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Memory, Writing, Politics: the Poetry of Peter Reading

István D. Rácz

The Mnemonic of Poetry

Sean O'Brien closes an essay with this aphorism: "This extremely literary poet tries to show us a world before literature gets at it" (146). Although it refers to Peter Didsbury, it could just as well be said about Peter Reading. On the one hand, Reading is a learned poet, whose life work has already shown an unparalleled variety of traditional and experimental forms of poetry; on the other hand, he is an outsider keeping a distance from literary life and trends. O'Brien has characterized him as a post-romantic poet, and pointed out that the basic principle in his verse is fancy rather than imagination. Both categories were introduced by Coleridge (and then adopted by a number of romantic essayists); the former means aggregation, the latter transformation (124).

Although O'Brien's statement is an inevitable simplification of Reading's texts, it still calls our attention to something significant: Reading is a poet of accumulated experience. Selection seems to be more important to him than transformation in the romantic sense. Coleridge wrote about choice, fancy, and association in Chapter XIII of *Biographia Literaria*:

> The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with, and modified by that empirical phænomenon of the will which we express by the word *choice*. But equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association. (167, emphasis in the original)

This is only partly true for Reading's poetry: although nearly all of his poems can be interpreted as the representation of memory, association is not a guiding principle. Just the opposite can be discerned in his texts: Reading uses association itself as a subject matter, and he explores its mechanism. Therefore, I need to revise my previous remark: Reading is not simply a poet of *memory*, it is more precise to say that he is a poet of *the act of remembering*. The target of memory can be practically anything (a text, a social event, a verse form, etc.), but the poet is always interested in what it

will become in the present act of recollection. Consequently, his lyric poetry is the opposite of elegiac poems: what is *done* in romantic verse, or even in Philip Larkin's poetry, is *perceived* in Reading. He is also an outsider in this sense.

Nevertheless, in another sense, he is romantic in principle since he sees his life work as an organic whole. He has commented that his poems are related to each other as the chapters in a novel (*The Poetry Quartets 3*). Of course, a poet reflecting on himself can be even more simplistic than a critic is. Therefore, we should be cautious with accepting this view. It does not mean, in the first place, that most of his poems cannot be understood and enjoyed in isolation. But undoubtedly, the cohesion in Reading's poetry is remarkable: some of his volumes contain only one long text, he has written twin texts, self-reflexivity is a spectacular feature of his poems, and many of them can be interpreted as the re-reading of an earlier text.

His volume of collected poems (that is, in Reading's own view, his "novel") starts with nature poems. One of these, "Raspberrying", uses a traditional pattern: the description of a landscape is followed by the contemplation of the implied poet, and the poem is closed with a generalizing conclusion. But the opening lines seem to be disturbing, since the speaker notices ugliness, rather than beauty, in nature:

> Last sun ripens each one, through rubicund, black
> then each rots. Lines are tight with late swallows,
> oak rattles leaves icicle-brittle...

The speaker sees a landscape, but he remembers the conventions of landscape poetry. The essence of remembering is the comparison between a sight in the presence and a form in the past:

> A bit neo-pastoral, one will admit,
> but then something conspiring to make decay more
> than the usual end of a season makes Nature
> itself as anachronistic today
> as a poem about it.

The opening line of stanza 2 reflects on the first one by admitting that writing nature poetry without the traditions of pastoral poetry is impossible. In this convention the essence of an autumn poem is that decay in nature is transformed into a symbol (or, at least, a synecdoche). It is exactly this *form* which makes nature as 'anachronistic' as a landscape poem. This very text may be added to Reading's own ideas. Something can be called anachronistic only on the basis of remembering its former modes of existence in the past and comparing it with the present. Exploring the act of remembering proceeds line by line: it starts with acknowledging convention, continues

with the protest against it, and closes with the act of writing a controversial text. In the form of classicist-romantic contemplation, the voice of the poet says that such contemplation is out of date. The question what nature means to us today is still hanging in the air, and it is answered in the last stanza:

> Yet one feels almost justified still to acknowledge
> the deeper reflection of, albeit hackneyed,
> the Human Condition in Nature (reduced
> as she is from the nympho once over-extolled
> for ad-nauseam cyclic fecundity, to
> today's stripped-bare and thorny old sod half-heartedly
> whorily pouting a couple of blackening nipples).
> (*Collected Poems* 37)

We can still use nature as a signifier of human existence, but then we need to find the ugly and the base in it. This is why the blackened raspberries are transformed into the distorted nipples of Mother Earth. The poem seems to ask: what can a poet do with a nature that has been destroyed? The answer is complicated, not only because the poem has even been written, but also since the implied poet regards it only as "almost justified". He does not say that writing nature poetry is impossible today; he only suggests that instead of mechanically applying conventional patterns, we should consider the essence behind existence, namely the significance and consequences of destroying nature.

Remembering is the topic of another early poem, "Mnemonic". The opening sentence ("I will think of you in three ways") could be read as a sentimental confession in isolation, but the title gives it a completely different meaning: the function of the poem is not expression, it is setting up a model for a technique of mnemonic. It is a text about practising remembering and the use of the verb *think* suggests that the basis of all thinking is memory. This reading is reinforced by the three groups of images which the speaker enumerates as the attributes of the person remembered, and which are even numbered to evoke the atmosphere of conscious exercise. The three basic images are those of the working, the painting, and the socializing person (perhaps a lover or a friend). The easiest meaning the reader constructs is this: one can only remember another person if one is able to recollect him/her as s/he is working, doing a creative job, and relaxing. But there are at least two further layers shining through this surface.

One is the representation of accidentalism. The speaker's selection of past events is emphatically accidental and concessive. (The word *or* is used seven times.) Consequently, remembering is inevitably selective and manipulative: through our selections we manipulate ourselves. When we

think that something comes into our minds accidentally, our unconscious has already done this, successfully.

The other layer is that of intersubjectivity as the speaker in the poem is getting closer and closer to the subject that he represents. He introduces the first part with the words *at work*, and the recollected objects (an in-tray, the lost top of a pen) are mentioned as the attributes of the represented person. This tacitly anticipates the opening of the second part: "and more the real you, painting". The implication is that the person formerly known 'at work' has a 'more real' self. But the speaker cannot enter this subjectivity, since in the third part the point of view changes: the speaking and remembering subject becomes the object of the other's perception and cognition. This change is similar to what happens in Douglas Dunn's poem "Young Women in Rollers", where the implied poet transforms himself into an object by creating the viewpoint of working-class women. But while Dunn is within the situation and is interested in class differences, Reading observes the dangers of his own mnemonic from the outside. The focus of his attention is the act of remembering.

Another aspect of the same topic can be discerned in "Ballad", which can be read as a poem about the collective memory of literature as well as about the oppressive power of recollection. It narrates a story in the modern world, but is written in traditional ballad stanzas. This form has always been popular in British poetry; therefore, Reading's poem creates a link with a living tradition. The poet remembers a form that is still present. The reader (depending on her/his former experience) can associate it with modern ballads such as W. H. Auden's "Miss Gee", Blake Morrison's "The Ballad of the Yorkshire Ripper", or James Fenton's "Children in Exile". But these texts are also different from one another: Auden's poem is a psychological case study, Morrison's is an experiment in combining literary conventions with a contemporary dialect, and Fenton's is a text of social exploration (to mention only the most spectacular meanings of these poems). Reading's poem tells a trivial, even banal, story in conventional meter; consequently, it can be read as a parody.

The two lovers in the poem, John and Joan, spend some happy years together as university students, then get tired of each other, split up, and both marry someone else. Ten years later they meet by accident, and they tell each other about their broken marriages. No catharsis follows this event; the poem ends with John's bitter laughter. Real life only lives in their memory; likewise, the poet is only able to tell a contemporary story by using a form lingering in his memory. "Ballad" is a piece of light verse, which laughs at the constraints of the characters and those of the poet at the same time. The objective correlative of these constraints is the applied

literary form itself, since the convention of the ballad stanza is incongruent with the lack of catharsis.

The horizon of expectation on which a new poem appears for an individual reader determines his/her reading. As Reading's "Ballad" testifies, the convention of a literary form may bring it home to us that the value represented by this particular form has become impossible in our culture. This is the value of purification through sin and overcoming sin by remorse or penitence; a value well known from traditional ballads. Thus, the title of the poem reflects both on a poetic tradition and contemporary culture, and depicts its own alienation from the past, signified by a literary genre. "Ballad" is not a ballad, since it lacks a firm and unchangeable moral value system.

The Dialogic Memory

Significantly, the subject matter of conventional ballads appears in different forms, as can well be seen in the three brief texts of "Duologues". The first of these is about a girl who grows mad after losing her sweetheart:

> '. . .See,
> er bloke (im as ad that motor bike crack
> comin ome off the piss that time Gonder's Neck way)
> e got buried in Boultibrook churchyard
> as lies back of the farmuss, so
> as er looks out er bedroom er sees is stone and
> they reckon as ow evertime er thinks on it.'
> (*Collected Poems* 99)

The phonetic spelling of dialect forms, on the one hand, recalls the world of medieval ballads; on the other hand, they also alienate this language from the reader, merely by the act of using it in writing. Spelling distances the dialect both from the standard forms of the language and the fictitious speakers. The *speakers* of a dialect are not necessarily the *writers* of the dialect since written forms are always closer to standard language than the spoken word. In the text quoted above we *hear* the voice of a peasant, but *see* the words of a conscientious and accurate chronicler. Thus a traditional feature of the ballad form is reconstructed: the tension between impersonal narration and the dialogue makes the simultaneous insight and judgment of the reader possible.

The narration of the above-quoted poem is determined by two subjects—those of the speaker and the writer. These two are contrasted (also visually) in "Parallel Texts":

(A bucolic employee of
South Shropshire Farmers Ltd.)

You remember that old boy Marsh?
—im as lived at Stokesay?
—forever picking is nose?
Well, this morning ees takin
some cattle over the line
(course they got underpass, like,
but also the level crossin
as mostly they uses),
an 7.15 from Stretton
runs over the fucker
—course kills im, like, never
you seen such a mess, cows an all.
Still, it dunna matter a lot
—ee were daft as a coot.
(*Collected Poems* 155)

(*The Craven Arms, Stretton & Tenbury Advertiser*)

A Stokesay farmer was killed
when he was struck by a train
on a stretch of track near
Craven arms. He was Mr John
Jeremiah Marsh, a 60-year-old
bachelor of Stokesay Castle
Farm, and the accident occurred
just yards from his home, at
Stokeswood—an unmanned level
crossing. Mr Marsh is thought
to have opening the gate.
The train which struck him
was pulling 39 goods wagons
on its way to Carlisle.

Typography imitates a distorted mirror image and both sides tell the story of the same accident. One text is in a phonetically spelt dialect; the other is a news item. This poem can also be read as a variation on and the aftermath of the ballad form, particularly if one reads it in the context of the whole oeuvre. It is the provocative callousness of the two texts that evokes sympathy with the man who died; this sympathy is a contemporary version of the classic catharsis. But most readers would probably see this poem as self-reflection first of all, since the vision of the accident raises several questions. Which story is the original one, and which is the mirror image? Is it the language of journalism that gives form to the raw material of dialect diction, or is it the other way round? Does the diction of the rural person fill the factual news item with life? These questions, of course, only serve to bring it home to us that they are not correct as no text can be identical with the event itself. Consequently, both texts in the poem are distorted images of each other.

The juxtaposition of different texts in some poems by Reading seems to be so accidental that it resembles the Neo-Dada. Importantly, this is only the first impression of such texts, since Reading is an extremely conscious poet. Contingency is not the guiding principle of his poems; it is their subject matter. "Ex Lab" is the monologue of an archeologist working in a laboratory, based on free associations, still fully conscious. The reader can detect when he works, when he takes a coffee break, and when his attention is distracted. This is the reason why different forms of communication and reflection are juxtaposed:

CIRCUS STRONG-WOMAN
CONVICTED OF MANSLAUGHTER.
STUDENT 'GOES MISSING'
IN AFRICAN MYSTERY.
SKINHEAD SETS FIRE TO CAGE-BIRD

In what's now Dorset
one hundred and eighty-five
million years ago,
Megalosaurus et al
flenched, flensed these bastards to mince.

(*Collected Poems* 231)

The scientist, who read his newspaper in the break, returns to his job with his mind still full with the indignation caused by what he has read. As a symbolic wish fulfillment, he plays with the fantasy of villains eaten by the dinosaurs he investigates as a part of his job. Remembering, however, is a complex process, and it creates a basis for more than just emotional fantasising. Archeology itself is also a rationalized form of remembering and a construction of the past, but it cannot be independent from the 'remembering' constructor: the archeologist.

The scientist becomes identical with the implied poet at the end of the poem, since a misprint reminds him of the Japanese meter called *tanka*, and his association immediately determines the form of the poem:

'SUPER-TANKA SINKS'
(the misprint suggests Baroque,
fugal, cumbersome
development of the Five-
Seven-Five-Seven-Seven...)

The typo that the persona has so fortunately found (*tanka* instead of its homophone, *tanker*) is a part of a five-syllable headline, which for this very reason could be the first line of a real tanka. This coincidence forms the basis of the stanza, which reflects on itself; a stanza whose theme, in the strict sense, is its own form. It is constructed as accidentally and arbitrarily as the past is in the hands of the archeologist. This is suggested in the next two stanzas, also written in tanka form:

What one enjoys most
is the manipulation
of these hapless things
at such impartial distance
to fit an imposed order.

Of course one does not
really care for the *objects*,
just the *subject.* It
is a Vulture Industry,
cashing in on the corpses.
(*Collected Poems* 235)

Like in the previously discussed texts, in this poem, once again, the speaker manipulates both the facts and himself. The meter, which was found by accident, suggests that finding remnants of dinosaurs is just as accidental. The intellectual is transformed into a scavenger (or necromaniac), and remains within boundaries, since his investigations lead to the representation of his own subjectivity rather than the past itself. Therefore, the significance of the Japanese pattern is not the same as it was, famously, for the imagists. Instead of aiming at the clarity of images, Reading creates a link with the form only through the shape, the number of syllables.

The affluence of forms also means the eventuality of forms in Reading. His virtuosity lies in his ability to write practically in any traditional meter and structure from the Petrarchan sonnet through Greek distichs. Their accidental choice is the subject matter of "10 x 10 x 10", whose unorthodox title means a self-imposed rule: the poem consists of ten stanzas containing ten lines of ten syllables. The actual theme is the invention of the form itself. After the protagonist falls down on an empty stage the poem closes with these lines:

When he regained
consciousness, he was considering the
arbitrary nature of the Sonnet—
'One might as well invent any kind of
structure (ten stanzas each of ten lines each
of ten syllables might be a good one),
the subject-matter could be anything.'
(*Collected Poems* 131)

Thus, the text goes back to the title, and the reader can just as well start reading again, since the poem itself is a sequel to the last lines. Of course, one can conclude: our lives today are so far from the values represented by poetry that life and poetry can only be linked with arbitrary forms. This reading would fit in the whole of Reading's life work, still such poems fall in the category of light verse, and they also signify the dangers of this type of lyric poetry. It is remarkable how often Reading says (or at least suggests) the same, and his gestures of self-reflexivity are also repetitive. This has led to mannerism in some poems, which is particularly noticeable as the oeuvre

is so coherent. If one reads Reading as he himself wants us to (that is, as a cohesive whole), a less successful poem also casts its shadow on the other texts.

Nevertheless, the duality of following and making rules is an organizing principle in his poetry, which makes it not only coherent but also intellectually exciting. The implied poet can be identified as somebody entering the realm of literature from the outside, but also as a very open person full of fresh ideas. This is why he tries his hand at the most difficult rhythmic patterns, and also why he sets up strict formal rules for himself. He explores convention both as something that can be followed and as something inevitably accidental. Apart from the texts mentioned above, further examples of self-made rules are the volumes $5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5$ (1983) and *C* (1984). The title of the latter is ambiguous: it is both the Roman numeral for 100 (the volume consists of a hundred texts, each of a hundred words) and the abbreviation of cancer. As Neil Corcoran has written, these volumes are narratives woven around "a single central preoccupation" (254). This is also true for those later volumes in which reflection and contrast as organising principles are even more important than in the earlier ones: *Ukulele Music* (1985) and *Perduta Gente* (1989).

Forgetting and Seeing through Texts

Ukulele Music consists of fictitious letters and texts written in classic Greek meter. The former are supposed to have been written by a cleaning woman called Viv; these are messages spelt and composed awkwardly, left on the piano for the employer. Viv appears as a tragicomic figure, since her communication goes one way: there are no answers to her messages, at least at the level of narration. On the extradiegetic level, however, we can read the texts written in Greek meter as replies to Viv's letters. If we make the hypothesis that the employer is the implied poet himself (and this is the most obvious explanation for his omniscience and the possession of the letters), then each poem is a reflection on Viv's messages and the newspaper articles that are related to her family. Two-way communication is replaced by endless dissemination and the media itself as a subject matter.

To put it more concretely, Viv's letters are the imitation of a primary experience; consequently, the whole volume is about the relationship between experience and literature. This is the 'preoccupation' that Corcoran has written about. The next few stanzas are a good demonstration of the complexity of this relationship:

> What is to one class of minds and perceptions exaggeration,
> is to another plain truth (Dickens remarks in a brief

preface to *Chuzzlewit*), 'I have not touched one character straight from life, but some counterpart of that character has

asked me, incredulous, "Really now *did you* ever see, *really*, anyone *really* like that?" (this is the gist, not precise).

Well I can tell that old cricket that this is JUST how we speak like, me and the Capting and all (only not just in two lines).
(*Ukulele Music* 36, emphases in the original)

The first feature most readers would notice is the meter: Reading's poem is a perfect distich. Not only does this dispel the myth that it is impossible to write English poems in Greek form, but it also demonstrates that one can even *find* lines in regular meter. To be precise, Reading has slightly modified the original text by Dickens, as he himself admits. This is what one finds in the preface to *Martin Chuzzlewit*: "What is exaggeration to one class of mind is plain truth to another. [...] I have never touched a character precisely from the life, but some counterpart of that character has incredulously asked me: 'Now really, did I ever really, see one like it?'" (7) The "quotation" in the poem shows very little difference from Dickens's sentences since Reading has only inserted and changed a few words. The original text is clearly identifiable, still perfect in meter.

