

**EGER JOURNAL
OF
ENGLISH STUDIES**

VOLUME XIV



EGER, 2014

**EGER JOURNAL
OF
ENGLISH STUDIES**

VOLUME XIV

EGER, 2014

Editors

Éva Antal
Csaba Czeglédi

Editorial Board

Siobhán Campbell, The Open University, UK
Iréen Hegedűs, University of Pécs
Janka Kaščáková, Catholic University in Ružomberok
Jaroslav Kušnír, University of Prešov
Wojciech Małecki, University of Wrocław
Péter Pelyvás, University of Debrecen
Albert Vermes, Eszterházy Károly College

Language Editor

Charles Somerville

A folyóiratszám a TÁMOP 4.1.2.D-12/1/KONV-2012–0002. számú,
Komplex nemzetköziesítési programfejlesztés az Eszterházy Károly Főiskolán
projekt keretében készült.

HU ISSN: 1786-5638 (Print)
HU ISSN: 2060-9159 (Online)

<http://anglisztika.ektf.hu/new/index.php?tudomany/ejes/ejes>

A kiadásért felelős:
az Eszterházy Károly Főiskola rektora
Megjelent az EKF Líceum Kiadó gondozásában
Kiadóvezető: Czeglédi László
Tördelés: Szutor Zsolt

Megjelent: 2014. december Pédányszám: 80
Készült: az Eszterházy Károly Főiskola nyomdájában, Egerben
Vezető: Kérészy László



Of National Bondage: Alasdair Gray's *1982 Janine*

Tamás Tukacs

Introduction

The September 2014 Scottish referendum on independence raises several practical and theoretical problems as to the future of Scotland, the United Kingdom and, we have to add, of the European Union as well. It is unprecedented in the post-1945 history of Europe that a territory which had been united with a larger entity more than three hundred years ago should become a wholly independent state, and, according to the plans of the SNP, remain or become a member state of the EU as well. The referendum was supposed to put an end to the vicissitudes of Scottish identity that have permeated the discourse on Scottish nationalism and national consciousness since the nineteenth century, but, since the majority of the Scottish voters decided in favour of remaining part of the UK, it is to be expected that the issue of independence continues to be a hot issue for decades to come.

Scottish nationalism is peculiar, since it is rare that a smaller country, after being colonised by a neighbouring larger entity, should greatly benefit from the union. The price Scotland had to pay for economic prosperity from 1707 onward, was the lack of the emergence of self-defining, stable nationalism in the Romantic era. The Scottish had little cause to rebel against England. Scottish nationalism, as Michael Billig stated it in the title of his 1995 volume, is “banal nationalism.” Since it is not defined by a separate language and since the foundations of Scottish culture are not basically different from the English one, Scottish nationalism is characterised by a concentration on territorial aspects, history, certain institutions, a “mythic past,” cultural symbols and icons. One important feature of Scottishness is that from the nineteenth century on, what could be termed collectively as “Scottish culture” has appeared, largely due to the very effective colonising techniques of the English, in the form of fragmented, easily digestible and mostly emptied cultural icons and stereotypes (the kilt, the Scottish landscape, the Celtic tradition, tribal heritage, and the stereotype of the reticent and stingy Scotsman, and so on). The renewal of Scottish literature during the first Scottish Renaissance in the twentieth century and its later versions and reverberations had to cope with this considerable dilemma, namely, that Scotland possessed every attribute that could have paved the way for “healthy” nationalism, yet Scottish consciousness

has constantly been tormented by a profound sense of backwardness compared to its more developed neighbour, which was exacerbated even more by the failure of the 1979 Devolution Referendum. Scotland seems to possess all the essentials of nationhood, yet that has not translated into political existence as of yet – instead, Scotland is still coping with the problem of the binarity between being identified as a mental image, an idea, a mood and its actual, physical existence (Dósa 23). From this aspect, the 2014 vote can be seen as a milestone in grounding a new Scottish national identity.

The lack of a clear idea of what Scotland should look exactly like as a nation is the source of a fundamental dichotomy between isolation and openness. It is ironic that Scotland has been bound to Continental culture with innumerable ties, especially to the intellectual currents of the Enlightenment, as opposed to England, yet the reverse is also true: certain aspects of England's culture seem to be more "open" and flexible in contrast to the inward-looking, isolationist culture of Scotland struggling with its own stereotypes and the lack of a narratable past.

This binarity of openness vs. isolation also appears in literary criticism regarding Scottish works. In recent decades, there has been a tendency to break away from the normative and prescriptive, "traditional" type of criticism, characterised by essentialism, canon-building and the construction of a national tradition that closes off anything that is alien, hybrid, feminine or anything that does not conform to the masculine and working-class thematic of Scottish fiction (Miller 13). As Gavin Miller puts it, "References to a Scottish tradition of context [...] seem to invite a metaphysical position in which Scottish cultural artefacts share a common essence which is necessary to their existence as works that are specifically Scottish." (13) In short, Scottish literature appears to be carrying the burden of the obligation to be Scottish, to be about Scottish people and Scottishness. As a solution, several critics have been urging a kind of openness and a transcendence of the "old-fashioned genealogical style of criticism" (Miller 13). As Eleanor Bell, for instance, points out, "Arguably, Scottish literary studies have been more focussed on canon-building and the construction of the national tradition, and too immersed in tradition-inspired approaches" ("Postmodernism" 86). Elsewhere, she states that "this approach of reading against the grain [one that includes issues of postcolonialism, poststructuralism and postmodernism] may, at a symbolic level, prove useful to Scottish studies in its probing and unearthing of national identity" (*Questioning 2*).

It appears that Alasdair Gray's *1982 Janine*, published in 1984, readily offers itself to these kinds of "post-readings" with its typographical experimentation and play with chronology and narrative voice. While it is easy to term Gray's novel "postmodern," the historical context of its publication must not be left unconsidered. Published only five years after the failure of the 1979 referendum, the text could be evaluated as a response to the Scots rejecting independence and the subsequent uneasy relations of Scotland with Thatcher's government. It seems that Gray himself wrote with the intention of transcending the limitations of

essentialism and nationalism. As he put it in “A Modest Proposal for By-passing a Predicament” (referring to Muir’s notion of the predicament of the Scottish writer): “It is very queer that a small nation which has bred so many strongly local writers of worldwide scope still bickers and agonises over the phoney old *local versus international doublebind*” (9). Yet such a “postmodern” text as *1982 Janine* cannot help but leave behind concerns with locality, nationality and Scottishness, either. In what follows, I am going to read Gray’s novel as an allegorical text on Scotland’s situation in the early 1980s, after a failed referendum, paying special attention to the dichotomy appearing in Gray’s sentence above between the local and the worldwide and, implicitly, between isolation and openness. Isolation is not only present in a spatial but also in a chronological sense in the novel, and since the protagonist’s story clearly parallels Scotland’s fate, the interrelatedness of the communal and the personal past is the second major theme of *1982 Janine*. To be able to approach the novel from this perspective, however, we must look at the Scottish literary tradition as a source of anxieties over isolation versus openness.

Unhistorical Histories: The Legacy of Scott

“Scotland is a place with a past but a place without history,” Cairns Craig asserts in *The Modern Scottish Novel* (118) and with this, he tackles a vital point of Scottish consciousness, that is, the problematic of the organic relationship with the (national) past, directing attention to the dilemma of the coming to terms, ordering and narrativisation of that past. This is a point around which the discussion of the relationship between Scottish fiction and identity may be ordered. Besides this, it is also important to look into two related themes, the relationship of Scotland to the outside world (including England) and Scotland’s relationship to herself.

The history of the Scottish novel still bears the mark of the oeuvre of Walter Scott, together with Scotland’s in-between situation that Edwin Muir described in the 1930s, writing about Scott, although his words bearing a more general significance, as Scotland at that time being “neither a nation nor a province” (11–12). On the one hand, Scotland was assimilated into England and the English identity, more specifically into the English Whig tradition (which exerted great influence on historiography and Scottish fiction) in the eighteenth century in a way that it was beneficial for Scotland economically but, in return, the kind of national consciousness and historical culture that could have paralleled national independence and the sense of the past in the Romantic age could never fully develop. On the other hand, Scotland never became an integral part of the new British identity and, to some extent, always stayed in the category of the strange and exotic. Paradoxically, certain elements of Scottish identity lived on – the Kirk, the School and the Law – but nineteenth-century Scottish nationalism was expressed in a way that it supported the union with England (Craig, “Constituting” 5). From this perspective, the beginning of the nineteenth century may be regarded, both temporarily and geographically, as a kind of “no-man’s land” for Scottish literature. It was in this schizophrenic, in-between state that Scott began writing his historical novels.

The same dichotomy may be observed in the critical assessments of Scott as the one often referred to in connection with Scotland: on the one hand, he is a writer of European significance, shaping the classical form of the historical novel, and exerting an influence on countless other authors, from Pushkin to Balzac. On the other hand, he was the one who distanced the past from the present, locked Scottish history into quarantine, solidified certain stereotypes, and falsified and mythicized Scottish history to an extent that his influence can be felt in present-day Scottish writing as well, as far as the problematic relationship with the national past is concerned. According to Georg Lukács, “Scott’s extraordinary and epoch-making talent in writing is expressed through the structure of his novels based on a ‘middling,’ merely correct but never ‘heroic’ hero” (37, my translation). Through the figure of the “hero,” Scott presents the critical moments of English and Scottish history more or less objectively, carefully avoiding extremes, Scott being a middle-class, conservative Tory himself. Although, with such a central hero figure, the crises of history are described with “almost unsurpassable perfection” (Lukács 37, my translation), this kind of historical novel could never become the means of national resistance or that of a search for identity, since Scott’s aim was precisely seeking out the points of compromise between the two nations by showing how conflicting ideas could merge into a higher and more sophisticated unit; for instance, the fight of Saxons and Normans results in the birth of the English nation, the War of the Roses leads to the reign of Elizabeth I or the Cromwellian civil war is epitomized in the Glorious Revolution of 1688 (Lukács 35).

In fact, Scott mastered the English-type Whig historiography, which brought about a situation in which nineteenth-century Scottish intellectuals had to cope with a rather schizophrenic scenario. The main reason for this is that the educated Scottish did not merely put on the mask of British imperialism but also did away with Scottish history as a possible frame of interpretation and lost their confidence and interest in their history in general, especially after the schism of the Kirk in 1843. Interestingly enough, the roots of Whig historiography can be traced back to seventeenth-century Scottish Presbyterian thinking and various dissenter movements, and even to the Scottish Reformation in the sixteenth century (Trevor-Roper, “Introduction” 8). The main tenets of this Whig ideology are the following: the assertion of the special role of the Anglican church in English history, a firm faith in the continuity of English constitutionalism and limited monarchism, emphasising the importance of the rule of “common law”, and the presentation of England as the main exporter of Protestantism and democracy (Kidd 6; in Lukács’s words: “the consistency of the English development amidst the most terrible crises” [43, my translation]). Since Scott rigidly believed in the unbroken unity of the British monarchy, the Anglo-Scottish conflicts never undermine the Union in his works. For instance, Waverley, the young officer, who participates in the 1745 Jacobite uprising on the side of the McIvor clan, and falls in love with the chieftain’s daughter, Flora, returns to England at the end of the

novel, and marries an English girl, Rose. Thus, Waverley's adventure is neither an integral part of his life story, nor is it symbolically the part of England's history. His love affair and alliance with the Scotsmen is, in fact, a deviation in the normal course of his story and in history, a "romantic perversion" at best (Craig, *Out of* 39), as is demonstrated by the final scene: the main character is contemplating an image of himself in the company of Fergus McIvor. The Scottish past may only exist as framed, elevated into the sphere of art, and securely separated from the present.

As Cairns Craig demonstrates, besides the tradition of Whig historiography, Scott was also the follower of certain currents of the Scottish Enlightenment, which was rather sceptical about the mere writability of history (*Out of* 67). The main precursor of this thought was David Hume, who was fully aware of the fictitiousness of history and treated historiography as a literary genre. His intention was not to write a "true" history, since he knew that a historical event may only become suitable material for the writer if it shows enough literariness, i.e., it is invested with enough dramatic quality, orderliness or developing plot. By writing England's history, Hume's aim was not to present a "true" but a "polished," literary version of the story, which is true by virtue of being impartial. Scott followed this concept of history, and, according to Craig, he was deeply sceptical about any kind of "historical truth" (*Out of* 69), which is attested by the innumerable forewords, prefaces, appendices, explanations, and footnotes that he attached to his novels, as if the recorded (hi)story had not been stable enough to be presented in itself, lacking something that could only be made up for by supplements like these. Contrary to the classical evaluation of Lukács, then, Scott does not seem to be the master of "historical realism," but a sceptic of the Enlightenment who is fully aware of the impossibility of objective historiography. Scott may be accepted as the representative of Whig history writing or as the advocate of the Humean Enlightenment, but, in either case, the result is the same: a version of Scottish history, which is emptied, full of dichotomous stereotypes, and which does away with the organic relationship of the past and the present, displaying a "secure," unhistorical version of history.

This unhistorical concept of history represented by Scott is the root of the basic opposition in Scottish fiction between the idea of home, a sort of familiar isolation, more generally a static and vacuum-like state and the "world," history and a story that could be given shape by narrative means (Craig, *Out of* 32). At the level of the story, the former means a non-linear, non-developing, circular and repetitive narrative turning on itself, as opposed to the English realist novel of the nineteenth century, which is fundamentally teleological, and which develops the eighteenth-century social panorama into a genre tackling human and social relationships. The inward-turning Scottish narrative outside history is only given an impetus by an external event which penetrates the static, homely, familiar, convenient (or suffocating and limiting) environment and subverts it. The most typical of such events that give impetus to an isolated world is the First World War

(Craig, *Out of 35*). Generally, Scottish literature and thinking has been tormented by the desire to connect to history (the outside world, temporality) and being excluded from it at the same time. Fintan O'Toole, for instance, remarks that in 1991, at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Easter Rising, Tom Murphy's *The Patriot Game* was staged, only to be welcomed by the Irish audience rather coldly. Soon after, the same play was on stage in Glasgow, but the reaction of the Scottish audience was totally different. The questions of the nation, independence, defeat and regeneration deeply moved them. As one of the spectators put it, they wished if only Scotland had had such a heroic episode of history as well (O'Toole 65).

The rather contradictory relationship with the past, traditions and history does not mean in the least, however, that Scottish fiction does not deal with certain aspects of the past. As Glenda Norquay and Gerry Smith assert, there seems to be a fundamental difference between Scottish and Irish fiction: while in Irish fiction (and drama), the past generally lives on in the present and constitutes a significant, if not always organic, part of the present (mainly in the form of traumatising returns and repetitions), the Scottish novel tends to deny understanding the present from the past (41). Instead, different versions (collective or personal) of the past live side by side, subverting "grand" narratives of history (such as a teleological and emotion-laden version of Scottish history), or it may happen that the emphasis falls on different family stories, generational conflicts and problems of genealogy.

In fact, Walter Scott's kind of unhistorical past and the problems of relating the past and the present to each other are carried on in the most popular Scottish genre of the nineteenth century, that is, the kailyard school. The nostalgic kailyard type of fiction represents Scotland as a collection of peaceful, idyllic, religious, and isolated communities stuck outside time, separated from the rest of the world, and untouched by problems of modern Scotland and history outside. Although the iconic representative of kailyard writing is generally regarded to be James Matthew Barrie's *Peter Pan*, the boy who would not grow up, even well after 1945 certain cinematic works of Scottish culture still displayed the main ideological components of kailyardism (*Whisky Galore!* [1949] or *Maggie* [1954]). It has to be added that the critical rewriting and subversion of the kailyard genre appears in the 1980s with films like *Another Time, Another Place* or *Local Hero* (Bényei, "A hegyvidék").

It was with the intention of renewing Scottish literature and culture, working against sentimentalism and the kailyard tradition, that in the 1920s and 1930s, although with different emphases, Edwin Muir and Hugh MacDiarmid appeared on the literary scene. Both condemned Scotland's provincialism and considered the chances of renewal with significant pessimism, as both realised that Scotland lacked the cultural possibilities comparable to the Irish Renaissance taking place at that period. While the Irish managed to create a new literature of their own with the combination of national myths, legends and the means of modernism, the preconditions of this rebirth in Scotland were missing, for two reasons. On the one hand, Scotland lacked a non-English literary language, because of the coexistence

of Scottish Gaelic and Scots. Since the works of the Irish Renaissance were mostly written in English, the second reason was more significant: the retrospectively created, artificial, "Celtic" legends gained a controversial reputation already in the eighteenth century. All in all, the Anglo-Scot, in general, did not feel that their culture was significantly different from that of the English (Craig, *Out of* 15). Muir regarded the very expression "a Scottish writer" indefinable, because Scotland was not in a situation to be able to create a distinct literary culture on par with the English one, which is why Muir stood for the Scottish revival in the English language. As opposed to him, the more radical MacDiarmid, also sensing that his country was imprisoned by false traditions, pronounced the slogan: "not Burns: Dunbar!" – referring to the sixteenth-century Scottish poet, a viable path for Scottish literary renewal. This, however, according to Craig, amounted to the tactics of "scorched earth" (*Modern* 22), since, although MacDiarmid referred to certain precedents in the past of Scottish literature, he failed to create an organic tradition which could establish a link between the past and the present.

Muir's contention in connection with the status of the Scottish writer leads to another topic, Scotland's relationship to the outside world and her relationship to itself as well. In Scottish consciousness, Scotland's double situation is still a lively contradiction, inasmuch as Scotland, during the course of her history, established innumerable links to England and the British Empire, through either the outstanding achievements of the Scottish Enlightenment or through building the Empire itself, but at the same time Scottish culture has always been stigmatised by a certain peripheral quality, exclusion from tradition, history, improvement, and isolation, entrapment, and parochialism. An important source for this schizophrenic cultural consciousness is Scotland's very relation to England. An organic, central culture becomes one precisely by force of integrating the best achievements of a marginal culture, thus solidifying that culture's peripheral situation. Craig cites the examples of the American Henry James and the Polish Joseph Conrad, who could unproblematically become parts of F. R. Leavis's "great tradition," while no-one would insist that, for instance, Dickens could be discussed as a figure of Scottish literary history (*Out of* 19). Thus, to make themselves heard, and to place themselves in any kind of tradition, Scottish writers must immerse themselves in the English tradition, which leads to the loss of their marginal situation, and hence their peculiarity (*Out of* 11–27). The organic, English centre is created precisely by the periphery in the hope of gaining a voice and later voicing its own marginal situation.

This dialectics leads us to the system of relationships already familiar from postcolonial studies: the tension between the desire to identify with the coloniser and rejecting it at the same time. After the Union of 1707, this duplicity characterised Scottish consciousness, coupled with the creation of an enemy image on the part of the English, because identification always creates its own supplement as opposed to which the subject can be manifested. After the Union, "the Scottish subject, hiding behind the mask of British identity, is articulated

against the (English) Other, the enemy image, which it already includes” (Szamosi, my translation); but, during the course of rationalisation, it creates the “residue,” the barbaric Highlander, against which this identification is necessary. Peripheral elements keep being integrated into this central discourse, which serve, through English colonisation techniques, the purpose of assimilation and forging a British unity. Such elements include the image of the noble, Celtic savage or concepts like femininity, spontaneity, poeticism and daydreaming, deemed by Matthew Arnold to be “Celtic” qualities versus the “masculine”, pragmatic “Saxon” core. Since the colonised would like to raise themselves to the level of the core culture, they begin to see themselves through the eyes of the coloniser, but meanwhile, precisely because of this, they have to realise how backward, isolated and peripheral they still are, just like when the black person is wearing a white mask (Craig, *Out of 12*).

The result is the rejection, denial, denigration, abjection and annihilation of the Other, and through the Other, of the self. A classic example of this split is widely recognised in Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, but just how effective the English colonisation techniques were is proved by Gregory Smith’s 1919 account of the national characteristics of Scottish literature, in which the central element is the so-called “Caledonian antisyzygy,” according to which the Scottish are “inherently” drawn to opposites and in their writings mingle qualities like practicality and fantasy (Szamosi). Self-denial leads to an inferiority complex, self-hate, neurosis, often coupled with a sense of guilt linked, in Scottish culture, to the strict principles of Presbyterianism and the fear of sin and God. It can be observed that from the nineteenth century on, several pieces of Scottish literature are imbued with motifs of sin, guilt, violence, barbarism, atavism, self-torture or self-mutilation, from James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), through Stevenson, the thriller writer John Buchan, the anthropologist James G. Frazer, to A. L. Kennedy or Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting*. According to Craig, “the potency of fear still remains a central element to Scottish culture” (*Modern* 37).

National Bondage: Alasdair Gray

I am going to approach Alasdair Gray’s *1982 Janine* (1984) from the aspect of the interrelated topics discussed above – the relationship with the past, with the Other and with the self, paying attention to motifs of imprisonment, bondage, and surveillance. Such an analysis highlights the fact that even such a postmodern text displaying various linguistic and typographic games, cannot leave behind concerns with Scottishness, national identity and topicality, including the sentiment felt after the 1979 referendum.

