner feelings of pain, doubt, and contradiction are probably also shared by many.

Further, the text itself does not condone segregation, but rather points out its divisive effects: it divides blacks for understandable reasons of self-interest. Rather than taking a clear stance by denouncing either the workers or the "freedom rider" in the barber shop, Hurston presents both sides of the issue, which is as likely to alienate both sides as it is to appease both sides. In an astute way, she manages to affirm racial equality in the very passage which seems to give sanction to Jim Crow laws of segregation. By turning her thoughts to self-interest, she emphasizes a common trait of all races, as well as a reason for divisions within the races. In this way, she breaks into pieces well-defined structures, stereotypes, and boundaries, and calls attention to other connections and limits not usually mentioned in this context.

The other passage that illustrates Hurston's understanding and use of the Southern space is the description of black people travelling on public buses and trains. In a chapter titled "My People! My People!" she contrasts two kinds of black people travelling on a bus or a train: a "well-mannered Negro [finds] other Negroes on there with their shoes off, stuffing themselves with fried fish, bananas and peanuts, and throwing the garbage on the floor. […] The offenders may be 'loud-talking' the place, and holding back nothing of their private lives, in a voice that embraces the entire coach" (2006, 177). Later, Hurston reflects on the situation again: "Certain of My People have come to dread railway day coaches for this same reason. […] They detest the forced grouping" (2006, 237). The enclosed space of the segregated coach is a place of rupture within the black race, an embarrassing stand-off between the behaviour of the uneducated and the norms of the educated. Rather than taking sides in the issue or at least lamenting over the divisions imposed on blacks by social necessities, Hurston celebrates this division with the humorous notion of "My People! My People!" recalling contrasts and contradiction within her culture and her self that can only be explained by the statement, "God made them duck by duck" (2006, 191). She takes the dividing line

from between blacks and whites, puts it between two types of black behaviour, and makes them both funny. Thus, she does not erase the dividing line itself, but points out its arbitrary nature.

The "dust tracks" in Hurston's title amply illustrate her appropriation of the Southern space. Dust does not simply mean walking in the poverty of the earth or a valorisation of the underclass. It also means a sort of temporality and oblivion, the ability to create one's own tracks in forbidden territory without being given away by permanent marks. Nevertheless, the tracks she herself created in the South – around her own doorstep – by calling attention to folk and cultural values – as well as individual values – seem to have gained permanence in the rich following she has in contemporary black literature (Walker 1984).

5. Lakatos: "Sorry for not being a tree"

Lakatos builds on and celebrates Roma traditions of travel and freedom, but shows how those traditions cannot work any more in his life. In contrast to the free-roaming past of his grandparents' generation, he and his parents live in the Roma enclosure ironically called "Gypsy Paris." While this enclosed space is a place of poverty, discrimination, and destitution, the hero's attempts to leave are shown as futile. In that sense, the trajectory of Lakatos's escape is similar to Wright's: the received traditions of freedom through travel and escape are celebrated but also rejected as inappropriate in the present conditions. The impossibility to find freedom through travel or escape does not legitimize the living conditions in Gypsy Paris any more than Wright's disappointment in the North legitimizes the South. As Wright moved his search for freedom from the level of geographical escape to a sense of intellectual rootlessness, so does Lakatos position himself as an intellectual chronicler and adviser of his Roma people.

Smoky Pictures opens with a description of the memories of a "free-roaming" past, a time when the protagonist's grandfather still lived the traditional life of travelling Gypsies, defying the national boundaries and social constraints of the territory in which they lived. Lakatos aligns his feelings with the old lady, Liza, who told him tales about this past: "We were a people whose blood had the fire of life in it; neither the winds nor the winters, cruel as they were, could extinguish its flames" (2000, 7). The Gypsy travels of the past symbolize freedom for the writer of the book, even if in reality that lifestyle might have been lived out of necessity and poverty at the time. The symbolism of the sea in the stories of another old lady, Mámi, is very important to the author, who lived in landlocked Hungary: "We travelled from the great water to the great water. Mámi never used the word 'sea,' perhaps she did not even know the word. She only said, 'bári pályi.' […] She talked about her ancestors as the embodiments of bravery and brains" (2000, 9). Even accounts of stealing in the past are made heroic in the novel, symbolizing the

freedom of a people who could defy the traditional, settled societies of the time, but having their own spatial divisions and laws. "The territory of the clans (*dolmutas*) is the area from where they pilfer gold, horses, and clothes. […] Why would any clan take any other's territory? We never went to any other clan's territory. Let them try, they would face the 'kriszi' and learn what Gypsy law means" (2000, 14-15).

In sharp contrast to the past thus described, Lakatos grows up in the enclosed area of Gypsy Paris. The description of life in this slum shows clearly how society had circumscribed and delimited the Gypsy population, so as to control it. Several incidents demonstrate that the boundaries of this enclosed space were directly and indirectly guarded, so as to keep their inhabitants inside as much as possible. Even the post-office clerk's voice "sounded like that of a sheriff" (2000, 22) when Gypsies entered. When a group of Roma children go and sing Christmas carols, they get a basketful of "gift" from one of the houses, which turns out to be "sheep-shit" (2000, 69). As he travels on the train, Lakatos is yelled at: "This is the students' coach, hey!" (2000, 95), and at school he is made fun of even when the teacher speaks kindly to him: "So, let us ask our little Negro, can he tell us whether…" (2000, 39). The sheriff and the police sometimes raided Gypsy Paris on account of some theft in the neighbourhood, but the purpose was usually not to find the actual perpetrators, but only to wreak havoc and instill fear in them (2000, 55). Even the doctor refused to enter the enclosure, and would stop at the edge when called to the sick: "'Is he alive?' he would ask. 'Why didn't he come himself to see me? Call me only after he is dead'" (2000, 118).

In spite of the oppressive nature of living in Gypsy Paris, Lakatos realizes that escape or a return to the traditional lifestyle does not solve the problem. Bada, who tries to live the life of a traveller, pilfering horses and clothes from Romania and selling them in Hungary, is portrayed as a negative character. Bada embodies many Gypsy stereotypes, such as trickiness, a predilection to stealing, and irresponsibility. When living with Bada for a while, Lakatos criticizes that lifestyle. The feeling of freedom associated with timeless roaming around in nature is clearly checked by the hero's awareness of the impossibility to escape from the constraints of present-day society: "No. No, because this way – I was looking for the correct ideas – is the way of escape. – I had to smile at this untrue, meaningless idea. The way of escape? This? I shook my head as I was feeling sorry for my own faults. To escape from this world? Where to?" (2000, 149).

In a strange reversal of the travelling lifestyle, Lakatos redefines his own sense of space when he wishes to become a tree:

> I don't know what Bada was thinking about. I was sorry for not being a tree, one among the many her, standing here for perhaps a hundred years, strong, hard, getting higher and higher to see farther and farther. What other goal can there be for a tree or for a man than to look into the obscure distance, to defy

time, knowing that every fall is followed by a budding spring, knowing that there is no death, only rebirth. But what is it that we know in our dwarf world? (2000, 273-274)

The constancy and permanence of the tree is linked to wisdom and knowledge. By refusing to partake in the doomed travelling lifestyle exemplified by Bada, he refuses to hearken back to a tradition that no longer exists for him. Caught between the enclosure of Gypsy Paris and the impossibility of being a traveller, Lakatos compares himself to Bada as such: "He simply has to leave his home, but I have to get outside of myself if I want to be considered somebody" (2000, 328). Getting outside of himself meant taking advantage of the education offered to him, an education that made him understand his position as well as separated him from his community. Upon returning home from school and seeing his parents' superstitious beliefs, he sighs with sadness: "How much time and what distance separated me from them! The years I spent at school grew a hundred-fold" (2000, 338). In a way similar to Wright, Lakatos thus refuses to accept the restrictions of his home-space, but also realizes the impossibility to escape as of old. And just as Wright found a certain intellectual freedom in being rootless, Lakatos finds his mission in becoming a tree. But this tree is also characterized by certain rootlessness, as its small space contrasts to both the large territories of the *dolmutas* ranging from sea to sea and to the stifling enclosure of the slum. It is rather characterised by defiance of time, views into the distance, and understanding of the budding spring.

6. Péliné: "Thrown from a gadjo's carriage"

Hilda Nyári Péliné takes advantage of the cityscape of her childhood Budapest to appropriate and call home a space where she can describe her views on racial harmony and racial connections. Throughout her autobiography, Péliné emphasizes her own personal role in furthering peaceful race relations, culminating in her unusual decision to marry a non-Roma (gadjo) man. Hilda, the child character of Péliné, is portrayed from the very outset as an artistically inclined girl, who differentiates herself from her brothers and sisters both by her extreme attraction to musicality and by her interest in gadjos. Her mother tells her both that "you dance and sing, that's quite normal for Roma, but the way you do it is quite extraordinary" (1996, 186) and that "you were thrown from a gadjo's carriage" (1996, 142), illustrating Hilda's strong Roma identity, as well as her connections to gadjos. Péliné's portrayal of her hometown space of Józsefváros shows this connectedness and Hilda's role in breaking down boundaries. Much like Hurston does in the American South, Hilda carves out a space in the city as her home, even though the story clearly shows the "unhomely" features of this area. Her neighbourhood becomes a place of familiarity and emotional attachment even

though it is also a place of danger, discrimination, and poverty. It is, using Homi Bhabha's words, literally a place of "interstitial intimacy" (1994, 19) among the various ethnicities of Jews, Germans, Hungarians, and Roma living there. Péliné, similarly to what Trefzer writes about Hurston, "transcend[s] the tight boundaries drawn around" (1998, 70) her ethnicity, not by denying the existence of very real dividing lines, but by creating subjective spaces in her character's life. Several times throughout the story, Hilda refuses to live within the space allocated to her by ethnic conventions, and creates her own spaces, seemingly arbitrary but certainly her own. In this way, she "evoke[s] and erase[s] totalizing boundaries […] disturb[s] those ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities" (Bhabha 1994, 213).

By portraying Józsefváros – the Budapest district where Hilda and her family lived without ever having a permanent home – as an ideal place, Péliné erases the boundaries among the "imagined communities" of various ethnicities. And by erecting boundaries between Józsefváros and the rest of the world, Péliné displays her very objective awareness of discrimination, poverty, and racial strife. The first house where the family lived is described as one where "all kinds of people lived. There were peasants, Gypsies, Jews, but we were all in the greatest harmony" (1996, 7). And even though the family soon had to move out of this house because of their poverty, the harmony experienced there remains with Hilda in other areas of Józsefváros. Hilda's family was on the move all the time, driven from one rented apartment to the other based on the momentary economic possibilities of the family. When her musician family had good jobs, they moved to larger and better apartments, but when there was illness or joblessness in the family, they moved over to smaller sub-lets. Thus, while she actually had no home in the sense of calling a flat or a house her permanent abode, she describes her neighbourhood in words befitting a home:

> Back in those days, the smaller streets were full of shops, taverns, restaurants, grocery stores, milk shops, paint stores, butchers, launderettes, diners, wine cellars, pastry shops, and many artisans' shops. The shopkeepers were all kind and courteous, and their work was always admirable. Most restaurants had Roma music going, so even the passers by could enjoy it. (1996, 134)

Even when poverty forced the family to move to one of the most destitute streets in the neighbourhood, Péliné writes about love and playfulness:

> There were two whorehouses in Munkás Street, just next-door to our house in Alsóerdősor Street. We were surrounded by whores, and […] I started pitying and loving them. They were so beautiful and kind. I even made friends with

them, as I played a lot of games – for example, hopscotch, on the streets with the other children. (1996, 155)

The pity and love she felt for the prostitutes is clearly associated with her games on the streets, rather than any moral permissiveness, as she advocates prudishness elsewhere (e.g. 1996, 261). Playing games with or near prostitutes on the streets, rather, empowers Hilda to be what she wants to be even in the midst of a home that may seem unhomely for children.

Hilda resembles what Trefzer writes about Hurston: "Because Hurston's desire for belonging in the South is balanced against the 'unhomeliness' of living there, her autobiography successfully reinvents subjugated southern communities as sites for empowerment" (1998, 73). The positive descriptions of Józsefváros point to a site of empowerment for Hilda, a place where she could successfully play out her desire to be a connection among various people, including gadjos, Roma, shopkeepers, musicians, prostitutes, and others.

But Péliné carefully balances this view against descriptions of "unhomely" experiences. In other words, Péliné does not describe an idealized world of racial relations; rather, she emphasizes her own determination to create around herself situations where she can live out her own expectations. She describes the reality of negative race relations by putting them into spaces other than her homely neighbourhood. For example, the racial harmony she sees in her neighbourhood and apartment buildings breaks down at school, where she has to experience racial prejudice from the outset. Long descriptions of the city slum called Auguszta Enclosure contrast sharply with Józsefváros. The descriptions of this shanty-town on the outskirts of Budapest, a place her family was forced to live in for some periods of time, are naturalistic and realistic, resembling the style of Wright, rather than Péliné or Hurston: "There was real poverty here. The entire Auguszta reeked of the stench of poverty, and there was smoke everywhere" (1996, 216-217). Without disregarding the serious social criticism here, the contrast between the valorised poverty of Józsefváros and the hated poverty of Auguszta must be emphasized. Even more strange is Hilda's hatred of Pesterzsébet, where they actually lived in a "comfortable" (1996, 48) house, and Bajna, her grandmother's village, where she spent a summer. Péliné also sets the limits of her Budapest home in time. She emphasizes that her childhood world, when "we could still have a good time; singing aloud was not considered shameful" (1996, 152), was better than the present world. Even administrative procedures of various offices seem to have been better during her childhood: "I always have to make comparisons – how much better they could simplify paperwork back in the past" (1996, 250). The text, thus, abounds with critical remarks of society, poverty, and ethnic strife, but these are relegated behind arbitrary boundaries in order to portray the harmonious hometown as Hilda's space of empowerment.

Péliné uses the notion of space for depicting her own role in breaking down boundaries between ethnicities. This can be seen most clearly in her descriptions of two squares close-by in Józsefváros: Kálvária Square and Mátyás Square. These public spaces are very important for her community, as Judit Durst explains, "the public space has a special function: it is the place for the manifestation of social identity and community feeling" (2003, 66). This is indeed amply described by Péliné, for example, in the following passage: "My family went to Mátyás Square a lot. There was always something happening there. Roma women would occupy their benches early in the afternoons, watching each other, how everyone is dressed, talking about each other" (1996, 162). Mátyás Square is further described as a special place for the Gypsies, a space of racial acceptance and unity, made through poverty: "Poverty somehow connected people […] Issues like Gypsy, Jew, Hungarian, were not even mentioned, we did not even think of these categories" (1996, 381). Durst emphasizes the importance of setting aside spaces, such as squares or neighbourhoods, in order to create safety: "'Our' spaces, where we can feel safety and comfort, these spaces are endowed with special meaning, while others are avoided as being dangerous" (2003, 66). As opposed to "our space" embodied by Mátyás Square in the book, Kálvária Square is portrayed as "their space," the space of and for gadjos.