The last stanza makes Viv speak. Unlike in Tony Harrison's poetry, in Reading it is not the confessional implied poet who colonises the heritage of classic literature, but a fictitious character, a construct of the poet. Dickens's observation is also related to her: there are no exaggerated literary characters, only points of view showing something as exaggerated. This seems to be a problem of literature, but essentially it is more than that. Both Dickens and Reading suggest that if we are unwilling to accept the constructs of literature, we are blind to reality. Continuing the narrative and the chain of ideas, Reading writes about facts and their textual representation in a later part of the book:

Gillian Weaver aged 22 walking 4-year-old daughter home when a girl and three men—hang on, this isn't just *news*:

Gillian Weaver aged 22 walking 4-year-old daughter
home when a girl and three men push her to pavement and steal

£3 from purse—she sits weeping and nursing 4-year-old (let's not wax sentimental re kids; let's stick to facts, here *are* facts).
(*Ukulele Music* 41, emphases in the original)

This passage is about the well-known paradox that for a subject facts exist only through their interpretation. More than that, it is also about those methods that transform facts into texts. At the beginning of the first stanza

we hear the voice of a news editor, who considers various ways of reporting about a most appalling crime: a gang cutting the face of a young child to get the mother's cash. Facts may become either a headline or a Greek distich. Neither of them changes the tragedy, but the reader can face the facts only through the text.

The variety of texts is visually represented in *Perduta Gente*. This is a book consisting of poems, photocopies of diary entries and photos of torn documents, on 56 unnumbered pages. The title is from Dante's *Inferno*, and the volume shows a 20th century hell, in which unimaginable wealth and poverty, rationality and ignorance add up to chaos. The story shining through the textual fragments can be summed up like this: a homeless person, while fumbling in the rubbish, finds some documents, torn into pieces, which analyse the possible effects of an expected nuclear accident. The police detect the documents, labelled as strictly confidential, in his pockets or bag, and arrest him as a supposed dangerous thief.

This volume, too, can be read as a poem of memory. The establishment of the country does not want to remember the possibility of a nuclear accident and the documents have presumably been thrown away because they are not needed any more. The forgetfullness of the establishment has the same function as the drug abuse of the homeless man. Losing memory, an artificially caused amnesia, is deliberate and collective in both cases. The book represents an inferno in which the only collective act is getting rid of memory, which also means getting rid of thinking.

The question is whether it is possible to forget facts. We are surrounded with texts, even the dustbins are full of them, and all these texts work against amnesia. To represent this, *Perduta Gente* imitates the physical appearance of fragmented texts. The book is like the skeleton of a pseudo-documentary novel: the reader sees the documents that can become the *corpus delicti* for both sides at a future trial.

These two sides, the establishment and the homeless man, are linked with their points of view as both sides see the damaged documents as evidence against the other. In addition, the boundary between the two classes is blurred. A recurrent sentence in the book is: "Don't think it couldn't be you." As Peter Barry remarks: "Reading insists that new post-industrial patterns have meant a radical extension of socially coercive anxiety. The dispossessed 'other' could, after all, easily become none other than ourselves" (88).

Consequently, *Perduta Gente* can be read as a political poem, moreover, as a literary indictment. Its two central symbols, the fragments of texts thrown away and classic meter, are two signs of the same social chaos. This has been caused by the erasure of order from people's memories, and serves

the interest of those who play with other people's lives, whether it is done by experimenting with nuclear energy or by maintaining a high unemployment rate.

Epilogue: Reading's Individual Voice

The above-mentioned reading is only one of many possible interpretations. There are a number of ways of understanding Reading's texts, and—although he is a solitary poet who does not belong to any group—his poems can easily be related to other life works. It is not without reason that Neil Roberts has compared him to Tony Harrison: the duality of being an outsider and writing in extremely polished literary forms is a feature they share. The latter feature, for both poets, means that they reinterpret classic (mainly Greek) literature, and use it as raw material. The difference is that Harrison "colonises" the culture of Greek antiquity re-establishing its mythology, heroes, and stories within his own marginalized position, which leads to the construction of a new centre. Reading, on the other hand, has remained an outsider: it is no accident that what he has applied from Greek poetry is merely the shape of the poem, whereas his characters and narratives are from contemporary marginal life. He writes about containment in distichs and alcaic stanzas, and with this method he eliminates the privileged position of Greek meter. This is one function of juxtaposing literary and non-literary texts (and the emancipation of the latter) in his verse.

The result is that he is a much more impersonal poet than Harrison, who is very explicit about his class struggle; than Douglas Dunn, who has been constructing his identity in confessional lyrics; or than Ken Smith, who writes political-autobiographical poetry. A common denominator is their social interest and responsibility as a central value, but Reading is distinguished by hiding his subjectivity. What I have pointed out in his twin-texts and self-reflections also means that his self is out of the reader's apprehension. In other words, this lack of apprehension is the self. Thus, Reading has deconstructed the illusion of a homogeneous identity. All his life work published so far is organized around this principle, and this is the basis of his diction peculiar only to him. The lack of a romantically conceived self, of course, does not mean a lack of individual style or that of aesthetic pleasure.

The function of found texts and of juxtaposition is also unique in his poetry. He is not a poet of transformation, as Edwin Morgan is, and not one of a holistic principle, which forms the basis of James Fenton's poetics. Reading's formal virtuosity can rightfully be compared to theirs, but his poetry is *only* poetry. His poems are not related to the life work of journalism

(as in Fenton), that of literary translation (as in Morgan), that of the stage and the screen (as in Harrison), or anything else—Reading's poems are *instead of* all these. In this sense, he is also an "extremely literary" poet, moreover, he is an extremely 'poetic poet'.

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Wordsworth and the Mountains: The Crossing of the Alps and the Ascent to Snowdon

Péter Dolmányos

The mere sight of mountains is likely to touch men. The physical beauty is only one aspect of mountains, however: they are associated with perspective as well—larger areas can be seen from the top of mountains. The conquest of a mountain involves upward movement, directing the climber towards the sky, which is at once a majestic and mysterious experience. For various peoples mountains have mythical significance, for others they represent the sublime. No matter which age, mountains have had a profound influence on the imagination.

Mountains seem to possess a special importance for Wordsworth. There are two very significant sections dealing with mountains—both are to be found in *The Prelude*, his poem written as preparation for his great synthesising poem to come, though never to be actually written, *The Recluse*. The two mountain-passages may indicate something of Wordsworth's original intentions concerning the great poem: his most significant passages on the imagination are elaborated following descriptions of experiences connected with mountains—the Simplon Pass episode and the ascent to Snowdon. These are examined during the course of this paper, each in its turn and in their relation to each other, revealing similarities and differences at the same time, and a structural connection which may render the Snowdon episode as the successful complementation of the somewhat controversial experience of the crossing of the Alps.

The Alps

The crossing of the Alps is not intended as a climbing to reach the peak of any mountain; it is not real climbing in the sense that there is no upward and no subsequent downward movement. The very problem of the incident is the unpleasant recognition that Wordsworth misses the Alps—a rather frustrating discovery for the young and ambitious traveller who is full of sublime expectations. From the point of view of the outcome of the venture it may be relevant to point out the fact that the Alpine journey is simply a part of a longer one, it is not primarily a destination in itself. It is a

part of something larger, though it is a very significant part. Before the scene of the actual crossing is narrated, Wordsworth describes an experience which may imply something as far as the crossing is concerned: the words of the divine are heard sounding over the Convent of Chartreuse. This surprising revelation is an indication foreshadowing the disappointment of the subsequent experience of Wordsworth's missing of the Simplon Pass.

The episode in which Wordsworth and his companion cross the Alps is located well after the middle section of Book Sixth of *The Prelude*. Book Sixth bears the title "Cambridge and the Alps'; it is only in the second half of this part that the walking tour in France is described, and the crossing of the Alps is intended as the culmination of this journey. There is great preparation and anticipation: as D. B. Pirie explains it, at that time the scenery of the Alps was generally considered to raise profound emotions from the spectator when he was on the spot and to reward him with an admiring audience when he was retelling his experience afterwards (Pirie 13–14). The reader then naturally brings a set of expectations to this section of the text only to face the actual words with disappointment as Wordsworth deflates all kinds of anticipations by his admittance of their 'failure' to attain the exaltation expected. The 'failure' is only partly a failure: it is true that Wordsworth and his fellow traveller, and consequently the reader as well, miss the dignified feelings as they cross the Alps without noticing it, but out of this situation grows one of the finest passages of the whole text, describing the descending part of the journey across the Simplon Pass.

Before Wordsworth and his companion can catch a glimpse of the Alps, they travel through the whole country. France abounds in scenes of celebration: the revolution is at its height. Wordsworth finds delight in this, however, there is one scene in which the actions of the revolution create ambivalent feelings in him: this is the scene of the small monastery under siege. As they are approaching the Convent of Chartreuse they witness the march of "riotous men commissioned to expel / The blameless inmates" (229, ll. 425–426) from the monastery. A contrast can be observed between the "silence visible and perpetual calm" of the convent and the implied noise and violence of the "riotous men". The continuation of the passage, however, offers a more significant contrast than this: the thundering voice of nature intervenes in favour of the monastery:

> —'Stay, stay your sacrilegious hands!'—The voice
> Was Nature's, uttered from her Alpine throne;
> I heard it then, and seem to hear it now—
> 'Your impious work forbear: perish what may,

> Let this one temple last, be this one spot
> Of earth devoted to eternity!' (229, ll. 430–435)

Under the influence of "conflicting passions" Wordsworth hails the newly born freedom but consents to support the preservation of the monastery as one of the important "courts of mystery". The zeal of the young man is checked by the reverence which Nature calls on to exercise in the convent; the convent in turn comes to be converted into a mystical place where worldly considerations stop short together with time, and the "heaven-imparted truth" becomes something synonymous for Wordsworth with what he reads as

> ...that imaginative impulse sent
> From these majestic floods, yon shining cliffs,
> The untransmuted shapes of many worlds,
> Cerulean ether's pure inhabitants,
> These forests unapproachable by death, [...] (231, ll. 462–466)

—that is, the truth that he reads from Nature.

An important element of the passage dealing with the convent is the idea of the place as a work of man "devoted to eternity". In the passage describing the descent from the Simplon Pass elements of nature are referred to as "[t]he types and symbols of Eternity". The concept of eternity might provide a link between the two passages here, and in such a way the reader may be tempted to feel an elaborate and very carefully planned structure: the voice of Nature personified is thus present even before the desired destination is reached; it is sounded when and where it is the least expected, and this may foreshadow something of the later moments.

Wordsworth and his companion reach their most important destination after this incident: this destination is the "wondrous Vale / Of Chamouny". That is the place from where they can have the first glimpse of Mont Blanc but the sight of the mighty mountain is accompanied by different feelings than would be expected:

> That very day,
> From a bare ridge we also first beheld
> Unveiled the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved
> To have a soulless image on the eye
> That had usurped upon a living thought
> That never more could be. (235, ll. 523–528)

The grief is felt over that "soulless image" which may probably be read as the thwarted anticipation felt when the first sight of Mont Blanc does not lead to the expected sense of the sublime, the wonder and awe generally associated with the pure sight of the mountain. The language here becomes rather

obscure; especially the word "usurp" is enigmatic; however, this seems to be one of the favourite words of Wordsworth in passages of utmost significance. The ambiguity of the passage seems to lie in the problem whether it is the "soulless image" or the eye which "had usurped upon a living thought". The usurpation of the "soulless image" seems more acceptable and in that case the passage may be read as another element of foreshadowing: the anticipated sublime experience is not likely to be fulfilled.

The scene, despite the initial inconvenience of experience, is a kind of 'book' for the young travellers:

> ...we could not choose but read
> Lessons of genuine brotherhood, the plain
> And universal reason of mankind,
> The truths of young and old. (235, ll. 544–547)

There is education offered by the sight and during their meditative hours "dreams and fictions" abound. The beginning of the next passage, however, mixes something disturbing with these dreams, and the awkward syntax of the following sentence adds to the ambiguity of the experience:

> Yet still in me with those soft luxuries
> Mixed something of stern mood, an under-thirst
> Of vigour seldom utterly allayed. (237, ll. 557–559)

That "stern mood" may suggest thoughts and feelings of a different kind, the rapture of dreams may be checked by some more serious concerns which are not clarified by Wordsworth. The implication, however, that there is something different there is enough and the experience that follows justifies this. It is not clear, though, whether Wordsworth felt this ambivalence on the very spot or it is something that belongs to the moments when he is composing these lines.

The description of the actual crossing the Alps is not a supreme one: it is a very simple account of how they were left behind in the "halting-place" and when they set off to join the others how they failed to do so. The anticipated dignity of the scene is nowhere to be found, the experience becomes a source of frustration and disappointment. Wordsworth, however, is not afraid of exposing his 'folly' of having too many and too great expectations.

Wordsworth and his friend take the road of the Simplon Pass. They follow a "band of muleteers" and they come to a place where the whole company settles to have their meal. The muleteers continue their way right after this, whereas the two young men linger on for some time. Their intention is to catch up with the company and they set off to find them: they are presumably further ahead on the same road. Wordsworth and his friend, however, fail to meet them: they come to a juncture and take the more

inviting path that leads upwards. As time passes their increasing worries are justified and the peasant they meet tells them that they have come the wrong way. Instead of the upward path they have to follow the stream and this can be translated in only one way—they have a downward journey to take.

If the passage is read carefully, it turns out that the highest point during their journey is the "halting-place", their way leads downward from there: when they set off to join the others they "paced the beaten downward way that led / Right to a rough stream's edge, there broke off" (237, ll. 568–569). When they learn from the peasant that they have to return to the juncture, they have to descend there. The road to take follows the stream—as streams have downslope courses, they are to have a downward walk for the rest of their journey. The "halting-place" then is the highest part of their journey, the 'climax', however, is missed. Consciousness of this is gained only when they learn that a downward course is ahead, and the disappointment is so overwhelming that Wordsworth does not return to the scene which was the highest location for them in the whole course of their Alpine experience.

The passage that follows the 'crossing' is addressed to the imagination. Wordsworth apologises for the use of this word, pointing at the "sad incompetence of human speech" as the cause for his choice. This "Power" (this word is hardly less overused than the other one) rises unexpectedly, which is compared to the sudden appearance of "an unfathered vapour". Wordsworth is lost in this moment of 'usurpation'—nothing remains for him but the humble admittance of the might of his soul: "I recognise thy glory" (239, l. 599). The word "usurpation" is heavily loaded as it is used here—the imagination 'usurps' on the senses of the poet and he is lost; yet the moment is also an instance of the "inherent paradox of the imagination", as Geoffrey Hartmann explains:

> [...] the imagination, because it depends on a human will "vexing its own creation," hiding itself or its generating source like mist, cannot be true either to itself or to Nature, unless usurped by a third power (here the immortal soul) at the moment when the creative will is at rest, as after an intense expectation or when the possibility of willed recognition has been removed. (Hartmann, 13)

The experience is doubtless accompanied by an intense expectation and it is after the removal of the willed recognition that the sublime vision can occur, with its intimation of infinity, and this is all facilitated by the usurping soul. This constitutes the fundamental greatness of the human being, this gives the essence of human life:

> ...with a flash that has revealed
> The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
> There harbours, whether we be young or old.
> Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
> Is with infinitude, and only there;
> With hope it is, hope that can never die,
> Effort, and expectation, and desire,
> And something evermore about to be. (239, ll. 601–608)

The soul then is infinite, and consequently the true home of man is to be found in "infinitude". When this recognition is made there are no further proofs required of the glory of the soul:

> Under such banners militant, the soul
> Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils
> That may attest her prowess, blest in thoughts
> That are their own perfection and reward,
> Strong in herself and in beatitude
> That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile
> Poured forth from his fount of Abyssinian clouds
> To fertilise the whole Egyptian plain. (239, ll. 609–616)

The image of the Nile is the adequate one to conclude such a passage. As Pirie points out, during the flood the river breaks through those very banks which define it, here the soul sheds its self-consciousness (Pirie 44). This allows it to recognise its true glory and to receive the vision of infinity.

After Wordsworth's humble recognition of the greatness of the soul comes another passage of profound significance. The description of the downward journey could naturally be the falling line of the narration of the crossing of the Alps, with due attention paid to the climax. The climax, however, has been missed and Wordsworth did not pay too much attention to the rising line, the upward movement either. Consequently, the most emphatic part of the whole journey across the Alps is the descent from the Simplon Pass, as far as the description is concerned. This passage abounds in great phrases and it contains a line, the concluding one of the whole passage, which is considered as "the most inclusive line of English poetry" (Pirie 21).

The momentary melancholy and disappointment of the travellers give way to something more pleasant as they take their downward journey. They quickly leave behind the feeling of disappointment as they return to the juncture; their walking pace becomes slow once again in the "gloomy strait": Wordsworth's mind seems to be preparing for some majestic experience. The

expectations are justified this time and the experience which awaits them in the "narrow chasm" is something verging on the visionary:

> The immeasurable height
> Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
> The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
> And in the narrow rent at every turn
> Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
> The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
> The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
> Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
> As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
> And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
> The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
> Were all like workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
> Characters of the great Apocalypse,
> The types and symbols of Eternity,
> Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.
> (239–241, ll. 624–640)

The passage is full of paradoxical juxtapositions which express truth. The first one of these is "woods decaying, never to be decayed"—it expresses the idea of continuity as it is observable in a wood: the individual trees may perish but the wood lives on sustained on the organic material produced during the process of decomposition of dead trees. "The stationary blasts of waterfalls" is another line of this kind, expressing stability and movement at the same time by bringing together the sights and sounds of the scene and expressing the paradoxical essence of the immobile waterfall which is constituted by the movement of the water. The words "bewildered and forlorn" may equally refer to the "[w]inds thwarting winds" and the travellers experiencing the sublime.