The renewal of the Scottish novel is often linked to the failure of the 1979 referendum; it is not an accident that the reissue of Muir’s *Scott and Scotland* (1936) took place in 1983, followed by a public debate organised by Polygon,

which also provoked Gray's reaction entitled "A Modest Proposal." According to Eilidh MacLeod Whiteford, "1982 *Janine* appeared at a moment when the whole notion of 'the Scottish writer' was being called into question" (227). The publication of the novel provoked various reactions. Paul Ableman considered the work, blending realism and fantasy, personal and national histories, as a great promise of the future; Joe Ambrose, however, named Gray a "vainglorious lout," whose desire is to get the Nobel Prize, and according to the infamous declaration of Peter Levi, the novel is nothing but "radioactive hogwash" ("Criticism of the Foregoing" section of *1982 Janine* at the end of the novel, no pag.).

These extreme reactions were mostly provoked by the text of the novel full as it was of sexual fantasies. The actual plot of the work can be summarised relatively easily. The protagonist, the aging, divorced, and alcoholic Jock MacLeish, whose job is to supervise security installations, is lying on a bed at a hotel in Greenock, and is trying to make an account of his life, entertaining perverted fantasies about invented female characters. Facing the failures of his life up till now, he attempts suicide, but vomits up the pills in the end. At the end of the novel, when he is writing his resignation letter, a female voice calls him to have breakfast. The novel has two main parts; in the first, the events of Jock's life slowly but incoherently penetrate the fantasies peopled by certain invented characters (Janine, Superb, Big Momma), and in the second section, after the failed suicide attempt, Jock tries to summarise his life in a linear, teleological fashion (193).

One of the central themes of the novel is the main character's making sense of his past. First, various erotic fantasies prevent him from making an account of the previous events of his life. Jock would like to suppress several episodes but the memories of these disrupt his attempt at a linear narrative. Apart from one or two episodes, the protagonist's life, it turns out, has been a complete failure. Jock is presented as a resigned, conservative, passive, cowardly and impotent man who takes a submissive role in relation to women. We learn that it was in fact his one-time love, Denny, who picked him up at the start of their relationship; Jock, however, returning from a trip to Edinburgh, caught her with the landlord. His later wife, Helen, "raped" him (59, 277), and Jock married her only because she led him to believe that she was pregnant, and neither of them wanted to call off the wedding so that the presents should not be wasted (305). They live childless, and when the wife realises that Jock is collecting pornographic magazines, she divorces him.

Facing the self and the personal past obviously depends, to a large extent, on giving a narrative shape to one's personal history. The two sections of the novel dramatize the tension between the past as isolated from the present and a version of the past which is able to elucidate the present and exist in an organic unity with it. The stake of the protagonist's enterprise is whether he can find a way to his own past, its function being similar to the second part of the novel, which is supposed to serve as an explanation to the suffocating, cyclical first part, which is always experimenting with new beginnings and new fantasies. Craig

calls this relationship between the two halves of the text “typological,” inasmuch as Jock’s pornographic fantasies may be seen as a kind of false New Testament of the modern world which postfigures and enlightens all earlier narratives (*Modern* 185). It is highly dubious, however, whether the perverted fantasies, falling back upon themselves, going round in circles, could in any way explain “the modern world.” The question is rather whether Chapter 12, the actual second, teleological and linear part of the novel, could serve as a retrospective explanation for the disintegrating and isolated first half. In other words, as Jock himself refers to it (193), the dilemma must be answered whether the circular “story,” chasing itself, in which the past could at best be connected to the present in a form of traumatic returns, could be redeemed by any ordered, straight, straightforward and non-perverted (“straight”), normal plot line.

The precondition of this would be if Chapter 12 could be rewritten as a sort of Bildungsroman. In fact, it starts out as one, beginning with the family background of the protagonist, his education and successes. However, one crucial element of classical novels of education is missing: finding an ultimate and definite voice with which the main character could be able to recount his story. This voice, as we learn, was actually found by Jock relatively early, around the age of twelve, when he daringly told the much-feared Hislop, the teacher of English literature, that he should not have punished his classmate, Anderson, for not being able to pronounce a particular sound correctly. Jock finds his voice, and conversely, Hislop loses his at that moment. The teacher breaks down and begins to complain like a child to the headmaster in a Scots dialect: “Oh sir they wullnae lea’ me alane” (337). This is the last episode of the second part. The rest of the novel is just about the way the protagonist symbolically loses his voice after his childhood; and that is why the story at the end of the novel culminates in mere crying (337–40). It is not by chance that Jock states he has been attempting to fabricate normal, “straight” and linear stories “since the age of twelve or perhaps earlier” (193). Voices surface as memory fragments in a traumatic manner, chiefly in the form of quotations taken from classical English literature, which were “poured into children’s ears” (176) by Hislop, whose mania is good sounding, euphony (182). Interestingly, these isolated quotations serve to disguise improper thoughts or the mere lack of thoughts (176). The cathartic moment of the flood of voices can be found right after the suicide attempt, at the end of the typographically peculiar Chapter 11, when, for instance, the simultaneous voices of the narrator and God can be heard. The end of phonetic chaos is vomiting alcohol and the pills by the narrator, a sort of emptying, which is followed, in the style of Laurence Sterne, several blank pages. Thus, the protagonist’s life story cannot be written as a story of Bildung because of the lack of a proper narrative voice.

Jock asks himself the question: “what can I do tomorrow if I do not die tonight” (176). Jock needs a sort of narrative closure, but, failing to achieve this, he starts to order his own life story, setting up various lists and categories (at the start of the novel there is a quotation by Paul Valéry about the “boxes in the

mind with labels on them"). Several lists are included in the novel's text: Jock makes a chronological account of his real and imagined lovers (153–166), he lists the differences between his wife and the fictional character Superb (33), he goes point by point listing the events of the Edinburgh theatre festival which eventually turns out to be a failure (246–88), and, indeed, it is as if the novel's title also reminded one of an element in a list or a file label. Contrary to what Miller states, that is, that "the protagonist recovers from his inability to narrate the past" (118), the reverse is true. There is no "time regained," no orderly narrative in the second half of the novel, either. Jock's aim is to gain control over his past, but in trying to do so, he unsuccessfully makes a narrative of his life story, becoming imprisoned in it and in his own past. It is also characteristic that he mentions the last volume of Proust's novel cycle, but instead of the correct version, *Time Regained*, he refers to it as *Time Redeemed* (166).

The second main theme of the novel is surveillance, dominance and control. According to Wallace and Stevenson, one of the important motifs of Gray's novels is a main character locked in (political, economic, social) systems, and this isolation leads to the disintegration and fall of the protagonist (115). The text abounds in closed spaces (during the plot, Jock never leaves the hotel room), enclosed sites, and references to traps. It is no coincidence that Jock happens to control security systems, which prevent external invasion, his task, on the other hand being finding faults in the system (104). A kind of mirror play is taking place: while Jock is a prisoner himself, a prisoner of his own past, his work and perverted fantasies (which are for the most part of the sadist, "bondage" type), he constantly dreams of subjecting, locking, bonding others and gaining control over women. The motif of fear, as referred to by Craig, does not only lead to isolation and symbolic confinement but often turns into its opposite, a delusion of grandeur when the God-fearing subject is often transformed into the opposite, a menacing figure (*Modern* 38). Although Jock's fantasies are never realised, they still suggest a delusion of grandeur: for instance, he would willingly pay Sontag to be able to subject her to unlimited power that his life denied him (43); the most comic episode is when, encouraged by the success of one of his ideas relating to holograms, he begins fantasizing about world domination (263–268).

Jock's inorganic relationship to his past (and to his future) is also manifested in his connection to his parents. Although his relationship with his father is not particularly hostile, they have a hard time understanding each other. The father is naively left-wing, while Jock is conservative, and the father dies without ever learning about the political views of his son (98). It is when Jock grows up that they both realise that they mutually caused hard times for each other during their walks when Jock asked the father about different plants and the father gave exhaustive answers with the help of a pocket book (100). After being left by his wife, the father refuses to move in with his son, despite Jock's continuous entreaties; and when his father dies, Jock throws out his father's war medals and wedding photo, saying that "no good comes from brooding upon the past" (172).

This is not rebellion, they are simply indifferent to each other. At the same time, Jock unconsciously repeats the life of his parents: similarly to his father (who is a foreman at a mine), Jock's job is also connected to surveillance, and another common element is the pregnancy before marriage (although Helen realises later that she is not expecting a baby) (83). According to Cairns Craig, cultural exile is manifested in the novel mainly through biological uncertainty, obscure origins, being created by parents and the search for symbolic parent figures (*Modern* 110). The parents unwillingly imprison their son and make a type out of him. When Jock goes to college, his father has six identical pairs of trousers made for him (202), and when he realises that Jock is interested in collecting stamps but cuts off the jagged side of the stamps, he buys a "normal" stamp album for him (95), which Jock, naturally, refuses to use. This leads to Jock remembering his home later as a prison (50) and as a trap (214).

From this aspect, the playful quotation taken from Hamlet ("LIST, LIST O LIST!", 195), in which the ghost of old Hamlet imprisons his son by giving him the task to take revenge, to be found at the beginning of the second part is important, but, as this quotation is intended for the reader, the narrator may exercise his power over the son-reader as well, besides giving a double entendre to the word "list," meaning "a list" and the verb "listen." As he is childless, Jock cannot become a father figure, he, in fact, escapes his role as a father (165), he is shy with women, and because of his eye defect, he is not enlisted into the army (148). The two main symbolic father figures are the sadistic and fearsome English teacher, Hislop, and Jock's friend, Alan. The protagonist entertains the fantasy that maybe his real father is Hislop (71), who "falls" at the end of the novel when he begins to speak in the voice of a child (337), while his emphatically alien-looking friend (109), whom Jock idolises, ends his life literally falling off the top of a building. Jock's real mother, who is always supervising his son doing his homework in her prison cell-like room, is transformed into the figure of the fat, lesbian prison guard, Big Momma.

For all this, *1982 Janine* would hardly be suitable to be discussed as a novel dealing with the problem of Scottish identity. The novel, however, is a lot more than a postmodern experimental text with an antihero, as the links between the personal life story of Jock and the history of Scotland show. At one point, Jock asks questions linking his personal story and the history of his country:

Why did my job start to sour? Why did my marriage start to stale? When did I start drinking too much? When did capital leave Scotland in a big way? When did the depression come to Britain? When did we start accepting a world without improvement for the unlucky? When did we start accepting a future guaranteed *only* by the police, the armies, and an expanding weapons race? (309)

The atypically masculine Jock often takes the position of women in certain self-descriptions: Helen “rapes” him or he becomes a whore (277), just as the idea of his home, linked to Denny, is inscribed as a woman, as a woman’s body, where Jock can return to or what he has never, in fact, left (167). Craig maintains that Jock is the symbol of Scotland, inasmuch as he transforms himself into a female element that he subjects to sexual humiliation (*Modern* 187). The much-criticised pornographic fantasies are then not gratuitous at all but stand for Scotland’s position in the 1980s, dominated by Thatcher’s ideology: contempt, abuse, exploitation, entrapment, isolation, “bondage,” emptiness and stealing the North Sea oil reserves (134–138). As the narrator puts it,

But if a country is not just a tract of land but a whole people then clearly Scotland has been fucked. I mean that word in the vulgar sense of misused to give satisfaction or advantage to another. Scotland has been fucked and I am one of the fuckers who fucked her and I REFUSE TO FEEL BITTER OR GUILTY ABOUT THIS. I am not a gigantically horrible fucker, I’m an ordinary fucker. And no hypocrite. (136–7)

Besides the parallels between Jock’s imprisonment and Scotland’s isolation, the motif of the colonised person’s self-hatred also appears: “Who spread the story that the Scots are an INDEPENDENT people? Robert Burns... . The truth is that we are a nation of arselickers though we disguise it with surfaces” (65), which is a reflection of Jock’s failed suicide attempt, and also recalls the well-known monologue by Renton in *Trainspotting* – “I hate being Scottish” – in which the lack of future perspective also leads to self-abuse.

According to Gavin Miller, “Gray’s fiction shows characters who develop a ‘schizoid’ relationship with the world” (21), the reason for this being that they withdraw from their communities trying to enforce a stifling ethos on them. Besides its structure and theme, Gray’s novel also shows parallels with the prime example of schizophrenic Scottish consciousness, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Both Stevenson’s novel and *1982 Janine* are episodic. In their first parts, we can see the symptoms tormenting the protagonist, and the linearly constructed second halves, containing the life stories (should) serve retrospectively to provide an explanation for the first sections. Other common elements are the themes of creation and the relationship between father and son. The motifs of identification and rejection are also important links between the two texts, besides the contrast between the respectable surface and the chaotic inner life. Finally, the two novels are similar as for the themes of self-annihilation and the radical break with the past and the self.

Similarly to *Dr Jekyll*, in the typographically overdetermined *1982 Janine*, there is a single letter playing a vital role, and that is the letter “Y.” In Stevenson’s

novella, Jekyll and Hyde are diametrically opposed to each other; what links them is this very letter, which is a perfect symbol of the split of the self, since in both names the letter “Y” stands for the letter “I” (Bényei, “Critic” 95). In Jock’s fantasies, the letter “Y” usually appears as turned upside down, standing for Jock’s fetish, the dominant female figure standing with her legs spread apart (177), and thus refers to the exposure and impotence which prevents the irregular, pervert and circular narrative of the first part from being ordered into a straight, linear and elucidating narrative. On the other hand, the letter “Y” may stand for the forking paths, the chances in Jock’s life that he himself refers to: “Later, when Janine is trapped and trying to escape, she will remember that she was given a chance to leave and refused because of money. We all have a moment when the road forks and we take the wrong turning” (26). In the case of Janine, the wrong choice results in isolation, similarly to Scotland, which could have a chance to create its own parliament in 1979, but which was rejected. (Possibly, the nude male figure raising his arms with his body forming the letter Y on the cover pages of the novel also reminds one of this.)

The letter in question gains significance from a third aspect as well, when it disappears and gets replaced by the letter combination “ie” in certain names. Jock recalls a novel with a title of a man’s name: “*Gillespie* by Hay? No. *McIlvannie* by Docherty? No. *Docherty* by McIlvannie” (298, a reference to William McIlvanney’s novel published in 1975). Apart from calling authorship, that is, symbolic fatherhood into question, this mistake also points to the difference between spoken and written language. This is precisely the area where the conflict between Jock and his symbolic father, Hislop, reaches its climax.

According to Miller, “Jock is initiated into Scottish manhood by his relationship with Hislop” (22). Miller interprets the punishment of the protagonist as a sort of rite of passage, a ritual humiliation. While this is true to some extent, the conflict is also that between the coloniser and the colonised. The opposition between the protagonist and the teacher of English literature always stems from the conflict between the two versions of language. Jock is first punished when Hislop finds five spelling mistakes in his workbook (72). Jock has to repeat loud “I am an idiot sir,” and then he is called to the blackboard where Jock again makes a serious mistake and the teacher beats his palm with a belt. Although Jock detests the teacher, he realises that if someone makes a significant impression on one, the person starts to resemble the feared other (83). Later he mentions the Hislop hidden in him (176). Next time it is Jock who demands to be punished (85), turning the coloniser’s sadism against himself, but, at the same time, subverting the coloniser’s discourse, since, the surprised Hislop remains speechless. The fall of Hislop, the advocate of English literature and the supremacy of Britishness in a Scottish environment, takes place when he begins to bully Anderson, the student with a speech impediment, the symbol of the reticent Scotsman. First Jock calls out in standard English – “He can’t help talking like that, sir” (337) – and then his moral judgment is uttered in the Scots dialect – “You shouldnae

have done that" (337) –, which the Scottish students begin incanting rhythmically. Thus, Jock turns his own (spoken) language against the symbolic father (Craig, *Modern* 189). However, Jock remains bound to the memory of Hislop and begins to resemble him more and more. The similarity between Hislop and Jock is also shown by the fact that the collapse of both of them is brought about by voices. The rebellion against the coloniser, then, is fairly short-lived, since the teacher remains an integral part of the protagonist's self, and the hatred against Hislop turns into a sadism against his own self or against other, imagined figures, just as the 1979 referendum may be interpreted as a failed rebellion against England.

Facing the past fails to bring a resolution, for it is dubious if we can speak about any kind of rebirth at the end of the novel. Jock decides to head for the railway platform and disappear in the crowd. In his last sentence, he implores one of his fantasy characters: "Oh Janine, my silly soul, come to me now. I will be gentle. I will be kind." (341), and finally a rap on the door returns him to the everyday routine. Jock, as an allegory of Scotland in bondage in 1979, continues to be tormented by fantasies, dreams, stereotypes, being unable to break out of the situation of the failed referendum and the Thatcher era. In spite of his depressing story, Gray was confident as to the future five years later: "Our present ignorance and bad social organisation make most Scots poorer than most other north Europeans, but even bad human states are not everlasting." (*Janine* 345)

Works Cited

- Bell, Eleanor. "Postmodernism, Nationalism and the Question of Tradition." Eleanor Bell and Gavin Miller, eds. *Scotland in Theory: Reflections on Culture & Literature*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004: 83–96.
- . *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004.
- Bényei, Tamás. "A hegyvidék mítoszától a *Trainspotting*ig: a skót film felemelkedése." [From the Myth of the Highlands to *Trainspotting*: the Emergence of Scottish Film] <http://mmi.elte.hu/szababolcseszet/index.php?option=com_tanelem&id_tanelem=89&tip=0> Web. 31 August 2014.
- . "The Critic as Guest: Reading (in) Jekyll and Hyde." Séllei Nóra, ed. *Alternative Approaches to English-Speaking Cultures in the 19th Century*. Debrecen: KLTE Egyetemi Nyomda, 1998: 89–98.
- Craig, Cairns. "Constituting Scotland." *The Irish Review* 28 (2001): 1–27.
- . *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996.
- . *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999.

- Dósa, Attila. *Beyond Identity: New Horizons in Modern Scottish Poetry*. (SCROLL 13) Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.
- Gray, Alasdair. "A Modest Proposal for By-Passing a Predicament." *Chapman* 35/36 (1983): 7–9.
- . *1982 Janine*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.
- Kidd, Colin. *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-c. 1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.
- Lukács, György. *A történelmi regény*. [The Historical Novel] Budapest: Magvető, 1977.
- Miller, Gavin. *Alasdair Gray: The Fiction of Communion*. (SCROLL 4) Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005.
- Muir, Edwin. *Scott and Scotland*. London: Routledge, 1936.
- Norquay, Glenda and Gerry Smith. "Waking Up in a Different Place: Contemporary Irish and Scottish Fiction." *The Irish Review* 28 (2001): 28–45.
- O'Toole, Fintan. "Imagining Scotland." *Granta* (Winter 1996): 59–76. Print.
- Szamosi, Gertrúd. "A skót nemzettudat posztkoloniális toposzai." *Korunk* (December 2004) <<http://korunk.org/?q=node/7714>> Web. 31. August 2014.
- Trevor-Roper, Hugh. "Introduction" to Lord Macaulay's *The History of England*. London: Penguin, 1986: 7–46.
- Wallace, Gavin and Randall Stevenson, eds. *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies: New Visions, Old Dreams*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993.
- Whiteford, Eilidh MacLeod. *Political Histories, Politicised Spaces: Discourses of Power in the Fiction of Alasdair Gray*. PhD Thesis. <<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/2054/1/1997whitefordphd.pdf>> Web. 31 August 2014.

Border Crossing: American Dreams, Illusions and Fictions in Paul Auster's *Man in the Dark* (2008)

Jaroslav Kušnir

Despite being one of his least artistically convincing novels so far,¹ Paul Auster's *Man in the Dark*, returns to some of the themes evident in his previous novels such as loneliness, American and Jewish cultural identities, travelling, and life in contemporary urban United States. In his novel *Man in the Dark*, it seems movement, travelling, and border crossings create central metaphors through the use of which Auster 1) reconsiders various myths related to American cultural identity such as the American Dream, Manifest Destiny and American exceptionalism, democracy and travelling as symbolic of freedom; 2) points out the problematic nature of both personal and cultural identity in the contemporary world and emphasizes not a diasporic, but rather a transnational nature of contemporary Jewish liberal identity in the USA; and 3) deals with ontological questions related to the relationship between language and reality, life and art, between actual, fictional, fantastic and imaginary worlds.

Traditionally, the border has implied the idea of separation, for example, the separation of geographical territories or different states, regions, and cultures. This separation also implies a difference, a difference in historical, cultural, and even ethical values represented by separated territories. But in his *Man in the Dark*, Paul Auster undermines the idea of border as separation and difference and, instead, eradicates the essentialist meaning of a border. Auster uses a metaphor of a border not as a metaphor implying stability (of a territory and people's cultural identity living on this territory) but he develops it to a metaphor of fluidity. Fluidity becomes connected with the idea of cultural identity not as a stable, fixed but rather transitional concept.