The unique message of Péliné is that she does not stay within the safe confines of Mátyás Square, but rather wanders around to, and even prefers, Kálvária Square:

> I did not like to go the Mátyás Square at all. I preferred playing on Kálvária Square and Ludovika Square, mostly with Hungarian girls. […] I was bored with Mátyás Square, and told my mother to go over to Kálvária Square […] My mother turned to me, angry, 'Why on earth are you bored? Can't you see all the things happening here? Aren't you bored on the gadjos' square?' (1996, 162)

In Durst's argument, this "can be viewed as a metaphor for Hilda's attraction to the gadjo world and to gadjos" (2003, 66). However, it is important to also notice that the mentioned Kálvária and Ludovika Squares are still within the confines of the neighbourhood she calls home. Spending an afternoon in Kálvária Square is not like moving to Pesterzsébet, Bajna, or Auguszta. By going over to the gadjo squares in her home district, Hilda does not abandon her home, but rather expands it, erasing the invisible boundaries. And this is the crux of her message about racial unity: she does not give up her Roma home, but connects it – through wandering – to other spaces in the neighbourhood.

Thus, we can observe that Péliné creates an idealized home in the centre of Budapest, a home that is not unlike the idealized place of Hurston's hometown,

Eatonville. But this home is framed within the dangers and sufferings of other places: the school, the countryside, the outskirts, and the slum. The reader thus gets a glimpse of two types of worlds. Péliné depicts a positive image of her home environment, but separately describes the harsh realities by inserting images of negative experiences at other places and times. In this way, Péliné presents an image of minority life that calls attention to the effects of destitution and discrimination while at the same time asserting her personal strength and ability to appreciate cultural values and create connections among various ethnicities.

7. Conclusion

Starting with the North-South distinction and migration patterns within the United States, we have seen various ways in which African American writers use both travel and the refusal to travel in their searches for freedom. A comparative reading of Hungarian Roma autobiographies reveals similarly innovative ways of using and altering traditional patterns of travelling and space in quests for better lives. Even though the four authors under discussion lived very far from each other in space, they all turn to artistic representations of these patterns in order to undermine essentializing views of race and ethnicity. Describing the constraints and boundaries of their very real communities and personal experiences, all authors make use of a "restless and revisionary energy" in order to "transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment" (Bhabha 1994, 4). While this empowerment does not bring about a freedom from racial prejudice and oppression, it is a personal statement of cultural experience that shows the arbitrariness of received racial constructions by celebrating revisionary energies in unlikely spaces.

Wright and Lakatos – the two male authors discussed – use images of travel only to show the impossibility of escape from their negative minority experiences. Wright's claims of rootlessness and freedom are in sharp contrast with the trauma he describes of growing up a black boy in the American South. His claim of being uprooted is an artistic statement of being able to see and describe his cultural values in spite of the traumatic experiences. Lakatos's ironic reversal of the traveling Gypsy in him – as he wishes to become a stationary tree in the wilderness – attests to his ability to transform his traditions into an artistic site of empowerment, by representing and celebrating Romani life on his own terms.

The two female writers – Hurston and Péliné – claim their freedom from the very outset by establishing homes in unlikely spaces and unlikely ways. Even more directly than the male authors, they simply ignore the totalizing boundaries erected between races: careful not to pretend a unity that does not exist, they traverse across boundaries and thus become empowered. Rather than affirming the "imagined communities," they build their own. Hurston's travel dust is around her

own doorstep, as she takes the reader on a voyage of fresh cultural insights in her own hometown and countryside. Péliné utilizes travel images in order to affirm her own version of home, a version of ethnic harmony transformed into being by her creative revisionary energy.

Reading the four texts together enriches our understanding of both African American and Romani writings. As traditional uses of travel images are rejected and altered in all four texts, they open up new spaces for reinterpreting minority cultures, attitudes to freedom, and artistic creativity.

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The Image of Africa in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and J. M. G. Le Clézio's *The African*

Kata GYURIS

School of English and American Studies
Eötvös Loránd University
gyuriskata@gmail.com

Abstract. Various encounters with the African continent have been a popular topic in literature since the resurgence of (post)colonial discourse. Even though both Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Le Clézio's *The African* discuss the experience of living in Africa as a non-native citizen, the characters approach the infinity of the African space from very different angles. While Lessing's South Rhodesia is presented as a vast barren land (hence the title taken from T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*), Le Clézio's South Africa is a wild and luscious terrain holding new opportunities.

These inherently different portrayals of the African space are also significant from the point of view of the protagonists. The openness of space both enables and restricts the characters in different ways. While Mary and Dick Turner are just as dry and desolate as the land they are desperately trying to cultivate, the child Le Clézio basks in the ambiance of this voluptuous body that is Africa. These clashing images eventually culminate in the appearance of physicality and violence which are prominent motifs in both novels. However, while in *The African*, this violence becomes significant as a liberating presence hidden in the endless space, in *The Grass Is Singing*, violence emerges when the protagonists feel trapped by the unconquerable enormity of the land. It is these double and often opposing perceptions that this paper aims to explore, focusing on the significance of spatial images of Africa.

Keywords: Africa, white settlers, spatial images, violence

The African continent has always been approached from a double perspective: on the one hand, it is considered to be the cradle of all humanity, the origin of all human life, but on the other hand, it is also regarded as the remnant of old and primitive times, especially in the eyes of the white colonisers. Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*, which tells the story of a murder and J. M. G. Le Clézio's *The African*, a tribute to the author's father, show two juxtaposed images of Africa, reflecting on the double historical interpretation of the continent. In Lessing's case, it is not only the land and the African atmosphere that are described as dry and suffocating but the inhabitants (the white settlers in particular) as well. By contrast, the child Le Clézio's image of Africa keeps all the positive attributes and his family's moving to Africa is described as a true return to the roots of human existence.

The contradiction between these two representations of Africa is not only evident in the image of the continent itself but in the portraits of the protagonists as well. In both cases, the characters belong to a group of white settlers who had set foot in Africa generations ago (i.e. they are not pioneers[1]). However, the two sets of characters are still in very different positions, which profoundly influences the formation of their personalities. The main aim of this essay is to investigate and to compare these clashing images of Africa, starting with the spatial representation of the continent, which is later transposed onto the characters, creating dichotomised, yet opposing portraits. Primary in these depictions is physicality and bodily images which lead to violence, another significant motif in both novels. It is essentially through this path – creating a parallel between body and land and unifying it with violence – that the true difference between Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Le Clézio's *The African* can be best grasped and understood.

1. The "wasteland" and the "material ecstasy" – Images of the African space

Doris Lessing famously takes her title from T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*, published in 1922. In this poem, Eliot blends antique myths and representations of contemporary society, which finally result in a sombre and pessimistic vision. In one of the most cited passages – which is incidentally Lessing's epigraph as well – the poet establishes a juxtaposition between the arid landscape and an enclosed space.

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[1] Saying that, one has to remark – and this will be evident in the analysis as well – that even though Mary and Dick Turner are not uninitiated in the African ways, they always remain pioneers in a certain sense: the African land remains elusive and unreachable for the European man; he will never become a true African. Similarly, even though the family of the young Le Clézio joins a white community which has been established in Africa for a long time, the experience is completely new for him. Thus, there is always a perpetual novelty in the experience of Africa.

In this decayed hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one. (Eliot 1963, 68)

The horizon is already limited and full of images that reflect on a physical and intellectual decline but it is with the appearance of the chapel in the middle of the barren landscape that the poem becomes truly desolate. It is not only the futility and eventual death of the Western myths (Thorpe 1978, 17) that is accentuated in the passage but the hopelessness of ever changing for the better.

Lessing uses a technique similar to Eliot's: parallel to the African space, she also presents the main characters' cottage as the central place of events. Mary, who grew up and has lived her whole life in the town, marries Dick Turner, a farmer who is in perpetual combat with nature. She moves into his cottage which is situated in the middle of the savage terrain. They live in a miserable, yet self-imposed poverty without any promise of redemption. The Turners share the suffering of all African farmers but since they belong to the "poor whites," they are forced to feel it even more profoundly. When Mary arrives at the farm for the first time, she is stupefied to discover their standards of living but she stays optimistic for a long while. However, she is closed up in a suffocating place where it often becomes unbearable to live, and consequently, she slowly goes paranoiac and eventually disturbed.

This process is not entirely due to the infinity and impossibility of the African land, which could be envisaged as a vast cemetery full of "tumbled graves," perpetually tormented by the burning and unending sun, but also due to the closed and suffocating little cottage. In the middle of "this vast, harsh country" (Lessing 1989, 19), there is the Turners' wretched dwelling:

He looked up at the bare crackling tin of the roof, that was warped with the sun, at the faded gimcrack furniture, at the dusty brick floors covered with ragged animal skins, and wondered how those two, Mary and Dick Turner, could have borne to live in such a place, year in year out, for so long. […] Why did they go on without even so much as putting in ceilings? It was enough to drive anyone mad, the heat in this place. (Lessing 1989, 28)

As one can see, it is not merely Eliot's smothering and oppressively hot atmosphere that is taken over by Lessing but the spatial arrangement as well. Furthermore, the cottage can also be viewed as a representative of colonialism (Roberts 2003, 135), which allows for a bodily interpretation: the abandoned house

in the middle of the African desert is the corpse of the coloniser defeated by nature and the enormous infinity of the surrounding African landscape. Lessing shows and describes Africa according to the European tradition with the white coloniser in the centre and the continent seen with his eyes. Nevertheless, she already indicates that Africa has two faces: that of a hostile and violent land and that of an intact, if not immaculate place, mostly represented by Moses, the Turners' servant (Bertelsen 1991, 650).

This double representation can be found in Le Clézio's novel as well, who despite being a white coloniser just like Lessing's protagonists, opts for the indigenous people's perspective. For him, Africa is almost inseparable from its inhabitants and he constructs it as an enormous palpitating body, full of life. When he arrives in Africa with his father at the age of eight, the first perceptions and eventual discovery of his own self are entangled with his magical initiation into this mysterious continent: "[...] it was an absolute freedom of body and mind. In front of the house, in the opposite direction from the hospital where my father worked, a horizonless space started, with a swift undulation where one could lose sight"[2] (Le Clézio 2004, 19).

Contrary to Lessing, here, the African experience is not restricted to a closed up space like the cottage of Mary and Dick Turner or to the suffocating infinity of the landscape. The horizon seen by the young Le Clézio possesses only positive attributes, which can partly be attributed to the youthful enthusiasm and naivety of the child author. However, in a previous essay of his, *The Material Ecstasy* [*L'extase matérielle*], published in 1967, Le Clézio already declares that it is in fact the material (or in other words the flesh) that represents true reality, not the intellectual spirit: "Body is life, spirit is death. Material is being, intellect is nothingness. And the absolute secret of thinking is without doubt this never-forgotten desire to plunge into the most ecstatic fusion with material [...]"[3] (Le Clézio 1967, 37).

Behind these somewhat hazy words lies the basic conceit of *The African*: this double representation of body and spirit reflects on the basic dichotomy of coloniser and colonised, which traditionally connects the body with the inhabitants of the continent and the spirit (or intellect) with the white settlers. Moreover, it is

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[2] "[...] c'était la liberté totale du corps et de l'esprit. Devant la maison, dans la direction opposée à l'hôpital où travaillait mon père, commençait une étendue sans horizon, avec une légère ondulation où le regard pouvait se perdre." All of Le Clézio's texts are presented here in my translation.

[3] "Le corps est vie, l'esprit est mort. La matière est être, l'intellect néant. Et le secret absolu de la pensée est sans doute ce désir jamais oublié de se replonger dans la plus extatique fusion avec la matière." The juxtaposition between "being" and "nothingness" is strangely reminiscent of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* where the French terms "être" and "néant" are precisely echoed in Le Clézio's essay. The comparison is all the more fitting since one of the major tenets of Sartre's book is the assertion of existence over essence, which seems to be very similar to the main idea behind *The Material Ecstasy* as well.

the body that receives all the positive attributes, particularly in Le Clézio's case who even talks about some sort of carnal desire of being united with the African body and of experiencing the "material ecstasy" of the land. Thus, as opposed to Lessing, Le Clézio's Africa can be best grasped in terms of its infiniteness and the freedom it offers.

Furthermore, in Lessing's case, the above-mentioned dichotomy can rather be interpreted in terms of postcolonial criticism with a strong juxtaposition between the originally vast African space and the small, scattered towns built by the white settlers. Even though the centre of Le Clézio's work is not the colonisers' world, there are some examples of this distinction, based on value judgments made most frequently by the father's character. The almost ecstatic experiences of the young Le Clézio are born of the fact that his father detests colonialism and is strongly convinced that the true image of Africa cannot be known in its colonial representation, that is, "the civilised zone" does not show the truth of Africa (Roussel-Gillet 2011, 92). The majority of the colonisers are only familiar with this zone but Le Clézio's father is one of the few who dares to penetrate the reality of Africa and, consequently, sees how the traces of the British and French occupation still weigh on the land and its people.

2. The appearance of bodies[4]

Despite all this, there are very few direct reflections on the effects of colonisation in Le Clézio's novel. It is rather an irresistible sensation for the African land, particularly in relation to the body that is in the centre of his work. In *The African* everything is interpretable in bodily terms, not only space but the characters as well. The primary difference between Lessing's and Le Clézio's novels rests on the choice of the protagonists: while the French writer's eight-year-old self and his friends represent a childlike point of view, Mary and Dick Turner's life chronicles the imminent decline of the colonisers' reign.