"The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky" is only an experience distorted by the senses, an optical illusion (as streams do not come from the sky—though the ultimate source is precipitation, taking its origin in a long process driven by solar radiation) but it provides Wordsworth with an image which connects earth and sky, an image which is the expression of change and permanence at once. The idea of everything being interconnected is elaborated in the next few lines of the passage: rocks are seen as if they were capable of intelligible communication—"Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside / As if a voice were in them" (241, ll. 631–632); the imperfect

near of the stream and the prefect far of the clouds and Heaven, the opposites of "[t]umult and peace" and "the darkness and the light" are listed to feature as the constituents of an infinite unity: they "were all like workings of one mind, the features / Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree" (241, ll. 636–637). Wordsworth does not stop here, however: he goes on to specify what he sees as the "workings of one mind"—the elements constituting the vision are "Characters of the great Apocalypse", reinforcing the sublime quality of the experience; translated into the language of poetics, they are "[t]he types and symbols of Eternity" (241, l. 639).

The concluding line of this section has a profound rhetoric effect. It echoes Milton's lines: "On earth join all ye creatures extol / Him first, him last, him midst, and without end" (Milton *Paradise Lost*, V. 164–5). In Wordsworth's line "Of first, and last, and midst, and without end" the Miltonian scope is replaced by a different one: Milton's God is exchanged here for "Eternity." Wordsworth's lines are, however, far from being unambiguous: the word "Apocalypse" is generally taken to refer to the vision of the end of the world, and as such it is in sharp contrast with the word "Eternity". The last line contains references to time but the world of Eternity is a world of stasis, where there is no first, no last and so on. The ambiguity also owes something to the syntax of these lines—the referent of the last line is not made clear.

The greatness of the passage seems to lie in its unity as a piece of text, and this unity may be analogous to the one Wordsworth observes in the scene, and consequently in the whole universe. The memorable phrases summing up the paradoxical quality of truth and the attempts he makes to join everything in a cosmic union, and the conclusion of the passage seen as an organic part of the context reads well, even if it seems to escape attempts at word-for-word translation in isolation into common language.

Snowdon

The description of the ascent to Snowdon bears a strategic importance from the point of view of the structure of *The Prelude*: the design of Wordsworth was to keep this episode for the end of the work both in the shorter five-book version and in the extended thirteen- and later fourteen-book version. The original aim of Wordsworth in the episode was to see the sunrise from the top of Snowdon; this, however, is mentioned only once, and it never comes to be fulfilled in the poem. Instead, a different kind of experience awaits the poet, a sudden visionary moment, which may be read as a probable parallel to the 'movement' of the mind. The episode concludes with a long passage on the sight offered to the poet in this visionary moment and even longer passage on the imagination.

The passage describing the ascent of Snowdon begins with a very short reference to the intention of the poet to see the sunrise from the top of the mountain. This expedition is not part of a longer journey: unlike the crossing of the Alps, it is not preceded by any other experience. The introduction part is very short as Wordsworth shortly states his aim and provides some necessary details and the description of the actual climbing begins. Wordsworth narrates the event in his usual manner and the accuracy of physical details provides the reader with the sense of reference. There is a strong emphasis on the darkness against which the experience takes place:

> It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,
> Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog
> Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky; ... (511, ll. 11–13)

It is night but the darkness is further enhanced by the fog. They soon become embraced and concealed in the mist; yet it is not only the mist that girts them round but their own minds as well: "pensively we sank / Each into commerce with his private thoughts" (511, ll. 517–518). There is only one incident that diverts attention from their own thoughts: the dog finds a hedgehog and attempts to tease it. Apart from this there are no digressions; the travellers continue their way and Wordsworth goes on with his narrative.

The march upwards is almost a militant one:

> With forehead bent
> Earthward, as if in opposition set
> Against an enemy, I panted up
> With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts. (511–513, ll. 28–31)

Their attention is turned inwards and downwards as they are absorbed in their thoughts and whatever little attention is left is turned towards the ground. The surprise consequently comes to Wordsworth from below though its source is above:

> ...instantly a light upon the turf
> Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,
> The Moon hung naked in a firmament
> Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
> Rested a silent sea of hoary mist. (513, ll. 38–42)

The vision comes as a "flash" and it rises and descends at the same time: he notices the light on the ground but he has to look up to see the whole sight. In the short space of these lines Wordsworth finds the means to connect the earth with the sky, and the description of the whole sight follows.

The fog enwrapping them at the foot of the mountain is transformed into an "ocean", and this ocean stretches out over the landscape to make a

contact with "the main Atlantic". The fog itself turns into landscape with "headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes", and it comes to reign over the real ocean:

> ...the main Atlantic, that appeared
> To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
> Usurped upon far as the sight could reach. (513, ll. 47–49)

Once again, the word "usurp" is used in a situation of crucial importance. The meaning is more palpable here than in other passages: the ocean of the fog is the usurper upon the real ocean, and the word suggests a temporary taking over of power.

The sky, however, shows a difference now: there is no usurpation there, the Moon reigns supreme over the heavenly dominion. From that perspective the ocean of fog looks "meek and silent" but there is a "rift" that disturbs the calm surface. The rift is "[a] fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place" through which "Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams / Innumerable, roaring with one voice" (513, ll. 58–60). The "breathing-place" renders the ocean as a vast organism but it retains its connection with the inanimate world as well—it allows the roar of the waters to pass through. The "torrents, streams" are waters in constant movement, so Wordsworth's favourite river-image is evoked. The roar of the waters serves another purpose in the passage as well: it connects earth and sky as it is "Heard over earth and sea, in that hour, / For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens" (513, ll. 61–62).

When the vision is gone, Wordsworth sets out to interpret what he has just seen. The experience appears to him as the manifestation of the divine:

> There I beheld the emblem of a mind
> That feeds upon infinity, that broods
> Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
> Its voices issuing forth to silent light
> In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
> By recognitions of transcendent power,
> In sense conducting to ideal form,
> In soul of more than mortal privilege. (515, ll. 70–77)

All these elements attributed to the 'mind' mentioned echo the qualities associated with the divine. However, some of these may be read as references to the human mind. The human mind is often seen by Wordsworth as a "dark abyss" which requires courage from the one intending to descend into it. The human mind is also capable of recognising "transcendent power", though it is true that only in certain moments. Wordsworth makes the suggestions of this passage explicit a few lines later:

> The power, which all
> Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
> To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
> Resemblance of that glorious faculty
> That higher minds bear with them as their own. (515, ll. 86–90)

The connection is explicit enough though Wordsworth narrows down the scope of his reference to include only "higher minds".

The special abilities of creation and deep empathy are elaborated in the following lines. There is a general sense of joy for these minds in whatever they see: "Them the enduring and the transient both / Serve to exalt" (515, ll. 100–101). They are ready to give and to receive: "Willing to work and to be wrought upon" (515, l. 104) and they do so in a spontaneous way: "They need not extraordinary calls / To rouse them" (517, ll. 105–106). Wordsworth takes the next step and provides the origin of such 'higher minds': "Such minds are truly from the Deity, / For they are Powers" (517, ll. 112–113). The rest of the passage gives a list of the consequences of this—enumerating all those activities and attributes that follow from the divine origin of such minds.

Conclusions

The two mountain scenes are built up along similar lines: there is a description of the physical journey, there are passages devoted to the sight offered by the places and there are passages dealing with the imagination in an attempt of interpreting the sights. The constructions in the two cases are, however, different: after the accurate description of the journey the construction comes to be changed—it is just the reverse of the Alps passage in the Snowdon episode. In the crossing of the Alps the passage addressed to the imagination comes first and the landscape is treated afterwards, in the Snowdon scene the sight is described first and the interpretation comes later. In the Alps the journey described in details is a downward one, whereas in the Snowdon section it is an ascent—this also indicates the relation of the two scenes concerning the element of vision.

In both scenes there are frontiers to be crossed: these are frontiers in the mind, as it becomes clear by the end of the passages (Rehder 167). There are corresponding external frontiers to these: the Simplon Pass itself in the Alps and the line separating the fog from the clear air above it in the Snowdon episode. In the Alps Wordsworth misses it entirely and is forced to recognise it afterwards, in the Snowdon scene it is noticed but in a moment when it is the least expected—the existence of such a frontier, or perhaps of a frontier at all in such a place, is a surprise in itself for Wordsworth. In the Alps scene the original intention is to cross

the Alps and to experience majestic feelings underway—the overwrought expectations divert the attention of Wordsworth from the scene and the experience ends in a spectacular failure. The Snowdon episode is somewhat more successful though the original aim of Wordsworth is to see the sunrise from the top—and the sudden appearance of the Moon above the clouds on a foggy and dark night surprises him to such an extent that he never returns to his initial concern.

Nevertheless, the frontiers are crossed and Wordsworth is rewarded by visions on both occasions. It is during the descent from the Simplon Pass that Wordsworth confronts the "workings of one mind", and the vision is so profound that he uses four more phrases to complete his thought due to the inadequacy of the language (Rehder 155). The passage is memorable however strong the disappointment was that preceded it. The Snowdon experience is different: it is during the ascent that the vision spreads out in front of him—there are no references in the text as to the relation of the place of observation to the peak of the mountain, the reader only learns that it occurs during their upward walk. The vision is once again haunting and intriguing, leading to the interpretative passage in which Wordsworth identifies the sight with the manifestation of the divine and expands the scope to include "higher minds" as well.

The visions are somewhat different as well. In the passage devoted to the imagination in the Alps episode Wordsworth favours the word 'soul'. Imagination is mentioned only once and Wordsworth excuses himself: the inadequacy of language leaves him no other choice than the word 'imagination'. However, he soon disposes of this word and its context, and substitutes 'soul' for it in the rest of the passage, changing the focus of attention. It is the immortal soul that has its home with "infinitude" and it is the soul which seems to have the essential ability of receiving those flashes of the "invisible world". It is more of a passive recipient though, its activity seems to consist in recognising the moments of divine vision, as "it cannot will itself to power" (Hartmann, 16) to prove its creative force.

The Snowdon passage uses the word 'mind' while 'soul' is not mentioned in the relevant context in this passage, nor is the word 'imagination' used. The only term which may build up a connection between the two scenes is the word 'Power'—"That awful Power" is the expression in the Alps passage, and "For they [minds] are Powers" is the one in the Snowdon text. The 'mind' is active and creative as well as recipient, and the glory of man is transferred over to it from the soul of the earlier part.

What may provide a more profound link between the two episodes is the idea of the mind as an abyss, a dark chasm, which is all the more interesting as a contrast with the positive forms of mountains. In the Alps scene the

"awful Power rose from the mind's abyss", unexpectedly, and as its lodging is an abyss, it is necessarily awful. The Snowdon passage has the "rift" in the ocean of fog which is "abysmal". Rehder mentions the idea of a very strong self-consciousness here: Wordsworth "imagines that what he has seen is the mind thinking about itself" (Rehder 33). The entire landscape of the moonlight vision comes to be interpreted as the manifestation of the divine mind, the landscape is seen as mindscape.

Another link may be the imagery related to clouds: the "unfathered vapour" of the Alps and the fog of Snowdon. In the Alps the imagination rises unexpectedly as a cloud appears in the mountains, enwrapping the traveller, descending unto him. In the side of Snowdon the fog enwraps the travellers and the imagination rises when the fog is left behind. Though in the Alps passage it is present only as an image, as part of a simile, its implications may be of use. In such a way the two passages show a reverse movement; on a more tentative level the "unfathered vapour" which descended on the young Wordsworth in the Alps and obscured his senses to lead him to miss the anticipated experience lifts up in the Snowdon episode to provide him with a truly sublime scene as compensation for the more mature man, yielding *the* vision he was so eagerly yearning for in the Alps.

The mountain-passages of Wordsworth are constructed with the help of a pattern whose constituents are the same in both cases though their order and organisation are different: there is a description of the journey, a description of the sight and a passage devoted to the imagination. The imagination is recognised as a mighty faculty of the human mind since it is capable of receiving visions of the divine. The vision occurs unexpectedly; no conscious effort can bring it about as it becomes clear from the Alps episode; it occurs when it is the least expected—not during the upward part of the journey, not on the highest point but during the descent, in a narrow valley. The Snowdon episode also supports this since instead of the intended sunrise the sudden appearance of the Moon above the landscape wrapped in fog evokes the vision.

The most significant part of these episodes is the vision. The reception of the divine has a very important function for Wordsworth: it communicates the message that the human mind and soul share some aspects of the divine in the universe. The vision is the tool for Wordsworth with which "he can make us understand that the outside world is not outside, but what we are made of".[1]

[1] Carey, J. *Sunday Times* review on Seamus Heaney, reprinted on the back of Heaney's *New Selected Poems 1966–1987* (London: Faber, 1990); the full quotation: "More than

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any other poet since Wordsworth he can make us understand that the outside world is not outside, but what we are made of."

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Beckett and the Poetics of the Absurd

Tibor Tóth

Beckett's poetry was produced predominantly in the 1930s, with a further substantial return in the 1940s, and occasional poems followed in the mid-1970s. But his poetic experiments never really ceased to contribute to the creative energies moulding his novels and dramas.

Beckett's composing his poetry in both French and English led to 'self-translations', which are not only telling examples of the essential separation of poetry and verse, but they also illustrate that the overall structure in his poetry is mainly determined by an image, sound effect or a tradition resistant counterpoint rather than by implied poetic meaning obeying to established poetic structures, a story-line, or 'that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith' and to which all else can be rendered subservient.

The above formulated generalization inevitably brings to one's to mind Beckett's writings in prose and for the stage. Because, just for the sake of an arch-known example, the 'nothing happens—twice' as Beckett stated speaking about *Waiting for Godot* formulates the lack of importance of narrative in the play, as well as the increased number of possible interpretations. The minimal utterances between stops and silences, Lucky's speeded-up verbalizations draw our attention as much to the rhythm as to the meaning of the play, creating a characteristic lack of coincidence between action and word. There is a similar lack of coincidence between Beckett's poetry and his poems close to the lack of coincidence between dramatic form and play in his works written for the stage.

Since Beckett wrote many of his poems in French, his self-translations can be used as eloquent examples of creative 'making of one's own' and stress the multilingual, multicultural nature so relevant in his works and his philosophy. Most of his poems were written earlier than his other works, which means that they illustrate his apprenticeship, the starting points of a process, and reveal some of his initial attitudes that might have contributed to his later ventures.

His early poem the "*Whoroscope*" (*CP*, 1–6)[1] displays Beckett's conscientious handling of the ironies of his text. The pun of the title and

[1] Beckett, Samuel. 1996. *Versek angol, magyar, francia nyelven. (Poems in English,*

wordplay elsewhere (such as the Joycean "prostisciutto" in line 13) clearly create a mask, irritate and prompt interest in the depths they half-conceal. The lines, "Kip of Christ hatch it!" (line 49), "Jesuitasters copy" (line 51), "In the name of Bacon will you chicken me up that egg" (line 66), "Anna Maria! / She reads Moses and says her love is crucified" (lines 69–70), "Christina the ripper" (line 92) are irritating in themselves and paradoxically reveal what they are meant to conceal: a unique treatise on lust, sex, intellect, and the world that 'stinks fresh'.

The irony applied to Galileo's revolutionary theory concerning the movement of the earth is meant to conceal the movement of the body during the sexual act pointless, senseless when thought of in terms of its potential to create new life. The movement illustrative of this near nonsensical desire is rendered absurd through a grammatical trick that will be repeated, when Beckett defines *Waiting for Godot* as a play in which nothing happens twice: "That's not moving, that's *moving*". However, since we are reading Beckett the otherwise present reference to Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood could enrich the list of possible interpretations. The line could also refer to the heart of King Henry IV: the dead heart that is moved, taken to a Jesuit college, a fact that moves the Jesuits.

The poem abounds in references to literature and mythology pretending to aim at concealing the dominating pornography. As we have already mentioned it might be interpreted simply as 'acting as if.' Christ, Maria Magdalena, Cain and Abel, Moses, Copernicus, Galileo, Joyce, Yeats, Zeus and Leda, Prometheus, the seven days of creation are invoked to add to the power of the experiment and they lose their own meaning being recycled in a pornographic context. The recycled material does not add to the meaning of the sexual act shamelessly revealed,—on the contrary,—its function could be defined as a deliberate attempt to divert attention from the possible enrichment of the interpretation. They introduce the sense of chaos into the 'narrative', by means of juxtaposition. The incantation of the last lines touches the limits of blasphemy, but it cannot be interpreted as such without violating the atmosphere of the poem:

> Then I will rise and move moving
> toward Rahab of the snows,
> the murdering matinal pope-confessed amazon,
> Christina the ripper.

Hungarian and French.) Budapest: Orpheusz Könyvkiadó. 6–13. 6. (All quoted poems are from this edition.)

Oh Weulles spare the blood of a Frank
who has climbed the bitter steps,
(René du Peron...!)
and grant me my second
starless inscrutable hour.
(*Whoroscope*, lines 89–97. *Versek*, 12)

Beckett's first poems are characterized by contradictory intensities formulating a passion for making words his own and the dilemmas of coming to terms with the previous existence of those words and their sociability as exchange, to protect and project the self by adopting a personae. There seems to be a sense of obligation that brings these multidirectional forces into focus, an obligation to self, to art, to society, nurtured by Protestantism and fostered by Geulincx, among others, in a sensitive mind certain of its powers but far from certain of their best orientation.[2]

"Gnome" (*CP*, 7) describes the inescapable circularity central to Beckett's later aesthetics. The cliché formulating the years of learning penetrates another cliché, that of adult society. The clichés anchor the opening in traditional social attitudes, but "squandering" of "Spend the years of learning squandering" becomes the expression of "courage." The "years of wondering" define courage evoking the tradition of Goethe's *Young Werther*. Thus the interplay of positive and negative value judgments is perpetuated and leads back to the earlier challenged cliché: society condemns the youth's antisocial preoccupations "politely turning / From the loutishness of learning". But "loutish" was the term used by the Church when condemning Galileo's learning. And Galileo's knowledge of the universe managed to triumph over conventionalism:

Spend the years of learning squandering
Courage for the years of wandering
Through a word politely turning
From the loutishness of learning.
(*Gnome. Versek*, 16)

Similar revitalization of clichés characterizes Beckett's 1935 collection of poems *Echo's Bones*.