1 *Man in the Dark* lacks conviction because of the simple explicitness of the ideas, because of its moralizing, a certain sentimentalism, undeveloped characters such as Owen Brick (situated in his fictional world before he attempts to kill his inventor and a writer, August Brill), because Auster's apparent attempt to be in tune with current political themes such as terrorism, because of the predictable use of his postmodern narrative techniques, etc.

American Dream

Beginning his first-person narration, August Brill says “I am alone in the dark, turning the world around in my head as I struggle through another bout of insomnia, another white night in the great American wilderness” (Auster 1).

This passage points out a personal crisis and illness of an ageing man, a 72-year old former reviewer and a writer, but his last words ironically refer to the contemporary condition and invoke a transfiguration of the past colonial American “wilderness”. The passage actually refers to contemporary America and implies a critique of the nature of contemporary American society, especially the free rules related to capital which negatively influence human relationships. The personal crisis manifests itself not only in August’s, but also in his daughter’s and granddaughter’s lives, who he is living with after his car accident. The relative financial security of his daughter and his granddaughter would be an evidence of a partial fulfillment of the American Dream, if it were not for the personal suffering (Miriam’s divorce, and the brutal murder of Katya’s boyfriend in the war in Iraq) of all the characters which creates a metaphor of failure. It is a failure of the American Dream which Katya’s boyfriend cannot achieve in the USA but by earning money through literally and symbolically joining violence in Iraq. His involvement in war finally results in tragic consequences – his brutal assassination highlights not only the materialist character of American society but also the failure of the American dream since not only is he brutally killed, but so is the idea of success connected with the money he has earned by going to Iraq.

The metaphor of crossing the borders thus acquires both negative and positive consequences in this context – negative because Katya’s boyfriend’s crossing of the border ends in tragedy, and positive because all these characters cross the borders of the reality they live in and find an emotional compensation in various art forms, that is a state of mind stimulating imagination as a source of value – August by telling stories, watching and discussing films with his granddaughter, and his daughter Miriam by writing a critical book on Nathaniel Hawthorne’s daughter’s life. Thus rather than materialist values, consumerism, violence and military practices as represented by the war in Iraq, it seems they are rather emotional values and imagination stimulating creativity which become a source of ethical values in Auster’s novel. Transgressing the borders of the real by invading the world of imagination thus means not only a symbolic denial of reality as a source of corrupted materiality, but especially the appreciation of the immaterial and the imaginary as a source of value, represented in this case by different forms of art.

Travelling, Motion and Freedom

Crossing the borders is closely connected with movement, motion and travelling which have acquired positive connotations in modern America as symbols not only of progress, but also of democracy represented by the possibility of free movement. According to Markku Salmela, “The individualism inherent in a life on the open road and the barely definable promise of political and economic emancipation symbolized by Lady Liberty—these may well be the two most dominant archetypes of the concept of freedom in the United States” (Salmela 134). But in Paul Auster’s fiction, this movement often acquires a different meaning as a metaphor of escape from chaotic, violent and corrupted reality and a search for both personal and cultural identity. In his article on the relativity of spatial freedom in Auster’s fiction, Markku Salmela observes “the dissociation from place inherent in travel by car” (133) in Auster’s works. He further argues that in his fiction “spatial freedom tends to incur a sense of disorientation and confusion, even mortal danger” (134) to emphasize “the relativity of freedom” (134) in Auster’s fiction. This can be true about his *Man in the Dark* – for both his protagonists August Brill, a writer, essayist and critic, and Owen Brick, his fictional character, a travelling magician in a fictional actual world who mysteriously finds himself in a dark pit, August is bound to a wheelchair and cannot move properly, and Owen’s travelling is rather an escape from danger and apocalyptic America rather than of the freedom represented by it.

Thus in *Man in the Dark*, a metaphor of movement and travelling acquires different, both positive and negative connotations— negative because they represent an escape from brutal apocalyptic reality (for Brick) and from the misery of ageing and loneliness (for August Brill), and positive because it is an escape to the world of imagination as represented by fiction writing which is able to create a mental asylum and a protection against dullness of corrupted and consumerist reality. Auster further develops various connotations related to the relationship between the actual fictional world of August Brill and metafictional world of Owen Brick all connected with a metaphor of border crossing. In his real, actual world, August and his family are only indirectly, however brutally, connected with the War in Iraq and its negative consequences. Yet Auster seems to point out negative consequences of colonialist practices based on the hunt for money which ultimately leads to violence, disintegration and death in the parallel post-apocalyptic world of Owen Brick. To escape from this world means to cross the borders between the imaginary and real world of August Brill which Owen achieves through accepting an offer from his sponsors to kill the author creating him in the actual world (August Brill) to get to this world through accepting the magic shot. Both characters are now in the same world reminiscent of the actual world, but Brick is unable to kill his creator and writer August since bombing and destruction indicate a beginning of war in this world.

Thus despite both characters seeming to be now on the same ontological level and in the world of actual reality, it seems Auster suggests not distance, but closeness, actuality and presence of violence, terrorism and war, turning imagination into reality since August is both literally and symbolically arrested in this reality by his inability to move and Owen Brick, his character, because his constant crossing of boundaries between actual and fictional worlds does not mean an escape, but emphasizes the inescapability of violence, terror, and disintegration. Travelling, movement, and mobility as symbols of freedom and democracy are thus ironically turned into a metaphor of arrest, passivity and inescapability of violence and disintegration stimulated by greed and a yearning for money as represented not only by Duke Rothstein, Lou Frisk from August Brill's fictional apocalyptic story on war but also by Katya's boyfriend who cannot see the moral implications of his involvement in the Iraq War; he protested against it and only went to the Middle East as a civilian driver. This also points out relativity of freedom occurring in Auster's fiction according to Salmela—one has a chance to choose freedom, but it is determined by many factors making this freedom limited—for example, he cannot prevent the political and military machinery violating the freedom of other individuals, nations and countries and, as seen in the example of Katya's boyfriend, if his work in the Iraq is understood as economic necessity, the freedom is limited by the economic situation of an individual.

Personal and Cultural Identities

Despite the fact that on one of its narrative levels *Man in the Dark* can be read as a story of the reconciliation of characters with their personal traumas, tragedies, divorces, deaths and ageing, and as depiction of a crisis of their personal identities, they are not only personal and individual identities which are at the center of Auster's attention. Most of the main characters are displaced from their roots and occupy a position of in-betweenness despite being integrated into either the European or American cultural environment. This in-betweenness position is especially depicted by Auster's depiction of travelling. August Brill, his wife Sonia, his daughter and granddaughter are depicted as having complex identities created by the interaction between the various cultural contexts they have been shaped by. They live in the USA, but their Jewish identities are reminiscent of the wandering Jew and are rather combinations of anti-essentialist practices secured by the movement, mobility and crossing of borders between different countries and regions. It is not a diasporic identity as understood by Safran, for example. In his view,

The concept of diaspora [can] be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics:

- 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'centre' to two or more 'peripheral' or foreign regions;
- 2) they retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history and achievements;
- 3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it.

As Safran further observes,

- 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and the place to which they or their descendents would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate;
- 5) they believe they should collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and
- 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship (Safran 83–84).

August Brill, his wife, his daughter and granddaughter are or have been (August's wife Sonia has died) living in the USA and have adopted this country as their new home despite being of Jewish origin. Despite their ancestors having been "dispersed from an original centre" (Safran 83), most other characteristics according to Safran do not apply to them and these characters display no urge to return to their native country, this time Israel, in the future. August lives in the USA, but he and Sonia maintain ties with Sonia's original country, France, through occasional visits to the country as Miriam, does. For August, a return to Europe means not only a re-establishment of the relationship with his parents-in-law, but also a return to the European cultural tradition his ancestors might have been influenced by. Despite being French, Miriam's cultural identity and belonging is also quite problematic. Sonia's father, Alexander Weil, was a Jew born in Strasbourg and influential research biologist, her mother was born in Lyon, France, "but both of her grandfathers were protestant ministers, which means that Sonia was hardly your typical French girl. No Catholics anywhere in sight, no Hail Marys, no visits to the confession box" (Auster 139). In addition, due to the rise of fascism, Sonia's parents are forced to cross borders, travel and come to the USA hoping to return to France after the war.

Thus like August, who came from a mixed family, "a Jewish mother and an Episcopalian father" (140), Sonia's identity and cultural belonging is also quite problematic. Despite being French by nationality, she is hardly typically French and her identity is composed of Jewish, European Catholic and Protestant traditions

and thus she also seems to occupy a position of-betweenness oscillating between Jewish-European-Catholic-Protestant and American cultures. Like August, her position is reminiscent of the wandering Jew who must be in a constant motion trying to find a place of belonging. According to Bill Ashcroft, “In-betweenness is not a state of suspended subjectivity [...] but a state of fluidity, of porous boundaries, of travel between subject positions” (Ashcroft 78). But Ashcroft further explains that the concept of in-betweenness does not mean “being lost or undecided or absent” (78) but points out that it is rather a condition of contemporary migrating subjects in a globalized world freely moving between nation borders and deciding upon their place of belonging.

In contrast to Sonia’s parents who are forced to leave France considered by them to be their home country and finally return, their cultural identity being rather close to a diasporic identity as characterized above, August’s and Sonia’s identities are different in nature. Despite their frequent travelling between the USA and France, they decide to live in the USA and do not wish to go either to France or Israel which would be one of the possible options to restore and perhaps secure their cultural belonging. The USA thus represents a fixed point of their belonging and the most adequate decision for the re-establishment of their new, this time transnational identities in the country created by immigrants if we exclude the Native and Black American inhabitants. This fixity as contrasted to mobility, movement as well as a myth of wandering Jew these characters are reminiscent of, and further emphasized by, the literal representation of August’s fixity to place, that is because he is bound to a wheelchair and the USA. Through a depiction of this literal fixity, that is of August’s family to the USA, however, Auster does not emphasize an essentialist position, but rather an anti-essentialist and rather transnational identity. This is represented by August family’s regular movements and travelling to re-establish their ties with other parts of their cultural belonging (mostly European) and with August’s reluctance to identify with contemporary American values and politics which is manifested in August’s vision of fighting, post-apocalyptic, fragmented, divided, brutal America as projected in the parallel world of Owen Brick. If we take Auster narrator’s statement that “The real and the imagined are one” (177), then August’s story represents his fictional refusal to identify with America and this identity. America, New York or Vermont is the place he has to live but it does not mean he and his family has to identify with all its values, cultural and political practices. Thus August and his family seem to achieve anti-essentialist and transnational identities in Bill Ashcroft’s understanding. In Bill Ashcroft’s view,

The idea of a ‘transnation’ disrupts and scatters the construct of centre and periphery, which continues [...] to maintain its hold on our understanding of the structure of global relations. If we think of the ‘transnation’ extending beyond the geographical, political, administrative and even

imaginative boundaries of the state, both within and beyond the boundaries of the nation, we discover it as a space in which those boundaries are disrupted, in which national and cultural affiliations are superseded, in which binaries of centre and periphery, national self and other are dissolved (Ashcroft 73).

Thus despite living in the geographical territory of the USA, August Brill family's cultural identity is reminiscent of transnational identity going beyond the boundaries of the state where national and cultural affiliations are superseded and which is composed of complex influences of European, French, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic and American cultures.

Language and Reality, Real and the Imaginary

Several critics have dealt with Auster's depiction of loneliness, chance, the relationship between language and reality, the image of a room, the process of writing, and many other issues related to the relationship between language and reality. In his study of Paul Auster's fiction, Mark Brown identifies central themes of Auster's fiction such as "the capacity of language to represent; language as a way of being in the world; the failure of language symbolised as the fall of man" (Brown 13). He also argues that Auster's "interests are twofold. First, he attempts to understand the 'distance' between the material world and the words that are meant to represent it. Secondly, he is concerned with the ability of the poet to position himself between the monolithic structures of the material world and language in such a way that the words he uses to represent his experience are adequate to that experience" (Brown 12).

This is also true of Paul Auster's novel *Man in the Dark*, but he seems to slightly modify the themes in this novel by playing other tricks on the reader and by a manipulation and eradication of the difference between actual physical, imaginary, artistic and dream worlds. In her book on *Theory of Possible Worlds in Literature*, Ruth Ronen argues that "[...] fictional worlds are ontologically and structurally distinct: facts of the actual world have no a priori ontological privilege over facts of the fictional world" (Ronen 12). She further explains that "The fictional world system is an independent system whatever the type of fiction constructed and the extent of its drawing on our knowledge of the actual world. (Ronen 12). And Ronen further observes, "Since fictional worlds are autonomous, they are not more or less fictional according to degrees of affinity between fiction and reality: facts of the actual world are not constant reference points for the facts of fiction" (12). In Ronen's view, then, "fictional worlds are non-actualized in the world but 'actualizable' [...] whereas fictional worlds are non-actualized in the world but also non-actualizable, belonging to a different sphere of possibility and impossibility altogether" (Ronen 51).

If we take Auster's book as a whole representing fictional worlds and an independent ontological system, it is true that it is a separate ontological system which is "non-actualized" in a real world, but within the fictional world of Auster's novel, the author depicts the actual physical, imaginary world of fiction and films, dreams and memories and the characters with transworld identities (Owen Brick, Virginia, Sarge Serge, Rothstein, and others) whose movement between the metafictional world of fiction (the story August is telling) and the actual world of August Brill within the fictional world of Auster's novel is accepted as natural since the reader imagines it all almost as the fantastical world of a fairy tale in which such migration is possible and because Owen Brick, to get to the actual world, must receive a magic shot to get there. Thus despite a difference between the ontological status of these worlds, the characters from the fictional world are aware of and know about the real physical world of August Brill, and August Brill must be necessarily aware of the characters from the fictional world he is constructing. But the Sergeant who orders Brick to kill August in the actual world says that August, by writing a story, invented a war "and everything that happens or is about to happen is in his head. Eliminate that head, and the war stops. It's that simple" (Auster 2008: 10). And Owen Brick, a fictional character August Brill invents, asks a sergeant: "You are saying it's a story, that a man is writing a story, and we're all part of it. Something like that. And after he's killed, then what? The war ends, but what about us? Everything goes back to normal. Or maybe we just disappear" (10). All characters thus seem to confirm not only the fictionality of the fictional worlds they inhabit but, at the same time, the equality between these worlds and their ontological levels. They easily transgress the boundaries and limitations of their world and cross the borders between the real, imaginary, dream, and fantastic. But if we follow Auster's characters from fictional world logics (soldiers, Virginia, a double agent, etc.), then the act of assassination of a writer, that is August Brill, would mean not only the end of war (in the story they are in), the end of destruction and chaos in the country, but also, metaphorically, the end of imagination as represented by storytelling and art. Thus what Auster seems to suggest is that not all worlds are equal, but also that one cannot avoid any of these worlds and must cope and live with all, however destructive they are, that is the real, physical, violent and chaotic world as well as the world of memories, dreams, imagination and art. This manifests itself in both Auster and August, the writer's decision to leave Owen Brick in the role of an assassin, in a situation before the assassination of the writer, in a situation when Owen is unable to kill, however reluctantly, a writer, August, now because the war starts in an actual, physical world of both himself and a writer. Thus imagination, invention, and scarcely imaginable war become reality which suggests Auster's warning against the possible realization of only "imagined" destructive events such as war. There is however, a different metaphorical meaning of the situation. Despite the chaos, violence, and possible destruction possibly becoming reality as Auster seems to warn his readers, what is impossible is to stop imagination rendered through storytelling and art (because Owen Brick does not kill his creator, a writer) which

seem to be a source of value and a way out of chaotic and brutal reality. In his pseudo-philosophical dialogue on the nature of reality, Frisk, a commander from August's world, comments on Giordano Bruno and his understanding of God and reality. He explains to Owen that he is

A sixteenth-century Italian philosopher. He argued that if God is infinite, and if the powers of God are infinite, then there must be an infinite number worlds [...] There is no single reality, Corporal. There are many realities. There's no single world. There are many worlds, and they all run parallel to one another, worlds and anti-worlds, worlds and shadow-worlds, and each world is dreamed or imagined or written by someone in another world. Each world is a creation of a mind (Auster 68–69).

What Auster seems to suggest here is not only a Brunian, but also phenomenological and solipsistic position of a relativity of the existence of objectively measurable and understandable world, that is all the worlds exist to the extent an individual is able to see, imagine, create, reconstruct or remember it being a physical world or the world of memories, stories, physical reality, fantasy, or dream. This equality but also relativity of all worlds Auster and his August Brill suggest finally manifests itself in a passage in which August comments on his memories recalling his wife in the past: "...the notes make no sound, and then she swivels around on the stool and Miriam runs into her arms...an image from the distant past, perhaps real, perhaps imagined, I can hardly tell the difference anymore. The real and the imagined are one. Thoughts are real, even thoughts of unreal things. Invisible stars, invisible sky...the sound of my breath..." (Auster 177).

Works Cited

- Ashcroft, Bill. "Transnation". Wilson, Janet., Sandru, Cristina., Welsh, Sarah. Lawson.(eds.). *Rerouting the Postcolonial. New Directions for the New Millennium*. Oxon: Routledge, 2010. 72–85.
- Auster, Paul. *Man in the Dark*. New York: Henry Holt, 2008.
- Brown, Mark. *Paul Auster*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.
- Ronen, Ruth. *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Safran, William. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return", *Diaspora* 1 (1):1991, 83–99.
- Salmela, M. *Paul Auster's Spatial Imagination*. Tampere: University Press, 2006.

Deconstructing the Twin Realities: Stephen King’s use of Metafictional Systems in “Secret Window, Secret Garden,” “Umney’s Last Case” and *The Dark Half*

Maroš Buday

Introduction

Stephen King may be perceived as a popular novelist; however, this paper focuses on the idea that King could be considered a postmodernist author on the basis of the use of metafictional elements as key components in some of his fictional writing. A vast majority of critics perceive King only as a writer, who twists and pushes the boundaries of reality and, on the basis of this, creates literary fiction using the basic elements of Gothicism. But if King’s work is put to the test and measured against the concept of metafiction, the results may surprise. Furthermore, for the purposes of establishing Stephen King as a metafictional writer, his works of art analyzed below are measured against one of the most prototypical academically acclaimed metafictional writers in the world, Paul Auster.

What King does in his fiction is not just the mere active reconstruction of objective reality, but rather, it is the reconstruction of literary fiction itself. In her study *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction*, Patricia Waugh poses a question: “Is telling stories telling lies?” (87) Metafictional constructs operate on the principle which allows fiction to cast serious doubt on the reality of the fiction itself. In other words, it blurs the boundary between two universes, namely, fiction and reality. Metafiction, therefore, destabilizes the traditional relation between fiction and reality by allowing fiction to permeate the firm barrier which has been established amidst this interplay of real vs. fictional. What emerges from this interconnection is a blurry composite constructed of twin realities. In addition, Waugh suggests that the two worlds are codependent although not entirely equal in their importance. It is so because while objective reality could exist independently of the fictional universe, it is not attainable vice versa.

This article deals with the fact that Stephen King not only reweaves reality but also deconstructs fiction. In terms of Waugh, the reality which is the truth becomes level with fiction which initially, as non-metafictional literature exhibits, bares the properties of the lie and, in King's hands, becomes the truth. King, as well as other postmodernist writers, in some cases, explores and what is more important to this context undermines his own position as a writer. He does so by the means of metafiction. In combination with his unique talent to pierce the veil of human consciousness to find phobic pressure points where fear, as one of the strongest human emotions, lies, his metafictional writing becomes somewhat different.

King completely ignores traditional forms of metafiction and instead of them he offers his readers entirely singular metafictional systems. Ranging from fused traditional forms of metafiction to entirely unorthodox and novel ones, King achieves not only the complete reinvention of the genre of horror fiction but of the novel itself. It is because his approach is so non-traditional and is quite disjointed from postmodernist literary conventions, that new terminology has to be introduced into Waugh's traditional forms of metafiction (the self-begetting novel, surfiction and fabulation being the most prominent ones). This chapter analyzes three of King's most prototypical metafictional novels which fall into three distinct categories, namely psychogenic metafiction ("Secret Window, Secret Garden"), transpositional metafiction ("Umney's Last Case") and corporeal metafiction (*The Dark Half*).

All of these three novels operate on postmodernist literary conventions but they principally differ from one another, hence the categories. What they have in common though, is that they all deal with reality and fiction, truth and 'lies,' and they do that by addressing both as one and the same. Because writing comes from truth, as Stephen King emphasized when delivering his acceptance speech to the The National Book Foundation's Medal for *Distinguished Contribution to American Letters*, by saying that "we understand fiction is a lie to begin with. To ignore the truth inside the lie is to sin against the craft, in general, and one's own work in particular" (King, "Stephen King"). What King very aptly points out is that, while he acknowledges that literary fiction is grounded in imagination it operates on principles of truth which are grounded in reality as perceived by the author.

This very statement which predicates that there is truth within the medium of fiction is the reason for Stephen King's decision to have written these three unique, horrifying and strangely rational, yet becoming pieces of writing. As he puts it, "I never truckled, I never lied. I told the truth. And that's always been the bottom line for me. The story and the people in them may be make-believe but I have to ask myself over and over if I've told the truth" (King, "Stephen King").