Le Clézio shows the very beginning of the colonial experience where all the emotions bear a sense of novelty and a positive connotation. The author's body merges with the body of Africa and even the tedious incidents become places of apprenticeship and perpetual fascination:

Africa, it was the body, rather than the face. It was the violence of sensations, the violence of appetites, the violence of seasons. The first memory I have of this continent is my body covered with an eruption of small bulbs caused by the extreme heat, a benign affliction of the Whites who suffer from it when

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[4] The title of this chapter is taken from *The African* where the phrase "l'apparition des corps" at the beginning of the novel basically summarises Le Clézio's main perceptions of Africa.

they enter the equatorial zone, and which is comically called "bourbouille" – in English, *prickly heat*.[5] (Le Clézio 2004, 16)

Le Clézio's light illness is presented as something benign which greatly contributes to the development of this ungraspable experience. It is not only the continent and the land which become one enormous body, the human beings are also reduced to the status of one huge living and sensual body. However, this "reduction" is not a negatively described process. On the contrary, the fact that people in Le Clézio's life are deprived of their individuality shows a return to the very beginning where the differences between coloniser and colonised did not yet exist and where everyone was one body.

This sentiment is further accentuated when the protagonist notices an old woman who had fainted in the middle of the street. Like all children, he is curious to know what has happened to the woman and more particularly why she is so different from other people: "The naked body of this woman, made of folds and wrinkles, her skin like flat goatskin, her saggy, flabby breasts, hanging on her stomach, her cracked skin, tarnished, a bit grey, all this seems strange to me but at the same time true"[6] (Le Clézio 2004, 15. It is interesting that instead of pity and disgust, Le Clézio "feels [...] love and interest"[7] (15). It indicates that in Africa, even old and hideous bodies are worth the same as young and healthy ones and belong to the community just as much as any other body. This distinction is all the more important since so far the young Le Clézio has only encountered intact female bodies "exempt of the illness of age"[8] (15). This difference between European and African ideology and way of life will be fundamental in the discussion about violence as well.

The characters' image in Lessing's novel is almost contrary to Le Clézio's representation. Mary Turner's body greatly resembles the presentation of the African space: she is dry and frigid, truly reduced to the status of a simple body: "Hatless under the blazing sun with the thick cruel rays pouring on to her back and shoulders, numbing and dulling her, she sometimes felt as if she were bruised all over, as if the sun had bruised her flesh to a tender swollen covering for aching

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[5] "L'Afrique, c'était le corps plutôt que le visage. C'était la violence des sensations, la violence des appétits, la violence des saisons. Le premier souvenir que j'ai de ce continent, c'est mon corps couvert d'une éruption de petites ampoules causées par l'extrême chaleur, une affection bénigne dont souffrent les Blancs à leur entrée dans la zone équatoriale, sous le nom comique de «bourbouille» – en anglais *prickly heat*."

[6] "Le corps nu de cette femme, fait de plis, de rides, sa peau comme une outre dégonflée, ses seins allongés et flasques, pendant sur son ventre, sa peau craquelée, ternie, un peu grise, tout cela me semble étrange, et en même temps vrai."

[7] "ressentai[t] [...] l'amour et de l'intérêt"

[8] "exempts de la maladie de l'âge"

bones" (Lessing 1989, 148). Note how Mary's "aching bones" are reminiscent of Eliot's "dry bones."

Under the devouring sun, she loses her individuality and becomes a simple container, perpetually tormented by the heat and the unbearable circumstances of the continent. We can see the same corporal reduction as in the case of *The African*: Mary loses her individuality and is eventually assimilated into the infinite space and finally becomes the equivalent of the land itself. The reduction, which in Le Clézio's case had an entirely positive connotation, designates here a process of loss, a decline which is strongly influenced by the environment surrounding the protagonists.

Similarly, the bodies so much admired by Le Clézio are despised and looked down on by Mary Turner:

> If she disliked native men, she loathed the women. She hated the exposed fleshiness of them, their soft brown bodies and soft bashful faces that were also insolent and inquisitive and their chattering voices that held a brazen fleshy undertone. [...] Above all, she hated the way they suckled their babies, with their breasts hanging down for everyone to see; there was something in their calm satisfied maternity that made her blood boil. 'Their babies hanging on to them like leeches,' she said to herself shuddering, for she thought with horror of suckling a child. The idea of a child's lips on her breasts made her feel quite sick [...] they were alien and primitive creatures with ugly desires she could not bear to think about. (Lessing 1989, 94−95)

Mary's pure repulsion towards African women is in fact a mixture of fascination and disgust stemming from her own desires which she refuses to accept as her own.[9] Over the years Mary becomes more and more feeble and sickly until the moment when this physical deterioration begins to affect her mental health as well. Her decline has a double face: it is not merely her body that is slowly becoming empty but also her brain. Her only link with the rest of the world is her servant, Moses who recalls Le Clézio's sensual figures, whose bodies somehow stay immaculate. For a long time it is only when looking at Moses that Mary seems once more attached to the real world: "She used to sit quite still, watching him work. The powerful, broad-built body fascinated her. […] He was rubbing his thick neck with soap, and the white lather was startlingly white against the black skin" (Lessing 1989, 142–143). Moses' body once again recalls the bodies of Le Clézio:

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9 Frampton mentions that Kristeva's idea of the *abject* describes Mary's position very adequately (2009,19). The abject is that which is both part of the self and that which is rejected and projected outside onto another object so that the repulsion or even fear one feels towards an alien being is in fact that part of the self that has been exiled. Similarly, Mary's disgust of the fleshiness and nudity of naked women stems from her own desire, first for more liberty, then for a child of her own.

lively and sensual but at the same time dangerous. Moreover, this body represents the black body *par excellence*, which can be perceived as something strange and at the same time as something which is completely natural: Moses is in this sense not an individual but a substitute for Mary for everything that she has missed and is missing from her experience of Africa.

However, the body of Moses is not entirely like the bodies of Le Clézio: he has already been contaminated by the destructive environment of Rhodesia and has seemingly lost the purity which Le Clézio hails so affectionately. "His face wickedly malevolent" (Lessing 1989, 187) looks at the world with a silent fury and with what is perceived to be a desire for vengeance. But by whom is Moses perceived to be evil? The question of focalisation is of crucial importance here since as the novel proceeds, we are increasingly locked up in Mary's head and we are forced to see everything from her perspective which is obviously that of a white coloniser and a desperate woman. Thus, even though Moses is initially perceived as all the other black servants (simple-minded, benevolent and even gracious), there is a suffocating force in him as well, just like in the African space.

Chung (2001, 111) accentuates that the term 'ek-tasy' originally denotes one's positioning and eventual transformation *outside* of oneself, thus achieving true material ecstasy. For this reason, Mary remains forever incapable of the ecstatic, joyful experience of Africa Le Clézio's younger self indulges in simply because she is inevitably locked up in her own head and never moves outside of it. For this reason, Rubenstein claims that the "outer hell is the counterpart or even the projection of inner hell" (1979, 17), marking the sadly hopeless position of Mary. Thus, both in *The Grass Is Singing* and *The African*, there is a reduction of bodies to spatial entities but while Le Clézio essentially writes about being united with Africa in a collective experience which excludes nothing and no-one, Lessing talks about a loss of individuality and eventually of life with the slow process of closing up in Mary's head. This power which is transferred from space and nature to the inhabitants finally manifests in violence, one of the most important attributes of Africa.

3. The emergence of violence

Violence and brutality have their very deep roots not only in the mentality of the inhabitants but in their land as well. Lessing writes that "Anger, violence, death, seemed natural to this vast, harsh country" (1989, 19). Le Clézio also shows that violence is a necessary and innate attribute of Africa but in Lessing's case, this theme becomes even more refined. The white settlers are furious because of the harsh circumstances of African life and because they are forced day by day to be in contact with the indigenous people whom they clearly regard as their inferiors. On the other hand, it is only illusory that the same indigenous people meekly accept

their subjugation because there is always a small residue of bitterness that has the capacity of pushing them towards violence. Thus, there are two sides to the development of violence: that of the colonisers and that of the colonised.

The source of violent actions is most frequently fear. The white colonisers are brutal with their indigenous servants and workers because they are subconsciously or not so subconsciously afraid of them but this feeling finds its origins in a projection of their own selves. Thus, Mary is instinctively afraid of Moses: "She stood rigid with fear, the chill sweat running down her body, waiting. He approached slowly, obscene and powerful, and it was not only he, but her father who was threatening her" (Lessing 1989, 165). This sentiment is once again reminiscent of Mary's general attitude towards the natives of Africa: they represent that part of the European which she rejects due to fear or disgust, and which will eventually lead to violent actions.

Moses initially works on the farm and when he becomes the Turners' household servant, Mary is already decrepit and physically and intellectually feeble. Her hatred towards Moses and all the blacks of Africa becomes a profound fear which pushes her into a subjugated position: Moses ceases to be a simple domestic servant; he practically becomes the guardian and benevolent parent of Mary. The scene where he dresses Mary shows that he has an absolute power over this weak and almost childlike woman. However, it is not until the very end of the story when he kills his mistress that violence actually emerges in him. Until this tragic moment he wins all his battles with patience and the occasional manipulation of this broken spirit. One still has to remark that Mary's murder, even if it is a profoundly violent act, is also a liberating one whose aim is to deliver this woman from her earthly sufferings. Thus, in *The Grass Is Singing*, it is the coloniser's turn to become subjugated and powerless.

Yet, the connection between violence and fear is much more complicated than the novel's story seems to suggest. This is very well shown in the scene where Mary and Moses meet for the first time. Dick is home sick and his wife is forced to go to the farm to supervise the work of the blacks but evidently she does not have as much authority as Dick and the workers stay lazy and unyielding. There is one particularly insolent black who continues to address her in a mockingly confident English. In her frustration and impotence, she hits him across the face with a whip. Sometime later, she is horrified to discover that Dick has chosen this same black man to be their new "boy." Starting with this incident, Mary lives in a vicious circle: she had committed this act of violence but she was immediately afraid of an equally violent retribution from the man who is obviously much bigger than she is. Her motivation to hit one of the workers was the fear of losing her authority but the consequence was also fear, which will keep pushing her towards newer and newer acts of violence.

In *The African*, violence rather emerges as an abstract but necessary attribute of the continent. We meet it in children's tales either told to the young Le Clézio or

invented by him and his friends. Apart from being profoundly incorporated into the very fabric of Africa, violence has no negative connotations as in the case of Lessing where the desperation and pointlessness of violence are closely related to the representation of space and the inhabitants. In Le Clézio's novel, violence is honest and open without those physical attributes which render it so sickly and devastating in *The Grass Is Singing*. It is rather described as an omnipresent and omnipotent power which appears in all that is related to Africa: nature and man equally.

> I remember the violence. Not a secret, hypocritical, terrorising violence which all those children who are born in the middle of a war know. […] That violence wasn't really physical. […] It was deaf and hidden like an illness. Ogoja gave me another violence, open and real which made my body vibrate. It was visible in every detail of life and in the surrounding nature.[10] (Le Clézio 2004, 19−20)

At first, this kind of violence is intangible and incomprehensible for the child Le Clézio because it greatly differs from what he had experienced in his previous life. Very much like in the case of the old woman, he feels an almost impenetrable distinction between the African and the European notions of violence. He says that "few Europeans knew this feeling"[11] (2004, 21), with which he positions himself among the true Africans who truly know this feeling and experience it without themselves becoming violent. The primary difference between the representation of violence in Le Clézio's and Lessing's case can be found in the position of this sensation, that is, in the distinction between individuality and collectivity. While in *The Grass Is Singing* violence is an individual feeling (even if it has collective implications connected to colonialism), in *The African*, violence can be found almost exclusively in human communities and in the space as an organising force.

However, there is an individual side to violence in *The African* as well. When Le Clézio speaks of his personal experiences he says that "Africa was powerful. For the child I was, violence was general, indisputable. It gave me enthusiasm"[12] (2004, 21). Even if he perceives violence as a general and incontestable phenomenon, the feelings that this presence incites in him are completely unique to him. His discovery of the African land also implicates a process of initiation into violence which will

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[10] "Je me souviens de la violence. Non pas une violence secrète, hypocrite, terrorisante comme celle que connaissent tous les enfants qui naissent au milieu d'une guerre [...] Cette violence-là n'était pas vraiment physique. Elle était sourde et cachée comme une maladie. [...] Ogoja me donnait une autre violence, ouverte, réelle, qui faisait vibrer mon corps. C'était visible dans chaque détail de la vie et de la nature environnante"

[11] "Peu d'Européens ont connu ce sentiment."

[12] "L'Afrique était puissante. Pour l'enfant que j'étais, a violence était générale, indiscutable. Elle donnait de l'enthousiasme."

necessarily differ from the "sentimental education" he could have received among the Europeans. His rite of passage contributes to the collective experience of violence but, at the same time, it is also restrained to him since such rites of passage are singular. Ultimately, despite all its negative attributes, violence clearly designates a process of development in Le Clézio's case, while in Lessing's novel, it is a process which leads to the total decline of life.

As we have seen, the difference between these two representations of Africa is perceptible on several levels. On the one hand, it seems that spatial images are inseparable from bodily images which reflect the traditional (colonial) dichotomical organisation of body and mind. However, in the uniqueness of point of view, and later in the various manifestations of violence, it seems that we are moving towards a postcolonial interpretation. Lessing's and Le Clézio's works seem to complement each other in the sense that they both present a postcolonial criticism of the colonial order, yet they do this in distinct, even opposing ways. While Lessing shows the devastating reality of white colonisation, Le Clézio gives a positive reading of the perspective of the colonised, which is essentially a childlike happiness, often depicted in colonial discourse as simple-mindedness and even stupidity. These two contrasting but complementary images, then, give us a thorough picture of the past and present of colonisation, with possible repercussions for its future.

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Mythical Spaces – The Aleph as Seen by Borges and Coelho[*]

Vilma MIHÁLY

Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania
Institute of Humanities
vilma_gote@yahoo.com

Abstract. The following study is aimed at presenting the concept of mythical space mainly based upon the theories of Ernst Cassirer and Mircea Eliade. In Cassirer's view, mythical thinking involves a basic mental opposition between the sacred and the profane. There is an inherent presence of mystery, of the supernatural and hidden connotations and connections which are disclosed at particular moments. The second part of the paper deals with the representation of mythical spaces in the works of Jorge Luis Borges and Paulo Coelho.