On the walk of a few miles from south to west of Dublin, from Portobello along the canal and the river Liffey in "*Enueg I*" (*CP*, 10–12) we meet an enigmatic child for whom 'want' and 'do' are as irreconcilable as for Beckett

[2] See Little, Roger. 1994. "Beckett's poems and verse translations or: Beckett and the limits of Poetry." in Pilling, John ed. *Beckett*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 184–196.

'can't' and 'must' are. The mental process is surprised as "the mind annulled / wrecked in the wind." The reason is that Beckett wants to introduce the meeting with the child:

> I stopped and climbed the bank to see the game.
> A child fidgeting at the gate called up:
> "Would we be let in Mister?"
> "Certainly" I said "you would."
> But, afraid, he set off down the road.
> "Well" I called after him "why wouldn't you go in?"
> "oh" he said, knowingly,
> "I was in that field before and I got put out."
> So on
> derelict, [...] (*Versek*, 22)

The final poetic gesture of "*Enueg I*" is directed both towards the sea that lies downstream and encompasses the whole world and towards non-being, which to the suffering protagonist seems a desirable ideal:

> Blotches of doomed yellow in the pit of the Liffey;
> the fingers of the ladders hooked over the parapet,
> soliciting;
> a slush of vigilant gulls in the gay spew of the sewer.
>
> Ah the banner
> the banner of meat bleeding
> on the silk of the seas and the arctic flowers
> that do not exist. (*Versek*, 24)

The journeys around Dublin, in the west of Ireland, London and Paris are explorations in a poetic manner marked by juxtapositions which interrupt and subvert any narrative progress. He does not use italics to separate the English, German, Englished Greek and Latin words, since the text thus composed can both withhold and explain the sexuality governing the poems. In "*Serena I*" in "her dazzling oven storm of peristalsis / limae labor", the goat in "*Enueg I*" is "remotely pucking the gate of his field" and so on. The meaning does not vanish through this method, but the pretended desire to hide sexuality tells of self-censorship, which in turn means the acknowledgment of social codes. Puritanism and lustiness seem to be exclusive and the material treated thus dictates the ambivalence of expression.

Cultural references and more or less veiled quotations are also source of ambivalence. Beckett juxtaposes their individual significances creating new meanings. A good example is when in the introductory lyric passage of "*Sanies I*" cycles through the north Dublin countryside:

all the livelong way this day of sweet showers from Porttrane on the seashore
Donabate sad swans of Turvey Swords
ponding along in three ratios like a sonata
like a Ritter with pommelled scrotum atra cura on the step
Botticelli from the fork down [...] (*CP*, 17. *Versek*, 34)

The sonata form, the German knight, and Latin introduce the Shakespearean connotation through the "poor forked animal" taken from *King Lear*, to confer it the qualities envisaged by the Italian painter. The solutions adopted here take us closer to Beckett's essential manner.

The poems written in French between 1937 and 1939 mark a change towards a less pompous mask. The intellectual challenge represented by the mastery of a foreign language seems to a large extent to have replaced in Beckett the urge to prove his deep sense of the world's intellectual patrimony. Extensive learning is present in these poems as well, but it is more lightly worn, and is largely restricted to general knowledge: the Greek myths, as in "jusque dans la caverne ciel et sol" (*CP*, 53), or Kant and the Lisbon earthquake in "ainsi a-t-on beau" (*CP*, 48). When Gabriel de Mortillet is evoked, he is, appropriately, no more than a stone statue in the "Arénes de Lutéce" (*CP*, 52). Knowledge petrifies—it is the hardest lesson to learn.

In "musique de l'indéfference" (*CP*, 46) the general replaces the particular. The opening series of nouns through their apposition produce the uncertainty of their relationship, and because there is no punctuation this apposition and uncertainty persist in the poem. The core statement "du silence [...] / couvre leurs voix" is a paradox coordinated with the second one, which ends the poem: "que / je n'entende plus / me taire". The paradoxes remain unresolved, but tellingly explore identity and relationships through notions of sound and silence. The voices are heard again in "que ferrais-je sans ce monde sans visage sans questions" (*CP*, 60) where a "gouffre de murmures" is linked, again in apposition, with both silence and self, and it is again the lack of punctuation that allows for both interpretations. The narrator expresses his isolation as more fully shared by years of meditation as he ends "sans voix parmi les voix / enfermées avec moi", expressing the impossibility of adequate expression.

The title of the 1947–9 poems is "*Mort de A. D.*" (*CP*, 56) represents the universality of death, another basic theme that preoccupies Beckett. His statement that man prepares for death from the cradle or before is directed, in the novels and plays, into more sustained metaphors of the eternal triangle of Eros, Thanatos and Logos. The image of the solitary figure in the bare room desperately trying to reconcile himself to himself, to the Other, to

life, to death, is tested in the poems, and the ambivalent projections of the mask in the plays become the ambivalent projections of the masque. The poetically tested juxtapositions help him adjust to self and society through words which belong to the community but gain dramatic strength through the individual mark attached to them.

The multiplicity of interactive obligations creates pressures on a vision which must enact that knot of contradictions. Beckett's poetic vision states that the challenge and the joy of coming to terms with this world have no limits. He repeatedly and forcibly refers to *The Bible*, especially to The New Testament, because it is a text that he knows he cannot trust. Thus, in spite of his life-long obsession with *The Bible*, he manages to prevent its becoming the symbol of universal truth. The characters of his fictional and dramatic works seem to live nearly exclusively through the text they produce, but the proto-texts they employ excel through their denial of their initial meaning, or any meaning at all.

The knot of contradictions central to *Waiting for Godot* unfolds through the juxtaposition of a clearly biblical theme and the denial to artistically and ethically interpret it. When to the question "Do you remember the Bible?" Estragon answers, "I remember the maps of the Holy Land. Colored they were. Very pretty", Beckett launches one of the many excellent deviations from universally accepted symbols: Estragon becomes a solitary figure in the 'Christian' world, unable, and perhaps unwilling to understand himself. He is not going to reconcile himself to God or himself, for he is suspended in an ambivalent projection of his (and our) memory. *The Bible* is then just one of the characters' texts and it loses authority over its own interpretation. It becomes just one of the expressions of the 'nothing' that happens twice in the play. The juxtapositions tested in his poems help him deprive the symbols belonging to the community of their meaning, and gain dramatic strength through the individual mark attached to them.

The use of the 'knot' representative of Beckett's poetic strategy in drama is brilliantly revealed through the tree in *Waiting for Godot.* The leafless tree is a concrete object on the stage, but in Act II four or five leaves appear on it. The context of first reference to the possible symbolic meanings of the tree strikes by means of contrast. The argument is centred round the importance and difficulties of taking off one's shoes:

> Estragon: It hurts?
> Vladimir: Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!
> Estragon: (*pointing*). You might button it all the same.
> Vladimir: (*stooping*). True. (*He buttons his fly*). Never neglect the little things of life.

Estragon: What do you expect, you always wait till the last moment.
Vladimir: (*musingly*). The last moment... (*He meditates.*) Hope deferred maketh the something sick, who said that?
Estragon: Why don't you help me?[3]

The reference to *Proverbs*, 13:12—namely, "Hopes deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is, it is a tree of life"—is created through the archaic discourse, placed in Vladimir's amnesiac discourse. The 'mask' employed at this point is intriguing. Vladimir is trying to remember something that might have a meaning, and might teach him whether taking off one's shoes makes sense or it does not, and whether waiting, hoping for help, perhaps helping makes any sense at all. Estragon's belated "Nothing" is a kind of an answer to the given situation and the underlying dilemma, or following the logic of the situation to neither of the two dilemmas.

Vladimir's omission of 'heart' and 'tree' calls our attention to their respective un-revealed, 'avoided' symbolic meanings in relation to life (viz. heart-life and emotion, tree-symbol of life and desire). Critics speak of Godot's trees rather than tree, because the tree is referred to as a gallows-tree and an object of exaltation, but not to be trusted:

Vladimir: It's for the kidneys. (Silence. Estragon looks attentively at the tree.) What do we do now?
Estragon: Wait.
Vladimir: Yes, but while waiting.
Estragon: What about hanging ourselves.
Vladimir: Hmm. It'd give us an erection!
Estragon: (highly excited). An erection!
Vladimir: With all that follows. Where it falls mandrakes grow. That's why they shriek when you pull them up. Did you not know that?
Estragon: Let's hang ourselves immediately!
Vladimir: From a bough? (They go towards the tree.) I wouldn't trust it. (*WG*, 17)

Later Estragon refers to the gallows-tree as object of desire saying "Pity we haven't got a bit of rope" (53); then the gallows-tree seems to be unattainable:

Estragon: (looking at the tree). What is it?
Vladimir: It's a tree.
Estragon: Yes, but what kind?
Vladimir: I don't know. A willow. (Estragon draws Valdimir towards the tree. They stand motionless before it. Silence.)
Estragon: Why don't we hang ourselves?
Vladimir: With what?

Estragon: You haven't got a bit of rope?
Vladimir: No.
Estragon: Then we can't. (*WG*, 18)

Although the same tree becomes the symbol of change and stability:

Vladimir: We are happy.
Estragon: We are happy. (Silence) What do we do now, now that we are happy?
Valdimir: Wait for Godot. (Estragon groans. Silence.) Things have changed here since yesterday.
Estragon: Everything oozes.
Vladimir: Look at the tree.
Estragon: It's never the same pus from one second to the next.
Vladimir: The tree, look at the tree. (Estragon looks at the tree.)
Estragon: Was it not here yesterday?
Vladimir: Yes, of course it was there. Do you not remember? We nearly hanged ourselves from it. But you wouldn't. Do you not remember?
Estragon: You dreamt it. (*WG*, 60)

Crucifixion, Resurrection, the tree of knowledge—there are some other possible references. It is the many possible symbolic meanings that can be attached to the tree that define it as a sub-category of that nothing that happens twice. The repetition of the symbol, which is never the same is refused its symbolic interpretations. The juxtaposition of senses suggests the multiplicity of the possible meanings. The meanings formulated by the text support the idea of the need to talk in a dramatic pretext where action fails to be effective or relevant. The denotative and symbolic functions of the language fail to function as meaningful means of communication, but do they kill the dead voices and the dead poetry so often discussed by critics:

Vladimir: We have our reasons.
Estragon: And the dead voices.
Vladimir: They make noises like wings.
Estragon: Like leaves.
Vladimir: Like sand.
Estragon: Like leaves.
(Silence.)
Vladimir: They all speak together.
Estragon: Each one to itself.
(Silence.)
Vladimir: Rather they whisper.
Estragon: They rustle.
Vladimir: They rustle.

Vladimir: What do they say?
Estragon: They talk about their lives.
Vladimir: To have lived is not enough for them.
Estragon: They have to talk about it.
Vladimir: To be dead is not enough for them.
Estragon: It is not sufficient.
(Silence.)
Vladimir: They make a noise like feathers.
Estragon: Like leaves.
Vladimir: Like ashes.
Estragon: Like leaves.
(Long silence.) (*WG*, 63)

One can hear Dante's souls in Purgatory in Beckett's dead voices, but as it has already been noticed by critics the differences are more relevant than the similarities. Dante's dead voices can hope for resurrection after Calliope has been invoked, while the sequence "Like leaves." "Like ashes." "Like leaves" responding to "Like leaves." "Like ashes." "Like leaves." clearly replaces the idea of time's passage contained in 'sand' when it is answered by "ashes", which in *Endgame* comes to signify the end of the world (32).

The above passage from *Waiting for Godot* is illustrative of the more general model on which the play is based: the repetition of two nearly identical poetic passages following the announcement of the subject of meditation. It is not a monologue, that could stress the meditative value of the section, but it takes the more dynamic shape of a dialogue. This way the elements of figurative language are denied poetic coherence, the similes are restricted to Vladimir and Estragon's utterance and fall back onto themselves while the centripetal force of the intertextual meanings undercuts the possibility of any intelligible communication within the dramatic work. Parallel to this the dialogue maintains its course, it progresses. Its construction illustrates the multiple repetitions that support the larger scale juxtaposition of Vladimir–Estragon, Lucky–Pozzo, Boy–Godot 'scenes' of the two acts.

If we accept as a starting point the idea that Beckett's condensed, often paradoxical structures, models, 'lyrical recyclings', and linguistic twists of philosophical 'knots' are expressed through condensed poetic diction we have to agree with those who are tempted to read Joyce and Woolf as writing fiction enormously supported by the generative power of poetic diction. Beckett's approach is, however, of a different nature from that of Joyce or Woolf. Beckett's idea is that the aesthetic appreciation flourishes best when rational needs subside. This attitude in turn leads to the negation of Logos at the surface level, a 'recycled mask' hiding Eros in order to formulate the

credentials of the absurd, the poetics of which, is in need of logical sequences thanatizing the thanatos.

Occasionally, the double negation will have its effects in Beckett's works placed onto the linguistic sphere, that is, textuality is the cause and effect that is conferred authority. Rabinovitz, when analyzing the addenda to *Watt*[4] points out the fact that the poems included in the addenda offer possible interpretations for the crucial elements of *Watt*. The governing method of the three poems included in the addenda is certainly juxtaposition. Note how the names Watt and Knott are juxtaposed with the words "what" and "not" in the following poem:

> Watt will not
> abate one jot
> but of what
>
> of the coming to
> of the being at
> of the going from
> Knott's habitat (249)

The suggestion underlying these possible redefinitions is characteristic of Beckett: identity is subject to interpretations, but interpretations are impossible because nothing can be trusted in his fictional world. Remember the possible, but uncertain definitions that are hinted at in the naming of Godot. The first part of Godot, tempts us to interpret the object of desire and waiting in the Almighty, an interpretation Beckett categorically refused. Similarly the interpretation of the English names Estragon and Vladimir, in the French phonetic context could lead to the definition of the two characters as representative of 'speech' and 'being' respectively. This transcultural, inter and intralinguistic attempt violates everyday logic, so, it cannot lead to reliable interpretation. Beckett fully employs the phonetic resources available to formulate later non-acknowledged implications of his text and this takes the text on a plane poetically higher than he is ready to admit.

The gesture brings down the world to the state of desiring nothing else but non-being, and the text is consistent only in formulating the negation of hope and verisimilitude. Beckett's prose is alternatively evasive and concise and suggestive as a line of poetry, and Beckett at times deliberately encourages readers to jump to misleading conclusions to suggest their subsequent discoveries about the deceptive nature of face values. For

[4] See Rabinovitz, Rubin. 1984. *The Development of Samuel Beckett's Fiction*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

example, when he is knocked down at the railway station Watt ignores the stimuli of the outer world by means of poetry (Hölderlin, Farquhar). Thus he makes a transition from rational thought to aesthetic contemplation. Intellectual life is shown as debilitating in Watt as in *Echo's Bones*, "*Gnome*", Arsene's comment based on *Everyman*.[5]

Although Beckett's early fiction is based on frequent allusions and conventional settings and displays an interest in outer reality, an outer reality that contradicts his characters' desire to withdraw into themselves. In his novels completed after *Murphy* the chronology becomes indistinct. When Watt wants to find out what the time is he gets no answer. The best example is perhaps the definition that is given to interest taken in time when we get to know that it was earlier than he hoped. Sam admits at the beginning of part four that the things in part four happened before the events presented in part three. Watt's inverted speech is another example of how Beckett employs clearly poetic strategies to express the chaotic character of time. Rabinovitz states in his conclusions to the analysis of Beckett's fiction in its development that the relationship between the conceptual and the existential seems to have a more or less identifiable regulative status.

> Beckett, [...], loathes 'the complacent scientific conceptualism that made contact with outer reality the index of mental well-being.' As the narrator of *Murphy* observes, the 'nature of outer reality remained obscure... The definition of outer reality, or of reality short and simple, varied according to the sensibility of the definer.' (Rabinovitz, 182)

Rabinovitz argues that Beckett's works should not be understood as unrealistic or absurd because they are concerned simply with the outer world as an illusion and as his perspective of the outer world deteriorates, one gains a clearer view of inner reality, and it is the inner reality that shapes and colours one's perception of the outer world. Rabinovitz's implied suggestion is that the prose thus obscured through word order, chaotic chronology, and interpolations of silences and voices approaches poetic diction and the generic title it should have is *Commment c'est. How It Is* is devoted to two subjects, how it is and how it began both contained in the title itself of one of Beckett's most exciting books: comment c'est and commencer sound very much alike.

The tradition to which it alludes as Abbott[6] states it is the epic which is circular, an expression of endless torment, and fragmentary. In *The Bible* and

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[5] Knowledge: "Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide, / In thy most need to go by thy side." (*Everyman*, II. 522–23).

[6] See Abbott, Porter, H. 1994. "'Texts for Nothing' and 'How It Is.'" in Pilling, John ed. *Beckett*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 106–124.

in epics following the biblical tradition (*Paradise Lost*, *The Divine Comedy*) the ordering of things is shown as being just. In *How It Is* is distilled to a final Newtonian essence as the perfection of order. The final object of "our justice" is to show that we are regulated on the basis of symmetry. The presence of evil is resolved in the symmetry of 'an eye for an eye' suggesting that every victim is a victimizer. The idea of symmetry leads to the drama of mathematics as the author is trying to work out the arithmetical terms for the order he postulated. But the author realizes that "something is wrong there" and the creator packs up and abandons the epic.

The failure of his authorship brings about the failure of the poet's authority. It is in the very tradition of the epic that the epic poet is chosen. Beckett's formula is to draw our attention to the constructedness of the epic instead of focusing on the creator of the epic who should be the prophet, the person formulating the absolute truth of which he has been chosen vehicle. Beckett's epic does not end in a song of triumph of the unity of a universe dominated by God who animates Man. Justice and authority are abolished by the very narrative of *How It Is*. Beckett's *How It Is* is of course a travesty of the epic. The function of his narrative is not to enlighten but to stupefy.