Psychogenic Metafiction

In the preface to one of King's most complex psychological metafictional pieces "Secret Window, Secret Garden", he comments on the process of making not only this particular novelette, but also the construction of fiction in general. He declares that he got the idea for this novelette when looking out of an upstairs laundry room window and seeing a small abandoned garden. He quickly makes the experience into an elaborate metaphor by saying that

It's an area [the garden] I see just about every day...but [this time] the *angle* was new. The phrase which occurred to me was, of course, the title of this story. It seemed to me as good a metaphor for what writers – especially writers of fantasy – do with their days and nights. Sitting down at the typewriter or picking up a pencil is a physical act; the spiritual analogue is looking out of an almost forgotten window [...] a window which offers a common view from entirely different angle [...] an angle which renders the common extraordinary. The writer's job is to gaze through that window and report on what he sees. But sometimes windows break. I think that, more than anything else, is the concern of this story: what happens to the wide-eyed observer when the window between reality and unreality breaks and the glass begins to fly? (King 2)

For King, the act of writing is an art, but what is more important here is the statement which King tries to make, not only of this story, but of the art itself. What King emphasizes here is that the window, therefore, the writer's psyche constitutes a lens through which reality is perceived. The truth becomes a lie when it is engaged and explored in written discourse. The question he poses at the end completely destabilizes this traditional literary notion and explores deeper concerns. When a window, i.e. the writer's psyche breaks, the consequences are potentially destructive, which is exactly what the theme of "Secret Window, Secret Garden" is about.

In the context of metafictional practice though, the metaphor deepens even farther. The sole fabric of reality is called into question. Therefore, we could transform King's question into the following form: What happens to an observer when the barrier between reality and literary fiction is either thin or simply disappears? This is also one of the themes which are hidden within the story itself.

The observer becomes the reader who, if he or she realizes the truth behind the fiction, comes to question not only the plot or the stories' characters but the written artifact itself. The reader thus notices the connections, the pressure points which draw objective reality into the work of fiction which destabilizes and undermines the fiction itself, which renders it obsolete. The fiction then becomes a hybrid,

a metafictional text, which has the properties of both reality and fiction alike. The readers' realization that the story has strong ties not only to particular objects of extralinguistic reality but also in reference to itself as a work of fiction is the art of metafiction par excellence. And it is exactly what King in this novelette does.

"Secret Window, Secret Garden" explores the psyche and the psyche-induced actions of a mentally traumatized writer called Morton Rainey. The mental trauma which his main character endures is induced by Rainey catching his beloved wife in bed with her lover, with whom she, after filing for divorce, engages in a romantic relationship. The story begins several months after this incident with Morton Rainey living alone in a lake house in Maine. At the beginning of the story the main character is visited by the antagonist of the story called John Shooter, who immediately accuses Rainey of plagiarism and claims that he has stolen his story and the only thing he wants from Rainey is for him to fix the ending to his story. Rainey automatically rejects the accusation. It turns out that Rainey's story called "Sowing Season" and Shooter's story called "Secret Window, Secret Garden", are nearly identical, after which Shooter proposes a three day ultimatum. If Rainey can deliver proof that he has written the story before Shooter, than he backs off. During the three day period, the protagonist is under a great deal of stress motivated by Shooter. Shooter's attacks gradually escalate and are realized by him killing Rainey's cat with a screwdriver, burning down his former house as well as killing his friend and handy man. What is particularly noteworthy is that the handy man is the only one who went by when Rainey and Shooter were having a conversation outside the lake house and subsequently claimed that Rainey was there by himself. After the death of the handy man, it becomes apparent that something is amiss in the story. Shooter has a conversation with Rainey where he acknowledges that he is only a reflection of his psyche: nothing more than a mere manifestation of his disturbed unconscious mind. It turns out that Rainey's psychological trauma has run a lot deeper than he was willing to admit to himself. The anger and frustration resulting from his inadequacy in maintaining a functional relationship with his wife has taken its toll and caused Rainey's malformed psyche to invent a whole new persona – John Shooter.

The character of Shooter is constructed very elaborately. He is an embodiment of memorial fragments which had been transferred from Rainey's consciousness and embedded deep within his unconscious mind. Shooter is an older man with a southern accent, who comes from Mississippi and he wears a dark hat. Shooter is a combination of literary and cultural references, past and present events and acquaintances experienced and met by Rainey. He serves as both a blessing and a curse to him. Since Rainey's superego, his conscience, is incapable of acting on his unconscious id (in this case his aggressive urges), he invents a persona to do the bidding of his clearly prevailing id for him. Throughout the story, Rainey identifies with Shooter only partly at first, mainly through the medium of written discourse, which plays a key role in the development of the protagonist's psychological breakdown. Towards the end of the novelette, Shooter fully takes

over Rainey's conscious mind and attempts to kill his wife and her lover. Rainey's consciousness basically subsides into the depths of his own psyche. The apparition of Shooter becomes the driving force behind Rainey's actions. It could be asked why, in case Shooter is a manifestation of Rainey's subconscious mind, does he torture him so much. In other words, how come Rainey's subconscious mind allows his other persona to act aggressively against himself?

Calling forth another persona seems to be a preemptive action. It appears to be so due to the fact that the subconscious mind is the paragon of mental health and protection. Although in Rainey's case, it becomes counterproductive. It has to create the other (Shooter) and destroy the original one. So, the aggressive behavior of the other towards Rainey is an attempt of the subconscious mind, however unsuccessful, to harden the latter's mental defenses while giving way to the overeager id. The ineffectiveness of this subconscious action and the need for unity of mind results in the prevalence of the other – in Darwinian terms, the fittest, who Shooter in this undoubtedly is, survives.

The practice on metafiction in this novelette is apparent in several places and it can be found in several different forms. First of all, this story is a kind of a meta-metafiction because the primary metafiction is realized through the character of Rainey being a writer, which in itself is the undermining of the author's status as the looming shadow presence who has subtly presented dominant power over his fiction. What is more interesting is the mixture of varieties of metafiction which King very carefully and deliberately uses in this novelette.

What further destabilizes the narrative is King's mastery of the 3rd person narration which is in no way omniscient as it is a custom in this type of storytelling, but it rather adopts the position of the 1st person narration. The hybridization of the two most common types of narration results in a uniquely claustrophobic atmosphere. While the reader follows the account of Morton Rainey's life from the point of view of third person, at the same time, he/she also suffers from the narrow viewpoint which is characterized by the story revolving only around the character of Rainey. Furthermore, the reader is given only the information from the outside world, which encompasses objects of extralinguistic reality. The outside world in this story is not only predicated on objective reality but rather Rainey's conscious thoughts as well. The thoughts of the main character are presented alongside objective reality, thus rendering them a part of this reality. All of the metafictional aspects of this story are bipolar, Platonic constructs; therefore, they are comprised of two distinct worlds. In this case, it is the world which Rainey's consciousness experiences as well as the consciousness itself. The other world constitutes the seemingly dormant and narratively implicit subconscious mind of Rainey and Shooter as well. Regarding the employment of hybridization in narration in this particular novelette, the metafiction can be also seen in the property of the written discourse reaching out to the reader, who cannot do anything but identify with the main character. In other words, the world of truth and the world of lies merge together into one reality.

Above all metafictional aspects, the most important issue which this story brings forth is the question of reality itself. As it was mentioned above, metafiction is grounded in the theory that there is only one real world which is comprised of two equally true realities, namely extralinguistic reality and literary fiction. These two worlds coincide and exist side by side and from time to time interact through the act of reading. What King achieves in “Secret Window, Secret Garden” is a kind of a nebulous state of reality, where dreams and reality merge into one world where they interact. The two worlds are represented by Rainey’s subconscious (the center of dreams) and conscious mind (the center of the perception of reality). In the course of the story, Rainey tries to remember several of the events and objects of the extralinguistic reality which are somehow tied to his unconscious invention of the persona of Shooter. These memorial fragments are hard to recall because “his memory of the event [is] quite foggy” (43). Memories are very important aspects of this story. The protagonist gradually begins to question the authenticity of his own recollections. “Mort took no notice, confusing her [his wife’s] real voice with the voice in his mind, which was the voice of a memory. But was it a true memory or a false one? That was the real question, wasn’t it? It seemed like a true memory” (46). The confusion which the protagonist feels here is a representation of the real and the textual world overlapping and starting to form a bridge between the two. Shooter, as an invented persona of a writer, and Rainey start to become one and the same. Until the end of the story Shooter is only a part of the non-textual discourse but it slowly becomes apparent that he is a part of the written discourse as well. When Rainey is visited by his estranged wife towards the end of the story, what he hears in his conscious mind is the first line of Shooter’s story “Secret Window, Secret Garden”, which is basically the same as his story – “Sowing Season”: “She had stolen his love, and a woman who would steal your love when your love was really all you had to give was not much of a woman” (99). This is the point of the story when not only John Shooter and Morton Rainey become one whole persona but it also becomes clear that both stories transform into one. The textual information presented in the story seeps into Rainey’s reality, therefore, reality within the fiction, which further complicates and mystifies the clear-cut boundary between truth and fiction within this narrative, i.e. the fiction as such. And because this form of metafictional practice is generated in the character’s psyche, the term psychogenic metafiction is appropriate.

Another interesting metafictional aspect of this narrative is the layeredness of fiction within the medium of fiction. First of all, there may be found fragments of stories embedded within the narrative structure. But this metatextual information is only the tip of the iceberg. When one looks at “Secret Window, Secret Garden” in terms of metafiction, one cannot omit the looming presence not only of the individual layers of narrations but mainly of the complex matrix of characters who had written the novelette “Secret Window, Secret Garden”. It is as much about the producers of this written discourse as it is about the title of the story itself. Within

the context of this work of fiction, there are five distinct interconnected levels of reality present and they all have a connection to the title of the narrative. Firstly, "Secret Window, Secret Garden" is the name of the story which, as a young man, Morton Rainey plagiarized from his classmate John Kintner. As years went by he forgot about the incident and pushed the memory to his subconscious mind. Later, he published the story under the name "Sowing Season". The narrative then resurfaced in the form of John Shooter and again adopted the name of its former image.

The last two layers of narration are especially interesting. At the very end of the story, after Morton Rainey is killed, his wife Amy finds a letter from John Shooter. The letter says: "I am sorry for all the trouble. Things got out of hand. I am going back to my home now, I got my story, which is all I came for in the first place. Yours Truly. John Shooter" (112). When this letter is taken into account, it could be suggested that the story which is being read by the recipient – the reader, is the story which was written by John Shooter as the prime mover of this layered metafiction. Shooter thus takes the place of Stephen King himself and acts as the writer while, Stephen King, being the last and final metafictional layer, only establishes a shadow presence. But we may go a little further. The fact that John Shooter leaves a physical remnant of his presence in the literary world suggests that he himself as the author of the original novelette (the literary world from which all subsequent literary worlds of this narrative emerge) performed a metafictional act by writing himself into the confines of the story.

This narrative is unique in many ways but the most noteworthy is King's ability to blur the boundaries between the reader and the main character, Morton Rainey. The true genius of this piece of writing, from a metafictional standpoint, lies in his ability to utterly and consciously undermine his own status as the creator of this work of fiction by completely destroying the veil between reality and fiction, thus identifying himself with the character of John Shooter. Therefore, Stephen King abides by the general rules of metafictional practice to the letter. By merging two worlds not only in the setting or the plot but by making the characters, reader and the writer one and the same thing – one giant simulacrum, which is no less real than its constituents. The novelette "Secret Window, Secret Garden" ultimately denies the writer any escape from his imagination, which dissolves the line between the real and the imagined rendering the writer the insane God feared in *Misery's Return*, a novel which the antagonist Annie Wilkes forced the main character Paul Sheldon, in King's novel *Misery*, to create.

Transpositional Metafiction

In *Misery's Return* Sheldon writes: "His ideas about God had changed [...] He had discovered that there was not one God but many, and some were more than cruel--they were insane, and that changed all. Cruelty, after all, was understandable.

With insanity, however, there was no arguing” (King, 310). This comment within the context of metafiction explores the multiplicity of worlds within other worlds. In this story King explicitly explores the power which the author exorcises and holds with respect to his creation. What this short excerpt from *Misery* states is that authors stand in a god-like position in reference to the whole literary universe, which encompasses space, time, plot and characters as well. When the fact that through metafiction, the literary universe is perceived equally realistic as objective reality is taken to account, it could be said that writers, as the creators of worlds parallel to this one, automatically assume a god-like status. As one of the best known academically acclaimed authors of postmodernist fiction, Paul Auster writes in his *Travels in the Scriptorium* towards the end of the narrative:

It will never end. For Mr. Blank is one of us now, and struggle though he might to understand his predicament, he will always be lost. I believe I speak for all his charges when I say he is getting what he deserves—no more, no less. Not as a form of punishment, but as an act of supreme justice and compassion. Without him, we are nothing, but the paradox is that we, the figments of another mind, will outlive the mind that made us, for once we are thrown into the world, we continue to exist forever, and our stories go on being told, even after we are dead. (64)

Firstly, this story is an account of one (and only one) day in the life of the protagonist Mr. Blank, who relives this day over and over again. This excerpt is from the afterword to the story, the existence of which is credited to the name N.R. Fanshawe, a name of the character in another of Auster’s narratives called *The New York Trilogy*. Similarly to King’s implicit positioning of the character of John Shooter into the position of the author, therefore himself, does Paul Auster credit and thus identify himself with his own literary creation, Fanshawe. The literary creations John Shooter and N.R. Fanshawe both assume the god-like position in which the author stands in relation to his own literary work, but at the same time they both stand in a character-like position, as is more than apparent in the excerpt from Auster’s *Travels in the Scriptorium*. The fact that Fanshawe is the explicit creator of this piece and he also refers to himself in regards to Mr. Blank in the first person singular and plural as well, suggests the equality of the status of both as mere literary creations of the prime mover, Paul Auster. There is one interesting element which is not present in King’s novelette “Secret Window, Secret Garden” but is present in Auster’s narrative, and that is the seemingly insignificant status of literary characters in association with the authors themselves. When we assume the position that authors are in a god-like relation to their literary creations, we automatically diminish the status of characters. But as Auster aptly points out in *Travels in the Scriptorium*, the characters of stories continue to exist forever.

Therefore, it could be stated that the original position, that characters are inferior to their creators which has been dominant in literature until the emergence of Postmodernism, is nowadays continually reversed. Literary characters thus assume the position of ethereal beings who, although they cannot exorcise power over authors, in many cases, they definitely outlive their original makers. This is a concept which Stephen King deconstructs in another one of his prototypical metafictional pieces called "Umney's Last Case". This short story is analyzed here in detail in parallel with Paul Auster's themes incorporated in his *New York Trilogy* as well as *Travels in the Scriptorium*. It is due to the striking thematic similarities with Auster's writing which King employs in his short story.

"Umney's Last Case" follows the story of a private eye in L.A., called Clyde Umney who on a completely ordinary day walks to work. During the walk he notices several unsettling changes in the environment which occur in events, places and characters in a previously perpetual state of existence, such as the newsboy standing on the street corner every day not being there, his favorite bar being closed, an elevator attendant having to retire after many years of service in the building where Clyde has his office and many more. After stepping of the elevator at the floor where his office is located, he gets inexplicably agitated at a group of painters painting the lobby. After a short squabble he learns that the building's owner, called Samuel Landry, has given the order to repaint the lobby. Oddly, the name of the owner seems to be unknown to Clyde. The final straw is when he discovers that his secretary, Candy Cane, has left him a letter of resignation. In other words, Clyde's relatively eventful yet monotonous life becomes dominated by chance, which is a concept previously alien to him. The phrase "confusion, confusion, nothing but confusion" (King 843) is being frequently repeated throughout the narrative. It becomes the central theme of the story. Shortly after arriving at his office, he is visited by a man. Clyde's reaction takes him by surprise when he states:

I was scared out of my mind. I've faced blazing guns in the hands of angry men, which is bad, and daggers in the hands of angry women, which is a thousand times worse [...] I have even been tossed out of a third-story window. It's been an eventful life, all right, but nothing in it had ever scared me the way the smell of that cologne and that footstep scared me. 'Clyde' a voice said. A voice I'd never heard before, a voice I nevertheless knew as well as my own. (845)

Furthermore, Clyde grows a lot more concerned when he notices the appearance of the man sitting in his office. The man in the chair has features which very closely resemble Clyde himself and as it turns out, the man looks exactly like Clyde apart from the age difference. The latter appears to be the spitting image of Clyde. After this unsettling encounter the two men talk a little

longer. The tone of the narrative abruptly shifts when the true purpose of the story becomes apparent as is demonstrated by one of the most important subchapters found in the story. The title of this subchapter seems to be speaking for itself.

This fifth subchapter is entitled “Interview with God” (847) which is an interesting and quite apt choice of words because the man visiting Clyde introduces himself as Samuel Landry. Landry gradually takes over the conversation and states that he is the creator of Clyde and the world Clyde inhabits, in other words, he is a writer. It turns out that Clyde is the main character in a moderately successful detective series. Trying to persuade Clyde that he is telling the truth, Landry immediately presents several arguments, after which the former tries to attack him out of frustration. Landry assumes domination over the literary character and stops Clyde’s advance by typing the actions of his character into his laptop. This finally satisfies Clyde’s skepticism. Landry then comes clear over the real reason for plunging into his own creation – his literary world. As it appears, Landry’s life in reality has not been so kind to him. His son has died and consequently, he and his wife got divorced. Furthermore, Landry suffers from shingles, which is an incurable and painful disease. Thus the true motives of Clyde’s maker begin to take shape. Landry familiarizes Clyde with his intentions in assuming his place in the literary world, where he believes he can be truly happy. Then without asking for Clyde’s consent Landry assumes the position of the private eye, Clyde Umney and Clyde’s consciousness is transferred into reality, therefore, Samuel Landry’s body.

This elaborate form of metafiction is a combination of two traditional and one hybridized example of metafictional writing, namely the self-begetting novel, surfiction as well as the aforementioned hybridized form of metafiction previously described in the novelette “Secret Window, Secret Garden” – the multi-layered metafiction. It is so because of the transposition of characters, parallel worlds and of power interiorized within the position an author holds over his writing.

Primarily, what is particularly striking about this short story is the complex and explicit manner in which King handles metafiction when it comes to the transpositioning of two worlds – the “real” and the imaginary. As the character of Landry points out “writers very rarely plunge all the way into the worlds they’ve created, and when they do, they end up doing it strictly in their heads, while their bodies vegetate in some mental asylum. Most of us are content simply to be tourists in the country of our imaginations” (King, 862). What King very clearly asserts here, is that writers of fiction, up until recent decades, had mostly set clear-cut boundaries between reality and the world of imagination and at best perceived the merging of literary fiction and reality as falling into the pit of insanity. To illustrate, here is an excerpt from the famous novel by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra called *Don Quixote*: “Finally, from so little sleeping and so much reading, his brain dried up and he went completely out of his mind” (48). As King points out, writers are reluctant to reveal themselves and their art to the general public but he shows that even demystifying literature by self-consciously

drawing attention to the imaginary to raise its status and degree of reality, can produce very interesting and complex literary artifacts.

The transposition of literary worlds in "Umney's Last Case" is very closely connected to the shift in the status and degree of power of its characters. By entering his imagination, Landry exorcised his power as the God of this respective universe but by swapping places with Clyde, he automatically and consciously gives up the power and transfers it to Clyde, which is a concept very similar to what Paul Auster attempted in the third part of his *New York Trilogy* called "The Locked Room." The story is about the narrator's search for his lost friend Fanshawe, a writer, who after disappearing and leaving his pregnant wife, leaves his life's work and a note explaining his actions to a friend (the narrator). Fanshawe asks his friend to read his work and in case he deems it worthy, he is supposed to publish it. The narrator does so and he himself writes literary criticism about his stories. By falling in love with Fanshawe's wife and by trying to erase every trace of Fanshawe from his life, however unsuccessfully, the narrator assumes his life and effectively becomes the former. It is even speculated that the narrator is the one who wrote the work under an assumed name: "My first response was to laugh. [...] Did people not trust me to tell the truth? Why would I go to the trouble of creating an entire body of work and then not want to take credit for it? [...] I realized that once all of Fanshawe's manuscripts had been published, it would be perfectly possible for me to write another book or two under his name" (Auster, *The New York Trilogy*, 248). To assume someone's life means to become someone else, and just like Rainey becoming Shooter in "Secret Window, Secret Garden" or the narrator gradually becomes Fanshawe in *The New York Trilogy*, in King's "Umney's Last Case," Clyde assumes the life of his creator, Landry. The types of metafiction which are presented in these three narratives differ from one another, yet have one common element. That is, the differentiation of the psyche which can either reconstruct or alienate the self. Furthermore, when Clyde assumes the position of his creator in the "real" world, he immediately starts thinking like the narrator of "The Locked Room." He starts to read and learn how to write in a style which constitutes the mirror image of his predecessor. But because this has been written by Stephen King, who very often introduces horrific elements to his writing, Clyde in the body of Landry decides to make a living hell out of the newly appointed detective in L.A. In other words, Clyde in a position of power takes revenge upon his original creator.