Keywords: mythical space, myth, the sacred and the profane

> *A man sets out to draw the world. As the years go by, he peoples a space with images of provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fishes, rooms, instruments, stars, horses, and individuals. A short time before he dies, he discovers that the patient labyrinth of lines traces the lineaments of his own face.*
>
> Jorge Luis Borges: *El hacedor*

Time and space have always represented the main pillars of human perception of the world and of its phenomena. Yet, there seems to be more focus upon temporal issues than there is on spatial aspects. This is probably due to the fact that although space and spatial aspects often stand at the core of a narrative text, there is no clear and complete definition of the term itself. Critics are either interested in the relationship between certain locations given in a literary work and their counterparts in reality, such as *The Atlas of Literature* by Malcolm Bradbury, or they conduct studies upon cities, e.g., Susanne Hauser, Sabina Becker or Andreas Mahler, landscapes, e.g., Eckhard Lobsien, James Turner or Greg Garrad, border areas, e.g., Richard Faber or Norbert Wokart, or journeys and horizons as presented in narrative texts (in Dennerlein 2009, 1-2). A comprehensive concept of space does not exist; 'space' in narratives can refer to the space consisting of the letters that make up the text, or to topographical conditions and experienced spaces (in Dennerlein 2009, 3-5). Merleau-Ponty, for example, introduces the dimension of seeing/watching as a feature of experienced space (in Dennerlein 2009, 3-5). Thus, the space we live in and the one we experience are conceived from the viewpoint of the individual (Dennerlein 2009, 54). Another approach is given by Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* (1958); he combines psychoanalysis with phenomenology in order to get a new form of describing space. He is interested in space from the perspective of the Heideggerian life-world. He analyzes the house starting from the cellar to the roof, defining places as experienced space that influence the human subconscious (1994, 3-37).

The present paper analyzes spatial structures within a short story by Jorge Luis Borges and a novel by Paulo Coelho, both entitled *The Aleph*. Although many of the above mentioned theories would work when conducting the study, here the focus lies upon the concept of mythical space. In this respect the theoretical background is mainly provided by Ernst Cassirer and Mircea Eliade.

Ernst Cassirer – in his study entitled *Mythical, Aesthetic and Theoretical Space* dating from 1931 – concludes that the concept of space means the general idea underlying the possible coexistence of various substances in a determined sequence. Space is seen as a basic organizational principle, which thus becomes a general symbolic form. As such, it can be perceived in a number of ways, resulting in several different concrete concepts of space, each offering us a system which provides the phenomena and events with a special meaning by assuming a position within the system and by entering into relations with other elements.

Mythical space as a system undertakes an initial division of space that functions as an ordering structure for the single phenomena and events appearing in it. This structure bears none of the known formal characteristics typical of our everyday perception of space. It stems from a specific mythical way of thinking and life experience inherent to all the creations of the myth.

Mythical space is made up of specifically meaningful *places.* There is a contrast between their value and meaningfulness: the space we naturally experience is endowed with positive or negative forces relating various places in a system of positions. When we speak of up and down, left and right, the East and the West or the North and the South in mythical terms, we do not refer to them as points and directions as in geometric or empirical and physical space. Each place and direction has a mythical quality. This mythical quality defines its content, meaning and specificity. What we are looking for here are magical traits. Salvation or damnation, accessibility or banning, blessing or cursing, familiarity or alienation, luck or danger – these are the trademarks that allow the myth to separate places from each other. For example, we attribute a positive value to the East – because the Sun rises in the East – and a negative value to the West – because the Sun sets in the West. The East stands at the origin of light and thus represents the source of life, contrary to the West, where decay, horror and the dead dwell. Yet, we cannot regard such spatial structures independently from the substantial fields they connect. They are rather *qualities* of the *considerable importance* inherent in these places. If in mythical space we do find an initial, fundamental orientation of space, this spatiality has no independent formal value. The form(s) of mythical space can only make sense to us if we start out from and return to the universal mental function of the myth itself (Bundgaard 2011, 43-57).

When talking about how people experience the world, Mircea Eliade (1987) makes a distinction between the religious man, who accepts the sacrality of the world and the nonreligious man, who rejects it. Thus, time and space are also perceived in two different ways, namely as sacred and as profane. Space is not homogeneous, which means that some of its parts differ in quality from others. There is sacred space with sacred places, which are similar to mythical ones. In opposition to sacred space, which is strong and significant as it constitutes primordial experience, identical with the founding of the world, there is the profane space, which is heterogeneous, chaotic and relative. When the sacred manifests itself, it ontologically founds the world, revealing "an absolute fixed point, a center" (Eliade 1987, 20-21). There must be a theophany or hierophany or at least some sign that indicates the sacredness of a place:

> Every sacred space implies a hierophany, an irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different. (Eliade 1987, 26)

> A *sign* is asked, to put an end to the tension and anxiety caused by relativity and disorientation – in short, to reveal an absolute point of support. (Eliade 1987, 27-28) [emphasis in the original]

Sacred space allows the real to show itself, opening a communication between the cosmic planes – e.g., earth and heaven – and thus, making the ontological passage from one form of existence to another possible (Eliade 1987, 63).

In conclusion, mythical/sacred spaces represent significant locations where one can experience some sort of an opening towards understanding the world and oneself.

In literature myths have always been present under various forms as imaginary structures. As a phenomenon of contemporary modern narrative, mythology not only represents a process which uses its own motifs, characters and images, but also constitutes itself as a method. From among the essential elements of the mythological method – time dimensions and initiation processes – we have decided to focus upon the dimension of space. In general, we can divide space into two categories, namely the vertical and the horizontal. If we look at the vertical category, we will have to work with the opposition up and down, which in its turn divides the world into three realms: the underground, the earthly and the celestial. If we take the horizontal level, we encounter the opposition left/right, the East and the West. If we look at the two subsystems at the same time, we will see an image resembling the cosmic tree/the cross/the axis mundi (Abrudan 2003, 221).

The beginning of the twentieth century brought a change to the traditional structures of narration. Writers such as Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce started to increase spontaneity in their literary texts by resorting to symbols and myths. Thus, mythologizing began to structure the narrative. Undoubtedly, it was James Joyce who had the greatest impact on the mythologizing process of twentieth-century fiction (Abrudan 2003, 223). Mythologizing meant that mythical and ritual structures were kept as a form but were filled with a different content. One of the most important issues seemed to be the hero's real or imaginary journey that often followed paths presented in myths or the Bible. The hero directs his attention upon himself; he tries to find his own personality by discovering another existential dimension within his *self* and within the limited space of ordinary life. The focus shifts from the outside to the inside, from the mythical hero's itinerary (Ulysses), to the town (Dublin), to the garden, to the room, to the cellar, to the inner self. Thus, when certain temporal and spatial conditions come together, even if randomly, a shift in perception takes place and the epiphany can occur. The modern hero seeks and finds the real dimension of existence, so that he is united with the world and human beings.

Time and space may differ; myths can vary and be transmitted in different ways. In the Western modern novel myths are losing their sacredness being substituted by irony, the grotesque and humor (Abrudan 2003, 225). Latin American literature also uses dreams, myths and fairy tales to recreate the real. Alejo Carpentier, Ernesto Sabato or Jorge Luis Borges all establish a free exchange of the real and the imaginary. By projecting the fantastic emerges into a mythical

space and time where the law of surprise and metamorphosis governs the world (Abrudan 2003, 226).

The authors – Borges and Coelho – and literary texts that will be discussed are somehow all connected to the same spatial structure or, better said, point in space, that is the Aleph, which became the title of both literary works. *Aleph*, א, is not only the first letter of the Hebrew, Arabic, Phoenician, Aramaic and Syriac alphabets, but also represents number one in Hebrew. In the Kabbalah it is related to the origin of the universe. In mathematics, *aleph numbers* denote the cardinality of infinite sets. The Aleph is also similar to Leibniz's concept of the monad, which is a mirror onto every other object of the world. Somehow it contains all that is important in our universe and recalls the primordial moment of founding the world.

Borges's short story, *The Aleph*, which was first published in 1945, tells us the story of a man, the narrator, who at the beginning is mourning the recent death of a certain Beatriz Viterbo, a woman he loved. Each year he comes back on her birthday to pay his respect. He gets to know her first cousin, Carlos Argentino Daneri, who considers himself a good poet. Daneri's aim in life is to write an epic poem giving a detailed description of every single place on Earth. When later a business on the same street wants to pull down Daneri's house, Daneri is furious, because this would mean that he would lose the cellar containing an Aleph, which helps him write the poem. The narrator thinks Daneri to be insane, yet he wants to see the Aleph for himself. Alone in the dark cellar, first he fears Daneri wants to kill him, but then he experiences the Aleph. Later on, he pretends to have seen nothing perhaps in order to get revenge on Daneri.

In the postscript to the story Borges explains that Daneri's house was demolished, but that Daneri managed to win second prize in the Argentine National Prize for Literature. Regarding the Aleph he now thinks that the Aleph in Daneri's house was not the only one to exist, based on a certain Captain Burton's report describing the Amr mosque in Cairo, where there is supposed to be a stone pillar containing the whole universe; this Aleph cannot be seen, but heard.

The Aleph in this short story is found in a dark cellar under the dining room, it can be reached through a steep stairway. The first time it is mentioned, Daneri gives us its description: "Yes, the only place on earth where all places are – seen from every angle, each standing clear, without any confusion or blending.[…] If all places in the universe are in the Aleph, then all stars, all lamps, all sources of light are in it, too."

Then the narrator provides us with a more detailed picture of the phenomenon:

> On the back part of the step, toward the right, I saw a small iridescent sphere of almost unbearable brilliance. At first I thought it was revolving; then I realized that this movement was an illusion created by the dizzying world it

bounded. The Aleph's diameter was probably little more than an inch, but all space was there, actual and undiminished. Each thing (a mirror's face, let us say) was infinite things, since I distinctly saw it from every angle of the universe. I saw the teeming sea; I saw daybreak and nightfall; I saw the multitudes of America; I saw a silvery cobweb in the center of a black pyramid; I saw a splintered labyrinth (it was London); […] I saw in a backyard of Soler Street the same tiles that thirty years before I'd seen in the entrance of a house in Fray Bentos; I saw bunches of grapes, snow, tobacco, lodes of metal, steam; I saw convex equatorial deserts and each one of their grains of sand; I saw a woman in Inverness whom I shall never forget; I saw her tangled hair, her tall figure, I saw the cancer in her breast; I saw a ring of baked mud in a sidewalk, where before there had been a tree; I saw a summer house in Adrogué and a copy of the first English translation of Pliny – Philemon Holland's – and all at the same time saw each letter on each page (as a boy, I used to marvel that the letters in a closed book did not get scrambled and lost overnight); I saw a sunset in Querétaro that seemed to reflect the colour of a rose in Bengal; I saw my empty bedroom; I saw in a closet in Alkmaar a terrestrial globe between two mirrors that multiplied it endlessly; I saw horses with flowing manes on a shore of the Caspian Sea at dawn; I saw the delicate bone structure of a hand; I saw the survivors of a battle sending out picture postcards; I saw in a showcase in Mirzapur a pack of Spanish playing cards; I saw the slanting shadows of ferns on a greenhouse floor; I saw tigers, pistons, bison, tides, and armies; I saw all the ants on the planet; I saw a Persian astrolabe; I saw in the drawer of a writing table (and the handwriting made me tremble) unbelievable, obscene, detailed letters, which Beatriz had written to Carlos Argentino; I saw a monument I worshipped in the Chacarita cemetery; I saw the rotted dust and bones that had once deliciously been Beatriz Viterbo; […] I saw your face; and I felt dizzy and wept, for my eyes had seen that secret and conjectured object whose name is common to all men but which no man has looked upon – the unimaginable universe. (Borges)

Thus, encountering the Aleph is a moment of epiphany/hierophany, when one gets an insight into the whole universe and experiences the ultimate unity with it. After revealing the essence of the Aleph to us, the narrator somehow takes it back at the same time, when he says, even if only to get revenge on Daneri, that there is no Aleph. In the postscript then he reassures us that the Aleph exists, moreover, there might be many places where it would reveal itself. In this respect, the Aleph is not unique, the experience cannot be considered as the ultimate one either.

Coelho's protagonist in his novel *Aleph*, published in 2010, sets off to Africa, then to Europe and via the Trans-Siberian Railway to Asia, on a journey to find energy and passion again. On his journey he meets Hilal, who is not only a gifted young violinist, but also turns out to be the woman Paulo loved and betrayed five hundred years ago. His betrayal in the past prevents him from finding real happiness in this life. Hilal and Paulo undertake a mystical voyage through time and space, teaching them love, forgiveness, and the courage to overcome the challenges of life.

Apart from sharing the same title, there is also a direct connection between the works of Borges and Coelho. There is a motto by Borges at the beginning of Coelho's book. Moreover, when asked in an interview whether he was influenced by Borges or not, Coelho replied as follows:

> He is my icon, the best writer in the world of my generation. But I wasn't influenced by him, I was influenced by the idea of aleph, the concept. In the classic tradition of spiritual books Borges summarizes very, very well the idea of this point where everything becomes one thing only. (Bosman 2011)

Coelho chooses a different location for the Aleph and thus gives credit to Borges, who stated that there would be more than one place where the Aleph was present. In Coelho's novel we can enter the Aleph on the train, in the small passage between two cars. Paulo and later Hilal too will encounter the Aleph in this small space, mainly in the evening or at night, so that it resembles Daneri's cellar. The description of the experience given by Paulo is also similar to that of Borges's narrator:

> I look at the light, at a holy place, and a wave comes towards me, filling me with peace and love, though these two hardly ever go together. I can see myself, but at the same time I can also see the elephants in Africa with their trunks high up in the air, and there are the camels in the desert, people talking to each other in a bar in Buenos Aires […] – everything is so clear and so huge, and at the same time so tiny and so dear. This is the Aleph, the point where everything is there in one place at the same time. I am in a window that opens onto the world and onto secret places, onto poetry that got lost in time and onto words that were forgotten in space. […] I am standing in front of doors, which open for a moment and then close immediately, but show us what hides behind them: treasures, traps, unknown roads and journeys surpassing imagination. (Coelho 2011, 81-82) [translated by me]

Both times we have a small, dark place representing space, where the protagonists experience the whole universe. The cellar and the cabin become

sacred/mythical spaces to those who undergo the spiritual awakening. The protagonists attribute positive meaning to the space where the Aleph manifests itself: to Daneri it is the source he needs in order to be able to write/create a piece of art, to Paulo and Hilal it is a means of finding the creative power of language, forgiving the sins of the past, so that they can move on as reborn individuals. The physical darkness lets its opposite, the spiritual light come in and thus, makes it possible for the protagonists to see/experience/live the Aleph.