The fact that we are constantly reminded of the structure rather than the idea we are searching for, and the bravado of the voice packing to abandon his creation defines another implication clearly contained. The order to which the voice aspired, is also the exclusive, oppressive tyrant's structure but tyranny is rejected as well. One has to look for poetic visions that transcend the text as they illuminate the 'life above in the light' and act against the voice governing the epic: "I see a crocus in a pot in an area in a basement a saffron the sun creeps up the wall a hand keeps in the sun this yellow flower with a string" (*HII*, 22).

The vision could be appropriated with Eliot's vision of the pool filled up with sunshine, but while for Eliot the governing force, the cause of all causes is love of God, Beckett seems to refuse the idea of any kind of authority. When in part two the hand craves its words in the back of its victim surrender to command and design of a superior power is forcibly rejected. That the epic does not eliminate everything is demonstrated by the mud, the voice, the rush of words, the non-defined being: "[...] only me in any case yes alone yes in the mud [...] with my voice yes my murmur" (*HII*, 159). The epic winds up where it began, because we hear the words of departure "how it was I quote before Pim with Pim after Pim how it is three parts I say it" (*HII*, 7). Or these are echoes of the last words of the *Texts for Nothing:* [...] as soon now, when all will be ended, all said, it says, it murmurs (*CSP*, 115).

As H. Potter Abbott in his already mentioned essay states, the

continual originating power of the language, the volatility of its conceptual interchange are the sources of 'action' in *How It Is*. The verbal puns starting with the pun of beginnings (the word of God), the cosmic project proclaimed "all balls" (with the implications of male organs of regeneration and the spheres of the universe) are all embedded in the "warmth of primeval mud" (*HII*, 12). The unsettled image of "mud in the mouth or the crawler's tongue" "lolling" in the mud, recycles both the mud out of which God made Adam, and the Word by which God gave life to the mud. And language remains in command when Beckett's word producer gives life to Pim: "who but for me would never Pim we're talking of Pim never be but for me anything but a dumb limp lump flat for ever in the mud but I'll quicken him you wait and see" (*HII*, 58). And the word-creator gives life even to himself claiming "I hear me again murmur me in the mud and am again" (*HII*, 138). Language disposes of originating power, and can deprive or at least make volatile identity: "Pim to Bom to Bem, Pam to Prim, Kram to Krim, Skom to Skum".

Following the tradition of normalization of criticism assessing *How It Is*, Abbott 'recycles' the design of the text of a strophe, providing it with the adequate punctuation and suggests the following reading of it:

> And later, much later
> (these aeons, my God!),
> when it [the painting] stops again,
> [with] ten more, [or] fifteen more [words] in me,
> a murmur,
> scarce a breath;
> then,
> from mouth to mud [they go],
> [a] brief kiss,
> [a] brush of lips,
> [a] faint kiss. (Abbott, 120)

Abbott points out that, read like this, the strophe can be understood as one variation on the interchange of mud and word out of which the texts arises. Normalizations are imposed by the very nature of the text. They are the dictates of the tyranny of the Beckett text. Beckett's play with sound and sense is turned into the form of the word under the leading principle "first the sound then the sense" (*HII*, 104).

The interplay of meaning and sound lies in the answer to all the other questions. Beckett concentrates on the wonders of origination. The rhetorical strategies are multiplied, the counter-tropes of reduction, negation, cancellation and despair are all sources of productivity. Beckett's art is not

the art of ending as much as the art of recommencement, much in the fashion of Eliot's "in my end is my beginning."

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Reading Wolf Solent Reading[1]

Angelika Reichmann

> "My own life on earth has resembled Solent's in being dominated by Books."
>
> (Powys, "Preface" 11)

Reading. Reading cheap stories and pornography. Reading the scandalous history of Dorset. Reading the story of the dead father in the landscape of his homeland. Reading the metaphor of the Name of the Father[2]. Reading—and rewriting—classics of the carnivalesque tradition[3] in European literature. To a great extent, John Cowper Powys's *Wolf Solent* is about reading as such and its representation plays the most significant role in the novel because it draws attention to a problematic aspect of narration by highlighting "the division in [Wolf Solent's] narrative consciousness" (Nordius 6). Though third person narration is used in the novel, the story is told exclusively from one point of view, that of the main character and "[o]utside this consciousness '[t]here is no author's voice with knowledge of objective truth. There is no final authority"' (C. A. Coates quoted in Nordius 46). What the reader receives is the story in Wolf Solent's reading(s) and thus the identity of this first—and ultimate—reader is a major determining factor in producing readings of *Wolf Solent*.

And here a vicious circle is apparently closed: the text is generated by

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[1] The present study is a section of a much longer analysis of the carnivalesque in *Wolf Solent*, which contains a separate chapter on the theoretical background of my reading. For this reason this paper contains only references to critical writings, but does not enlarge on their relationship. It is a section of my PhD dissertation and has been completed with the assistance of the Eötvös Scholarship supplemented by a grant from the Hungarian Ministry of Education (OM).

[2] Cf. Füzesséry Éva, "Lacan és az 'apa neve'," *Thalassa* 4 (1993/2): 45–61 and Anthony Wilden, "Lacan and the Discourse of the Other," Jacques Lacan, *The Language of the Self — The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 157–312.

[3] Cf. Mihail Bahtyin, *François Rabelais művészete, a középkor és a reneszánsz népi kultúrája*, trans. Könczöl Csaba (Budapest, Európa Könyvkiadó, 1982) and Бахтин, М. М. *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского. Собрание сочечений.* Vol. 6. (Москва: Русские словари, 2002), 5–300.

the narrative consciousness, but Wolf Solent's identity is generated by the text itself. So much so, that for example Nordius's interpretation of the novel as the expression of Powys's philosophy of solitude in the making (45) shows it as the "plotting out" (in the sense Peter Brooks uses the term[4]) of the central metaphor of the "lone wolf" (46) inherent in the main character's name. Wolf Solent as a subject seems to be unambiguously definable by one metaphor, by his name—which appears as a clearly readable sign. However, the reader might realise that the word "solent", revealing a fundamental feature of both character and text, can actually be read as a play on words, combining sole/solitary and silent. The ambiguity inherent in his name is only one example of the multitude of carnivalesque ambiguities[5] characteristic of the novel. Through the character of Wolf Solent as the archetypal reader, reading itself is represented in the text as a form of transgression, which, instead of creating coherent and unquestionable ultimate discourses, rather opens up new gaps in the already existing ones by maintaining a constant dialogue[6] of text and reader. The acceptance of

[4] Cf. Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot — Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England, Harvard University Press, 1984).

[5] Apart from the works by Bakhtin mentioned above, cf. Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," *Desire in Language — A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (New York, Columbia University Press, 1980), 64–91.

[6] I use the word "dialogue" in the Bakhtinian sense here (cf. М. М. Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского* and Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel"). Cf. К. Томсон, "Диалогическая поэтика Бахтина." trans. from English into Russian А. Махов and Г. Шегалова. *М. М. Бахтин: pro et contra — Личхость и творчестеа М. М. Бахтина в оценке русской и мировой мысли.* Vol. 1, ed., introduction and commentary К. Г. Исупов (Санкт-Петербург, РХГИ, 2001), 312–322. Thomson claims that Bakhtin's notion of the dialogue is a much debated one and his contemporary interpreters often emphasise such aspects of his ideas which are not sufficiently detailed and elaborated to settle the issue. He himself suggests taking it as a "strategy" of polemics which Bakhtin himself usually applied when he, without any intention to nivellate them, let the ideas of his opponents speak for themselves in his writings. Thomson, relying on Ken Hirschkop's opinion, treats this "strategy" as a "kind of populist deconstruction" (313), which clearly relates Bakhtin's critical writings with poststructuralist, rather than structuralist reading strategies. A similarly broad understanding of the term is also reflected by the special edition of the Hungarian journal of literary criticism, *Helikon*, on the dialogue. Cf. *Változatok a dialógusra — Helikon — Irodalomtudományi Szemle* XLVII (2001/1). Peter Brooks in his short study, "The idea of a psychoanalytic literary criticism" [*Discourse in Psychoanalysis and Literature*, ed.

these bitter-sweet qualities of reading with the major ironies making them possible and the solitary celebration of the joys given by the openness of the reading procedure identify it as a "reduced" form of the carnivalesque[7]—probably the only form possible in the 20th century.

The function of reading as a central determiner of Wolf Solent's identity is established by its metonymical/metaphorical connection with his metaphor for the core of his consciousness, his 'mythology'. The latter is a concept that conspicuously resists further interpretation in itself, taken out of its context. On the one hand, Wolf "use[s] it entirely in a private sense of his own" (Powys 19). On the other hand, it is most often represented in further images which usually undermine each other. In other words, it is a metaphor leading only to other metaphors, for example his 'mythology' as "hushed, expanding leaves", "secret vegetation—the roots of whose being hid themselves beneath the dark waters of his consciousness" (Powys 20–21). The "roots" evidently lead from the conscious to the unconscious, in Lacanian terms Wolf's 'mythology' covers his 'true' identity, it screens "the adulterated chapter" of his history, which can be read most conspicuously in the transference neurosis, in the compulsively repeated symptoms surrounding the gap in the story (*The Language of the Self* 20–24). Wolf introduces his 'mythology' in the following manner:

> This was a certain trick he had of doing what he called 'sinking into his soul'. This trick had been a furtive custom with him from very early days. In his childhood *his mother had often rallied him about it* in her light-hearted way, and had applied to these trances, or these fits of absent-mindedness, an amusing but rather *indecent nursery name. His father*, on the other hand, *had encouraged him* in these moods, taking them very gravely, and treating him, when under their spell, as if he were a sort of *infant magician.* (Powys 19, italics mine)

The exact circumstances of the generation of his 'mythology', as it

Shlomith Rimmon-Kennan (London, Routledge, 1987), 1–18] also connects Bakhtinian dialogue with Lacanian psychoanalysis and his own psychoanalytic literary criticism, more concretely with textual analysis through the application of the Freudian concept of transferential situation to literary analysis (11).

[7] Cf. Bakhtin's description of the changes of the grotesque, a phenomenon belonging to the core of the carnivalesque. He claims that in the Romantic period the grotesque and thus the carnivalesque became relevant only to the personal sphere of the individual, their universal character gradually diminished and finally disappeared. The original carnivalesque laughter also changed its nature, its regenerative power was brought to the minimum, which resulted in the dominance of its "reduced" forms, humour, irony and sarcasm (Bahtyin 50–51).

suits any screen memory covering a traumatic experience, remain hidden. However, its relationship with early childhood, the antithetical reaction of the two parents, the "indecency" attached to it by the mother and the imaginary power position implied by the "infant magician" practically cry for a psychoanalytic interpretation. In a Freudian-Lacanian context[8], Wolf Solent's 'mythology' is a classical case of infantile regression to wish fulfilment in daydreaming, instead of the core of his consciousness it is a symptom, a (false) construction[9] with the function of hiding the seemingly forgotten traumatic knot in the unconscious[10], which must be read and reread to form a more authentic story of Wolf Solent's identity.

For this reason the readable links which connect the "censored chapter" of the unconscious to this ominous gap give extremely useful help for the analyst. If Wolf Solent's 'mythology' is a case of daydreaming, it is directed at the repetition of an idealistic situation in which the wish fulfilment was granted in his childhood[11]. For Wolf Solent the perfect situation that is to be repeated is sitting at the bow-window of his grandmother's house—a re-enactment of the circumstances of finding the word 'mythology' for his special habit—thus supplying the first useful links to the "public" and "untouched" chapters of his identity:

> It was, however, when staying in his grandmother's house at Weymouth that the word had come to him which he now always used in his own mind to describe these obsessions. It was the word '*mythology*'; and he used it entirely in a private sense of his own. He could remember very well where he first came upon the word. It was in a curious room, called 'the ante-room', which was connected by folding-doors with his grandmother's drawing-room [...] The window of his grandmother's room opened upon the *sea*; and Wolf, *carrying the word 'mythology' into this bow-window*, allowed it to become his own secret name for his own secret habit. (Powys 19–20, italics mine)

As it turns out, the central element which dominates the scene is the

[8] Cf. Sigmund Freud, "A költő és a fantáziaműködés," trans. Szilágyi Lilla, *Művészeti írások, Művei IX*, ed. Erős Ferenc (Budapest, Filum Kiadó, 2001), 115–200, Jacques Lacan, *The Language of the Self — The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. with notes and commentary Anthony Wilden (Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1981). A critique of the Freudian text relevant here is introduced by Peter Brooks in "The idea of a psychoanalytic literary criticism" and *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling* (Oxford, UK, Cambridge, USA, Blackwell, 1994).

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

(bow-)window, an image which returns several times later in the text always associated with the pleasurable place where Wolf Solent likes or would like to be. At the beginning of the story the thirty-five-year-old Solent is shown travelling home to his birthplace in Dorset after a twenty-five-year absence, sitting at the window of an otherwise empty railway compartment, deeply submerged in "an orgy of concentrated thought" (Powys 13), in his personal 'mythology' (Powys 19). He characterises his mental state in the following manner:

> Outward things [...] were to him like faintly-limned images in a mirror, the true reality of which lay all the while in his mind [...]
>
> What he experienced now was a vague wonder as to whether the events that awaited him—these new scenes—these unknown people—would be able to do what no outward events had done—break up this *mirror of half-reality* and drop great stones of real reality—drop them and lodge them—hard, brutal, material stones—down there among those dark waters and that mental foliage. (Powys 21, italics mine)

The overall image of Wolf Solent represented here is fundamentally reminiscent of "The Lady of Shallot". He is locked up in the ivory tower of his own consciousness, intentionally separating and defending himself from outside events, which appear as mere reflections and shadows. As a result, the last twenty-five years of his life have been monotonous and uneventful; "he has lived peacefully under the despotic affection of his mother, with whom, when he was only a child of ten, he had left Dorsetshire, and along with Dorsetshire, all the agitating memories of his dead father" (Powys 14).

The same surface of consciousness also seems to protect him from himself: since all the events of his 'real' life take place on a mental plane, in his 'mythology', his being locked up in a state of utter passivity in the shell of his consciousness hinders him from any actual action. However, "the condition of narratability [is] to enter a state of deviance and detour (ambition, quest, the pose of a mask) [...] before returning to the quiescence of the nonnarratable" (Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* 108). It is exactly Wolf Solent's 'mythology' that makes it impossible for him to become the hero of his own story and thus to have an identity (Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* 33) of his own. His story—the novel—can only start when he is willy-nilly pushed out of this passivity, and ends with shattering his 'mythology' as a shelter from "reality", but his ultimate desire is to return to the ideal situation of sitting at the window and submerging in his 'mythology'. For example, on returning to Dorset his wish to live in one of the little cottages is embodied in his attempt "to fancy what it would be like to sit in the bow-window of any one of these, drinking tea and eating bread-and-honey,

while the spring afternoon slowly darkened towards twilight" (Powys 66–67). When trying to imagine what it will be like to work for Mr Urquhart, he has a "dream of [a] writing-table by a mullioned window 'blushing with the blood of kings and queens' [which] turns out to be a literal presentiment" (Powys 61). When he feels that Miss Gault's drawing-room has "the Penn House atmosphere" it means that "there was something about this room which made him recall that old bow-window in Brunswick Terrace, Weymouth, where in his childhood he used to indulge in these queer, secretive pleasures" (Powys 132). And finally, when Christie moves to Weymouth, he flatters himself with the idea that their relationship will not end and "[sees] himself as an old grey-headed schoolmaster [...] walking with Christie on one arm and Olwen [...] on the other, past the bow windows of Brunswick Terrace!" (Powys 619).

The second link to the "adulterated chapter" is supplied by the *metonymical* connection of the grandmother's house, and more specifically the bow-window, which is the location of the only pleasant memories of Wolf Solent's childhood, with reading:

> He recalled various agitating and shameful scenes between his high-spirited mother and his drifting, unscrupulous father. He summoned up, as opposed to these, his own *delicious memories* of long, *irresponsible holidays*, lovely uninterrupted weeks of *idleness*, *by the sea at Weymouth, when he read so many thrilling books in the sunlit bow-window* at Brunswick Terrace. (Powys 37, italics mine)

Thus reading in the literal sense of the word and 'sinking into his soul' become *metonymically* connected by being attached to the same location, the bow-window in the house of Wolf's grandmother in Weymouth. The location itself, as a scene of his infantile daydreaming, becomes subject to many-layered interpretation via its connection with the symptom that covers the traumatic event. In classic Freudian analysis houses are symbolic of the body and rooms are especially associated with women (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 471–472). In Wolf's case the female body represented by the house and its rooms is most probably his mother's, substituted with the slightly veiled corresponding element of the grandmother's figure. Thus Wolf's wish to return to his passive and pleasurable stay in Weymouth, where he was "irresponsible", that is, free from any moral obligations to act, becomes an embodiment of the return to the maternal womb in the symbolic sense as a combination of libido and desire for the ideal conditions before birth in the death-wish[12].

[12] Cf. Sigmund Freud, *On Metapsychology — The Theory of Psychoanalysis* —

The bow-window as an opening might be symbolic of his ambiguous position: he is inside but would like to enjoy the pleasures of being a spectator, or to use a word with even more obvious sexual connotations, a voyeur[13]. Conspicuously, the view of the sea from the window implies a very similar imagery to that of the "dark waters of [Wolf's] consciousness", which is more than reminiscent of the imagery of the oceanic[14] feeling related to the Freudian concept of the death wish. This symbolism is deepened by the relationship of the location with Wolf's 'mythology' and reading, which also seem to be *metaphorically* related to each other in their turn by sharing a number of common qualities. They lack any practical value according to the social norms and make Wolf, who indulges in them, an outsider and a transgressor; they yield solitary autoerotic pleasure; and they serve as an escape from the traumatic experience of his parents' stormy marriage, the "shameful scenes" which might correspond to the "page of shame" (Lacan, *The Language of the Self* 24) that seems to be forgotten but must return, and finally, they become the sublimation of his frustrated (incestuous) sexual desire[15]. Thereby, Wolf's 'mythology', as it is also implied by the expression "secret vice" that he uses for it, turns out to be a metaphor for the "short circuit" of incest which closes narratives—and reading—prematurely and finally (Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* 109). It is the de(con)struction of this closed narrative—the story of Wolf Solent as a mythic hero in his own imagination—which he experiences as the tragic death of his 'mythology' and the annihilation of his identity. Significantly, the story does not end here.