The previously mentioned multiplicity of layers embedded within the metafictional aspects of this story is realized by logical dissimilarities in the textual and physical relation between Clyde and Landry. The first layer or narration is the connection Umney – Landry. Landry appears to be the prime mover when it comes to Clyde but it seems to be untrue. It is so because of Clyde, who is a mere literary character in Landry's twisted imagination, and retains the ability to manifest certain minor thoughts and actions independent of Landry's knowledge. He is, for example, able to resist Landry keeping him at bay by moving

just a little and thinking autonomous thoughts. This undermines the primary assumption about Landry being the one who asserts ultimate dominance over Clyde; therefore it implies a prime source of his partial resistance. While Landry appears to have the status of God in the literary world of Clyde, as the latter points out it is “sort of awful, realizing I had been made by such a bush-league version of God, but it also explained a lot. My shortcomings, mainly” (King, *Nightmares and Dreamscapes*, 856). Clyde as a creation was made, similar to men, in the image of his maker, but the sole fact that even the creator of the literary world Clyde inhabits is not perfect and all-powerful, undermines his status as the true drive behind the aforementioned world *and* Landry’s world as well. King here very subtly incorporates the notion of another layer of metafictional practice, which is embodied in King himself being the prime mover, who controls the actions of Clyde as well as Landry’s assuming dominance over his character as well. King then toys with his literary conceptions by reversing the roles of both characters thus brilliantly demonstrating the theory of multiple realities implied by metafiction within the fiction itself. Although it could be argued that the freedom exhibited by Clyde is only the result of a careless mistake made by Stephen King, it is highly unlikely on the grounds that when it comes to the main theme of his stories, King very rarely makes even the tiniest of mistakes, not to mention a considerable one like this.

Corporeal Metafiction

The third and last singular form of metafiction employed by King deals with his literary creation coming to life. This literary creation is the protagonist’s pseudonym, which is what is at the core of his metafictional novel. Similarly to King’s *The Dark Half*, in Paul Auster’s “The Locked Room,” the narrator’s thoughts begin to wander and he starts to think about passing his work under the name of Fanshawe, he contemplates the intricacies of using a pseudonym: “What it means when a writer puts his name on the book, why some writers choose to hide behind a pseudonym, whether or not a writer has a real life anyway” (238). These and several other points which Auster during the course of the story uses are being frequently deconstructed by many authors. Writers often use pseudonyms but very rarely comment on it.

In the early 80’s, Stephen King attempted a literary deception, where he published several of his novels under a pseudonym, Richard Bachman. He did this in an effort to extinguish the embers of his uncertainty: he was questioning his literary success and wanted to know which one of two possibilities was responsible for his accomplishment. He basically wanted to know whether it was talent or luck which had been standing behind his huge success as a writer of literary fiction. As King himself states that he has “yet to find an answer to the ‘talent vs. luck’ question” (King, *Thinner*, 2) as Bachman’s true identity as King was revealed

quite soon. As Richard Bachman, King published several novels including *Rage*, *Thinner*, *Blaze*, *The Long Walk* and *The Running Man*. After a short period of moderate success, fans noticed the similarities between the authors. A book clerk from Washington D.C., Steven Brown, discovered the similarities and went to the library of congress and uncovered the truth about the Bachman books. Later, he contacted King's publisher and was then contacted by King himself, who offered him the chance to write an article about him uncovering Bachman's true identity. As King announces in the foreword to his Bachman novel *Thinner*, Bachman "died" in 1985 of "cancer of the pseudonym" (3). There is one more thing worth mentioning, namely that King's pseudonym, Richard Bachman, adopted his own pseudonym which he "had used to write *The Fifth Quarter* under the name of John Swithen" (King, *Blaze*, 4).

This literary simulacrum led to the conception of one of the most important literary pieces when it comes to the employment of metafiction in King's literary corpus. The forward to King's novel *The Dark Half* is very short and concise but in actuality it speaks volumes. King pays homage to his literary pseudonym by writing that he is "indebted to Richard Bachman for his help and inspiration. This novel could not have been written without him" (1). Admitting the use and inspiration by his own literary creation in itself suggests the involvement of this particular theme which dominates the novel. *The Dark Half* is representative of merging serious postmodernist tendencies with horror fiction and creating a hybridized form of metafiction utterly unique to literature as well as King's own writing.

In contrast to "Secret Window, Secret Garden", which deconstructs the destructive influence writing could have on the psyche of an author, and "Umney's Last Case" which examines the relation between the literary universe and objective reality, *The Dark Half* incorporates the literary universe inside extralinguistic reality by introducing the concept of the horrific other. It also scrutinizes writing as an art of creating and suggests the fragmentation of the self, i.e. of one's psyche when it comes to authors.

The story follows a moderately successful writer Thad Beaumont, who is one day visited by the police who accuse him of murder. Thad has an airtight alibi but the police doubt it very much because it turns out that the murderer left Thad's fingerprint at the scene of the crime. It is also crucial to note that Thad had a twin brother whom he dissolved in utero. After diagnosing him with a form of cancer, the doctors discover some undissolved parts of Thad's unborn brother lodged in his brain. Thad is "a novelist with a dual career, one under his own name as a critically respected but unpopular novelist" (Grace, 63), and another under an assumed name, a pseudonym, George Stark who is the supposed author of a very popular and critically unnoticed crime novels. After enjoying 13 years of success as George Stark, Thad, influenced by a fan's discovery of the similarities between his and Stark's literary style, decides to "out" himself to the general public by staging a "funeral" for his literary double. After this event, two very important things happen. Firstly, the killings which the novel centers on start right after the

funeral. Secondly, the metaphorical killing of his literary pseudonym coincides with Thad getting writer's block. He is unable to write anything but his diary which is mostly written in a very impersonal and saccharin style. One day, Thad is called to the cemetery and sees a hole dug from inside in front of the fictional grave in which George Stark was figuratively buried. Right after that, the killings start. Later in the course of the story, it turns out that the murderer is none other than George Stark himself, a literary pseudonym which comes to life. Stark's figurative burial and his ultimate acquisition of a corporeal form results in a gradually escalating series of murders of people associated with Thad's isolation as writer who no longer depends on the work of his pseudonym. This leads to the inevitable final literary battle in which Stark, as a corporeal entity created entirely out of written discourse, tries to learn how to write from Thad, thus attempting to gain full separateness. Since Stark is a part of Thad, at the end the latter has no choice but to give up his greatest passion which is writing and thus destroying Stark once and for all.

King's statement in the preface of *The Dark Half* clearly determines that his own pseudonym was the source of inspiration for the novel. The metafictional aspect of this novel is very clear and concise. A purely literary creation coming to life is a fully developed hybridized form of metafiction. Combining certain aspects of the self-begetting novel and adding the elements of horror into it results in the creation of an entirely separate form of metafiction, named corporeal metafiction. It is realized through the pseudonym attaining, in spite of his fictionality, a certain degree of reality. Stark, although in corporeal instead of an ethereal state in which literary characters may be found, is nevertheless dependent upon Thad's creative genius. He lives from his imagination. Until his burial, Stark was no less real than he was after that, and he served as Thad's other persona, much like John Shooter was the double to Mort Rainey. When writing as George Stark, Thad has had no control over himself, he:

sometimes believed that the compulsion to make fiction was no more than a bulwark against confusion, maybe even insanity. It was a desperate imposition of order by people able to find that precious only in their minds... never in their hearts. Inside him a voice whispered for the first time: 'Who are you when you write, Thad? Who are you then?' And for that voice he had no answer. (128-9)

By assuming a certain amount of realization that Stark is present in Thad's mind, the latter willingly admits to himself the fact that through the medium of written discourse, his self becomes alienated from objective reality and his self. Thad's psyche becomes fragmented to the point where the other, his dark half, assumes power over writing, but through Thad's imagination. The fact that Thad has no answer for his inner voice (Stark's voice) suggests that he does

not question and only passively accepts his self-splitting. And by subsequently laying Stark to rest, he assumes a corporeal form out of the power of Thad's imagination.

Another striking aspect of this novel is when Thad sees Stark for the first time and notices his appearance: "They looked nothing alike.[...] Thad was slim and darkish, Stark broad-shouldered and fair in spite of his tan [...] Yet they were mirror images, just the same" (426). Stark, though an embodiment of Thad's brother who was dissolved in utero, bears very little physical resemblance to Thad, yet as Thad notices later, Stark not only looks but also acts exactly how he imagined the protagonist in the Stark novels, *Alexis Machine*, would. When Thad contemplates the possibility of the murdering double being the embodiment of his own pseudonym, he questions his own sanity because "George Stark was not real, and neither was Alexis Machine, that fiction within fiction. Neither of them had ever existed, any more than George Eliot had ever existed, or Mark Twain, or Lewis Carroll, or Tucker Coe, or Edgar Box. Pseudonyms were only a higher form of fictional character" (161). The name Stark was also borrowed by King. It was the pseudonym of a famous writer of crime novels originally called Donald E. Westlake. By creating a character inspired by an actual person, King "farther fictionalizes his fictional fiction" (Grace, 64). He interconnects three worlds and remakes them into one whole – the world of the novel *The Dark Half*.

Stephen King handles life and death of his antagonist in a very similar manner as it was done by Paul Auster in his "The Locked Room." The narrator of Auster's story first assumed Fanshawe's life and then tried to erase every trace of him from his life, but he gradually becomes obsessed with finding Fanshawe and decides to look for him. In the same way, Thad seems to be obsessed with Stark and in a manner akin to the narrator of Auster's story, tries to erase traces of him, but he is unable to do so. Furthermore, this attempt occurs involuntarily therefore there is no proof of Thad's positive reaction to this event which impacts his life in a major way. The same goes for Stark's coming to life. It is also an event which is forced upon Thad and while he wants to get rid of his murdering other, he is also reluctant to do so, because he realizes that getting rid of Stark means giving up writing. This need for writing, thus this "attraction to Stark" is akin to "alcohol or drug addiction" (Meyer 111).

Stark and Thad are both codependent upon each other and this relationship is most strongly realized near the end of the story. Stark is a creature compiled entirely out of words. He is the physical representation of the protagonist of the Stark novels, *Alexis Machine*. But while Stark is unable to exist independently of Thad's imagination, and thus is tied to Thad's ability to write, Thad himself is able to function without him ever writing, because addiction is treatable. It is also because Stark assumes corporeal form Thad's dead brother that Stark tries to achieve autonomy by trying to absorb Thad's ability to write in the same manner in which Thad's absorbed his twin brother in utero. By successfully assimilating Thad's ability to write, Stark could be able to manage independence.

Thus, the medium of writing is presented as a potentially destructive as well as constructive and remedial force. It is the thing which is able to reintegrate the parts of the self which were scattered by the self-splitting of Thad's persona into a coherent whole. However, Stark is unsuccessful and subsequently destroyed but at the cost of Thad giving up what he loves to do most, to write.

The ending of the novel is rather pessimistic. Although Stark is destroyed, the experience leaves Thad utterly distraught because since he has given up writing, his self becomes a whole but he has lost his life's purpose. Thad's inability to write after Stark's disappearance is due to the continuation of his writer's block about which King gives very little indication whether it is broken or not. However, the epigraph of the novel shows a part of Thad's earlier novel. It is a scene in which two lovers part and that ultimately denies a happy ending. But what is more important is that it indicates that Thad no longer possesses the ability to write. This renders the whole concept of writing mute, at least in this case. What King suggests here is that written discourse, wherever it comes from, comprises of "twin realities – the one in the real world and the one in the manuscript world" (201). And losing the world of imagination, the dark half of the self, means losing the ability to write.

Conclusion

The focus of this paper was put predominantly on three of Stephen King's archetypal metafictional works of art, namely "Secret Window, Secret Garden", "Umney's Last Case" as well as *The Dark Half*. The deconstruction with respect to his use of metafictional systems was performed by a thorough analysis of the specific instances within the narratives themselves which, in several ways, contributed to the metafictional elements present in the interpreted works of art. King's approach of using the persona of an author as the protagonist of his fiction in all three cases was measured against the work of Paul Auster who, similarly to Stephen King, uses authors as his main characters, however, unlike King, he is in accordance with the traditional forms of metafictional practice proposed by Patricia Waugh. King strays from this postmodernist convention because he employs the elements of horror fiction in his writing. This is the reason for him being pushed to the fringes of academic discourse. Notwithstanding, this article offers a perspective which sheds new light on King's position within the literary tradition. It suggests that King's employment of horror fiction within his writing is not a detraction, on the contrary, it is an asset which enables him to produce truly remarkable and singular pieces of postmodernist writing to which the elements of metafiction are central. The aforementioned narratives are unlike anything postmodernist literature has ever seen.

Works Cited:

- Auster, Paul. *The New York Trilogy*. London: Faber and Faber, 1988.
- . *Travels in the Scriptorium*. London: Faber and Faber, 2006
- Cervantes, Miguel de Saavedra. *Don Quixote*. London: Wordsworth Edition Ltd, 2003
- Grace, Dominick. *Critical Insights: Stephen King*. Pasadena: Salem Press, 2010
- King, Stephen. *Blaze*. London: Hodder, 2009
- . *Misery*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987
- . “Stephen King, Recipient of the National Book Foundation’s Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters Award.” *National Book Awards Acceptance Speeches*. National Book Foundation, 2003. Web. 8. Oct. 2014. <http://www.nationalbook.org/nbaacceptspeech_sking.html#VNyg_i43IOI>
- . “Secret Window, Secret Garden.” *Four Past Midnight*. By King. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990
- . *The Dark Half*. London: Hodder, 2009
- . *Thinner*. London: Hodder, 2009
- . “Umney’s Last Case.” *Nightmares and Dreamscapes*. By King. London: Hodder, 2007
- Meyer, Michael. *Stephen King’s Writers: The Critical Politics of Literary Quality in Misery and The Dark Half*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2004
- Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1984

#OpSherlock: Privacy, Surveillance, and Anonymous in *Elementary*

Brigitta Hudácskó

Questions of privacy have always been focal issues in the detective genre, and have been problematised in crime fiction and film in several ways: in its most evident form, we can find (threats to) privacy as a motivation for crimes even in the earliest of Sherlock Holmes stories; the investigation process itself challenges and overwrites the everyday rules of privacy; and when the Great Detective is finally introduced into the process, he brings about a new set of practices and rules regarding privacy. Although the original Sherlock Holmes stories often address the issue both on the level of the plot and in the method of the detective, the discrepancies around privacy have become all the more visible in the most recent television adaptations of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, such as in *Elementary* and *Sherlock*. This development is at least partly due to the technological advances introduced in the past few decades, which made constant surveillance both in public and in private, not only possible but often unavoidable, but, on the other hand, recent historical events – specifically 9/11 and its repercussions – have apparently necessitated these measures as well. Apart from the official privacy measures and concerns, online initiatives, such as the hacktivist group Anonymous, and its spin-off endeavours, LulzSec and AntiSec have highlighted the severity of the situation concerning online privacy, or lack thereof. In my paper I would like to examine that corner of popular culture where Sherlock Holmes meets Anonymous, that is, the reflections of privacy issues and practices, and the emergence of hacker culture in the recent CBS series, *Elementary*.

Privacy and the Detective

“London, like New York, is a beacon of freedom and a target for terrorists. It is, as a consequence, one of the most observed cities in the world. Its network of thousands upon thousands of CCTV cameras tracks the movements of its citizens, looking for anything at all out of place” (“Step Nine”). This Foucauldian observation by Sherlock Holmes from an episode of *Elementary* touches upon a rather fitting diagnosis of the current state of surveillance: on the one hand, it

calls attention to the all-permeating presence of observation equipment in urban locations, and, on the other hand, it indicates its paranoid nature, as the means of surveillance is to find “anything at all out of place,” anything extraordinary, which, in fact, is also a characteristic of the Great Detective’s *modus operandi*.

At this point it would be advisable to take a look at the original Sherlock Holmes stories to find the foundation for this paranoid panoptical vision that has since been adopted not only by later reincarnations of Holmes, but by law enforcement agencies, and, on a larger scale, by liberal governments as well, in the so-called war on terror. Upon Dr. Watson’s first meeting Holmes, the detective “reads” his future companion – “You have been to Afghanistan, I perceive” (Conan Doyle 18) –, which later on becomes a set feature in the stories: whenever a potential client visits Holmes in his rooms, he proceeds to figure out a number of facts about the caller, thus re-establishing himself as the Detective.² This, however, may seem as a mere party trick when compared to the more important use of Holmes’s uncanny vision: in short, there is no privacy from the gaze of the Detective. His overactive observational skills come extremely useful in solving crimes, but, after all, these skills also enable him to see through those metaphorical walls surrounding private life – if it were not enough that his cases take him deep into people’s private lives as well, when he is investigating step-fathers with a murderous intent (“The Speckled Band”) or the love affairs of prestigious personalities (“A Scandal in Bohemia”).

Sherlock Holmes’ observation skills introduced in the canon are not only the stuff of legend, but have become something of a cliché as well, and thus run the risk of being reduced to mere showing off. The detective’s uncanny gaze, however, is not simply a sign of excessive genius, but also a symptom of a pathological compulsion, not only a need to observe and map out everything the detective’s gaze touches upon, but also an inability to not do so. Of course, the detective does use this ability (which, then, could even be labelled as a disability) to impress, but, boasting apart, it is apparently not something that he can exercise control over. This notion is often reflected in later adaptations, maybe best in the television series *The Finder*, where the Great Detective character, Walter Sherman, struggles with paranoia after a head trauma suffered in the Iraqi war. His disability paired with his newly acquired overactive observation skills allow, or rather, compel him to start a career as a self-proclaimed finder: he acts as specialized private investigator of lost items and lost causes. He manages to track down people, events (such as the missing parts of an overheard conversation or a dinner), or objects deemed lost by his client, but besides the usual occupational hazards he has to face internal risks as well: he must find what he is looking for, or

2 The uncanny, panoptical gaze of the Detective did not, of course, originate with Sherlock Holmes, as it was first introduced in the characterisation of Dupin in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” where, while walking the streets of Paris, Dupin answers his companion’s unuttered observation, based on his own observations of the walk and the intimate knowledge of the workings of the companion’s mind.

else he cannot cope with failure, cannot stop his investigations and this may drive himself into a catatonic state, which eventuality illustrates the less glamorous and more pathological aspect of the compulsive observational genius.³ But even if the compulsion does not manifest itself as a psychological disorder, several portrayals of the Great Detective operate with drug issues to highlight the pathological nature of Holmes's skills (in recent adaptations *Sherlock*, *Elementary*, as well as in *House, M.D.*).

It has been characteristic of the crime genre since its inception that it introduced the latest advances and technologies in forensic science, thus making it easily acceptable for the general public, when these advances were later introduced in everyday use, from photography to fingerprinting, and later on more elaborate techniques.⁴ This phenomenon has, however, expanded since then: it is not only the featured equipment and techniques that have been adapted, but the detective's paranoid gaze has apparently become an ideology as well: Julian Reid in his monograph *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror* depicts liberal societies' defence strategies in the war on terror, strategies (including surveillance) which can be paralleled with the detective's observational techniques. Reid explains this defence strategy with the concept of "logistical life," which implies the following: the individuals living according to the rules of the logistical life always live under the duress of the command to be efficient, they are ready to be positioned where they are required, use their time economically, they are able to move when told to, and able to extol these capacities as values for which one would willingly kill and die for, if necessary (Reid 20). The implementation of such policies in societies, albeit serving genuinely useful purposes of security, has the side-effect of aggravating the anxieties caused by the threat of possible (terrorist) attacks in the population and turns the individuals against each others, as citizens are encouraged to look for signs of danger and dangerous individuals anywhere, thus adapting the paranoid gaze characteristic of surveillance systems. What is more, these systems implemented in the defence of freedom may do, in fact, more harm than good to the very freedoms they are protecting, as it is the citizens, whose liberties are being protected here by taking away some of those liberties, the same citizens who are observed and held up for scrutiny during their

3 Interestingly enough, probably *The Finder* is the series, which, despite its light-hearted nature, manages best to showcase the dangers of the compulsive side of the Detective: the series ended after its first season, with Sherman hauled off to jail, as he was unable to stop an investigation and thus broke his promise made to the US Marshalls: he was supposed to stop looking for a person – his own mother – in witness protection, but he was unable to do so, because that would have meant failing to fulfil an assignment. In the course of his investigation he also killed three people trying to attack his mother, which obviously aggravated his situation. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the series was not renewed for further seasons, so this event could never become resolved, and thus it realised the imminent doom that is forever hanging over the Detective's head: going too far, from a legally grey area to illegality and (self-)destruction.