Moreover, in both literary texts there is a focus upon *seeing* the Aleph. In Borges's short story, the relationship between the perceiver and the perceived, as implied by the act of *seeing*, is very complex. On the one hand, it underlines the role of the physical body which functions as the ultimate space where the spiritual experience can take place. On the other hand, the physical body is a mirror which reflects everything without being itself reflected in any mirror at all; it shows a detailed image of the body, down to the organs, it is a mirror-eye:

> […] I saw, close up, unending eyes watching themselves in me as in a mirror; I saw all the mirrors on earth and none of them reflected me; […] I saw the circulation of my own dark blood; I saw the coupling of love and the modification of death; I saw the Aleph from every point and angle, and in the Aleph I saw the earth and in the earth the Aleph and in the Aleph the earth; I saw my own face and my own bowels; […] (Borges)

In Coelho's novel the narrator sees the Aleph through Hilal's eyes – in this case we have a perceiver, who also becomes the perceived, but there is a second person involved in the process functioning as a channel for the experience.

Both authors seem to agree upon the fact that though the Aleph experience needs special circumstances in order to reveal itself, it cannot or rather should not be bound to a single place. Borges's narrator somehow mocks at Daneri's exaggerated fondness of the house and the cellar. The narrator does not say that there is no Aleph at all, because he has also experienced it. What he emphasizes is that there are many potential places where one can meet the Aleph, as well as many ways of seeing/perceiving it. In Coelho's novel the protagonists encounter the Aleph on a moving means of transport. Here it is this movement that expresses the infinite proliferation of the space-based Aleph experience.

Borges likes playing with the text and the reader, his works are often "ludic thought experiments," aiming "in irony at the epistemological urge that fosters the ten thousand different beliefs that humanity has considered to be knowledge, at the same time he satirizes the undying thirst for the transcendence once granted by absolute knowledge" (Thiher 2005, 238, 240). Just like Joyce, Proust or Virginia Woolf, Borges develops experimental possibilities of a connection between science and literature. Thus, similarly to modern cosmology, Borges's fiction states that

there is a coexistence of a great amount of alternative events, as in so many multiple universes, or so many infinite groups of things (Thiher 2005, 239). In Borges's view, the world includes all the claims to know the world, as well as claims about these claims, without ever coming to an end. Therefore, a real/factual representation demands each and every thing and its mirror image, every statement and its opposite, reflected images of reflected images (Thiher 2005, 240). The motifs, themes and narrative techniques used by Borges support his theoretical views: e.g., here the Aleph, writing a book within a book, etc. Coelho's approach is slightly different; he tries to render esoteric/spiritual epistemologies. In his novel the Aleph represents *the* ultimate mystical initiation.

In conclusion, in its definition as a point where everything is present at the same time, in both literary texts the Aleph stands at the meeting point of the vertical and horizontal levels of space, connecting them with each other and looking upon them from above at the same time. In this respect the Aleph is also similar to the center of a labyrinth/mandala, where the initiates would find the true face of themselves and of the sacred universe.

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Entering the Room. Spatial Metaphors as a Dialogue between Tarkovsky and Bergman[*]

Ruxandra BERINDE

University of Sheffield
School of Architecture
ruxandra.berinde@sheffield.ac.uk

Abstract. Gazing through phenomenological lenses, the paper will trace a possible dialogue between the Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky (1932–1986) and the Swedish director Ingmar Bergman (1918–2007), established through the spatial metaphors in their films. Taking into account that the two of them never met, nor spoke directly, albeit contemporary and highly praising each other's works, this paper will list the fragments of indirect verbal interaction between the two, arguing that some of the gaps in their dialogue were filled through the communicative functions of spatial imagery in their films. Transgressing the factual absence of communication, these spatial metaphors, understood as visual phenomenology of lived space, position the two artists in a state of silent, yet crystalline dialogue, all the more profound in its silence and revelatory to the common nature of architectural and cinematic language.

Keywords: childhood home, doors, film image

Fig.1: Images 1-3: film stills from *Wild Strawberries* (Bergman, 1957), images 4-7: film stills from *The Mirror* (Tarkovsky, 1975).

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1. Introduction: "standing at the door of a room"

The study of inhabited space concludes that "the phenomenology of architecture is founded on verbs rather than nouns. The approaching of the house, not the facade, the act of entering, not the door; the act of looking out of the window, not the window itself seem to trigger our strongest emotions" (Pallasmaa 1994, 19). In a visual way, if the noun *window* relates to basic architectural technicalities, the mental image created by the verb *looking out the window* is an intense fragment of cinematic expression, which portrays the *lived experience*. This aspect is relevant in bridging between architecture, cinema and phenomenology, making film a medium permeable to such ineffable concepts as lived space. Communicating experiential qualities of architecture, film operates with intensity in the territory of metaphors: the visual metaphor contains in itself not merely the image of space, but also a hypostasis of it in which perception is interwoven, mostly codified as mental associations, vague sensations or memories, in an instant act of poetic montage.

The term *poetic montage* belongs to the Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky, his films forming a strong testimony to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's idea that cinema is, more than anything, "a phenomenological art" (1962). The topic of spatial metaphors in Tarkovsky's oeuvre is extended, covering both the visual imagery of his films and the (so far) understudied poetics behind the text of the screenplays. This paper will take into consideration one single such metaphor, relating back to Pallasmaa's definition for the phenomenology of architecture: "the act of entering, not the door itself" (1994, 19).

An essential element in reading these images as spatial metaphors lies in their ability to perform the role of language: to communicate meaning. Therefore, the paper will build upon the space of his films' reception, unfolding from a few words by Ingmar Bergman, a quotation that precludes most of the books written about Tarkovsky: "My first discovery of Tarkovsky's film was like a miracle. Suddenly, I found myself standing at the door of a room the keys of which had, until then, never been given to me. It was a room I had always wanted to enter and where he was moving freely and fully at ease."[1]

2. Room as metaphor for the immaterial: "across thresholds into the room which they have risked their lives to reach"

Among the first questions arising upon reading Bergman's frequently quoted words is: what is this room? In his autobiographical novel, *The Magic Lantern*,

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[1] Fragment from an interview with Bergman: date N/A; source: http://people.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/ nostalghia.com/TheTopics/IB_On_AT.html (accessed March 2012)

Bergman offers a more extended, more poetical version of this encounter: "All my life I have hammered on the doors of the rooms in which he moves so naturally. Only a few times have I managed to creep inside" (1989, 73). So then again, what is this room?

The mention of the word *room* next to Tarkovsky's name would instantly make the connoisseur think about the destination of the journey in *Stalker* (1975), "the room in which, we are told, everybody's most secret wish will be granted" (Tarkovsky 1987, 198). The film is the cinematic adaptation of the novel *Roadside Picnic* (1971) by the Strugatski brothers, and, aside from the many shifts in emphasis that make the science fiction narrative turn spiritually transformative, one important change that Tarkovsky brought to the screenplay was made upon the very nature of the destination. That which in the novel was a Golden Sphere became The Room. The inherent spatiality of this metamorphosis is of crucial importance to Tarkovsky's phenomenological attitude. In *Roadside Picnic* the aim of the journey is an object, in *Stalker* it is a place; when the protagonists pause in front of the Golden Sphere, their gesture has temporal resonance, when they linger before crossing the threshold of The Room, their act is of spatial significance. Thus, as in Pallasmaa's statement that "the act of entering, not the door, triggers our deepest emotions" (1994, 19), Tarkovsky succeeds in accentuating the existential crux of the film through spatial means. The threshold metaphorically condenses and deepens the various interior conflicts of the three characters: "they have been through a great deal, thought about themselves, reassessed themselves; and they haven't the courage to step across the threshold into the room which they have risked their lives to reach. They have become conscious that at the tragic, deepest level of awareness they are imperfect" (Tarkovsky 1987, 198). Visually, the film intensifies the idea around the metaphysical function of the threshold: we never see the interior of The Room, instead, we have a view of the three men seen from inside of it, underlining that the essence of The Room lies in its interiority, in its potency to contain, to embrace. In the same time, the scene subtly hints to the fact that The Room is not a material place, but rather an interior space infused with sensorial and spiritual realities, in which one dwells inwardly, within the soul.

Having stuck to the Golden Sphere of the initial novel, such nuances would have been lost. An object, however magically empowered, is hardly attachable to matters of the soul, while the experience of being-in-place and inhabiting triggers such deep experiences that it seems a natural attitude to reverse this situatedness in almost naïve metaphors, such as "the rooms of the soul." This opens the matter further to phenomenological enquiry, since "phenomenology seeks to describe the deep structures of intentional life beginning with the unreflective naivety, structures which give meaning, but are forgotten in that naivety" (Critchley 2002, 7). The naturally intuited spatiality in metaphoric language proves the ontological dimensions

of the act of dwelling; "the experience of a place or space is always a curious exchange; as I settle in a space, the space settles in me" (Pallasmaa 2009, 27).

The idea that being contained determines a reflected understanding of containing resembles Aristotle's definition of place, if we equate "thing" to mental categories; "the place is the innermost motionless boundary of what it contains. The outer surface of the thing coincides with the inner surface of the place. Place is thought to be a kind of a surface, and, as it were a vessel, a container of the thing. Place is coincident with the thing, for boundaries are coincident with the bounded" (Casey 2000, 184).

In his diaries, Tarkovsky notices the coincidence of the "place" with the "thing" twice: once speaking of being contained, referring to an immersion of the self within its immaterial environment; the other time, about containing, moving inwardly to describe the creative process as ideas dwelling within the inner self.

The first is a quotation noted down from the writings of Saint Basil the Great, which is more or less a poetical continuation of Aristotle's definition of place, "this is what one ought to be: like water. It knows no obstacles: it flows, a dam stops it, it breaks the dam and it flows again, it is rectangular in a rectangular vessel, round in a round one; water is stronger and more necessary than everything else" (1998). [2] The second moves into the territory of metaphors, space becoming a conceptual domain:

> how does a project mature? It is obviously a most mysterious, almost imperceptible process. It carries on independently of ourselves, in the subconscious, crystallizing on the walls of the soul. It is the form of the soul that makes it unique, indeed only the soul decides the hidden gestation period of that image which cannot be perceived by the conscious gaze (1998).[3]

It is around this idea of conceiving an artistic creation that one might trace a first clear overlap between Tarkovsky's and Bergman's use of spatial metaphors, while also unveiling an answer to the question which opened this section. Bergman says, with an acute poetical sense that marries good humor: "a production stretches its tentacle roots a long way down through time and dreams. I like to imagine the roots as dwelling in the special room of the soul, where they lie maturing comfortably like mighty cheeses" (1989, 202).

[2,3] Fragments from Tarkovsky, Andrei. 1998. *Dzienniki*, the Polish version of the Diaries, ed. and trans. by Seweryn Kuśmierczyk – exclusively retranslated in English by Jan at Nostalghia.com: http://people.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheDiaries/sacrifice.html

3. Poetics of interior enclosures: "the speaking shadows turn without evasion towards my most secret room"

Bergman's attitude towards this *room* as a distinct immaterial entity is constant. He mentions spatiality as a quality of memory in his recollections of childhood, when speaking of the family's country house, "I went there the first month of my life and still dwell there in my memory" (1989, 52). These rooms of memory are mentally approachable, "today, if I am calm and just about to fall asleep, I can go from room to room and see every detail, know and feel it" (1989, 20). However, there is one precise interior space that is referred to as *secret* or *closed*, a space that throughout Bergman's writings appears with constancy only in three distinct circumstances: emotions that underlie childhood recollections, his fascination toward the metaphysical depths of cinema and… Tarkovsky. The first two categories often merge temporally and aesthetically:

> No form of art goes beyond ordinary consciousness as film does, straight to our emotions, deep into the twilight room of the soul. At the editing table, when I run the strip of film through, frame by frame, I still feel that dizzy sense of magic of my childhood: in the darkness of the wardrobe, I slowly wind on one frame after another, see the almost imperceptible changes, wind faster – a movement. The mute or speaking shadows turn without evasion towards my most secret room. (Bergman 1989, 74)

However, if in the self-reflective notes the *room* is referred to as *secret*, or *closed*, of an utterly inaccessible nature albeit contained within, the act of entering is alluded to only when mentioning the encounter with Tarkovsky's work, such as the above-mentioned quotes. For instance, when remembering some episode, Bergman writes: "I found to my surprise that my senses did indeed register the external reality, but the impulses never reached as far as my emotions. They inhabited a closed room" (1989, 117). These lines were written some time before 1986, the events narrated had happened around 1933, and, with the gaze of the one looking back, Bergman adds:

> Now that I have the key in my hand, I know that more than forty years were to go by before my emotions were released from that closed room where they had been imprisoned. I existed on the memory of feelings. I knew perfectly well how emotions should be reproduced, but the spontaneous expression of them was never spontaneous. There was always a micro-second between my intuitive experience and its emotional expression." (1989, 118)

Simple math says that the chiasm of forty years would have ceased around 1973, and is not merely coincidental that Bergman first encountered Tarkovsky's work in 1971, an experience which he describes using exactly the same metaphors of entering the room: "I found myself standing at the door of a room the keys of which had, until then, never been given to me."[4] Many years later, Bergman would still tell of how he came upon the film *Andrei Rublev* (Tarkovsky, 1966) and bribed the cameraman to stay afterhours to screen it: "At about 2:30 a.m. we came out of the screening room with gaunt eyes, completely moved, enthusiastic and shaken. I will never forget it. What was remarkable is that there were no Swedish subtitles. We didn't understand a word of the dialogue, but we were nonetheless overwhelmed" (Shargel 2007, 197). Members of his filming crew confessed that from that moment on, Bergman would watch *Andrei Rublev* before setting to work for every new film production (Alexander-Garret 2011, 54), sensations from this film appearing through his later writings.[5]

4. Notes for an incongruent conversation: "we didn't understand a word of the dialogue"

Having set the scene of convergence between Bergman's and Tarkovsky's understanding of interior spatiality, the divergence of exterior communication should also be listed, briefly mentioning the fragments of incongruent interaction between the two. Bergman was born in 1918, fourteen years older than Tarkovsky, then twenty-one years outliving the latter. Bergman directed his first film in 1934 (*Crisis*), Tarkovsky released his full-length feature film in 1962; the two would activate concomitantly for only twenty-four years. In 1964, two years after the release of Tarkovsky's award-winning first film *Ivan's Childhood*, Bergman, who was already an internationally accomplished figure, having been asked in an interview whether he had enjoyed any Russian films, would answer: "Very much, I think something very good will come from there soon. I don't know why, but I feel it. Have you seen *Ivan's Childhood*? There are extraordinary things in it" (Shargel 2007, 42). And Bergman's suppositions would prove right. Two years after this, *Andrei Rublev* (1966) was released, but its international distribution was delayed by Russian authorities, so Bergman would only come across it in 1971. The encounter with this film, as described above, would be overwhelming.