The third link to the unconscious is a *metaphorical* connection between looking out of the window and reading in the more general sense of the word, established here and developed in the rest of the text. Windows and words, language, seem to function in a very similar way for Wolf Solent, both providing frames that not only limit his vision and thereby slice out a portion of the world that is perceivable, but actually create signs from otherwise meaningless objects by the continuously changing and often

"Beyond the Pleasure Principle", "The Ego and the Id" and Other Works, The Pelican Freud Library, Vol. 11, ed. Angela Richards, trans. James Stratchey (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1984).

[13] Cf. the reader as a voyeur in Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Basil Blackwell, 1995), 17.

[14] Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents,* ed. and trans. James Stratchey (New York, London, W. W. Norton and Company, 1989).

[15] Ibid.

surprising perspective they determine. He verbalises this similarity in the following way:

> These glimpses of certain fixed objects, seen daily, yet always differently, through bedroom-windows, scullery-windows, privy windows, had, from his childhood, possessed a curious interest for him. It was as if he got from them a sort of *runic handwriting*, the *'little language'* of Chance itself, commenting upon what was, and is, and is to come. (Powys 232, italics mine)

The implication is that windows present writing, a sign that must be read. In this excerpt Wolf Solent associates his vision through the window with textuality in general, and implies that life is practically nothing else but trying to read the cryptogram it presents. In a dialogue with Christie he directly connects the image of the window as a frame with reading and daydreaming:

> Philosophy to you, and to me, too, isn't science at all! It's life winnowed and heightened. It's the essence of life caught on the wing. It's life *framed*... framed in room-windows... in carriage-windows... in mirrors... in our 'brown studies', when we look up from absorbing books... in waking dreams... (Powys 91, italics in the original)

In this excerpt "framing" becomes a metaphor for contextualising or conceptualising and thus interpretation, while the means that make it possible are the "window" or "mirror" of a philosophical text—or literary text, for that matter. This "framed life", the narrative, seems actually to take the place of life itself for Wolf Solent, so much so, that he even "frames" the most elemental phenomena of nature into stories that he knows from the literary tradition. Everything is symbolic for him, for example "a great yellowish fragment of sky" becomes a centaur drinking from the fountain of a willow (Powys 151). Thus Wolf definitely seems to embody the neurotic reader—more exactly, the hysteric in the sense Barthes applies the term (63). Since the window as a frame in itself is most conspicuously a hole, Wolf Solent becomes a reader of gaps with all the postmodernist/poststructuralist implications of the word concerning the nature of language and of the human unconscious[16]. Looking out of the window—or peeping in through windows, for that matter—becomes a metaphor for reading which highlights

[16] Cf. Jacques Lacan, "The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious," *The Structuralists From Marx to Lévy-Strauss*, ed. Richard and Fernande DeGeorge (Garden City, New York, Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), 287–324. Cf. also Joe Boulter, *Postmodern Powys — New Essays on John Cowper Powys* (Kidderminster: Crescent Moon, 2000). He uses "some of the analogies between Powys's themes and

its inherently paradoxical nature, since the window, which is both a border and a frame, simultaneously encloses and opens up space.

Thus the identification of Wolf Solent's 'mythology' as a case of infantile regression to daydreaming in the Freudian paradigm instead of leading to an ultimate closure of the text so characteristic of psychoanalytic literary criticism applied to fictional characters.[17] actually reveals that *Wolf Solent* can as easily be the subject of a "more formalist" psychoanalytic criticism outlined by Peter Brooks[18] It reads the returns of the text itself, in the given case the instances of reading itself, which turn out to be attempts to reconstruct the "false constructions" of the textual conscious for the fundamental gap in the text, Wolf Solent's identity itself as a narrative consciousness, the supposed "master" of the text (Brooks, "The idea of..." 11–12). This is the point where the text recoils on itself: Wolf Solent, in his obsessively repeated attempts to read the missing chapter of his own unconscious, actually acts out the archetypal situation of the reader who both tries to master the text by analysing it and becomes mastered by the text as the analysand (Brooks, "The idea of..." 11–12). These instances reveal reading itself as transgression, a basically carnivalesque element. Just like the screen memory of Wolf's 'mythology', reading is exposed as an autoerotic activity[19] in the scenes of acquiring forbidden knowledge by gaining (perverse) sexual pleasure from reading pornography, of substituting the fulfilment of desire with reading and thereby sublimating it, of Wolf's voyeurism and finally of his Narcissistic obsession with his own images in actual and symbolic windows and mirrors. By the end of the novel Wolf Solent's constant readings and rereadings of himself dissolve the closed narrative of his 'mythology': his mythic image as a fighter in a cosmic battle against evil proves to be incompatible with his other parallel readings of his identity, which turn out to be unavoidably carnivalesque. Of course, only the exchange of one "false construction" with another can take place. However, since it consists in continuous reading, which leaves room for ambiguities and can cope with the constantly shifting nature of signifier with the help of self-ironic laughter, it results in Wolf's symbolic rebirth after the seemingly

techniques and the themes and techniques of postmodernist theorists as the basis for interpretation of some of Powys's novels" to "interpret him in the context of postmodernist theory" and claims that the most important connecting element between postmodernist theorists and Powys is that they "are all, in a loose sense, pluralists" (5).

[17] Cf. Peter Brooks, "The idea of a psychoanalytic literary criticism".

[18] Ibid., cf. Peter Brooks, *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling.*

[19] Cf. Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* and Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1979).

fatal death of his mythology.[20] Consequently, reading, as it is represented in *Wolf Solent,* reveals itself as "truly" carnivalesque in the Bakhtinian sense of the word.

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[20] My reading of *Wolf Solent* thus partly corresponds to the one given by Ian Hughes in his "The Genre of John Cowper Powys's Major Novels," [*Rethinking Powys — Critical Essays on John Cowper Powys*, ed. Jeremy Robinson (Kidderminster, Crescent Moon, 1999), 37–48]. While I agree with him that "Powys finally succeeds admirably in his attempt to dramatise the philosophic education of a central figure" (46) in *Wolf Solent*, and reading the novel as a "philosophic romance" (37) elaborating the "philosophy of sensationalism" (40) does not exclude a carnivalesque reading, I still think that it implies a closure and a finite nature that do not characterise the novel.

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The Rhetoric and Ethics of Reading*

Éva Antal

The context of my research is given by my doctoral thesis on irony, where I studied several ironological (irony-theoretical) texts of primary importance. In the last part I analysed the irony-conceptions of the (modern) American New Criticism and the (postmodern) American deconstruction. Now I would particularly like to emphasise the fact that while I was studying those texts on irony, my attention gradually focused on deconstruction and the so-called rhetoric of reading. The conclusion of my thesis is concerned with the (possible) ethics of reading, whereas the term was—and now in my paper is—borrowed from a Yale professor and critic, Joseph Hillis Miller, and his book, *The Ethics of Reading*. The study of this paradoxical term and its meanings—which we may look at suspiciously—leads to different reading techniques of modernism and postmodernism. I have used the word 'techniques', but I had better say 'practices' of reading because both in the American modernist New Criticism and postmodern deconstruction, the practicality of theories is emphasised. I think that for us teachers, critics, writers and readers (sometimes) functioning as 'models' in our life it is really important to take these ideas into consideration.

When we speak about deconstruction in the States, we feel compelled to indicate the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida's influence; immediately adding that Derrida does not name himself a deconstructionist and, actually, this something called deconstruction was born and brought up at the University of Yale in Paul de Man's, J. H. Miller's, Geoffrey H. Hartman's and Harold Bloom's, the four main deconstructors' work—of course, with Derrida's '(dis)seminating' step-fatherhood. In his *Allegories of Reading* de Man defines what the rhetorical means to him:

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> I follow the usage of common speech in calling this semiological enigma 'rhetorical'. The grammatical model of the question becomes rhetorical not when we have, on the one hand, a literal meaning and on the other hand a figural meaning, but when it is impossible to decide by grammatical or other linguistic devices which of the two meanings (that can be entirely incompatible) prevails. Rhetoric radically suspends logic and opens up vertiginous possibilities of referential abberations. (de Man AR, 10)

In the next sentence as antecedents, de Man refers not to Derrida's impact, but he mentions two modernist critics of the school named New Criticism: Monroe Breadsley and William Wimsatt, who also recognized the importance of the rhetorical in textual understanding. It also shows us that if we want to understand the rhetoric and later the ethics of reading, we have to map the preliminaries. That is, to understand the postmodern reading practice and its ethical implications, first, we need to know about the modernist view of reading, which gives the immediate context of American deconstruction.

In America in the 1940s–50s, having realised that students could not do anything with pieces of literature (especially, with poems), university teachers—John Crowe Ransom, Robert Penn Warren, René Wellek, Allan Tate, William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks—developed and used a new method to analyse literary and philosophical texts. Besides practical textbooks written to students—eg. the famous 'understanding-series' (*Understanding Poetry*, *Understanding Fiction*)—their articles and studies were also concerned with the theory of literature, literary language and literary criticism; we can think of the well-known 'Wellek–Warren-book' titled *Theory of Literature*. Thus, it can be said that their mission—and they really took their work in such a way—made them immensely influential and productive.

What was new in their criticism? They deliberately acted against the branches of contemporary criticism, such as sociological, biographical or philological criticism, and demanded a more systematic and more rigorous approach in reading. They claimed that literary language differed from any other kind of language; consequently, critics, teachers, students, that is, readers had to concentrate on the texts themselves. In their work, *Literary Criticism,* Wimsatt and Brooks define "the principle task of criticism—perhaps *the* task of criticism—is to make explicit to the reader the implicit manifold of meanings" (652). They also undertook the task of improving the readers, not the authors, by showing them the complexity and inexhaustible richness of the literary works.

The key terms of their theoretically based approach are: "close

reading", structure and irony. That is, according to the New Critics, the text and its language are to be considered without any interest in the author's age or life; for example, in a poem we should pay attention only to the usage of language and the structure created. The real meaning of a literary text is given by and in its semantic structure, which is, on the one hand, dynamic—every poem is a little drama—showing the reconciliation of opposites; and on the other hand organic, that is, nothing is irrelevant. Thus, every detail contributes to the whole. As in his article, "The Heresy of Paraphrase", Brooks describes: "the structure meant is a structure of meanings, evaluations and interpretations; and the principle of unity which informs it seems to be one of balancing and harmonizing connotations, attitudes and meanings" (195). This poetic structure and its desired unity is not rational or logical, but—to use Brooksian similes—it resembles that of architecture or painting, a ballet or musical composition based on the "pattern of resolved stresses" (Brooks WWU, 203).

In poems, tension, conflicts and stresses are given by the 'problematic' elements, such as metaphors, symbols, paradoxes and other figures of speech, because they easily get their connotative meanings from the context. For example, Wimsatt in *The Verbal Icon* says that in a good metaphor "two clearly and substantially named objects ... are brought into such a context that they face each other with fullest relevance and illumination" (111). In spite of the conflicting or opposing meanings by the end of the close reading, an equilibrium of forces, a unity is supposed to be given, and "this unity is not a unity of the sort to be achieved by the reduction and simplification appropriate to an algebraic formula. It is a positive unity, not a negative; it represents not a residue but an achieved harmony" (Wimsatt VI, 114–115). Using the above mentioned drama-metaphor, it can be imagined as if the conflicting forces, more exactly the possible semantic (connotative) meanings of the words were fighting, and their tension resulted in a climax giving the theme, a leading idea or conclusion of a text. The whole process of close textual understanding is summarized in one word: irony. Nevertheless, in the modern New Criticism irony is overused. On the one hand, "it is the most general term that we have for the kind of qualification which the various elements in a context receive from the context" (Brooks WWU, 209); that is, irony necessarily operates in every context and in every reading process. On the other hand, by the end of our close reading of a text we have to reveal the work's (possible) "invulnerability to irony". As Brooks introduces this idea in the wonderful arch-simile:

> Irony, then, in this further sense, is not only an acknowledgement of the pressures of a context. Invulnerability to irony is the stability of a context in which the internal pressures balance and mutually support

> each other. The stability is like that of the arch: the very forces which are calculated to drag the stones to the ground actually provide the principle of support—a principle in which thrust and counterthrust become the means of stability. (Brooks "Irony", 1044)

Let us pay attention to two things here: first, the figurative language used by the new critics in their close reading/writing; secondly, their obsession with a wanted/wished equilibrium and totality in textual understanding. While the first phenomenon leads us to the deconstructive attack on New Criticism, the second one foreshadows the moral implications of close reading.

Although the New Critics do not explicitly speak about ethical questions, for them poetry means "a way of knowing something: (if the poem is a real creation,) it is a kind of knowledge that we did not possess before"—as Allen Tate claims in *The Essays of Four Decades* adding: "it is not knowledge 'about' something else; . . .it is the fullness of that knowledge" (Tate 104–105). When Brooks says that, optimally, the ironical reading process results in "a unification of attitudes into a hierarchy subordinated to a total and governing attitude" (Wimsatt–Brooks LC, 380), he displays his totalizing and somewhat holistic, though dialectic, worldview. In the concluding paragraphs of his "Irony as a Principle of Structure" he confesses that in textual close reading "penetrating insights" can be gained and one of the uses of poetry is to make the readers "better citizens". But poetry, that is, a given figurative text, manages it relying on the expressed relevant particulars, not with the usage of abstraction. More accurately, it carries us "beyond the abstract creed into the very matrix from which our creeds are abstracted" (Brooks "Irony", 1048). Thus, specific moral problems can be the subject matter of literature, but the purpose of literature is not to point a moral.

I suppose, it can be guessed that in close reading—due to the critics' concern with true knowledge and wisdom—"such qualities as wit, ambiguity, irony, paradox, complexity, and tension are valued for more than aesthetic reasons; they are indexes to the view of reality—and of man and truth—in the work. They are, therefore, not really aesthetic or rhetorical but, since they are modes of apprehending reality, ontological or, in the broad sense, religious" (Spears 240). What's more, in "Cleanth Brooks and the Responsibilities of Criticism" Monroe K. Spears sees the mission of New Critics grounded in the tradition of Christian humanism giving ontological meaning to their reading practice while their irony is taken religiously, or at least ethically.

In the modernist close reading of New Criticism the belief in the possibility of order and the quest for order are emphasised, since in literature the reader is supposed to find true knowledge, "knowledge of a value-

structured world" (Wellek 228). As Wellek quotes Brooks's claim, namely, poetry gives "a special kind of knowledge... through poetry, man comes to know himself in relation to reality, and thus attains wisdom" (Wellek 229). The New Critics also have their belief in a strong sense of community expressed by the romantic idea of 'organic unity'. Actually, I characterised their reading technique as 'ironic' paying attention to the rhetorical forces of a given text, it is better called "irenic" striving for the equilibrium of those forces. Although we can find the New Critical approach quite positive and fruitful, we have to admit its basic idealistic naivity resulting from the modernist efforts aimed at solving the surrounding chaos of the world. Their desired vaulted arch symbolizing understanding can refer to perfection, but we cannot forget that it is suspended in the air between two solid, but imagined buildings.

In his early critical writings (*Blindness and Insight*) Paul de Man, one of the four Yale-deconstructors, deals with this shift from 'close(d)' reading to the open—later with his term named as allegorical—reading. In his essay titled "Form and Intent in the American New Criticism" he says, though the New Critics noticed the importance of and paid attention to such distinctive features of literary language as ambiguity or irony, these structural elements themselves contradicted the very premises on which the New Criticism with its central "totalizing principle" was founded. In the key paragraph he describes this process:

> As it refines its interpretations more and more, American criticism does not discover a single meaning, but a plurality of significations that can be radically opposed to each other. Almost in spite of itself, it pushes the interpretative process so far that the analogy between the organic world and the language of poetry finally explodes. This unitarian criticism finally becomes a criticism of ambiguity, an ironic reflection on the absence of the unity it had postulated. (de Man BI, 28)

Actually, it seems as if de Man had thought over the new critical approach of reading—reading its theory closely—, and on the basis of its faults or 'blind spots' and 'insights' he developed his later ideas. According to de Man, the greatest mistake of New Criticism was, while they tried to pay "such patient and delicate attention to the reading of forms" (de Man BI, 29), the presupposed idea of totality forced them to find closed forms and to strive for order. It can be said that they simply used Heidegger's theory of hermeneutical circularity, but they forgot about the fact that the (hermeneutical) act of understanding is a temporal one. As de Man remarks: "yet, the temporal factor, so persistently forgotten, should remind us that

the form is never anything but a process on the way to its completion" (de Man BI, 28). And the symbol that can show the true nature of textual understanding is not the circle or the arch, but the spiral line that consists of seemingly closed/closing circles displaying the temporal and neverending process of understanding, that is, the rhetoric of temporality.

In *Blindness and Insight* in the essay titled "The Rhetoric of Temporality", de Man regards allegory together with irony as the key rhetorical tropes in our (textual) understanding. Here he is concerned with the differences of the two rhetorical figures, which he defines in their relation to time. Though both show the discontinuous relationship between sign and meaning, the experience of time in the case of irony means "a synchronic structure, while allegory appears as a successive mode capable of engendering duration" (de Man BI, 226)—that is, it is diachronic. It is quite obvious why de Man feels obliged to distinguish the two tropes: he wants to resist, to get detached or differentiated from the new critical reading asserting that "the dialectical play between the two modes, as well as their common interplay with mystified forms of language ..., which it is not in their power to eradicate, make up what is called literary history" (de Man BI, 226). We can guess that after the New Critical emphasis on irony as a basic principle, in the de Manian reading, allegory is given primacy. Having published his theoretical works, de Man starts to interpret/read philosophical and literary texts relying on his ideas of the rhetorical. In the greatest collection of his readings titled *Allegories of Reading* (its subtitle says: *Figural language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*) he defines his rhetorical mode of reading:

> The paradigm for all texts consists of a figure (or a system of figures) and its deconstruction. But since this model cannot be closed off by a final reading, it engenders, in its turn, a supplementary figural superposition which narrates the unreadability of the prior narration. As distinguished from primary deconstructive narratives centered on figures and ultimately always on a metaphor, we can call such narratives to the second (or the third) degree *allegories*. Allegorical narratives tell the story of the failure to read. (de Man AR, 205)

But I can immediately add that efforts are made again and again as we try to understand, try to read a text and its allegory. It means that in the background, not only in the texts but in language itself, there should be something that makes the different allegorical readings possible and also helps us readers accept the impossibility of a final reading. We 'need' this something that is essentially rhetorical; we need irony. As in the concluding sentences of his *Allegories*—in the chapter titled *Excuses*—de Man says:

'Irony is no longer a trope but the undoing of the deconstructive allegory of all tropological cognitions, the systematic undoing, in other words, of understanding. As such, far from closing off the tropological system, irony enforces the repetition of its aberration" (de Man AR, 301).