4 Cf. Thomas, Ronald R. *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science*. Cambridge: CUP, 2004

everyday movements in the name of “democracy and freedom.” Slavoj Žižek in his collection of essays, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!* comments upon this discrepancy thusly:

[...] all the main terms we use to designate the present conflict – ‘war on terrorism’, ‘democracy and freedom’, ‘human rights’, and so on – are false terms, mystifying our perception of the situation instead of allowing us to think it. In this precise sense, our ‘freedoms’ themselves serve to mask and sustain our deeper unfreedom. (2)

“Came for the Lulz, Stayed for the Outrage”

Before turning to *Elementary* and examining how the Detective and his uncanny gaze function in the series, and how they affect issues of privacy, I would like to introduce an entity which, on the one hand, had gathered significant public attention in the past few years and was featured in *Elementary* as well (at least in a fictionalized form), and, on the other hand, in its evolution and activities shows significant resemblance to the figure of Sherlock Holmes.⁵ This entity in question is the online hacktivist group Anonymous, who have evolved from the attention-seeking “Hate Machine of the Internet” (FOX News, qtd. in Coleman) to a veritable and powerful, although still often disputed activist group, supporting important causes that may not otherwise gather the necessary attention or get the proper treatment from whatever agencies they concern, from law enforcement to corporate powers, and, to achieve their goals, they often resort to illegal means, may that be a DDoS attack against a website or garnering information by hacking (“owning/pwning”) databases.⁶ This evolutionary process is summed up wittily by a member of Anonymous, who claims that, joining the group, he “came for the lulz, but stayed for the outrage” (Coleman, Loc. 1069), that is, just like a significant portion of the membership, he joined the group for the fun of the havoc they were wreaking, but stayed on to contribute to and enjoy the attention – and certainly the outrage – their later, more activist-minded movements had caused. Although

5 Although Anonymous have a less clear-cut genesis than Sherlock Holmes, it has also gone through several mutations through the years, with sub-branches and independent groups emerging along different interpretations as to what should the main profile of Anonymous be like.

6 Gabriella Coleman in her recent monograph on Anonymous gives a detailed account of techniques most frequently used by the group: a DDoS, or a distributed denial of service attack, for example, is carried out by sending a huge number of requests to a server, which the server cannot process and thus it has to be temporarily shut down and cannot provide the service it is designated for. Anonymous have, over the years, carried out DDoS attacks against government agencies, security firms, and corporations like PayPal, Visa, and MasterCard.

it can by no means be said that Anonymous have one, defined profile and agenda, and its activities have certainly caused tension, disagreement, and division within the group itself, it is still clear that they have grown from petulant trolls to a political force to reckon with, as they organized or supported causes like the Arab and African Spring, the #Occupy movement, and #OperationAvengeAssange. One of their most recent operations (#OpFerguson) concerned the events of the summer of 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri, where Mike Brown, an unarmed, African-American young man was shot down by a police officer. Anonymous expressed a sense of dissatisfaction over the treatment of the issue, and as they perceived that the police were covering up the case to protect one of their own (or, as further cover-ups were revealed, several of their own), so they reacted by doxing members of the Ferguson police force, that is, publishing sensitive information about them, such as their addresses and social security numbers. This incident reveals the conflicting nature of Anonymous: in the spirit of the means justifying the end, their tactics may often cause major damage to the parties involved in or targeted by their operations. The nature of “the end” is also debatable and highly debated within the group: even though Anonymous have often supported social and political causes, the end that initially kicked off the group was “lulz,” that is, entertainment. In an early communication aimed at their long-time enemy, Fox News, they have worded their philosophy thusly:

We are everyone and we are no one ... We are the face of chaos and the harbingers of judgment. We laugh at the face of tragedy. We mock those in pain. We ruin the lives of others simply because we can ... A man takes out his aggression on a cat, we laugh. Hundreds die in a plane crash, we laugh. We are the embodiment of humanity with no remorse, no caring, no love, and no sense of morality. YOU ... HAVE NOW GOT ... OUR ATTENTION. (“Dear Fox News,” *YouTube*)

The anthropologist Gabriella Coleman, who has spent years observing Anonymous, phrases it somewhat differently: “Lulz is engaged in by Internet users who have witnessed one major economic/environmental/political disaster too many, and who thus view a state of voluntary, gleeful sociopathy over the world’s current apocalyptic state, as superior to being continually emo” (Loc. 510–12). The key aspects here, in my opinion, are that, on the one hand, the Internet users in questions are highly sensitive to social issues – especially to situations with negative outcomes or to those where a wrong has been committed, without further repercussions –, and, on the other hand, they engage with these situations with a sociopathic attitude, to seek out some kind of enjoyment in the meantime. As already stated, the actions and attitudes of Anonymous are anything but consistent: if we try to categorize their operations based on the motivation behind them, we can certainly find a significant number of “#ops” (especially in the later years of their existence), which have been initiated by social and/

or political concerns, such as #OpFerguson, #Occupy, and their involvement in the Arab and African Spring. However, several other ops have been carried out purely for fun, and, to put it simply, because it was possible to be done. They have attacked, for example, several security companies and obtained highly sensitive information for their servers (such as credit card information and passwords of customers), because they could: ironically, said security companies had rather low security measures installed, which made it possible for hackers to gain access to sensitive information.⁷ While these operations had excellent “lulz” potential to them, they certainly raised important concerns as well – which were, to some extent, the motivation behind the initiatives: to call attention to the fact that this is how our information is treated. This is how our privacy is treated. This is how – despite several agencies trying to convince us otherwise – there is no privacy on the Internet. Another example which sheds light upon the attitude of Anonymous towards those perceived as enemy is an excerpt from their communiqué to the Church of Scientology, which they set out to destroy back in 2008, after the church attempted to remove material from a highly publicised Tom Cruise interview from the Internet, and thus limited the freedom of information: “For the good of your followers, *for the good of mankind—and for our own enjoyment*—we shall proceed to expel you from the Internet and systematically dismantle the Church of Scientology in its present form” (qtd. in Coleman, Loc. 213–14, italics mine).

If one observes the evolution of Anonymous and compares it to the evolution of crime fiction, several similarities can be found between the hacktivist group and the figure of the Great Detective (which, just like Anonymous’ profile, has gone through a number of regenerations and reinterpretations and is thus not entirely consistent). Probably the most significant of these parallels is that both the Detective and Anonymous started out with extraordinary but rather (self-)destructive skills, which needed to be managed and channelled into good use, otherwise they would turn against their users. Although Holmes often works closely with the police, his methods reside in a legally grey area, occasionally dipping into the illegal, though he is given much leeway to manage things his own way, as often happens with criminal informants – as Coleman points out when discussing the anomalies of the informant system.⁸ Law enforcements agencies are a lot less benevolent with Anonymous: several members are currently in

7 See Coleman’s “Sabotage” chapter for further details about an attack against Stratfor, a global intelligence company that was hacked in 2011.

8 The extent of Holmes’ criminality once again depends on the interpretation: in certain versions he merely turns to unusual means when chasing a criminal, but in BBC’s *Sherlock* he eventually ends up as a murderer – although he acts in defence of his friends, but the fact remains. So does that fact that his actions are covered up by his brother, and even his punishment of exile (and very probable death in action) is lifted when his skills are needed back home.

prison or on trial for their participation in the group.⁹ A very significant distinction is, however, that Anonymous cannot be commissioned: it is one of their core principles that they are not going to be anyone's personal army (Coleman, Loc. 2341), they only get involved in cases that raise their attention and can get the approval of some majority ("some" in the sense that even though there appears to be a core initiating operations and coordinating tasks, the decision making process is always contingent on the currently active members at any given moment, which is by no means a static group). While in the case of Anonymous outside requests are rarely welcome, the Detective can be commissioned – but he only commits to cases that interest him, and, we can often see, he is willing to go any length to get involved in a fascinating case even when the police do not want his assistance.¹⁰

Another important aspect that is significant both for the Detective and for Anonymous is the question of morality or lack thereof. The Detective mostly keeps to his own principles, which do not necessarily coincide with the letter of the law, and, more importantly, he is more motivated by the mystery than by the urge to bring justice to criminals, and thus could be labelled amoral – although an evolution process can be observed here, as well, which is different in different interpretations, but as a tendency Holmes usually comes to embrace a certain kind of morality. In Anonymous, the original amorality is quite obvious, and in fact, the issue of "moral faggotry"¹¹ has proved to be a point of disagreement several times, and even caused breaches within the group, when certain members felt that the support of serious, worthy causes suppresses the original purpose of the group, which was the lulz. As a result, branches like LulzSec and AntiSec came about, which were really more about the lulz than anything else.

And yet, despite all the criticism and the moral and ethical dilemmas surrounding them, both the iconic Great Detective and Anonymous have a great following and they are surrounded by constant admiration from certain circles, at least. Admittedly the Detective is somewhat harder to despise as he stands on a firmer moral ground, or at least his reputation is more established, yet the similarities are hard to ignore. To crack open the reason why these figures are so alluring, we need to turn to Walter Benjamin, as he observes that the great criminal "however repellent his ends may have been, has aroused the secret

9 Interestingly, though, Coleman's book reports a case when the FBI employed an influential member of Anonymous as their criminal informant and thus allowed him to organise and/or carry out a number of highly illegal operations in order to take down other members of the group. The CI eventually faced only a couple of months of incarceration. The chapter "Sabotage" in *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy* contains a detailed account of the case.

10 Such an example can be seen in the first episode of *Sherlock* ("A Study in Pink"), where Sherlock keeps bombarding police officers and reporters present at a press conference with texts, in which he expresses his disagreement with the police's official stance on the case.

11 The term "fag" appears to be a general way of addressing members of the group or units within the group (e. g. "leader fags") and does not necessarily carry judgement. In the case of "moral fags," it most certainly does.

admiration of the public” (qtd. in Coleman, Loc. 4608–10). Coleman explains that “[this] admiration stems from the fact that criminality reveals the limits of the state’s monopoly on violence and the force of the law” (Loc. 4608–10). While the Detective only borders on the criminal, his work certainly points out the limits of the state’s monopoly on the force of the law, as his very existence is justified by the fact that there are cases where the official powers cannot effectively do justice – often because they cannot descend into legally grey areas. As Robin Woods also notes, when commenting on the detective’s isolation in Golden Age crime fiction – although this statement is certainly not limited to that era –, the detective is too close to the criminal ever to become part of society, otherwise he might transmit criminality back to the communities he is trying to protect (106). The hacker in general also exists in a similarly grey, liminal state, as what s/he is doing is often illegal and motivated merely by a thirst for knowledge and the intrigue of mysteries, but in fact, the results of their labour very often benefits society as they discover and point out such flaws in electronic systems, which could be exploited for malicious purposes, if they are not corrected in time.

In the specific case of Anonymous, some of their recent operations have shown that they act when law enforcement cannot or will not act: besides #OpFerguson, there have been several incidents where Anonymous worked to bring justice to victims of small-town rape cases, which have been covered up by the local police and school personnel (such as the Steubenville rape case of 2013). This kind of vigilante justice certainly has its allure, especially among those who previously have felt powerless against the workings of the system – and if Anonymous have proved anything, it is that previously suppressed or disregarded individuals (like the often mocked geek) can have significant political power, when equipped with the right tools – and that right tool may be a single laptop in a mouldy basement.

There is, however, a rather significant difference between the Detective and Anonymous: while stories are constantly being told with the detective in the focus and cast in the role of the hero, Anonymous are mostly featured – at least, in mainstream media – in the stories of the other, and consistently cast in the role of the villain. It is perhaps Coleman’s *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy* which focuses entirely on Anonymous, without typecasting them as the bad guys.

You now have our attention: the Detective and Anonymous

Since its first big operation in 2008 (#Chanology, against the Church of Scientology) Anonymous has proven its political potential and aroused a significant amount of attention from all walks of life, thus it hardly comes as a surprise that they have been featured in popular culture as well (especially considering that the group grew out of geek culture in the first place). My previous comparison of the Great Detective and Anonymous has not been incidental: in the final part of my paper I would like to examine how they are brought together in *Elementary*, where a

fictionalized version of the group, named Everyone, has been featured in several episodes. I have chosen two episodes for the present analysis, the first being “We Are Everyone.” It was first aired in October 2013 as part of the second season of the series, and the plot relies heavily on recent events concerning public security and certain freedoms, especially the freedom of information, partly discussed earlier in this paper. Holmes and his protégée, Joan Watson are commissioned to find a hacker/whistleblower called Ezra Kleinfelter (reminiscent of Edward Snowden), who has been leaking classified government information. In retaliation for Holmes’ investigation of Kleinfelter, a group of cyber terrorists or hacktivists called “Everyone” are wreaking havoc in the detectives’ lives (among other things, doxing them), and, if that were not enough, Holmes and Watson turn up on the radar of the CIA as well.

This episode in question illustrates – albeit on a small scale – some of the imaginable consequences which may occur as a result of Anonymous’ real-life operations. As part of Everyman’s revenge, the electronic devices in the detectives’ home are hacked, their phone numbers are published in what appears to be advertisements of very specific sexual favours, and Watson’s profile on a dating website is hacked, stating radical and false opinions about sensitive matters and publishing her home address. Although in the series the viewer’s sympathies lie with the detectives, who eventually manage to extricate themselves from the technological and social troubles, the episode (especially when viewed alongside the latest events) is certainly indicative of the power of those who have access to the excessive information stored about each individual in virtual and physical records, and points out how excessive freedom of information ultimately leads to unfreedom.

While the general public is often supportive and sympathetic towards the endeavours of Anonymous, perceiving the “system” and its bureaucratic and often covert operations as hostile, *Elementary* offers a completely different point of view. First of all, Kleinfelter, the hacktivist in the centre of the manhunt turns out to be a murderer as well (though the circumstances and motives of said murder remain rather weak and underdeveloped in the episode), Everyone is depicted as a hostile group, and Kleinfelter is willing to sacrifice the life of a dozen of covert agents by publishing records containing their identities, in exchange for his freedom – all in the name of freedom of information. What we can see here is two radically different interpretations of the notion of “freedom of thought,” and the machinery of ideology working behind the episode seems to suggest that complete and utter freedom of information can be fatal in inappropriate hands, therefore it is better to revoke it from everyone, just to be on the safe side. Here, similarly to the application of mass surveillance, we can see the suspension of certain freedoms for the sake of “freedom” in general. Or, to quote Žižek once again, “you’re free to decide, on condition that you make the right choice” (3). While the concerns raised by the episode are somewhat legitimate, it is also important to point out the fictional Everyone – or at least their representative, Kleinfelter –,

is depicted is plainly immoral, as opposed to the often playful amorality of the real-life Anonymous.

Interestingly enough, though, later *Elementary* episodes present a rather different view on Everyone, as the detective on occasion engages their services when he needs to obtain information he could not get through legal channels. Although Everyone, whom Holmes dubs as “a bunch of anonymous, immature hackers” (“The Many Mouths of Aaron Colville”), seems to be more willing to accept commissions than their real-life inspiration is, the lulzy aspect is clearly there: whenever Holmes puts in a request to the group, he has to perform some minor act of self-deprecation: he either has to post a video of himself performing the song “Let It Go” from the film *Frozen* in a pink prom dress, or stand on the street with a sign inviting people to punch him in the arm, as the price for Everyman’s help. Holmes seems to understand and accept the economics of the group as he performs his assignments without any further ado, and at one point, he even explains the exchange value of the lulz as currency to Watson. We can see him cooperating with Everyone in a number of episodes in the second season, most notably in “The Many Mouths of Aaron Colville” and “The Grand Experiment.”

While in “The Many Mouths of Aaron Colville” (aired April 2014) Everyone’s role is mostly restricted as acting as Holmes’ personal hackers, they have a smaller, but probably more significant appearance in the finale of the second season, “The Grand Experiment,” which also focuses heavily on different forms of surveillance. Leading up to this episode, we learn that Mycroft, Sherlock’s brother, who has been so far known as a successful restaurateur with establishments all over the world is, in fact, an MI6 asset and his New York City restaurant is frequented by a French gang of criminals, who are, in turn, watched by the MI6. After a series of accusations and counter-accusations, Mycroft’s handler, Sherrington turns out to be a traitor to MI6, who threatens to torture Watson in her own home if she does not provide him with information about Mycroft’s whereabouts. Watson has been prepared, though: she reveals that she has been in video connection with fifteen members of Everyone throughout the discussion, they have been listening in on Sherrington’s admission and threats, and would not be averse to making it public, in case anything happens to Watson. I find this short scene significant, because it toys with the (reverse) uses of surveillance: this technique, as we know it today, is mostly exercised by agencies of power, to keep tabs on individuals both in (mostly) public areas and online. As Coleman notes:

What surveillance really is, at its root, is a highly effective form of social control. The knowledge of always being watched changes our behavior and stifles dissent. The inability to associate secretly means there is no longer any possibility for free association. The inability to whisper means there is no longer any speech that is truly free of coercion, real or

implied. Most profoundly, pervasive surveillance threatens to eliminate the most vital element of both democracy and social movements: the mental space for people to form dissenting and unpopular views. (Loc. 6303–7)

MI6, along with its international equivalents all over the world, have been wielding this power of social control over individuals with their extensive and ever more pervasive forms of surveillance and they aim to regulate the dissenting elements of society. Surveillance, however, cannot be limited to the (potentially) dissenting only: while mass surveillance of public places and online activities is – theoretically – conducted in the interest of citizens, as a consequence everyone is treated equally as a potential delinquent, and the thus gathered excessive data, such as CCTV footage, records of online activities, virtual profiles stored in internet archives can function as circumstantial evidence in the eventuality when the suspect becomes a perpetrator.

At this point let me once again recall Sherlock Holmes’s opening thoughts about the metropolis: “London, like New York, is a beacon of freedom and a target for terrorists. It is, as a consequence, one of the most observed cities in the world. Its network of thousands upon thousands of CCTV cameras tracks the movements of its citizens, looking for anything at all out of place” (“Step Nine”). I find this statement symptomatic for several reasons: the beacons of freedom are targeted for their very essence, and, as a response, the protectors of this freedom turn the cities into places of confinement. Sherlock’s wording is accurate: it is the citizens, whose liberties are being protected here by taking away some of those liberties, the same citizens who are observed and held up for scrutiny during their everyday movements in the name of “democracy and freedom.” In “The Grand Experiment,” however, this power is twisted out of the authority’s hand and turned against it: what Sherrington believed to be a private moment where he could exercise his influence and make threats from the safety of his position (which would also allow him to cover his tracks), turned out to be a rather public moment, due to new forms of surveillance. At this point, my argumentation turns back to the previous discussion of Anonymous: both through the lulz and their more serious operations, they have proved that privacy is either non-existent for most individuals, or rather hard to achieve (mostly through technical expertise) for those in the know. But while so far mostly individuals’ privacy has been violated either by malevolent forces (such as criminals specialized in the area) or by certain authorities, whom we have, on occasion, but certainly not always, allowed to violate our privacy for the sake of our safety. As recent developments – such as the previously mentioned Edward Snowden case – have shown, the main concern has not always been our safety – or at least, this “us” is probably a more limited concept than previously thought. Therefore the lulz and the #ops often turn violations of privacy against those who are guilty of these crimes as well: security firms, the NSA – and, in the episode in question, the MI6.

The conclusions of these *Elementary* episodes – and of the recent activities of Anonymous –, just like the conclusions of the present paper are hardly uplifting: even though groups such as the fictional Everyone and their real-life equivalent are fighting – often dirty – for the security of everyday Internet users, for the security of *everyone*, basically, what they managed to raise awareness to is probably the virtual impossibility of privacy and security. Therefore, in some aspects, we are back to the early days of Sherlock Holmes: privacy is given up to the all-seeing gaze of the Detective for the sake of some greater freedom – only now this uncanny, all-seeing, panoptic gaze is everywhere, following us around online and offline.

Works Cited

- “Anonymous – #OpFerguson.” Online video clip. *YouTube*, 10 August, 2014. Web. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOSRQ-clXW0>> 20 August, 2014.
- Coleman, Gabriella. *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy. The Many Faces of Anonymous*. London, New York: Verso, 2014. E-book.
- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur. *A Study in Scarlet. The Penguin Complete Sherlock Holmes*. London: Penguin Books, 2009.
- “Dear Fox News.” Online video clip. *YouTube.*, 29 July, 2007. Web <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFjU8bZR19A>> 7 January, 2015
- Reid, Julian. *The Biopolitics of the War of Terror. Life Struggles, Liberal Modernity, and the Defence of Logistical Societies*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006.
- “Step Nine.” *Elementary*. CBS. 26 September, 2013. Television.
- “The Grand Experiment.” *Elementary*. CBS. 15 May, 2014. Television.
- “The Many Mouths of Aaron Colville.” *Elementary*. CBS. 3 April, 2014. Television.
- Thomas, Ronald R. *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science*. Cambridge: CUP, 2004.
- “We Are Everyone.” *Elementary*. CBS. 10 October, 2013. Television.
- Woods, Robin. “ ‘It Was the Mark of Cain’: Agatha Christie and the Murder of the Mystery.” *Theory and Practice of Classic Detective Fiction*. Ed. Jerome H. Delamater and Ruth Prigozy. Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1997. 103–110. .
- Žižek, Slavoj. *Welcome to the Desert of the Real! Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates*. London, New York: Verso, 2002.