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[4] Fragment from the above-cited interview with Bergman: date N/A; source: http://people.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/IB_On_AT.html (accessed March 2012)

[5] In a recurrent nightmare concerning professional anxieties, Bergman dreams that in the moment of uttermost conflict he finds relief taking off and flying, with arms as wings, passing above a large field ("it's bound to be Russia") – an image mirroring the beginning of *Andrei Rublev* (Bergman 1989, 174).

Tarkovsky found out about Bergman's appreciation only two years later. He had already been a great admirer of Bergman, his list of ten favorite films including three signed by the latter. Tarkovsky's diary sheds light upon their non-verbal and indirect dialogue that stretched over twelve years:[6]

> *Andrei Rublev* is being shown in Sweden. Apparently Bergman called *Andrei Rublev* the best film he has ever seen. (17 June 1972, Moscow)
>
> Someone says there is an interview somewhere with Bergman, who considers me the best contemporary director, even better than Fellini (?!!) I wonder if it can be true. It doesn't sound right. (7 January 1974, Moscow)
>
> Bergman invited me a few times to stay with him in Sweden. I was told nothing about it verbally. (14 September 1975, Moscow)
>
> Spoke to Sophia in Stockholm, last night. I asked her to pass on to Bergman the idea of a collaboration between the three of us: Bergman, Antonioni and myself. (13 May 1980, Rome)
>
> Sophia telephoned yesterday from Stockholm. Bergman was very interested in our idea of working together on a film, only unfortunately he is completely booked up until 1983. He very much wants to meet me. Sophia says he has seen *Andrei Rublev* ten times. (16/17 May 1980, Rome)
>
> Saw Bergman for the first time in person today. He had a meeting with young people at the Film Institute where he was presenting the documentary about the making of *Fanny and Alexander* and providing a running documentary. Then he answered the questions. He made an odd impression on me. Self-centered, cold, superficial, both toward the children and the audience. (15 September 1984, Stockholm)

The last entry is written when Tarkovsky was in the middle of preparations for *The Sacrifice* (*Offret*, 1986)*,* shot in Gotland, the Swedish island where Bergman had been filming and living for over twenty years at that time. Even if all previous entries would presume a desire to interact once geographically close, Sven Nykvist, the cinematographer who worked with both of them, recalled that while Tarkovsky and Bergman were both in Stockholm, they would each cross the street to the other side when seeing the other, to avoid any meeting (Johnson 1994, 30). Moreover, after completion of the film, Tarkovsky would abruptly dismiss all assumptions that *The Sacrifice*, due to the fact that it physically inhabited Bergman's landscape, was a Bergmanesque work, while Bergman would publicly consider Tarkovsky's last work "a hopeless waste" (Shargel 2007, 197). This odd incongruence could be open to manifold interpretations, which, however pertinent, would still leave out the innermost realities of both men. While not pretending to

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[6] Following fragments extracted from *Time within Time: The Diaries* (1991).

solve queries of interpersonal failures, the paper will continue tracing reciprocal fusions in their use of spatial metaphors, through this arguing that, beyond the flaws and resilience of direct communication, the two artists have met on a far more profound level.

After having criticized Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice*, Bergman would add:

> Anyway, I still think he is a wonderful human being. But let me tell you of the strange relationship I had with him. One day he was in Gotland. It would have taken me twenty minutes to go there, but I didn't go. I thought about it a number of times. Here is someone who meant so much to me, who influenced me decisively – perhaps more because of his attitude about life than as a film director. So why didn't I visit him when he was so close? I think it was the issue of language […] we would have to communicate through an interpreter. But for the matters I wanted to discuss with him, I could not use an interpreter. It would have been impossible. Thus, we never met. I regret it now. (Shargel 2007, 198)

5. Theoretical interlude:

If there was this issue between them, Swedish and German vs. Russian and Italian, what was, then, that language in which Tarkovsky had managed to influence Bergman decisively, communicating even ineffable concepts such as attitude about life? Philosophers say that we are immersed in language as in an existential system which precludes any knowledge, its ontological function reflecting again the naturalness of inhabiting, of becoming immersed in place's phenomenological embrace. While Bergman considered that Tarkovsky "had invented a new language, true to the nature of film, as it captures life as a reflection, life as a dream,"[7] Walter Benjamin (1999) thought that architecture is made of dream images that protrude into the waking world and Henri Bergson (2004) would observe that cinema is the only art rightly equipped to depict such inner and imperceptible layers of the human mind as dreams and memories. All three assumptions might refer to one and the same communicative reality, which – in absence of a better term – might be called language beyond language.

> There's another kind of language, another form of communication: by means of feeling and images. That is the contact which stops people being separated from each other, which brings down barriers. Will, feeling, emotion – these

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[7] Fragment from an interview with Bergman: date N/A; source: nostalghia.com (accessed March 2012)

remove obstacles from between people who otherwise stand on opposite sides of a mirror, on opposite sides of a door… (Tarkovsky 1987, 13)[8]

In this language, direct perception transgresses the sensorial and dwells as a reflection upon memories and dreams, and lived space becomes expressible in cinema:

> As a communicative system, what is called the film experience uniquely opens up and exposes inhabited space of direct experience as a condition of singular embodiment and makes it accessible and visible to more than the single consciousness that lives it. Cinema thus transposes what would otherwise be the invisible, individual, and intra-subjective privacy of direct experience as it is embodied, into the visible, public and inter-subjective sociality of a language that not only refers to direct experience, but also uses direct experience as its mode of reference. (Sobchack 1991, 9)

Following the previous discussion about entering the room, now taking into account the direct experience of the door as is referred to, but also as a mode of reference, in the films of Bergman and Tarkovsky, the cinematic imagery around this basic architectural element unveils new layers of poetic meaning. As observed by Benjamin and Bergson, the act of opening a door and crossing the threshold is protruded by dream images translatable in cinema. As will be shortly described, the door is for both directors at times a mode of reference and trigger for unfolding the flow of dream and recollected images, while other times being referred to as a metaphor for approaching these interior rooms of memory. Paul Ricoeur would define "inhabited space as a paradigm for memory mechanisms. In memories, corporeal space is immediately linked with the surrounding space of the environment" (1992, 150).

In this regard, the most eloquent and picturesque example is, for both filmmakers, the childhood home, the place which holds the roots of the first "attitudes about life" (Shargel 2007, 198), and of the first spatial intuitions.

6. Approaching and depicting memories of the childhood home: "suppose I open it?"

"I can still roam through the landscape of my childhood and again experience lights, smells, people, rooms, moments, gestures, tones of voice and objects. These memories seldom have any particular meaning, but are like short or longer films

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[8] Fragment of a letter which Tarkovsky received from one of the admirers of *Zerkalo*, quoted in the introduction to *Sculpting in Time* (Tarkovsky 1987, 13).

with no point, shot at random" (Bergman 1987, 17), writes the Swedish director in a fragment which shows the synaesthesic intensity in perceiving and expressing these early experienced spaces. Such sensorial recollections are recurrent in his writings, and one of these raises a fairly intriguing question: "In the quietness of Grandmother's home, my senses opened and decided to keep all this forever and ever. Where has everything gone? Have any of my children inherited the impressions of my senses? Can one inherit impressions of senses, experiences, insights?" (1987, 20).

Where has everything gone? Most psychologists and phenomenologists that study memory and its mechanisms would point towards the embodiment of memories, underlining the fact that the body is the center for storing impressions, and that only through reenacting the body's situatedness would those memories be restored. However, this view is opposed, or rather completed, by those that say that "the body is indeed one of the things in which our true feelings are located, but it is not the only one… Least of all is the self limited to the body. A person literally projects or throws himself out of the body, anywhere at all" (Becker 1971, 32). "In other words, our inner existence (mind) is incredibly entangled with the exterior world, in the phenomenological world in which we live" (Schwartzenberg 2009, 60).

Bergman's approach exemplifies both positions. On the one hand, he can often "go from room to room and see every detail, know and feel it" (Bergman 1987, 20) without a need to reenact the body's emplacement; on the other hand, his first autobiographical film, *Wild Strawberries* (*Smultronstället*, 1957) was prompted by an actual encounter with the place, visiting his childhood house after many years of absence. In this case, the space itself turned into a metaphor that would further develop into the film image:

> I went up to the house and took hold of the door knob of the kitchen door, which still had its colored glass pattern and a feeling ran quickly through me: suppose I open it? Supposing old Lalla, our old cook, is standing inside there, in her big apron, making porridge for breakfast, as she did so many times when I was little? Suppose I could suddenly walk into my childhood? Then it struck me: supposing I make a film of someone coming along, perfectly realistically, and suddenly opening a door and walking into his childhood? And then opening another door and walking into reality again?" (Bjorkman 1993, 131)

The film did not, in the end, keep the idea of opening the door as trigger of the transformation, from directly perceiving a materiality of loss into physically grasping the immaterial memory image. Perhaps, however sincere, the film image would have been thought of as too facile, since, as previously stated, describing the immaterial in terms of spatial metaphors is a natural, almost naïve attitude. Just as

Tarkovsky writes that memory has to be worked upon before it can become film (Tarkovsky 1987, 29). Instead, the house turns from its decaying present-day into the bright image of the protagonist's recollections, while piano music starts to play. Seemingly arbitrary, this association is in fact part of Bergman's innermost childhood landscape, as he reveals when discussing filmmaking in the opening of the book on *Wild Strawberries,*

> my association with film goes back to the world of childhood. My grandmother had a very large old apartment in Uppsala. I used to sit under the dining-room table there, listening to the sunshine which came in through gigantic windows. The sunlight moved about and sounded in a very special way. One day, when winter was giving way to spring and I was five years old, a piano was being played in the next apartment. On the wall hung a large picture of Venice. As the sunlight moved across the picture, the water in the canal began to flow, the pigeons flew up from the square, people talked and gesticulated. Bells sounded from the picture itself. And the piano music also came from that remarkable picture of Venice." (Bergman 1993, 6)

The synaesthesic strength in such juxtapositions of senses as sounding sunlight and bells chiming from inside of a static picture phenomenologically describes the deeply-lived space. Moreover, the subjective association, replacing the physical opening of a door with a piano melody that opens an interior room through the spatiality that inheres in music, render truthfulness to the final film image. Due to its flexibility in moving from one sense to the other, film is the medium that captures such metaphoric inversions in the most subtle way and seems to answer Bergman's question: perhaps it is us, the viewers, that could inherit impressions of senses, experiences, insights…

Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* was one of Tarkovsky's favorite films and, although the narrative, the structure and the imagery essentially differ, Tarkovsky's own autobiographical film, *The Mirror* (*Zerkalo*, 1975) shares a similar metaphorical treatment in approaching the door of the childhood home. Unlike Bergman, Tarkovsky's images of this house unfolded solely from memories and photographs. This is because the house he was born in and had spent his first years of life perished long before he made the film, having been previously flooded when a dam was constructed closely, on the Volga. His sister recalls him having constant dreams of swimming through dark water, toward the house, while other dreams of it eventually generated the idea for this film:

> I have a recurring dream which is amazingly regular. Each time it is almost identical, the house where I was born, with only the smallest changes. The only thing that varies is that the sun may be shining or it may be raining, winter or

summer. And now as I dream of the log walls blackened with age, and the door, ajar, leading from the porch into the darkness of the vestibule, I already know that I am only dreaming it, and the unbearable joy of returning to my birthplace is diluted by the expectation of waking. (Tarkovsky 1999, 303)

In a lecture for film students, Tarkovsky further confessed that it was precisely the spatial impossibility of crossing this house's threshold in dreams (as mentioned in Johnson 1994) that prompted the need to make this film, to rebuild the house in the same location where it once stood, and make it inhabitable within the film experience.

In the film sequences where the little boy approaches the house, he constantly stops at the door, aside from one scene, a poetic spatial metaphor that subtly associates memories (of having inhabited this house) with dreams (of its flooded decaying existence). The first drafts of the screenplay for *Zerkalo* contained an episode in which the young Andrei sinks in the waves of the river Volga, while his Mother washes laundry on the riverbank, and afterwards they swim together towards and within an underwater house. However, this dream image was then artistically transformed in film. Such as in the case of Bergman, an associative process of juxtaposing feelings gave rise to a stronger, more inclusive metaphor: after seeing the image of Mother washing laundry and Andrei swimming in the river, we see the little boy approaching the house and this time entering it, crossing the threshold and passing through rooms in which light-filled curtains float in the air, translucently veiling the view of the house, at times caressing and covering him in their bright vaporous texture, as he moves on in slow motion. The beautiful metaphor of floating veils speaks in a domestic tone of the flooded house, as well as of the layers of time gone by, the curtains bringing homely familiarity and taming the dramatic image of a sunken house and the even more dramatic image of oblivion.

Telling the story of his family and the failures of communication among them, *Zerkalo* was for Tarkovsky an attempt to say those things never being said, ask for forgiveness and seek some filial repentance. Speaking the very same language, which – indeed – needs no interpreter, Bergman would recount how one Sunday afternoon, years after both his parents (with whom he could never have a genuine dialogue) had died, was sitting in a church across the street from his childhood home, listening to Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, and, sinking in a reverie, he imagined going to the house and finding his parents spending the quiet hours of the afternoon in silence, his Mother reading, while he gently approaches her and filially kisses her forehead. "Now I'll make an attempt, this time it will be successful" (Bergman 1989, 282). The narrative fragment continues when, upon waking from this redemptive reverie to the physicality of the church filled with light and flowing sounds, in a fragment that seems to mirror in detail Tarkovsky's metaphoric image: "Bach's chorale was still moving like colorful floating veils in

my consciousness, flitting back and forth across thresholds and through opened doors. Joy" (Bergman 1989, 282).

7. Conclusions: "to glimpse with our sightless eyes"

It is the first mention of opened doors in Bergman's reflective writings about his inner self. The doors to that room which had been closed in him for over forty years and which he had glimpsed when first watching *Andrei Rublev*… now opened into joy? It is surely not Tarkovsky's film approach, nor his imagery that opened up these rooms, since Bergman confesses that Tarkovsky was for him a decisive influence more because of his attitude towards life than as a filmmaker. This attitude towards life of the Russian director is, paradoxically, best summarized by his attitude towards death: "There is no death," he would constantly say in interviews: *Andrei Tarkovsky: A Poet in the Cinema* (Baglivo, 1984), and reiterate in his films. In the context of absent direct dialogue, one might guess, then, that Bergman perceived beyond the visual metaphors of these film images and understood them in the same key in which Tarkovsky would conceive them: "an image is an impression of Truth, which God has allowed us to glimpse with our sightless eyes" (Tarkovsky 1987, 106). Bergman would declare himself to be an atheist, although many evidences in his oeuvre prove the opposite, and so does his admiration for Tarkovsky and his watching *Andrei Rublev* before setting to work (since *Rublev* deals with the position of the artist before people and before God, this ritual could almost be understood as prayer). Last, but not least, Bergman writes that "Bach's piety heals our faithlessness" (1989, 281), and the story of listening to the *Christmas Oratorio* could have been one of these "healing" moments, when closed rooms are finally open.