Now, after this long—but I hope necessary and not uninteresting—digression on reading, the most important question comes: what happened to the possible covert moral implication of the New Criticism in de Man's reading? I should claim that in the rhetorical deconstructive reading it has become overt; what's more, it has become evident. In his readings de Man speaks about the "practical ethical dimension of allegory" (de Man AR, 209) and he also says that "allegories are always ethical" (de Man AR, 206). The famous quotation reads as follows:

> Allegories are always ethical, the term ethical designating the structural interference of two distinct value systems. In this sense, ethics has nothing to do with the will (thwarted or free) of a subject, nor *a fortiori*, with a relationship between subjects. The ethical category is imperative (ie., a category rather than a value) to the extent that it is linguistic and not subjective. Morality is a version of the same language aporia that gave rise to such concepts as 'man' or 'love' or 'self', and not the cause or the consequence of such concepts. The passage to an ethical tonality does not result from a transcendental imperative but it is referential (and therefore unreliable) version of a linguistic confusion. Ethics (or, one should say, ethicity) is a discursive mode among others. (de Man AR, 206).

First, in this luminous paragraph, before going into details, we can find three different words related to our chosen topic: morality, ethics and ethicity. I think de Man does not simply want to play on words, since the more ancient—or modern—word, morality, and its science, ethics, are differentiated from the postmodern term, ethicity.[1] Although in their original meaning the words seem to refer to the same realm of the question of good versus wrong behaviour, from the common foundation the postmodern theory of ethics named ethicity gives rise to multiplicity. That is, in the word 'ethicity' we can see the deconstruction of ethics with preserving and questioning its aporetic roots. Despite the usual attack on deconstruction claiming that deconstruction turns from ethical problems in complete indifference, it rather turns to and regards such questions in their differences.

[1] Moreover, in its meaning the word 'ethicity' can be taken as being closer to morality than ethics, as it is also concerned with practice, not rules or system of rules formulated in ethics.

That is, the ethicity of deconstruction can be named 'ethics-in-difference' as being sensitive to variety it pays more attention to differences and consciously accepts them.

In de Man's theory, the new term of ethicity is strongly connected with the practice of reading, more exactly, the allegorical reading practice. In *Allegories of Readings* his analyses are about the universality and the impossibility of Reading (written with capital 'r') as he says "any narrative (that is, story-telling) is primarily the allegory of his own reading ... the allegory of reading narrates the impossibility of reading" (de Man AR, 76–7). However good we are as readers, we inevitably fail to read allegories due to the fact that a rhetorical trope says one thing and always means another, and its final reading thus becomes impossible. For de Man, "Reading" (written in quotation marks and capitalized)—also as an allegory—"includes not just ... the act of reading works of literature, but sensation, perception, and therefore every human act whatsoever" (Miller ER, 58). That is, it gives "the ground and foundation of human life" (Miller ER, 48) and, consequently, in a given text, event or experience we cannot reach a totality of understanding; that is, we cannot have a single, definitive interpretation.

De Man's theory certainly can be applied to de Man's reading of his own text or my understanding of his reading. In his *Ethics of Reading* J. H. Miller as a good reader tries to understand the impossible and reads de Man's ideas on ethicity in one of his chapters titled "Reading Unreadability: de Man". Analysing the famous quotation, Miller calls attention to the way de Man rejects the traditional, basically Kantian theory of ethics. Though de Man still uses the words, 'category' and 'imperative' alluding to the Kantian 'categorical imperative', for him the ethical category is neither subjective, nor transcendental—but linguistic. Being taken as a linguistic phenomenon, the ethical refers to a necessary element in language and life, namely that "we cannot help making judgments of right or wrong or commanding others to act according to those judgments (or) condemning them for not doing so"—says Miller (Miller ER, 46).

In his chapter on de Man's ethicity, he also emphasises the existential importance of reading and the 'fictional' (imagined sequence of allegories) nature of the (neverending) process of understanding that "mix(es) tropological, allegorical, referential, ethical, political, and historical dimensions" (Miller ER, 44). As de Man claims, the ethical just like the allegorical is only one of the possible 'discursive modes'; not a primary, but a secondary or a tertiary category, that is, they do not and cannot come first in textual understanding. Then what comes first? Referring again to the quotation it clearly says that the reading process starts from "a figure (or a system of figures) and its deconstruction", then due to its

deconstruction it is followed (endlessly) by a sequence of "supplementary figural superposition" which tells "the unreadability of the prior narration". And these narratives—actually generated by the primary one are called allegorical narratives or allegories telling "the story of the failure to read" (de Man AR, 205).

Thus, *right* at the beginning of understanding we have rhetorical figures; more exactly, language with its determining laws. And—following de Man's ideas—I can say this is the very first and the very last moment when the word 'right' can be *truly* used, as starting our reading of a text with its rhetorical figures, we must (truly) enter its *false* world. Although we are in the realm of falsehood, being good readers we try to read it *right*; and, what's more, the ethical appears in this contextualized falsehood. For de Man "the term ethical designates the structural interference of two distinct value systems" referring to the epistemological true-false and the ethical right-wrong value-pairs. That is, in an allegorical reading a statement cannot be both true and right at once, as "it is impossible to respond simultaneously to those two demands" (Miller ER, 49).

Therefore instead of using the expression 'ethical value', de Man speaks about 'the ethical category' regarding it as an imperative: as an obligation it is taken absolute and unconditional. Both Miller and de Man (and I myself) struggle with the real meaning of de Man's ethicity—as can be expected in a text claiming the unreadability of reading. Miller quotes another interesting passage, where de Man clearly names his 'true' categorical imperative: "in the case of reading of a text, what takes place is a necessary understanding... an understanding is an epistemological event prior to being an ethical or aesthetic value" (Miller ER, 51–52). I think it becomes obvious that de Man knows only one imperative: the imperative of language with its—quite hermeneutical—'read!' or 'understand!'. Returning to the central de Manian principle, Miller concludes that "to live is to read, or rather to commit again and again the failure to read which is the human lot... each reading is strictly speaking, ethical, in the sense that it *has* to take place, by an implacable necessity, as a response to a categorical demand" (Miller ER, 59). Our world is full of texts and systems of signs, which we are bound to understand; we cannot help reading, but we should accept that we cannot go beyond the borders of language. And we also have to accept that the ethical is only one of the possible but necessary referential modes of our reading.

Actually, Miller tries to read and interpret de Man's theory of the 'rhetorical close-reading' from an ethical point of view, but he himself cannot escape from falling into the traps of the rhetorical, of language. At the end of his reading on de Man's ethicity, Miller answers his own question

using the tricky affirmative of double negation. He says that in de Man's case "(the) ethics of reading imposes on the reader the 'impossible' task of reading unreadability, but that *does not* by *any* means mean that reading, even 'good' reading, *cannot* take place and *does not* have a necessary ethical dimension" (Miller ER, 59. Italics are mine).

On the whole, Miller's effort, aimed at showing the ethics of reading in de Man's ethicity, cannot be seen as really convincing. Miller is apologizing all time that he is only a reader (and cannot be anybody else), which also means that he must be mistaken if he thinks his own reading as a definitive one. Despite of it being a 'mission impossible' he still insists on the necessity of the ethical in understanding, and works out his ethics of reading, relying on de Man's ethical-linguistic imperative expressed in the allegorical reading. Thus in the following chapters after interpreting de Man's ethicity, he explores passages from three novelists' (George Eliot, Anthony Trollope and Henry James) works. Although in his introductory "Reading Doing Reading" Miller confesses that his selection of texts and their ordering is not innocent, he claims that he at random chose his examples. Let us believe him in the case of the literary works, but I strongly doubt that the second chapter written on the famous de Manian passage resulted from an arbitrary choice. The same is true of the other topic dealt with in the previous chapter, since the very first chapter is concerned with Kant's categorical imperative.

In fact, towards the end of the chapter on de Man's 'unreadable reading', Miller quotes Kant's concluding sentence in *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*) about the incomprehensibility of the moral imperative: "And so we do not indeed comprehend the practical unconditional necessity of the moral imperative; yet we do not comprehend its incomprehensibility, which is all that can be fairly demanded of a philosophy which in its principles strives to reach the limit of human reason" (Miller ER, 56). According to Miller, while Kant, to some extent, still believed in the ability of language and reason to formulate an understanding of a nonlinguistic impossibility, de Man regards the moral imperative and reason as aspects of language and language cannot be used to understand/to read its own limitation.

In a chapter titled "Reading Telling: Kant", Miller tries to understand and deconstruct the Kantian categorical imperative to show an example of his (mysterious) ethics of reading. The English translation of the well-known apodictic formula[2] goes "I always should act *as if* my private maxim were

[2] "...ich soll niemals anders verfahren, *als so*, dass ich auch wollen könne, meine Maxime solle ein allgemeines Gesetz werden." I basically rely on the English translation of the Kantian formula quoted in Miller's work, but I also consulted with the original

to be universal legislation for all mankind" or in another way "I should never act *in such a way* that I could not also will that my maxim should be a universal law" (Kant 21). In the formula, Miller calls our attention to the usage of 'as if' (*als so*) and 'in such a way' together with the mode of past subjunctive (cf.unreal past): to accept the Kantian categorical imperative, we should use our imagination. That is, with this *als so* we must enter the world of fiction, and having created a fictitious context, a little novel, we shall be able to tell whether or not the action is moral. Miller again emphasises that narrative or story-making gives the basic activity of the human mind together with the ability of telling stories to each other and understanding them; that is, (again) we cannot help reading. He finds that "narrative serves for Kant as the absolutely necessary *bridge* without which there would be no connecting between law as such and any particular ethical rule of behaviour" (Miller ER, 28). Moreover, Miller finds it is quite interesting that in his sytem, Kant regarded his third critique, *Critique of Judgment* (work of art), as serving as a bridge between epistemology (the work of pure reason) and ethics (the work of practical reason) separated by a deep chasm.

Then, among other passages, Miller quotes a footnote from *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in which Kant tries to give what he means by the expression, 'to act from respect (Achtung) for law', claiming that "respect can be regarded as the effect of the law on the subject and not as the cause of the law... All respect for a person is only respect for the law of which the person provides *an example*" (Miller ER, 18. Italics are mine). Here it is again expressed that in our life we are related to the ethical through finding analogies and reading stories. We can judge a person or an act as ethical, because we find him or it being analogous to the incomprehensible law: as if human beings and their life events or narrated stories were used as rhetorical figures of speech (signs) referring to the moral imperative.

According to Miller, this footnote reveals the Kantian reading of ethics, as he finds that the author reads himself or re-reads his own text. As Miller says "at such moments an author turns back on himself, so to speak, turns back on a text he or she has written, re-reads it, and, it may be, performs an act which can be called an example of the ethics of reading" (Miller ER, 15). In this sentence it is revealed that this moment is not a necessity in every text, as it may happen. But for Miller, or me, the deconstructive reader, who exactly pays attention to those moments, it means a necessity, a must, and the self-reading blindness of the chosen texts becomes the insight of the

German text, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten, Werkausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982).

ethics of reading in his/my understanding. Since throughout he suggests keeping in mind that his "interest is not in ethics as such but in the ethics of reading and in the relation of the ethical moment in reading to relation in the sense of giving account, telling a story, narrating" (Miller ER, 15).

But being a deconstructor, Miller cannot give a relaxing conclusion of his reading of the Kantian ethics. In the last pages he discusses the performative act of promising offered by the Kantian categorical imperative. Unfortunately, the example Kant gives is one of false promise, which "does not exemplify that of which it is meant to be an example" (Miller ER, 36). Miller with great pleasure displays Kant's blindness or slip of the tongue concluding that in the end the good reader is to be confronted by not the moral law, not even a good example of it, but by the unreadability of the text. The promise is made in language, and it cannot promise anything but itself with its own unfathomed abyss. To quote Miller's judgment: "The example, he (Kant) assures us, will serve as the safe bridge between (the universal law) and (the particular case). Instead of that, the example divides itself within itself between two possible but incompatible readings and so becomes unreadable. The bridge which was to vault over the abyss between universal and particular law opens another chasm within itself" (Miller ER, 35). Thinking of the bridge-metaphor, we can remember the vault of New Criticism and it can be concluded that both of them, the modernist and postmodernist metaphors of reading, remain in the realm of figurative 'falsehood'.

Thus, in texts the ethical can be said to basically mean the introduction of a universal 'must'. As Miller summarises:

> In what I call 'the ethical moment' there is a claim made on the author writing the work, on the narrator telling the story within the fiction of the novel, on the characters within the story at their decisive moments of their lives, and on the reader, teacher, or critic responding to the work. This ethical 'I must' cannot... be accounted for by the social and historical forces that impinge upon it. In fact the ethical moment contests these forces or is subversive of them (Miller ER, 8).

Now, we can ask the question: why is it so important for the deconstructors to insist on the existence of such discursive modes, namely, the ethical, the social, the political or the historical, which sound quite odd in their rhetorical analyses? In his introduction, Miller says that his provocative choosing of the title and topic, 'ethics of reading' can be explained by the attacks on deconstruction, as it is often labelled as 'nihilistic', 'ahistorical', 'relativist', 'immoral' or 'negative' (Miller ER, 9). In spite of these mistaken, or at least awkward, polemics being aimed at calling against the rhetorical-

deconstructive reading practice, they obviously appear as a necessity in the course of the history of literary criticism and theory.

On the whole, as Jonathan Loesberg remarks "the most virulent charge against deconstruction [is] its aestheticism [which] stands as a vague synonym for imagining a realm of art entirely separate from social or historical effects and then advocating an escape into that 'unreal', aesthetic universe" (Loesberg 3). On the one hand, I think, the Yale-critics would answer that there is no escape beyond language and textual understanding. They would also say that they really do work hard as reading needs continuous efforts, and they should follow a must: a linguistic necessity, which can be called a hermeneutical or ethical imperative. On the other hand, deconstruction as a new mode of criticism (cf. new new criticism) appeared in the last few decades of the 20^{th} century, and the end of the previous centuries were similarly marked by the atmosphere of decadence—with the signs of nihilism, hedonism, pessimism and escapist fantasies.[3]

But there is a crucial difference between deconstruction and other decadent theories of art: it is its strong sense of responsibility. In *The Ethics of Reading*—following de Man's idea on the necessity of reading—Miller claims that "each reading is, strictly speaking, ethical, in the sense that it *has* to take place, by an implacable necessity, as a response to a categorical demand, and in the sense that the reader *must* take responsibility for it and for its consequences" (Miller ER, 59). And here the word 'reader' can not only refer to the writer and his invented figures, but also critics, teachers

[3] I especially find one period close to deconstruction in its ideas: English Victorianism with its central theorist, Walter Pater. The movement called the English *l'art pour l'art*, 'art for art's sake', which meant that a circle of the novelists and painters was basically centered around or related to Pater himself and all the members were also attacked due to their 'sinful' aestheticism. In spite of the differences between the two kinds of criticism, the question of the ethical in the aesthetical emphatically appeared in both of them. Let me refer to a particular work now: Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Despite the scandaleous nature of the work with its welcoming of amorality, new hedonism, worship of art and Greek spirit in love (cf. homosexuality), it offers a puzzling ending. Dorian Gray wishes to remain handsome and pure, while his portrait, his 'magical mirror', is getting old and marked by his sinful deeds. In the end he tries to destroy the portrait, the only witness to his ugly and unjust life, but he dies while his portrait gets back the original purity and goodness of his youth. How can we interpret the ending? In Dorian's death we can claim the victory of art over life, but the villain is punished. Consequently, we can read the ending as a moral conclusion united with the perfection of art, which Wilde called the expression of "ethical beauty" (quoted in Ellmann 321). See "The New Aestheticism". In Ellmann, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*. NY: Vintage Books, 1988.

and students, since all of us are involved, must be involved, in the process of Reading. And in a later work titled *Victorian Subjects* Miller emphatically connects the problem of responsibility expressed in the ethics of reading with the obligation of teachers. Being a reader, the teacher is also obliged to submit himself or herself to "the truth of the linguistic imperative" of reading, that is, to "the power of the words of the text over the mind" (Miller VS, 255). In this sense the teacher is taken as a revealer, not a creator and the way Miller describes the teacher's ethical reading is similar to the Socratic method:

> The obligation of the reader, the teacher, and the critic would seem to be exclusively epistemological. The reader must see clearly what the work in question says and repeat that meaning in his commentary or teaching. He functions thereby, modestly as *an intermediary*, as a *midwife or catalyst*. He *transmits* meanings which are objectively there but which might not otherwise have reached readers or students. He *brings the meaning to birth again* as illumination and insight in their minds, making the interaction take place without himself entering into it or altering it. It would seem that the field covered by reading involves exclusively the epistemological categories of truth and falsehood, insight and blindness. (Miller VS, 237).

I am sure the tone of this description can be felt as being quite ironic, and we should remember that the Socratic method itself was based on irony. We can wonder if the deconstructors think it is impossible to Read—that is, to give a definitive reading of a text—what is happening in the seminars. The answer is 'obvious': reading is happening as it is bound to take place. Maybe, it sounds strange after all these theoretical analyses, but being a teacher of English literature[4] I agree with the Yale-critics, who work or worked as teachers, that the questioning Socratic way is useful in teaching. Certainly, all of us are aware of the fact that—like in the Socratic dialogues—the questions are directed. Yet in the ethics of reading they are directed not by the teacher, but by the text: its rhetoric and linguistic imperative. This makes it possible for every student to read the text in his or her own way, while the teacher acts as mediator and moderator at the same time.