“To flood, with voweling embrace, /Demesnes staked out in consonants.” Aspects of Language in Contemporary Irish Poetry

Péter Dolmányos

Irish poetry is among the most exciting bodies of writing in contemporary literature. Banal as this statement may be, the underlying idea of the why and wherefore of it is taken so much for granted that it rarely becomes a consideration in itself: that the language of most of contemporary Irish culture, and within that of literature, is English. The origin of this phenomenon opens colonial dimensions to the Irish context yet it also provides a warning at the same time of the problems of treating Ireland as a postcolonial place *par excellence*. Though the relation of England and Ireland is easily and justifiably seen in terms of coloniser and colonised, care must be taken when applying postcolonial approaches to the contemporary culture of the island, South and North alike, since Ireland does not demonstrate several of the typical features of formerly colonised lands due to the fact of its specific location on the same continent as the coloniser.

One salient aspect of colonial relations, and perhaps of their unique dimension in Ireland, is the question of the language, in this case of the English language. The long-standing antagonistic relation between Ireland and Britain has fostered a strange state of bilingualism in modern Ireland, both South and North. The imposition of the English language contributed to the decline of the Irish language yet it has to be noted that the Irish were in many cases more than willing to shed their old language for the advantages and conveniences of the new one (Kiberd 650) – as Sean De Fréine explains, the advance of English in the course of the 19th century was due to a “social self-generated movement of collective behaviour among the people themselves.” (quoted in Paulin 59)

The colonial pressure, however, is still not to be underestimated since the advance of the new language went together with an attempt at cultural homogenisation, aiming to deprive the Irish not only of their language but of their cultural heritage as well. One aspect of this project was the early nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey which renamed the Irish countryside either through translating the culturally loaded Irish place names into English ones, or through transliterating them to approximate the original pronunciation using an English

spelling. The underlying idea was that of linguistic as well as cultural dispossession as the renamed countryside would grow increasingly alien even for its native population. Despite colonial intentions Irish place names even in their ‘new’ form seek to preserve the past. Translated names, by virtue of translation itself, arrest something of the meaning of the original and though it may seem a reduction, it still contains a part of the heritage. Transliteration preserves another aspect, the pronunciation of the name – this may appear a very weak aspect yet the nature of language as sounds is not to be overlooked. Though fragmented and refracted, the cultural heritage shines through – and this may be mourned as well as celebrated: the loss is inevitable and this bears heavily on the consciousness of several poets yet the advantages of the English language are generally taken for granted.

Place names thus become emblematic of the general situation concerning the relation of the two languages, yet at the same time they are only one aspect of this. The Irish language may be cherished and mourned yet its decline is inevitable due to various historical factors several of which are still being felt. English may be imposed and alien yet it has become familiar to the degree of intimacy and has become the actual mother tongue of generations of Irish people, offering thus a wide enough audience even in the otherwise narrow Irish context. The language situation presents a dilemma with paralysing effects for the intellectual yet it is one that must be accepted as such since no solution exists for it.

Michael Hartnett’s short poem “Inchicore Haiku” masterfully sums up the dilemma of the contemporary Irish poet in relation to the question of the language. “My English dam bursts / and out stroll all my bastards. / Irish shakes its head.” (Hartnett 69) The antagonism of the two languages, their combat for the status of the language of poetry is given a special dimension by the history of Hartnett’s own poetic practice: a bilingual poet, he gave up his original activity of writing in English and turned exclusively towards Irish, just to be forced to recognise the futility of insisting on the latter language. As Declan Kiberd notes, Hartnett’s mission had the fruit that “he discovered that it may not be a question of a writer choosing a language, so much as a case of the language choosing to work out its characteristic genius through a writer.” (Kiberd 588) Though his English poems, and his Irish with them, may be considered “bastards,” and his Irish may justly shake its head, the march of the former cannot be stopped. The personal experience of the poet lends authority to the speaker, and the phraseology he opts for embodies the dilemma itself: both “bastards” and “stroll” reflect the frustrated but doubtless understanding of the relation of the two languages.

Matthew Sweeney’s “The Eagle” suggests a possible counter-current to the usual English versus Irish relation in the choice of language for writing. Against all the charges brought against the Irish language, the poem reverses the general approach to the language question: the father figure choosing to write in Irish because English would not do is an open attack on the belief that the native Irish cannot compete with English. The topic decides in favour of the old language and it is the very modernity of English which renders it inadequate for the context:

“the unexplained return / of the eagle to Donegal” (Sweeney 10) cannot be treated in a language which is “too modern” (ibid), which is “good for plane-crashes, for unemployment” (ibid). The description consists of the past and the present, involves the coining of a new word, and includes “folklore / and folk-prophecy.” (ibid) It does not venture to say anything about the future, yet the aim is not that either – celebration and the historical dimension are targeted: “The research is new / and dodgy, but the praise / is as old as the eagle.” (ibid)

The poem, however, is cunning at the same time, since it involves the possibility of its own subversion. The end of the poem domesticates the opening irony and only traces remain but those are certainly there. The choice of the father is a rare one, so is the occasion: the English language may be too modern yet what it is capable of covering, plane-crashes and unemployment, are in fact more frequent constituents of the present than such a miraculous event as the return of the eagle. The Irish language certainly has a past yet practical wisdom favours the English. It is also of interest that the father is the one making the choice, thus the older generation is allied with the old language, which is basically a declaration of the time relation of the two languages as well which would subvert the optimism of the possibility of using the Irish instead of the English.

John Montague’s poem “A Lost Tradition” epitomises not only the relation between physical location and history in the Irish context but the principal focus of the poem is the dismal fate of the Irish language. The persona’s contemplation of a landscape coming alive as “shards of a lost tradition” (Montague 33) quickly becomes a catalogue of items all described in the English language: his native Garvaghey becomes the Rough Field in the first step and the rest of the points of reference are also identified in the imposed language. The once historically-loaded landscape is slowly turning into something increasingly alien:

The whole landscape a manuscript
We had lost the skill to read,
A part of our past disinherited;
But fumbled, like a blind man,
Along the fingertips of instinct. (ibid)

The colonial heritage of linguistic dispossession, however, is balanced and corrected by a new development, that of state education: the Irish language is ‘revived’ as part of the school curriculum – at least on the level of the ideal(ogy). There is a fine grade of irony in the juxtaposition of the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ Irish:

The last Gaelic speaker in the parish
When I stammered my school Irish
One Sunday after mass, crinkled
A rusty litany of praise:
Tá an Ghaeilge againn arís... (ibid)

The naïve optimism of the Irish phrase, “We have the Irish again” (*ibid*), is upheld for another half line in the next stanza; then the picture is quickly changed for a historical account of the failure of the O’Neill rising, an event followed by the Flight of the Earls, seen as the real beginnings of English colonisation in Ireland (cf. Vance 17). The cunning yet definitely sad choice of the word “last” indicates the practical failure of the attempt of encouraged revival in the context of a language, providing a more disappointed conclusion than the word ‘revival’ suggests in itself.

“A Grafted Tongue” enlarges the context from place names to a full-scale view as it compresses several lifetimes into the space of a relatively short poem: it provides a close-up view of the suppression of the Irish language and its later artificial revival, thus it complements “A Lost Tradition.” Possession, dispossession and repossession follow each other in the life of succeeding generations with a repeated pattern: Irish children are forced to drop their native language and to speak English at school, losing contact slowly with their native culture – and the reverse of it is repeated later, though in a somewhat more moderate way, with the Irish becoming a school subject for Irish-born yet English-speaking children. The method of teaching English reflects the colonial relationship between Britain and Ireland as it is done with force, with each mistake severely punished by the master. The logic is clear: the Irish will become aliens in their own land, losing touch with their world and even with themselves as the “altered syllables / of your own name” (Montague 37) indicate. The process is seen as growing a second tongue, with all its implications:

To grow
a second tongue, as
harsh a humiliation
as twice to be born. (*ibid*)

This unnatural condition is the fate of the Irish until independence changes the situation:

Decades later
that child’s grandchild’s
speech stumbles over lost
syllables of an old order. (*ibid*)

The compulsory teaching of the Irish language to children born into the English language, however alien and imposed it may be, is also a way of growing a second tongue, and though the measures involved are less drastic, the resulting state of linguistic in-between-ness is similarly confusing. Syllables are

“lost,” learning is “stumbling,” the prospect of proficiency and repossession is accordingly dubious, which is a sad recognition yet an inescapable one too.

Seamus Heaney’s placename-poems illustrate one aspect of the operation of language in the specific context of Irish culture. The translated or anglicised names, in spite of the attempt of the coloniser, still preserve something of the native culture yet their partially alien nature liberates them for the acquisition of new meanings. As language lives in the speech of succeeding generations, the new associations take their place side by side with the old ones, leading to the formation of a rich and peculiar stock of meaning. Beyond this dimension the place names of Ireland also have the power of offering the sense of a “shared complicity” (Montague 44) for people of the same place: the unique sounds of a name are the common property of those who live there whatever community they happen to belong to yet these sounds remain alien and difficult for others. This idea can also incorporate a seed of hope as it cuts across the otherwise rigid sectarian divide by pointing out the common element beyond all division.

“Anahorish” is on one level the tracing of how the renamed country takes on new meaning for the linguistically dispossessed. The original Irish “Anach fhior uisce” (Parker 98) is partially preserved in the Anglicised version, though it is only the pronunciation which recalls the native. The tradition of the *dinnseanchas* is briefly recalled in the first line as the English meaning of the original Irish name is rendered as the “place of clear water” (Heaney 21), indicating the communal historical heritage of the name. The place then, however, is associated with childhood memories for the speaker and not with the ancient story preserved in the name, as a consequence of the renaming of the countryside. The name thus becomes “soft gradient / of consonant, vowel-meadow” (ibid), a sequence of sounds to be savoured and to take on a principally auditory dimension without the least indication of meaning apart from its reference to a physical location. The place in turn builds up its own associations and the “after-image of lamps / swung through the yards / on winter evenings” (ibid) is accommodated in an older cultural tradition as the “mound-dwellers” (ibid) are evoked.

The world that is lost through the renaming of the Irish countryside is slowly reclaimed as the new name comes to be possessed by the disinherited. The “first hill in the world” (ibid) exists before it is named and the child follows this sequence in his process of learning his world. The name is thus first associated with a place known from direct experience and its meaning is only recalled later, in translation from an obscure old language. In this form the name creates its own music, and when savoured and accepted it comes to be possessed by coming to life in the context of the old culture as well, acquiring meanings that link it with the previously lost world which is thus no longer beyond the reach of the disinherited and is therefore no longer lost.

“Broagh” is a placename-poem of a different kind. The lines of the poem bring together words of different origins – and these different origins emblematically

correspond to the general division in Northern Ireland: the title word is Gaelic, “rigs” is Scots and “docken” is Anglo-Saxon (Parker 99). These three strains then converge in the imaginative universe of the poem towards the concept of the “ford,” a manageable section of the riverbed where crossing is possible. The idea of crossing involves a specific meaning in the Northern context yet it is only on the tentative level of the poem that a common element is found: the word “Broagh” itself, with its last sound, “that last / *gh* the strangers found / difficult to manage.” (Heaney 25) That difficult guttural sound is endemic to the North, and the carefully articulated phrase of “the strangers” points towards a possible union beyond division, a point where division could become plurality with no hierarchy involved despite the historical sequence of the words in focus.

“A New Song” also harks back to place names through personal memories. The narrative experience is somewhat reminiscent of Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan,” a meeting with a girl from an exotic land, yet the exoticism of Heaney’s place derives not from physical distance but from a temporal dimension which is embodied by a place name. Derrygarve becomes “a lost potent musk” (Heaney 27) and the visual memory is immediately recollected – the river Moyola and its banks are recalled with a vividness that in turn evokes the “Vanished music, twilit water” (ibid) associated with the river. The river image presses the poem forward to the domain of language, with Heaney’s personal approach to the duality of Irish and English expressed in terms of vowels and consonants respectively (cf. Heaney quoted in Corcoran 85):

But now our river tongues must rise
 From licking deep in native haunts
 To flood, with vowelling embrace,
 Demesnes staked out in consonants. (Heaney 27)

The normal course of overwriting, however, is somewhat revised in the account: the “vowelling embrace” will (if the prediction in “must” is accepted) reconfigure relations as the “Demesnes staked out in consonants” are redefined by that embrace. The fact that language is a combination of *both* vowels and consonants is not questioned, thus the language dilemma is addressed from a different angle, and Heaney finds an unusual, but promising, potential in the interaction of the two languages, understanding it as intertwining rather than conflict.

Paul Durcan’s “The Persian Gulf” arrests a more tragic aspect of the language situation in modern Ireland. The poem draws a haunting picture of a nightmarish vision of fire eating up the building in which the speaker is situated. The train of associations is launched by the sight of the skylight, the only “escape route in the event of fire” (Durcan 110). The speaker is engaged in the exotic act of reciting the “Rosary in Irish” (ibid) – exotic as the language is no less strange to him than foreign languages are. The mind of the speaker wanders off easily – he dreams of the Persian Gulf and tries “To imagine what the skylight would look like / On fire”

(*ibid*), without apparent success at first. Yet the enterprise yields satisfaction as the vision of their “three-storey house going up in flames” (*ibid*) carries the thread of the narration away. They clamber up to the roof, the fire brigade invades the neighbouring streets and the moment of being rescued nears – only to disappear in the wake of the reaction of the father. The fireman receives the Irish sentence “We don’t speak English” and then he disappears, taking the rescue team with him, leaving the refugees “to burn to death speaking Irish.” (Durcan 111) The surrealistic picture of the ruins of the house “floating upstream” (*ibid*) in the Persian Gulf concludes the poem and this image leaves the poem suspended in an exotic world.

The exotic practice of reciting the Rosary in Irish turns out to be a fatal luxury from the speaker’s perspective – the insistence of the father on a language virtually devoid of practical applicability is responsible for the family’s perishing. Though Durcan presents an experience in the form of a dream, the suggestions are easily decoded: a proud and defiant insistence on an outdated and impractical habit out of equally outdated and impractical hatred is not only absurd but outright destructive too.

In contrast to the general hostilities there is a rather peaceful reconciliation of two diverging traditions in Ciaran Carson’s “Second Language.” The poem does not make explicit any conflict between the two languages, though perhaps the greater force of English is demonstrated by its connection with writing, which in turn can also be seen as the second language referred to in the title. “Second Language” is an account of coming into the possession of a language, or rather, of acquiring another ‘native’ language after one is already in the possession of the speaker. The title imports autobiographical material into the poem by alluding to the fact that Carson himself was a native speaker of Irish before he acquired his English in the street, picking it up rather than learning it.

The poem opens with a surrealistic non-language system: the preverbal state is composed and constructed with the help of images and impressions of colours and shapes, and this state nearly blends into another, equally strange situation, that of an Irish-speaking child. In a weird way the possession of the Irish language seems to be linked with immersion in Latin, yet this does not work on the literal level; the exoticism of a no-longer spoken language opens figurative parallels with the Irish dimension. Urban, mainly industrial noises hang like a curtain in the background of this strange process, and once the speaker’s recollected self acquires a language, the experience becomes more encompassing, with objects now seen as “a hieroglyphic alphabet” (Carson 12). The ‘revolutionary’ change comes with a dawn: “I woke up, verbed and tensed with speaking English” (*ibid*). This moment opens yet other perspectives, “the as-yet morning, when no one’s abroad” (*ibid*), which is a particular time of day with the potential of vision as well as an unchartered territory for individual exploration. English also brings writing, and what this may bring is as yet unknown and unpredictable: “What comes next is next, as no one knows the *che sera* of it” (Carson 13). The future-might-bring-anything idea is cunningly checked by a shift back into past tense,

rendering the experience a dream in the last moment; however, it is at the same time the reinforcement of the narrative thread governing the poem: “I woke up blubbering and dumb with too much sleep. I rubbed my eyes and ears. / I closed my eyes again and flittingly, forgetfully, I glimpsed the noise of years.” (ibid)

Carson’s solution of bringing together the two languages into such a relationship is indicative of the historical perspective too as it proves the possibility of the coexistence of the two languages without loading this fact with stereotypical emotional content. Irish is still present yet the language of much of contemporary Irish culture is English, which is a fact to face: the English language has become as good as indigenous in Ireland at the expense of the native Irish which has not disappeared yet the attempts to revive it as the first language in the Republic after independence all seem to conclude in a palpable failure. This is the situation to be assessed by poets – their approach to the question of the language is thus marked by an acknowledgement of the decline of Irish, yet several recognise the survival of some form of it in the English spoken in Ireland. This recognition turns the language of contemporary Irish poetry into a potent medium, and as Heaney weaves his vision of the “vowelling embrace” around the “Demesnes staked out in consonants” (Heaney 27), the complementary sounds combine to create a genuinely Irish idiom which is simultaneously a variety of English, at once familiar and exotic.

Works Cited

- Carson, Ciaran. *First Language*. Loughcrew: Gallery, 1993.
- Corcoran, Neil. *A Student’s Guide to Seamus Heaney*. London: Faber, 1986.
- Durcan, Paul. *Daddy Daddy*. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1990.
- Hartnett, Michael. *Selected and New Poems*. Winston–Salem: Wake Forest University Press, 1994.
- Heaney, Seamus. *New Selected Poems 1966–1987*. London: Faber, 1990.
- Kiberd, Declan. *Inventing Ireland. The Literature of the Modern Nation*. London: Vintage, 1995.
- Montague, John. *Collected Poems*. Loughcrew: Gallery, 1995.
- Parker, Michael. *Seamus Heaney: The Making of the Poet*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993.
- Paulin, Tom. A New Look at the Language Question (1983). In: *Writing to the Moment. Selected Critical Essays 1980–1996*. London: Faber, 1996.
- Sweeney, Matthew. *Cacti*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1992.
- Vance, Norman. *Irish Literature: A Social History*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999.

**“The Shakespeare of the Irish”
A Bibliography of John Millington Synge’s Works
in Hungarian Translation and of the Books,
Book Chapters, Articles and Reviews about
His Works Written by Hungarian Authors**

Mária Kurdi

The present bibliography is compiled with the aim of honouring the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the opening of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in December 1904, which later gained the status of the National Theatre of Ireland. Its inception and early history is strongly intertwined with the anti-colonial movement in the country, which rapidly intensified during the late 19th century. In terms of the Act of Union (1800), at that time Ireland was still an internal colony of Britain (until 1921), and its national struggle for independence took various forms. Cultural nationalism came into being as part of the many-sided process of decolonization, and became an intellectual force supporting and underpinning the unfolding literary activities the goal of which was to give voice and visibility to the Irish as a colonized people. The writers embarked on reviving, translating and integrating aspects of the distinctive Irish cultural heritage and native traditions into new, often radically experimental forms and modes of literature. Hence the name Irish Literary Revival for the period spanning the decades from the 1880s to the 1920s.

The Revival produced its best fruit in the domain of drama, because theatre productions had a compelling immediacy and could be attended and enjoyed even by illiterate people. Being aware of this kind of potential in the genre, the revivalists decided to establish a theatre. The Irish Literary Theatre was founded by a handful of enthusiasts including Lady Augusta Gregory, W. B. Yeats and Edward Martyn in 1899. This formation promoted the writing and production of plays on Irish themes, thereby consciously opposing the colonial tradition of theatre practices in Ireland which employed simplifying or often degrading stereotypes of Irishness, mainly in melodramas. However, the founders did not yet possess a permanent theatre building or a theatre company, therefore a search for funding was begun. As a result, in 1903 they managed to establish the Irish National Theatre Society and got hold of a building for the Abbey Theatre, then represented by a small company.

Its first directors were W. B. Yeats (1865–1939), Lady August Gregory (1852–1932) and J. M. Synge (1871–1909). On 27th December 1904, on its first night the theatre staged three one-act plays by Yeats and Gregory. Following this well orchestrated and successful beginning, the theatre mounted plays in English as well as in Irish which drew on Irish folklore, heroic legends, scenes of Irish country life and native traditions as their subject matter. Each of the trio of directors wrote plays, laying stress on keeping art free from direct politicizing as much as it was possible at that time; instead they favoured and fostered an experimentalist aesthetic in style and dramaturgy. In a few years the Abbey embarked on touring its best productions to the United States, attracting the attention of, for instance, the young Eugene O’Neill there in 1911.

Time has shown that of the three Abbey director-playwrights Synge emerged as the most lasting talent, in spite of his unfortunately short life. However, his plays, except for *Riders to the Sea* (1904) and *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (completed by Gregory and produced posthumously in 1910), did not garner success when first performed in Ireland. True, Synge’s works far from provided an idyllic picture of Ireland and the life of Irish country people. Instead, Synge explored the conflicts and constraints that fragmented the society and curtailed desires and ambitions to achieve individual freedom, particularly in the case of women and marginalized segments of the population. While *The Well of the Saints* (1905) inspired merely some hostile feeling and resentful criticism largely on account of staging dirty beggars as the protagonists, *The Shadow of the Glen* (1903) met with immense disapproval on the part of the nationalist audience (including Maud Gonne, Yeats’s beloved, leader of a patriotic women’s group). They resented the play because its young female protagonist, Nora, leaves her old husband’s house with a tramp. Many thought that this implied a defilement of the morals of Irish womanhood, and that the play gave a perverted and false portrayal of the Irish marriage in general.