It might not be too far from truth, then, to assume that for both Tarkovsky and Bergman, "the most secret room," or that "in which everyone's most secret wish is granted" are one and the same place, where man meets God, where silence speaks louder than language, where death does not exist, where there is light even in the night, where there is forgiveness, where memories and emotions reside and grow into thoughts, where images are born. It is the spiritual dwelling place experienced on some invisible layers by the child, which merges in perception with the childhood home and makes the latter linger in the memory as a nostalgia for Eden. Approaching it, people usually "haven't the courage to step into the room which they have risked their lives to reach. They have become conscious that at the tragic, deepest level of awareness, they are imperfect" (Tarkovsky 1987, 198) and it takes an act of courage, indeed, to bow down and humbly cross its threshold. "Come and abide in us."

It might also be true to say that, at least in the brightest images of their artistic creations, both Tarkovsky and Bergman have entered this room.

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The 'Other Spaces' of Exile in Dubravka Ugrešić's
The Museum of Unconditional Surrender

Katalin SÁNDOR

Babeş–Bolyai University
Department of Hungarian and General Linguistics
sandorkati17@gmail.com

Abstract. My essay investigates the way heterotopic spatial and cultural experiences shape the concepts of space and the spatial practices of exile, as well as their narrative representation in Dubravka Ugrešić's novel, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*. Following Foucault's approach, heterotopic spatial experiences can be described by the localizability and, at the same time, the in-betweenness and the placelessness of space, by its relational aspect and by the capacity of heterotopias to juxtapose in a single real place several spaces that are in themselves incompatible. In Ugrešić's novel the museum, the zoo, the flea-market can be identified as heterotopic spaces which are not ontologically given, but are constituted by spatial, discursive and corporeal practices. This essay examines how the subject experiences not only the otherness of the Other, but also her/his own disquieting ambivalence in the discontinuous spaces and heterotopias of exile. The paper also reflects on the question whether the text functions as an act of critical re-mapping with both aesthetic and ethical consequences.

Keywords: Dubravka Ugrešić, space representation, heterotopia, spatial practices

"Wo bin Ich?" – this untranslated question is the title of the last chapter of Dubravka Ugrešić's novel, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*.[1] Along this question the text can be read as a narrative about a self-exiled narrator's nomadic steps, a first-person account of a Croatian woman writer, whose routes expose a

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[1] The novel was written during the author's self-imposed exile.

peculiar cultural cartography before and after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The fragmented aspect and the rhetorical heterogeneity of the text can be interpreted as an attempt "to counter nationalist reification of memory" (Popescu, qtd. in Wienhold-Brokish 2010, 354) or to elude a totalizing narrative about the past, but also as a symptom of the unspeakability of trauma and displacement. By writing the nomadic steps of a self-imposed exile, the narrative becomes especially sensitive to the problem of space and reflects on spatial practices that are inseparable from questions of identity construction, of cultural otherness and cultural nomadism, of textual remembrance and amnesia.

If – relying on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological views – we consider space not some kind of ether in which things "bathe," but a medium that enables the location of things (qtd. in Figal 2009, 140), and if we relate spatial relations to a subject who is able to locate herself/himself in space, then space is no longer conceived as a withdrawing background, but as a constitutive part of cognitive processes and cultural, social practices. Moreover, temporality and spatiality are not only a set of empirical, physical relations; each of them "comes to life as a social construct which shapes empirical reality and is simultaneously shaped by it. Thus, the spatial order of human existence arises from the (social) production of space, the construction of human geographies that both reflect and configure being in the world" (Soja 1999, 123). Being socially and discursively constituted, space is also irreducibly heterogeneous, being inhabited by different values, ideologies, narratives, symbols, beliefs, phantasms, cultural maps and "other spaces" (or heterotopias, as Foucault would put it).

In Ugrešić's novel the narrator's continuous dislocations map out heterogenous and intermediary spaces. These can be thematized within the framework of a cultural heterotopology that makes visible not only the heterotopic spaces in the text, but also their cultural embeddedness and the spatial practices that constitute them. The heterotopic spatial experience is shaped by the localizability and at the same time the in-betweenness and the placelessness of space, by its relational aspect and by the fact that "[t]he heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 1986, 25). Heterotopias such as the cemetery, the theatre, the garden, the museum, the library, the fairground, the vacation village, the prison, the brothel, the colony, the ship, etc., "always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" (Foucault 1986, 26).

In the novel the museum, the zoo, the flea-market can be identified as heterotopic spaces which are not ontologically given, but constituted by spatial, discursive and corporeal practices. The discursive production and delimitation of not only heterotopias, but space in general, is also thematized in a short chapter of the novel entitled Borders. Here the railway line functions as a border for the child, because – according to local stories – beyond the line "concealed by the blue silk

of distance, lived Gypsies *who stole little children* [...] I imagined them drawing that silk in, covering me with it as with a scarf and I would vanish for ever" (Ugrešić 1999, 74). In the tactile-visual figure of the "blue silk of distance" spatial experience and the narrative which produces and dissects this space fold into each other, as if showing that physical space becomes palpable and at the same elusive through a discursive material, through the "silk" of figuration. The local narrative about the Gypsies who steal little children does not simply begin beyond the border, but draws the border itself and projects the space of the unknown, of the foreigner, of the Other beyond it. Thus, borders function as discursively produced dividing, controlling strategies that distribute a heterogeneous space according to political, social, cultural, national criteria, making the space forbidden, stigmatized, or cultic, familiar, and so on.

The conceptualization of space in Ugrešić's novel is emphatically shaped by exile, emigration and displacement, in which the subject repeatedly performs acts of border crossing. In the discontinuous spaces of exile the subject experiences not only the undomesticable otherness of the Other, but also her/his own disquieting difference and ambivalence. Dislocation and border crossing become constitutive acts in the process of (re)making the self.

In Berlin or New York the narrator's use of space becomes visible in practices which escape the filtering and regulating practice of panoptic administration and city planning, as de Certeau would put it. For de Certeau the everyday spatial practices, the "pedestrian movements form one of these 'real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city'" (1999, 131). He understands these pedestrian movements – the "chorus of idle footsteps" – as "multiform, resistant, tricky and stubborn procedures that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised" (de Certeau 1999, 131). The regulating panoptic administration, as well as the readability of the city implies distance (an Icarian view), whereas the pedestrian movements imply proximity and the lack of the perspective of an all-seeing power. De Certeau uses the expressions "*tactile* apprehension" (1999, 131 – emphasis mine, K. S.) and "kinesthetic appropriation" (1999, 131) to describe the qualitative character, the style of the walking steps that "weave places together" (1999, 131). I consider it is worth laying more emphasis on the words *tactile* and *kinesthetic*: it seems that the regulating panoptical administration differs from the pratice of walking also from the perspective of corporeality, of embodiedness: the former presupposes an almost disembodied experience of looking and apprehension, whereas the latter is an utterly embodied, sensual practice in which urban space is approached both as readable meaning and as something unreadable, sensual and diffuse. In Ugrešić's novel the layers of history are read also by the walker's feet. The topography of memory and that of the urban space fold into each other, walking in the city means touching a stratified, spatialized past: "... the walker could step on someone's roof. The asphalt is only a thin crust covering human bones. Yellow stars, black swastikas, red

hammers and sickles crunch like cockroaches under the walker's feet" (Ugrešić 1999, 161).

Ugrešić's narrator relates the experience of in-betweenness and heterogeneity to the space of Berlin, which is called a mutant, transvestite (1999, 104), schizophrenic (1999, 231), museal city, an "archeological find," "a before-after place" (1999, 221). The city is not only a cluster of different spaces, but also a cluster of different times; linear, historical or measurable time often seems to be disturbed or suspended: "Altogether, there's something wrong with time here. In Berlin buses one can see the oldest old ladies in the world. It's as though they had forgotten to die" (Ugrešić 1999, 106). Berlin, a multi-layered collage of East and West, of different histories and ideologies, is written as a heterotopic space in which the performability of identity is linked to the use of space and to orientation practices. To buy Croatian newspapers the narrator chooses a route which cannot be explained by a rationalizing urbanistic discourse: she walks across a place filled with porn shops and "stalls run by Turks selling cheap food, exchange bureaux, jewellers and newspaper stands" (Ugrešić 1999, 101). She drags herself through "this warm tunnel greased with its various exhalations" and wrapped by a "strong smell of mutton fat" (Ugrešić 1999, 101). The way leading to Croatian newspapers overwrites urbanistic rationality and follows the diffuse, warm, bodiless and still palpable map of smell which functions for the narrator as a detour and as a medium both in a cultural and in a sensual, corporeal sense. The familiar smell of mutton fat related to the Eastern Turkish culture leads to the smell of printer's ink, the smell of home, which – in this case – orients through its absence.

The experience of placelessness and displacement is articulated by using and inhabiting heterotopic places. Such a place could be the zoo which, according to Foucault, is a heterotopia resembling the garden: it "is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (1986, 25). The garden is "the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world," "a sort of happy, universalizing heterotopia" (Foucault 1986, 26).

In the European cultural history of the zoo as an institution (from the nineteenth century on) this garden has been shaped by the (orientalist) ideologies and the colonizing gaze of Western culture, but also by scientific ideologies or by the history of leisure time activities. The zoo offers the spectacle of the Other, of the wild which is domesticated, made controllable, exoticized and consumed from a safe and (power-related) position. Still, this garden aiming to become encyclopedic, maintains some disquieting contradictions; the zoo is a heterogeneous collage of the natural and the cultural in which – despite all harmonizing efforts – the traces of assembling and re-contextualization are visible: "lions direct their roars towards the Grundkredit bank, trains and cars pass alongside rhinoceros" (1999, 102). In this intermediary space the narrator notices remarkably many visitors who are in one way or another outsiders, displaced or misplaced within the social sphere: "Here, in the Berlin zoo, a

harmony is achieved between people and rhinos, drunks and monkeys, drug-sellers and wild goats, smugglers and lions, courting couples and seals, prostitutes and crocodiles...” (Ugrešić 1999, 102).

The novel begins by presenting a strange display in the zoo which could be a critical (meta)figure of this heterotopic space and of the ambiguous relation between the natural and the cultural. The unusual collection shows the content of the stomach of a walrus that died in the Berlin zoo: a cigarette lighter, a metal brooch, a hair grip, a water pistol, sunglasses, a metal comb, a beer can, a baby's shoe, etc. Through these objects the city penetrates into the body of the natural and the display subverts any clear delimitation between nature and culture. Not only the natural ingests the urban, but also the urban space swallows up the collage of the living which can be grasped only through its cultural-discursive remake. The stomach of the walrus and Teufelsberg, the zoo, the museums, the flea-markets become meta-figures in the text reflecting on each other and on the material and discursive depositories of history which in Ugrešić's text escape any reductive ideological appropriation.

Related to the theme of the zoo, a nomadic text fragment returns twice in the novel: the short text describes the way the narrator and the largest parrot of the world, the *Anodorhychus hyazinthicus*, look at each other in the artificial light of the Vogelhaus. The two fragments narrating the same scene displace the narratorial point of view. This might be interpreted as a strategy that foregrounds the mediated and perspective-bound aspect of narration. In the first fragment we read about a third person's (a middle-aged woman's) gaze: “The woman and the splendid bird the colour of bluebells look at each other silently. [...] The woman is calmly chewing bread: with her fingers bent into pincers she breaks off quite small pieces and puts them in her mouth. The blue ara watches the woman with charming attention” (Ugrešić 1999, 105). In the second fragment the gaze will be that of the narrator. The displacement of the gazes implies or is the effect of a split, a distance necessary for reflecting on the self as Other. However, this apparently simple scene is shaped by multiple displacements: the heterotopia of the zoo is not only the observed space; the visitor is not the exclusive owner of the gaze. In the heterotopia of the zoo that exoticizes otherness, the observer abandons the appropriating gaze by observing that she herself is observed in the reciprocity of gazes. Thus, the heterotopia becomes a site for both reflection and self-reflection and for a subtle, hardly noticable act of (dis)identification: the narrator resonates with the exhibited but still inaccessible otherness through her body. Her fingers resembling pincers continue in the beak and in the movements of the blue ara.

In Ugrešić's novel the walker's steps and the spatial practices that remake the city seem to be related to what de Certeau calls “‘another spatiality’ (an ‘anthropological,’ poetic and mythic experience of space), and to an *opaque and blind* mobility characteristic of the bustling city” (1999, 128). Thus “a *migrational*,

or metaphorical city" folds into "the clear text of the planned and readable city" (de Certeau 1999, 128). The flea-market, which is mentioned in the novel several times, could be a heterotopia of the migrational city. For Foucault, fairgrounds (and consequently flea-markets), "these marvelous empty sites on the outskirts of cities" are heterotopic places which – unlike temporal heterotopias linked to the accumulation of time (e.g., museums) – are not "oriented toward the eternal" and are "linked to time in its most fleeting, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival" (1986, 26).

In the novel the Berlin flea-markets become the lived spaces of interculturality, of identification and remembrance practices. The Bosnian Kašmir's mother, for instance, crochets little mats only to pretend to sell them, but actually she goes to the flea-market to meet their folk. It is not surprising that the policemen who punish her for selling the mats without a licence do not understand her completely non-commercial reasons. But "'[s]he's at it again... crocheting...' says Kašmir" (Ugrešić 1999, 226).

The flea-market is a nomadic, transitory heterotopia, which gathers not only cultural differences, but also the fragments and quotations of historical time: family albums, peaceful, reconciled military uniforms, watches, broken flower vases, etc. This transient space, the "rubbish heap of time" (Ugrešić 1999, 229), the transit zone of cultures and histories, permeates and disturbs the regulating urbanistic discourse by drawing an invisible map whose existence is linked solely to cultural practices of re-appropriating the space. For the refugees who live in *heim*s, the street and the flea-market are spaces in which they can perform and redefine their cultural, social, ethnic and linguistic identity – by drawing the map of absence: "Here, in Gustav-Meyer Allee, on Saturdays and Sundays, the country, that is no more, Bosnia, draws its map once again in the air, with its towns, villages, rivers and mountains. The map glimmers briefly and then disappears like a soap bubble" (Ugrešić 1999, 230).