Undoubtedly, the biggest scandal during the early years of the Abbey was generated by the premiere of Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907). It is a satirical comedy, exposing the petty-mindedness and hypocrisy of most of the characters in a Mayo village, contrasted by the struggle for autonomy and self-discovery represented by the protagonist, Christy Mahon (played by William Fay in 1907). The first minutes of the performance already called attention to something unconventional and strange on offer for the people who eagerly occupied the seats of the Abbey that night. Their confusion increased and led to visible outrage when Christy uttered the word “shift,” meaning a piece of ladies’ underwear in the drama text. Most members of the audience were not willing to accept an apparently unflattering portrayal of their countrymen as innovative art; they were incapable of valuing the play’s mixture of realism with the fantastic and its achievement of a creatively hybrid style by its poetically shaped Hiberno-English language. In spite of the verbal and even physical violence taking place during the first performances, the play was not withdrawn from the theatre. Performances,

however, could go ahead only under police inspection because the so called “Playboy riots” were really quite unusual. Hardly surprisingly, the reception was ambiguous in the United States too, given the influence of the nationalist spirit there among the Irish-Americans. Learning from the initial scandals of *The Playboy*, Synge thought that his last completed play, *The Tinker’s Wedding* (1908) had better not premiere in Ireland because of its anti-clerical elements. The play was first performed in London in 1909, not long after the untimely death of the author.

It took some years before Synge’s dramatic genius was fully recognized in his homeland. Clear-sightedly, G. B. Shaw gave him the label “the Shakespeare of the Irish.” After his death Synge’s international fame grew rapidly, and his plays, especially *The Playboy* but certainly not just that masterpiece, have been on an unending journey in the theatres of Ireland and the world ever since. For the last two-three decades an enormous bulk of criticism has been produced on his work, discussing it in the context of postcolonial, gender and comparative studies, as well as among the most distinguished representatives of Irish modernism. The following bibliography intends to demonstrate that Synge is conspicuously present in Hungarian culture through the translations and theatre productions of his works, poems and plays, as well as through reviews and critical reflections.

Anon. “Hamisítatlan ír történet a színpadon” (A True Irish Story on the Stage). Szatmár. Ro 20 March 2013 http://www.szatmar.ro/Hamisitatlan_ir_tortenet_a_szinpadon/hirek/57070 Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* adapted by Harag György Company of the Szatmárnémeti Northern Theatre, 2013.

Ágoston, Vilmos. “Tisztánlátók, csodavárók” (Seeing Clearly and Waiting for Miracle). *Élet és Irodalom* 19 (Nov. 1986): 11. Review of J. M. Synge, *Drámák (Plays)*. Budapest: Európa, 1986.

Báthory, Éva. “Álmok, ébredések, megváltás” (Dreams, Awakenings, Redemption). *Theater Online* 23 March 2013. http://www.theater.hu/?mode=szinhaz&sub=I&cikk_id=8645 Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* adapted by Harag György Company of the Szatmárnémeti Northern Theatre, 2013.

———. “A nyugat bajnoka – másként” (The Hero of the West – in Another Way). *Szatmári Friss Újság*. 21 March 2013. <http://www.frissujsg.ro/a-nyugat-bajnoka-maskent/> Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* adapted by Harag György Company of the Szatmárnémeti Northern Theatre, 2013.

Bertha, Csilla. “Az ír dráma száz éve” (One Hundred Years of Irish Drama). *Korunk* III.11 (2007): 79–86.

- . “J. M. Synge.” *Világirodalmi Lexikon 14.* (Encyclopaedia of World Literature). Ed. István Szerdahelyi, Ildikó Juhász. Budapest: Akadémiai, 1992. 68–69.
- Bérczes, László. “A rendező jegyzeteiből” (From the Director’s Notes). *Hajónapló* 9.7 (2004): 4–5. Notes of the director of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Bárka Theatre, Budapest, 2004.
- . Ádám Nádasdy. “Mi legyen a cím... E-mailváltás (részletek)” (What Should the Title Be... details from E-mail messages discussing a new Hungarian title for *The Playboy of the Western World*). *Hajónapló* 9.7 (2004): 7–8.
- Egyed, Betti. “A kolompár lakodalma – Ferrum premieren jártunk.” *Vaskarika: a kultúracél.* (*The Tinker’s Wedding – Having Attended a Première by Ferrum*). 2009. 09. 17. http://vaskarika.hu/hirek/reszletek/1293/a_kolompar_lakodalma-ferrum-premieren_jartunk/ Review of *The Tinker’s Wedding* produced by Ferrum Theatre Company, Szombathely, 2009.
- Éltető, József. “A vén bakancsos és fia, a bajnok” (The Old Man in Boots and His Son the Playboy). *Új Néplap* 21 Dec. 1993. n. p. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Szigligeti Ede Theatre of Szolnok in 1993.
- Gyárfás, Miklós. “Egy nemes kísérlet: Synge-bemutató a Katona József Színházban” (A Noble Experiment: Synge Première in the Katona József Theatre). *Népszabadság* 19 Jan. 1962. 9. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* premiéred at Katona József Színház, Budapest, 1961.
- Heltai, Nándor. “A nyugati világ bajnoka” (*The Playboy of the Western World*). *Petőfi népe* 1 March 1978. n. p. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Katona József Theatre, Kecskemét, 1978.
- Hermann, István. “A nyugati világ bajnoka: a Katona József Színház bemutatója” (*The Playboy of the Western World*: Premiére at József Katona Theatre). *Élet és irodalom* 6 (Jan. 1962): 8. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* premiéred at Katona József Színház, Budapest, 1961.
- Illés, Jenő. “Synge színműve a Katona József Színházban: *A nyugati világ bajnoka* (Synge’s Play in Katona József Theatre: *The Playboy of the Western World*). *Film, színház, muzsika* 29 Dec. 1961. 14–15. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* premiéred at Katona József Színház, Budapest, 1961.
- Józsa, Mihály. “A vak nem világtalan” (Blind but Not Sightless). *Békés Megyei Hírlap* 28 June 1999. n. p. Review of *The Well of the Saints* produced by Jókai Mór Theatre Békéscsaba in 1999.
- Katona, M. István. “A szentek kútja” (*The Well of the Saints*). *Magyar Honvéd* 4 Aug. 1995. 38–39. Review of *The Well of the Saints* produced by Castle Theatre, Esztergom, 1995.

- Kékesi Kún, Árpád. “A nyugat hőse” (*The Playboy of the Western World*). *Színházi kalauz* (Theatre Guideline). Szekszárd: Saxum Kiadó, 2008. 448–450.
- . “Synge, John Millington.” *Színházi kalauz* (Theatre Guideline). Szekszárd: Saxum Kiadó, 2008. 764.
- Kocztur, Gizella. “John Millington Synge születésének századik évfordulójára” (On the Centenary of John Millington Synge’s Birth). *Nagyvilág* 16.6 (1971): 915–16.
- Kurdi, Mária. “Egy társadalmi performansz szubverzív újrajátszása az ír színpadon J. M. Synge és Marina Carr műveiben” (Subversive Restagings of a Social Performance in Respective Works of J. M. Synge and Marina Carr). *A performansz határain* (On the Borders of Performance). Ed. Barbara De Blasio. Budapest: Kijárat, 2014. 197–210.
- . „Gondolatok John Millington Synge kritikai és színházi fogadtatásának újabb irányairól.” (Thoughts about Recent Trends in the Critical and Theatre Reception of J. M. Synge). *Nagyvilág* 57.9 (2012): 883–90.
- . “A Hungarian Tribute to a Self-renewing Playboy: On the Centenary of the First Production of *The Playboy of the Western World* by John Millington Synge.” *EPONA: E-journal of Ancient and Modern Celtic Studies* 1.1 (2007): 1–2.
- . “Intertextuality in Drama: Strategic Remodelling of Motifs and Character Figurations in Synge and O’Casey by Irish Women Playwrights.” *Eger Journal of English Studies* 10 (2010): 3–12.
- . “Transplanting the Work of ‘that rooted man’: The Reception of John Millington Synge’s Drama in Hungary.” *Comparative Drama* 41.2 (2007): 219–41.
- Lengyel, Balázs. “Az írek Shakespeare-je” (The Shakespeare of the Irish). *Nagyvilág* 5.12 (1960): 1891–92.
- Mesterházi, Márton. “John Millington Synge.” *Ír ember színpadon* (Irishman on the Stage). Budapest: Liget könyvek, 2006. 65–87.
- . “John Millington Synge 1871–1909.” *Nagyvilág* 57.9 (2012): 867–82.
- . “Utószó” (Afterword). J. M. Synge, *Drámák* (Plays). Budapest: Európa, 1986. 241–62.
- Metz, Katalin. “Csodalény az idegen faluban. Határon túli Magyar színházak találkoznak Kisvárdán.” (A Magic Creature in an Unknown Village. Hungarian Theatres from outside the Borders Meet in Kisvárdá) *Magyar Nemzet* 30 June 2007. http://www.szinhaziadattar.hu:8181/_pdf/016399.pdf Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* adapted by Harag György Company of the Szatmárnémeti Northern Theatre, 2013.

- Nagy, Imre. “Ír fanyar, magyar humor” (Irish Wryness, Hungarian Humour). *Dunántúli Napló* Nov. 18, 2004: 7. Review of *The Well of the Saints* produced by National Theatre, Pécs, 2004.
- Nádasdy, Ádám. “A szabadság fenséges és rettenetes” (Freedom Is Majestic and Frightening). Beszélgetés Nádasdy Ádámval (A Talk with Ádám Nádasdy about the translation of *The Playboy of the Western World*). *Hajónapló* 9.7 (2004): 10–12.
- Nyulasi, Zsolt. “Keresztúton, keresztűzben” (At the Cross-roads, in Cross-fire). *Dunaújvárosi Hírlap* 24 Jan. 1996. n. p. Review of *The Well of the Saints* produced by Petőfi Theatre, Sopron, 1996.
- Orbók, Attila. “John Millington Synge.” *Nagyvilág* 4.3 (1959): 577–82.
- Ölbei, Livia. “John Millington Synge: A nyugat Hőse. Bárka Színház” (John Millington Synge: *The Playboy of the Western World*. Bárka Theatre). *Ellenfény* 7 (2005): 46–47. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Bárka Theatre, Budapest, 2004.
- Papp, Timea. “Földszagú bohócballad: A nyugati világ bajnoka” (Clowns’ Ballad Smelling of Earth: *The Playboy of the Western World*). Revizor a kritikai portal. 22 February 2008. <http://www.revizoronline.com/hu/cikk/140/a-nyugati-vilag-bajnoka-sepsiszentgyorgyi-tamasi-aron-szinhaz/> Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Tamási Áron Theatre, Sepsiszentgyörgy, 2007.
- Pió, Márta. “Ki ment meg a szentektől?” (“Who Is Saving Us from the Saints?”). *Kisalföld* 3 Febr. 1987. n. p. Review of the premiére of *The Well of the Saints* at Kisfaludy Theatre, Győr, 1987.
- Róna, Katalin. “Színházi kísértetek: drámák a század első feléből” (Theatre Ghosts: Plays from the First Half of the Century”). *Magyar Nemzet* 16. Oct. 1999. 18. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Castle Theatre, Budapest, 1999.
- Sándor, L. István. “Színjátékforma – Színházi Forma” (Dramatic Form – Theatre Form). *Holnap* 5.1 (1994): 41–44. Comparative article about four Hungarian productions of *The Playboy of the Western World*.
- . “A színjáték hitele: Synge, *A nyugati világ bajnoka*.” (The Credibility of Play: Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World*). *Színház* 27.2 (1994): 15–17. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Szigligeti Ede Theatre of Szolnok, 1993.
- Sárosdyné Szabó, Judit. “Az ír moralitás tükröződése és a fordítás nyelvének változása John Millington Synge drámájának két magyar nyelvű műfordításában.” (The Reflection of Irish Morality and Changes in the Language of Translation in Two Hungarian Translations of Synge’s Drama).

Reáliák – a lexikológiától a frazeológiáig. Értelmzések és fordítási kérdések. (Realia – from Lexicology to Phraseology. Interpretations and Questions of Translation). Ed. Vilmos Bárdosi. Budapest: Tinta Kiadó, 2012. 203–08.

- Stuber, Andrea. “John Millington Synge: A nyugat hőse” (John Millington Synge: *The Playboy of the Western World*) c3. 2005. *Criticai Lapok* 15 March 2005. <http://www.c3.hu/~criticai_lapok/1999/12/991223.htm> Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Bárka Theatre, Budapest, 2004.
- . “Légyegtelen esték. John Millington Synge: *A nyugati világ bajnoka.*” (Unimportant Evenings. J. M. Synge: *The Playboy of the Western World*). *Criticai Lapok* 12. 1999. http://www.criticailapok.hu/?option=com_content&view=article&id=34653&catid=1%3A1999&Itemid=13 Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Castle Theatre, Budapest, 1999.
- Synge, John Millington. “Átok.” (The Curse). Trans. Rezső Forgács. *Tört álmok. Ír költők antológiája* (Broken Dreams. Anthology of Irish Poets). Ed. Tamás Kabdebó. Budapest: Kormosz, 1988. 206.
- . “Átok a szerző egyik ellenségének nővérére, akinek nem tetszett a nyugati part kedvence.” (The Curse. To a Sister of an Enemy of the Author’s Who Disapproved of *The Playboy*). Trans. Mesterházi Márton. *Nagyvilág* 57.9 (2012): 814.
- . *Dramák* (Plays). *Szirti lovasok, A Szentek kútja, A völgy árnyéka, A kolompár lakodalma, A nyugati világ bajnoka, Deirdre, a bánat leánya* (*Riders to the Sea, The Well of the Saints, The Shadow of the Glen, The Tinker’s Wedding, The Playboy of the Western World, Deirdre of the Sorrows*). Trans. Árpád Göncz, Tamás Ungvári. Budapest: Európa, 1986.
- . “A glencree-i tölgyekről” (To the Oaks of Glencree). Trans. Márton Mesterházi. *Nagyvilág* 57.9 (2012): 814.
- . “Glencree tölgyfáihoz” (To the Oaks of Glencree). Trans. Mónika Mesterházi. *Nagyvilág* 57.9 (2012): 815.
- . *Halotti tor* (*The Shadow of the Glen*). Trans. Dezső Kosztolányi. *Ma este* 3.48 (1925): 81–89.
- . “A kérdés” (A Question). Trans.: Judit Pór. *Tenger és alkonyég között: angol költők antológiája* (Between the Sea and the Sky: Anthology of English Poets). Ed. György Gaál. Kolozsvár: Dácia Könyvkiadó, 1978. 353.
- . “Két levél” (Two Letters). Trans. Mária Kurdi. *Nagyvilág* 57.9 (2012): 891–92.
- . *A nyugat hőse* (*The Playboy of the Western World*). Trans. Ádám Nádasdy. Supplement to *Hajónapló* 9.7 (2004): 1–20.
- . *A nyugati világ bajnoka* (*The Playboy of the Western World*). Trans. Tamás Ungvári. Budapest: Európa, 1960.

- . *A nyugati világ bajnoka (The Playboy of the Western World)*. Trans. Tamás Ungvári. *XX. Századi angol drámák. (20th Century English Plays)*. Ed. Tamás Ungvári. Budapest: Európa, 1985. 511–76.
- . “Olcsó regény.” (Cheap Novel). Trans. Rezső Forgács. *Tört álmok. Ír költők antológiája. (Broken Dreams. Anthology of Irish Poets)*. Ed. Tamás Kabdebó. Budapest: Kormosz, 1988. 206.
- . “Prelude.” Trans. György Végh. *Világirodalmi antológia Vol. VI–1. (Anthology of World Literature)*. Ed. Tibor Lutter, Albert Gyergyai. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1962. 242.
- . “Prelude.” Trans. György Végh. *Tenger és alkonyég között: angol költők antológiája. (Between the Sea and the Sky: Anthology of English Poets)*. Ed. György Gaál. Kolozsvár: Dácia Könyvkiadó, 1978. 352.
- . “Sírirat” (An Epitaph). Trans. Rezső Forgács. *Tört álmok. Ír költők antológiája (Broken Dreams. Anthology of Irish Poets)*. Ed. Tamás Kabdebó. Budapest: Kormosz, 1988. 205.
- . “Szigeten” (On an Island). Trans. Rezső Forgács. *Tört álmok. Ír költők antológiája (Broken Dreams. Anthology of Irish Poets)*. Ed. Tamás Kabdebó. Budapest: Kormosz, 1988. 205.
- . *A tenger lovasai (Riders to the Sea)*. Trans. Endre Gombos. *Nagyvilág* 4.4 (1959): 577–82.
- . *Tengerparti lovasok (Riders to the Sea)*. Trans. István Bernáth. *Világirodalmi antológia Vol. VI–1. (Anthology of World Literature)*. Ed. Tibor Lutter, Albert Gyergyai. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1962. 243–50.
- . “Tél” (Winter). Trans. György Végh. *Világirodalmi antológia Vol. VI–1. (Anthology of World Literature)*. Ed. Tibor Lutter, Albert Gyergyai. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1962. 243.
- Szántó, Judit. “Christy, Fóris és a Whiskys” (Christy, Fóris and Whiskys). *Színház* 28.9 (2005): 17–18. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Bárka Theatre, Budapest, 2004.
- Szekeresné, Flachner Mária Margit. *Lady Augusta Gregory: Az ír nemzeti színpad megalapítása (Lady Augusta Gregory: The Foundation of the Irish National Stage)*. Budapest: Magyar Királyi Pázmány Péter Tudományegyetem Angol Philológiai Intézet, 1931.
- Székrenyesy, Júlia. “Változatok a vakságra” (Variations on Blindness). *Élet és irodalom* 20 (Febr. 1987): 13. Review of the première of *The Well of the Saints* at Kisfaludy Theatre, Győr, 1987.
- Szenczi, Miklós, Tibor Szobotka, Anna Katona. *Az angol irodalom története (History of English Literature)*. Budapest: Gondolat, 1972.

- Szerb, Antal. “Kelták” (Celts). *A világirodalom története* (History of World Literature). Budapest: Magvető, 1941. 723–24.
- Széky, János. “Kelet keltái. Synge: *A nyugati világ bajnoka*” (The Celts of the East. Synge: *The Playboy of the Western World*). *Színház* 15.4 (1992): 15–16. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Petőfi Theatre in Veszprém, 1991.
- Szombathelyi, Ervin. “*A nyugati világ bajnoka*: John Millington Synge színműve a Katona József Színházban” (*The Playboy of the Western World*: John Millington Synge’s Play in Katona József Theatre). *Népszava* 30 Dec. 1961. 4.
- Szverle, Ilona. “A csonthéjba zárt kagyló. Synge: *A nyugati világ bajnoka* – Szatmárnémeti Északi Színház, Harag György Társulat” (Pearl in the Shell: *The Playboy of the Western World* in Szatmárnémeti Northern Theatre, Harag György Company.” *Critikai lapok* 7 (2013) http://www.criticailapok.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=38718%3Aa-csonthejba-zart-kagyló&catid=29%3A2013&Itemid=13
- Tóth, Róza. “Hegedűs a háztetőn” (Fiddler on the Roof). *Vas népe* 29. Oct. 2005. n. p. Review of *The Playboy of the Western World* produced by Bárka Theatre, Budapest, 2004.
- Ungvári, Tamás. “Utószó” (Afterword). J. M. Synge, *A nyugati világ bajnoka* (*The Playboy of the Western World*). Budapest: Európa, 1960. 67–75.
- Várhegyi, Andrea. “*A szentek kútja*” (*The Well of the Saints*). *Magyar Nemzet* 26 June 1999. n. p. Review of *The Well of the Saints* produced by Jókai Theatre Békéscsaba in 1999.
- Vértessy, Péter. “*A nyugati világ bajnoka*: Bemutató a Kecskeméti Katona József Színházban” (Première of *The Playboy of the Western World* in Katona József Theatre of Kecskemét). *Magyar Nemzet* 24 March 1978. n. p.

Contents

TAMÁS TUKACS Of National Bondage: Alasdair Gray's <i>1982 Janine</i>	3
JAROSLAV KUŠNIR Border Crossing: American Dreams, Illusions and Fictions in Paul Auster's <i>Man in the Dark</i> (2008).	19
MARÓŠ BUDAY Deconstructing the Twin Realities: Stephen King's use of Metafictional Systems in "Secret Window, Secret Garden," "Umney's Last Case" and <i>The Dark Half</i>	29
BRIGITTA HUDÁCSKÓ #OpSherlock: Privacy, Surveillance, and Anonymous in <i>Elementary</i>	47
PÉTER DOLMÁNYOS "To flood, with vovelling embrace, /Demesnes staked out in consonants." Aspects of Language in Contemporary Irish Poetry	59
MÁRIA KURDI "The Shakespeare of the Irish" A Bibliography of John Millington Synge's Works in Hungarian Translation and of the Books, Book Chapters, Articles and Reviews about His Works Written by Hungarian Authors	67