If the flea-market is the heterotopia of transience, then the museum is the heterotopia of accumulated time. The Museum of Unconditional Surrender,[2] which lends its name to the novel, is evoked in the text several times. For Foucault, the museum is a space which collects time and creates a heterochrony, another time. Relating to nineteenth-century modernism, museums are general archives that accumulate "all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes" in a place "that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages" (Foucault 1986, 26).

In the novel the Museum of Unconditional Surrender (a war museum owned by the Soviet Union) becomes after the fall of the Berlin Wall the space of amnesia, the space of a cultural and memorial surrender. The smell of the museum

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[2] The museum was closed in 1994, but reconceptualized and reopened as the German–Russian Museum in 1995.

is "heavy, stale, sweetish" (Ugrešić 1999, 224). In the emptiness of the museal space undisturbed by visitors the past is literally hibernating, it is unaddressed and unaddressable, closing onto itself. Just like the old woman in the museum who is sleeping and "hugging her own stomach like a cushion" (Ugrešić 1999, 222), as if suspended between the unstable status of the exposed object and the caretaker.

This heterotopic place is discovered by the narrator's countrymen, by those whose relation to spaces and lands has been redefined by the experience of exile and emigration. For the ex-Yugoslav refugees who live in (consistently untranslated) *heim*s, the café in the basement of the Museum of Unconditional Surrender becomes a somewhat familiar, culturally inhabitable space, not only due to a shared cultural memory and a still fresh experience of the communist past, but also due to a taste, to a corporeal, sensual familiarity: the Georgian coffee resembles "their" Turkish coffee. For the placeless the café inserted in-between memory and amnesia is paradoxically homely also because of its cultural placelessness, its historical nowhere. The refugees and the emigrants are slowly musealized not only because they re-appropriate the café of a museum or because their otherness is repeatedly put on display. They become "walking museum exhibits" (Ugrešić 1999, 234), because in the absence of institutionalized collective memory they do the work of remembrance and carry the lost culture of everyday objects and practices: Plavi Radion, the first Yugoslav washing powder, Studio Uno, the first television programme, Gavrilović meat pâté. Ugrešić's cultural project of collecting and archiving extends beyond this novel: the lexicon of Yugoslavian mythology (www.leksikon-yu-mitologije.net) she and others propose is an on-line virtual museum collecting the "warmest" places (Ugrešić 2005) of collective memory (jokes, objects, newspapers, TV-series, posters, photographs), counterbalancing the lack of institutionalized frameworks.

In the novel the back side of musealizing practices is Teufelsberg, the artificial Berlin hill containing the ruins of the Second World War. The hill incorporating the historical debris of the city belongs to the geography of an impossible amnesia. It swallows up historical time and makes the remains of a historical epoch invisible by "naturalizing" them, covering them with vegetation. Teufelsberg redraws the geography of the city, the urban landscape by which it is reincorporated into history. The body of the city and the strata of time continue under the asphalt and under the grass of the artificial hill. Teufelsberg becomes the figure of another unwritten or unspeakable past leaking through the written, musealized discourse of history: "'Berlin is Teufelsberg' I say, madness covered with indifferent grass" (Ugrešić 1999, 168).

Ugrešić's textual musealization appears as a practice of remembrance, as a way of (re)making the past. Writing about geocultural narratives and musealizing modalities, Kornélia Faragó remarks that after the disintegration of Yugoslavia only the narrative act, the textual organization and the anthropological gesture of

reconstruction through writing have a structure-forming capacity (2009, 7). Culturally significant objects, as well as immaterial artefacts and gestures of cultural collecting may acquire the function of structuring the text (Faragó 2009, 17). In the novel shaped by the practice of cultural collecting, the textual museum does not resemble the discourse of the normative, regulative museum. Ugrešić's collection is much closer to Hooper-Greenhill's *post-museum*, which – beyond the accumulation of objects – stimulates interpretation and the social use of the museal space (Hooper-Greenhill, qtd. in György 2005, 4). In the musealizing discourse of the novel (resembling the non-hierarchical texture of collage) the fragments of ex-Yugoslavian and European geo-cultural spaces are exhibited in a way that encourages intervention and rearragement.

Ugrešić's collection and heterotopography (including the museum, the flea-market, the zoo) are part of a discourse in which identity, cultural otherness or the recent past of (ex-)Yugoslavia are not reified by unequivocal or adjudicating narratives. The text seems to follow "the chorus of idle footsteps" (de Certeau 1999, 131), and disturbs the maps of ideological closure. Thematizing the performative, ambivalent and nomadic aspect of identity and relating it to the heterotopic experience of exile, the text itself becomes fragmented, migrational, unstable, facing the unspeakability of displacement. In this way the novel can function as an act of critical remapping with both aesthetic and ethical consequences.

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Book Reviews

"Raccontami una storia ..." Fiabe, leggende e miti nella memoria dei popoli **by Giovanna Motta.**
Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011. 262 pp.

Review by Elena DUMITRU
Sapienza University of Rome

1. Brief summary

The book "*Raccontami una storia...*" *Fiabe, leggende e miti nella memoria dei popoli* ("*Tell Me a Story...*" *Fairy Tales, Legends and Myths in Peoples' Memory*) is the result of a vast project coordinated by Giovanna Motta – full professor at Sapienza University of Rome and director of the Phd Programme in History of Europe – and involves a large team of scholars from different countries and disciplinary formation aiming to present a variety of approaches regarding the reception and the significance of fairy tales, myths and legends in the history of different territories.

2. General considerations

The book is not a simple compilation of fairy tale texts, but a collection of studies that discuss historically and critically the evolution of fairy tales, their influence on popular beliefs, on the creation of a common "memory" of the peoples and also on the manner in which they perceive the world. What makes this book so relevant is that the authors offer an analytical perspective on this topic reminding us that folklore is not just for children and trying to connect the literary and emotive dimension of folktale to the wide cultural and historical treasure that each community maintains and transmits through generations because – as the coordinator emphasises in the introduction – legends and myths preserve the historical and anthropological identity of different communities.

3. The structure of the book

The book contains 28 essays that offer a careful analysis of the subject and bond different countries, European and not only, creating a wide literary-historical "network" from Portugal to Spain, France, Ireland, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Poland, the Baltic countries, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, etc., in a multitude of interpretations that represent indeed a valuable contribution in this very particular field of inquiry. In this multicultural universe, the main idea that unites the various essays regards the theme of travel in fairy tales in order to describe and explain different circumstances when the emotive sensibility of the peoples becomes the expression of the natural need and will to discover themselves, but also the others, as well as to interact with elements that belong to a specific geographical space or a particular perception of the universe. For this reason, the fairy tales contain the deep roots of social groups and, even if we can easily find common elements such the use of imagination and magical transfiguration, these stories show us also the differences that determine cultural variety and social, historical, territorial, linguistic, educational multiplicity of the countries and peoples. The social and cultural background of the tales becomes in this way an important factor during the process of the formation of a specific identity.

4. Conclusions

The authors of the book reveal a deep knowledge and understanding of folklore and its implications in the creation of a national patrimony. It is an ambitious work that links literature and history and I recommend it to anyone who wants to learn more about this universe dominated by the struggle between Good and Evil, in a series of circumstances that acquire a symbolic dimension. From these different stories, the authors piece together the world view of an incredibly rich part of our civilization, of our cultural traditions. Moreover, this book is an excellent resource for students, scholars, professors and folk narrative enthusiasts.

Pap Levente and Tapodi Zsuzsa, eds. *Kapcsolatok, képek – Imagológiai tanulmányok.* [*Connections, Images – Studies on Imagology.*]
Miercurea Ciuc: Status, 2011. 241 pp.

Pap Levente and Tapodi Zsuzsa, eds. *Interculturalitatea şi interetnicismul ieri şi azi – Studii de contactologie şi imagologie.* [*Interculturalism and Interethnicism Then and Now – Studies on Contactology and Imagology.*]
Miercurea-Ciuc: Status, 2011. 196 pp.

Review by Árpád Kémenes
Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania

The two volumes contain the proceedings of the conferences on imagology organised by the Department of Humanities of Sapientia University in the years 2007, 2009 and 2011. As the presentations were held either in Hungarian or in Romanian language, the first volume, *Connections, Images – Studies on Imagology* contains the studies delivered in Hungarian, while the second one, *Interculturalism and Interethnicism Then and Now – Studies on Contactology and Imagology* comprises the written forms of the presentations held in Romanian language as well as the Romanian translation of some presentations originally held in Hungarian. The conferences opened debates on issues such as self-mythology, the transformation of national myths, or the role of films and of the media in shaping the image of a nation. Stereotypes are also approached from a number of perspectives. The writers of the studies included in the two volumes seek answers to questions related to stereotypes that influence the formation of self-knowledge and the image of otherness, investigate the stereotypes that have penetrated the educational system and the media, and point out the role of arts and literature in developing ways of thinking based on stereotypes. Also, research has been carried out into the extent the image created about the Other living in our proximity has changed or has been changing in the course of the twenty-first century.

In the collection of studies written in Hungarian Zoltán Kövecses approaches the ideal and stereotype of the Hungarians from a cognitive linguistic perspective. A number of studies focus on issues connected to imagology as they appear in folk culture. Lajos Balázs argues that folklore and, generally, the entire folk culture has 'escaped' from the medium where it was born, and started to fulfil national functions. He also points out that folk culture can be regarded as an 'antidote' for

globalisation and homogenisation. Modernisation, the effects of economic, social and cultural changes on the traditional values of peasants are also investigated in Veronika Lajos's writing entitled Complex Peasant Knowledge and Cultural Adaptation. Katalin Lajos analyses different versions the Romanian folk ballad *Mioriţa*, and discusses on the way the topic of conflict and the perception of the stranger appear in the analysed versions.

The second part of the volume focuses on literature, media and films. Levente Pap analyses Saint Gerard's legend, which is considered to contain the first written reference to the existence of their folk poetry both by the Hungarian and by the Romanian literary historians. Szilárd Szilágyi writes about the awareness of the relationship between the Turks and the Hungarians in the Turkish Turanist poetry. Several studies focus on stereotypes in literature. Lilla Bollemant writes about sexual and national stereotypes in Piroska Szentes's novel *Star on her Forehead*, Zsuzsa Ajtony analyses the British stereotype as it appears in G. B. Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*, while Zsuzsa Tapodi investigates the prejudices, the ethnic and national stereotypes that influence the critical reception of Albert Wass's works. Angéla Ferencz examines the role of local media in forming the society after the fall of the communist regime, reaching the conclusion that media plays an important role not only in local and ethnic self-representation, but also in regional self-definition.

Approaching the concept of alterity from the point of view of image theories, Judit Pieldner examines the way the experience of foreignness and the representation of the Hungarian national image appear in András Jeles's films. Films are in the focus of Imola Részeg's writing, as well, in which the author investigates how the past political system and the social problems of that time are reflected in the works of contemporary young Romanian film directors.

The second volume, which contains the collection of studies written in Romanian language, largely relies on issues concerning literature. Zsuzsa Tapodi writes about the critical reception of Lóránd Daday's works, and disproves opinions that label Daday as being hostile to the Romanians. Judit Pieldner examines the representation of Romanian women in the works of Hungarian authors, surveying the stereotypes of Romanian women as they appear in different literary genres. The way the image of alterity appears in some works belonging to contemporary Hungarian literature is investigated in Éva Bányai's writing, while Mircea Breaz expounds on the image of the child's world in the Romanian and Hungarian proverbs. Although the majority of the studies presented in the volume focus on the Hungarian and the Romanian cultures, Ştefania Custură investigates some aspects of Romanian-Saxon cultural interfaces in Braşov; Maria Anoca Dagmar, basing on literary works, scientific studies and newspaper articles written by Slovak authors, provides information on the self-reflection of Slovaks living in

Romania, and Elena Dumitru's study deals with the image of the Romanians in the Italian newspapers.

The variety of topics presented in the two volumes offer food for thought for the readers interested in imagology, and provide proper basis for further research.

Pieldner Judit. *Genres in Changing Contexts. An Introduction to the Study of English Literature from the Beginnings to Romanticism*.
Miercurea Ciuc: Status, 2010. pp. 250.

Review by Boróka Prohászka-Rád
Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania

Genres in Changing Contexts – as the author, herself a teacher of English literary history, phrases it – responds to a challenge and a demand. The challenge consists in the task all of us teachers of literature face today: how to best assist our students in their journey of discovering, understanding, interpreting, and critically-analytically addressing works in an era when the skills and knowledge necessary for an adequate attitude towards literature, towards books in general are rarely focused on and students' analytic mindset is often missing. Judit Pieldner's book offers a frame and tools of aiding students in such a quest through a clear and easily accessible method: an introduction to basic literary terms, and overview of different dominant genres, followed by a discussion of the successive periods of English literature from its beginnings to the period of Romanticism.

The book also responds to a demand teachers of literature constantly face: troubled and bewildered by the multitude of sources available both in print and electronically on the Internet, students often get lost among such an abundance and fail to differentiate between veritable and reliable sources and most often authorless, ready-made interpretations of literary works that they take at face value accepting their accuracy and correctness without questions. Other times students just give up altogether, deeming bibliographic research and reading the available literature a burden best to avoid as it is often written in a language that seems inaccessible and fails to offer them guidance in understanding the text and its context.

The author's aim is to initiate students as well as readers eager to immerse themselves in a systematic process of getting acquainted with the history of English literature into a method that aids the first-hand experience of reading and the practice of literary interpretation. The structure, style and discussions within the volume are adapted to the needs of undergraduate students familiarizing them with the adequate terminology and discourse of literary history and analysis. The first two sections of the book – Basic Literary Terms and Genres in Changing Contexts – adopt a theoretical approach to such issues as the concept of literature, literature and new media, literary canons, questions of authorship and different methods of

interpretation from the genealogical to the deconstructive, as well as a brief presentation of genres such as the heroic epic, the ballad, the romance, the framework story, the sonnet and the ode, the utopia, tragedy, comedy and the tragicomedy. The second part surveys main literary periods, trends, genres, and representative authors of the given periods in a chronological order.

This foundation course is highly recommended to students who wish to create their own path in studying English literature, to teachers of literature searching for efficient and fun ways of aiding their students, to college and university libraries, and the general public interested in fundamental concepts of literature and central themes, style, characteristics and prominent authors of the different ages.

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