I think that besides acting like a 'midwife' and encouraging the imaginative reading skill of the students, a good teacher needs something else—a sense of irony. Irony is needed to accept the students' different views

[4] Though I obtained my PhD-degree in philosophy (more exactly, in aesthetics), I teach history of English literature and literary theory at the Department of English Studies. Actually, the combination of my present occupation and my philosophical attitude has resulted in my interest in the rhetoric and ethics of reading.

on the texts, and so keep the varied lines of thought together. But this deconstructive irony means more than simply referring to a trope since it is an attitude, an openness towards reality, ethicity, reading, and teaching that is based on the ability of shifting points of view. It marks the ability of avoiding to claim this or that interpretation as the final one, while giving the experience of reading to each and every student. And I am sure it cannot be done without accepting that the final reading, Reading, is unattainable, which we should admit cannot be done without irony. I hope to have fulfilled my—hopefully, not a false—promise of discussing 'the rhetoric and ethics of reading', and you have been 'its' (and also my) good readers.

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The English Cathedral: From Description to Analysis*

Matthew Palmer

That the appearance of English cathedrals differs from those of its counterparts on the continent is beyond question.[1] That English cathedrals have "a distinctive national character", as has been suggested mostly famously by Nikolaus Pevsner in his famous essay "The Englishness of English Art", is however open to debate.[2] By questioning this latter statement, which appears to be the starting point for Endre Abkarovits's "English Gothic Cathedral Architecture" seminar, we hope to provide students with new fields for debate and analysis.[3] Most of the debates outlined below are well-known with the exception perhaps of a suggested intercultural analysis of Gothic architecture in Hungary and England. By providing what British Council British Studies literature describes as an "intercultural focus" we are hope to provide students not only with an opportunity to apply knowledge and architectural examples from closer to home but to make the point that English Gothic is not necessarily distant and exotic.[4] Indeed, by

* The English Department at the Károly Eszterházy College in Eger is unique amongst English Departments in Hungarian Higher Education in offering courses on Medieval Art History. What is remarkable is, that despite the lack of resources, the specialised language the discipline demands and the fact nearly all the primary documents are in Latin, the courses on offer have proved popular. It is a notable achievement for which Endre Abkarovits deserves to take great credit. This paper has been written especially with Dr. Abkarovits and his students in mind.

1 Fletcher, Sir Banister Flight, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (London, Architectural Press, 1896, 1921 edition), pp. 500–507.

2 Abkarovits, E., "Teaching the Englishness of English Gothic Cathedrals", *Eger Journal of English Studies* Vol. II., ed. Abkarovits, E. (Eger, EKF Líceum Kiadó, 1998), pp. 43–65; Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The Englishness of English Art* (Harmondsworth, Peregrin, 1956)

3 Abkarovits, op. cit. p. 62.

4 Jones, K. (Senior Advisor for British Studies, English Language Division) 1992. "British Studies R and D Project: Executive Summary First Quarterly Report", The British Council, April 1.

stressing the fact that England and Hungary formed constituent parts of the same Gothic world to which the Kingdom of Hungary also belonged, albeit at the furthest extents of Jenő Szücs's "the three regions of Europe", we are adopting a standpoint which is not only topical, as Hungary has recently joined the European Union, but entirely in the spirit of Villard de Honnecourt, whose travels took him to Hungary.[5] The paper intends to raise issues, each of which will be introduced by a "keyword".

"Englishness"

The conceptual jump from saying that English cathedrals have common generic features to suggesting that these features contain some essentially national characteristics is enormous, and one which critics of Nikolaus Pevsner have been only too happy to draw our attention to. The most famous contribution to this particular debate probably being David Watkin's in his essay on Pevsner in *Morality and Architecture* in which he writes:

> [...] in order to sustain the argument that there must be some unconscious synthesis, some underlying uniformity which will be a reflection of national character, the historian has to bring to his subject all sorts of assumptions about the national character, language, religion, politics, and so on. And these assumptions, unlike the art-historical assumptions, are rarely analysed or defended.[6]

Whilst it might be wise to avoid the question of "national character" in an analysis of English cathedrals, its existence as part of a cultural debate should be recognised, albeit as part of an introduction to the historiography of the subject. It would, however, be unfair to expect students of English in Hungary to be completely familiar with core texts such as Paul Frankl's classic study *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* (Princeton, 1960), who has this to say on the topic of "Gothic as a National Phenomenon": "Nobody will deny that there exists a Gothic particular brand of the Isle of France, Burgundy etc. Yet there is no connection with «blood and soil» as the same provinces created—or copied—other styles at other times. Again the explanation lies in intellectual or spiritual reasons common to those who dwell together all their lives."[7]

It is for this reason, that while we agree that the study of English Gothic cathedrals has a valid place within a British Studies curriculum, and

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[5] Szücs J, *Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról* (Budapest, Magvető, 1983), pp. 10–11.

[7] Frankl, Paul, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 685–6.

one which will help in our understanding of the Middle Ages, the study of English cathedrals will not necessarily help us understand English culture in general across the ages unless one addresses the questions of historiography, ideology and language.[8]

Language

Although we have very few documents telling us how contemporaries saw their "Gothic" buildings, and those we have are in Latin, we do have Gervase's description of the rebuilding of the choir of Canterbury Cathedral following the catastrophic fire of 1174. It is a description in which Gervase tells us what he thinks are the significant differences between the old building and the new one:

> The pillars of the old and new work are alike in form and thickness but different in length. For the new pillars are elongated by almost twelve feet. In the old capitals the work was plain, in the new ones exquisite in sculpture. There the circuit of the choir had twenty-two pillars, here are twenty-eight. There the arches and everything else was plain, or sculpted with an axe and not with a chisel. But here almost throughout is appropriate sculpture. No marble columns were there, but here are innumerable ones. There, in the circuit around the choir, the vaults were plain, but here they are arch-ribbed and have keystones. There a wall set upon the pillars divided the crosses from the choir, but here the crosses are separated from the choir by no such partition, and converge together in one keystone, which is placed in the middle of the great vault which rests on the four principal pillars. There, there was a ceiling of wood decorated with excellent painting, but here there is a vault beautifully constructed of stone and light tufa. There, was a single triforium, but here are two in the choir and a third in the aisle of the church of the church. All which will be better understood from inspection than by any description.[9]

Thus, it is that Gervase compares the Romanesque (or Norman) and Gothic styles, centuries before the terms were coined.

The *vocabulary* used by contemporary art historians has a history of its own, with terms like "Norman", "Early English", "Decorated" and "Perpendicular" having their own histories, some longer than others.[10]

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[8] Abkarovits concludes by saying: "This is why studying English Gothic cathedral architecture is an indispensible element in our understanding English culture" (op. cit. p. 64).

[10] The terms Norman, Early English and Decorated were coined by Thomas Rickman

An investigation into the etymology of English architectural terms, would constitute a course in its own right, and one in which students could draw upon their other majors and indeed their mother tongue. The variations existing within the terminology as used would provide but one part of this analysis. Why is it, for instance, that Thomas Rickman (1776–1841) originally dated "Early English" 1189–1307, whilst Alec Clifton-Taylor prefers 1175–1265 and John Harvey 1150–1250? Not only would this allow students to apply their historical knowledge and to learn building chronologies, they would actually have to ask themselves what actually constituted the style itself.[11]

It is also important to note that the *tone* of Gervase's description differs greatly from those of some of our contemporaries or near contemporaries:

> The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Salisbury is famous rather for its beauty and artistic merit than for its historical associations. It cannot compare with some other English cathedrals, such as Winchester or St Paul's, in historical significance, nor is it rich in tombs of kings or national heroes—though King Henry III was present at its consecration and many other royalty have worshipped there. But it is a splendid and graceful work of architecture, in the loveliest setting of any cathedral in this country; and its superb spire is renowned throughout the world, thanks in part to the paintings of John Constable. It symbolises the peaceful loveliness of the English countryside amidst which it stands, the eternal truths of the Christian Faith expressed in stone, and the continuing worship of Almighty God.[12]

It is this "gulf between our own perceptions and those of contemporaries"[13] which demands that we should treat any claims to universal values and eternal truths with caution.

Tradition

It is important for students to realise that the way people have looked at Gothic architecture frequently tells us more about the viewers and the spirit of the age in which they lived than the buildings themselves. There have been periods where Gothic architecture has been ignored or reviled, the term

in his book, *An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England from the Conquest to the Reformation* (London, 1817). See: Frankl, op. cit. pp. 506–7.

[11] My thanks to Eric Fernie

[13] Fernie, E, *The Architectural History of Norwich Cathedral* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 155.

originally having been coined to describe the pointed arch then considered the work of the uncultured Goths which contrasted with the round arch of the classical Greeks or Romans.[14] At other times the style has been lauded to the point of being hailed at various times as the "Christian style", the "socialist style", the "national style", the English not being alone in making this latter claim.[15]

Today, the association that English cathedrals tend to have with national character sits comfortably with the needs and requirements of the heritage industry, where cathedrals are marketed as being timeless manifestions of England's culture. However, when one in fact looks at the history of religious ceremonial, church music and all those other institutions and events which make the English cathedral what it is today, much of what one sees comes under what Eric Hobsbawn terms an "invented tradition", something which he defines as "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition and automatically implies continuity with the past."[16]

It is important to remember that the architectural environment in which these set of practices take place are very different from those experienced by medieval worshippers and visitors in later centuries. As David Cannadine writes, "the combination of poverty of means and absence of taste made the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century a low point in ecclesiastical and ecclesiological concern".[17] The pendulum was to swing to the other extreme with the arrival of the Gothic Revivalists. Indeed, the fervent ecclesiologists of the Cambridge Camden Society, founded in around 1839, was to have as catastrophic effect on England's cathedrals as the neglect which preceded it. Adherents of "ecclesiology", the science of church-building and decoration, believed that by collecting sufficient evidence one could discover universal principles they believed Gothic architects abided by. It was an approach which credited architects with embuing all aspects of their designs with symbolism. Once they had felt they had discovered the principles, Gothic Revivalists were not satisfied only with

[14] Clark, Kenneth, *The Gothic Revival* (Harmondsworth, Pelican, 1949), pp. 2–3. Before the honour was finally conceded to the French it was long believed by English antiquarians that the Gothic style originated in England.

[15] Frankl, op. cit. pp. 680–692.

[16] Hobsbawm, Eric, in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Hobsbawm E. and Ranger T. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 1.

[17] Cannadine, David, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition'", c. 1820–1977 in Ibid., p. 115.

merely designing new Gothic churches, they also went about "improving" or "correcting" errors perceived to have been committed by the medieval architects themselves. The results could be disastrous, as seen in J. M. Neale's wish, fortunately not acted upon, for Peterborough Cathedral to be pulled down, "if it could be replaced by a middle-pointed [cf. Decorated] cathedral as good of its sort".[18]

It was the eagerness of the Victorians to restore and partly rebuild England's parish churches and cathedrals which led William Morris the founder of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877 to demand that the original fabric be respected. This has been more or less accepted up to this day.[19] Nevertheless, one still has to be wary, especially at cathedrals as heavily restored as Ely and Lichfield, of looking at 19th century and not medieval masonry.

Nation

At no time during the Middle Ages do we hear of buildings in England being described as "English" in the same way as we hear of churches on the continent being described as *opus francigenum.*[20] From this, one can assume that people were not aware that English Gothic constituted an individual style, in the same way that those looking at French, or rather Parisian, Gothic did. For Burchard von Hall, writing in about 1280, "French" was a recognisable style, the sculpted saints on the interior and exterior, the windows and the piers provoking comment.

English was a variation of the *opus francigenum*, and architects in England decided to take what elements they wanted from it. It is perhaps wrong to suggest that architects in England willfully rejected the French style. Rather, rejection was of a passive nature caused by what Crossley

[18] Dixon, R. and Muthesius, S., *Victorian Architecture* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 194; White, James F., *The Cambridge Movement: The Ecclesiologists and the Gothic Revival* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 87 and p. 164.

[19] More recently, however, surveyors of the fabric like Donald Buttress, who was responsible for restoration work at Chichester Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, have been prepared to defend the interventions of some of his Victorian predecessors whilst doing a little "improving" themselves.

[20] Frankl (op. cit., p. 55) quotes from Burchard von Hall's *Chronicle* (c. 1280) describing building operations at the monastery of St Peter in Wimpfen on the River Neckar. "Richard caused the basilica to be constructed in the French style (*opus francigenum*) by a very experienced architect who had recently come from the city of Paris". Branner, Robert, *St Louis and the Court Style* (London, A. Zwemmer Ltd, 1965), pp. 122–3.

calls "a mixture of perversity and ignorance"[21]. When the "French and English artificers were summoned" to Canterbury to inspect the damage after the fire, as Gervase tells us, it is unlikely that they would have been offering the monks a choice of two styles, one French, the other English. When looking at the designs of the two architects who actually carried out the work it is difficult to decide which William came from France and which from England.

It is not difficult, however, to list the contrastive features between French and Early English cathedrals: the one broad, the other long, round ambulatories and square ends, western portals and side porches, compact masses and broken up masses, great height and moderate height, verticality and horizontality. However, having drawn up contrasts of this kind one must beware of jumping to too many conclusions.[22]

Gothic Design

As we have already seen the study of Gothic architecture is riddled with many theories. One such notion is structural rationalism, a term most associated with the writings of Eugene Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879). It believed that structural performance and structural efficiency, of employing "materials according to their qualities and properties", was the be all and end all of the Gothic style.[23] Whilst rarely believed today in their entirety Viollet-le-Duc's ideas and those of his followers have led popular art historians to show an unhealthy interest in the heights of vaults, the prominence of flying buttresses and the size of windows, yet sharing a view that the Gothic style was inherently progressive, and that all those who had not caught "world record fever"[24] (Gimpel) were either conservative or provincial. Whilst acknowledging that the Gothic was indeed a new style, it was essentially a *stylistic* transformation which took place in the Ile-de-France between 1135 and 1145. Jean Bony defines it in the following terms: "Gothic is a new style in which a new interpretation is given to all the aspects

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[21] Crossley, Paul "English Gothic Architecture", *The Age of Chivalry*, eds. Alexander J. and Binski P. (London, Royal Academy of Arts with Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 69.

[22] Perhaps one of the most famous list of contrasts can be found in Fletcher, op. cit., pp. 500–507.

[23] Summerson, John, *Heavenly Mansions* (London, The Cresset Press, 1949), pp. 135–158; Watkin, op. cit. pp. 23–32; Frampton, Kenneth, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1980), p. 64.

[24] Gimpel, Jean, *The Cathedral Builders* (New York, Grove Press, Inc., 1983), p. 76.

and data of architecture: construction, plan, masses and visual effects being all equally affected."[25]

Medieval architects designed vast buildings using simple tools and simple geometrical principles. Buildings were not designed with a detailed knowledge of loads and stresses, but on the use of the square, the (golden) rectangle, the regular polygon and complex shapes derived through relatively simple operations with the benefit of experience. No mathematics was involved as designs were based on simple logical progressions, proportions being used not ratios. Going upward was just one way such progressions could proceed. That those living in England were aware that the new Gothic style produced taller buildings we have seen in Gervase's description. However, the fact that English architects decided to design lower buildings cannot be explained on purely ethnic grounds, in the same way that French cathedrals cannot be explained merely in terms of structural efficiency.

For an understanding of how architects went about collecting ideas and producing new designs one need look no further than Villard de Honnecourt's sketchbook, a document which opens with the following words:

Villard de Honnecourt greets you and begs all those who are involved in all the different types of work mentioned in this book to pray for his soul and remember him; because this book may help be a great help in instructing the principles of masonry and carpentry. You will also find it contains methods of portraiture and line drawing as dictated by the laws of geometry.[26]

We would be foolish to ignore his pleas of supplication. Apart from being an important sourcebook in the understanding of Gothic taste and design, Villard de Honnecourt's sketchbook not only shows that the Kingdom of Hungary could be just as valid as a source of ideas as northern France, but also helps us understand how High Gothic evolved into the Rayonnant and Decorated styles.[27]

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[25] Ibid., p. 32.

[26] For Villard de Honnecourt in Hungary see: Gerevich L, "Villard de Honnecourt Magyarországon", *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* (Budapest, 1971), pp. 81–105. For his appreciation and perception of Gothic architecture see: Hearn M. F., "Villard de Honnecourt's Perception of Gothic Architecture", *Medieval Architecture and its Intellectual Context,* eds. Fernie E. and Crossley P. (London and Ronceverte, The Hambledon Press), pp. 127–136.

[27] Bony, Jean, "French Influences on the origins of English Gothic Architecture", *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 12, 1949, p. 46.

Region

It would be both more appropriate and practical to start one's analysis of English Gothic cathedrals by noting that they formed part of a much larger cultural and political landscape, one which spread from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Carpathians in the east during the course of its existence.[28] It is a geographical area which can be divided up in many ways, whether in terms of empires, kingdoms, duchies etc. or cultural landscapes. Students should be introduced to these frames of reference in order to decide whether England constitutes the best geo-political unit from which to survey the cultural landscape. It is important to remember England had its own regional styles, the Western School differing from the Gothic seen in northern England and the Gothic of Canterbury Cathedral and the buildings that it influenced. England can also be seen in a larger context, England forming, until 1204, one part of what John Gillingham terms the "Angevin Empire", an empire which included Normandy and Anjou, each of which had their own characteristic style.[29] To these one can add other Gothic variations elsewhere in France, like for example the "Swiss-cheese architecture" of Burgundy with it fondness for wall passages, and the "giant orders" of Bourges, Le Mans, Coutances, both of which defy analysis from a national perspective.[30]

In all these regional variations art historical debate has tended to focus on the way elements belonging to the Gothic canon, expressed in its purest form at Chartres Cathedral, are either developed, modified, ignored or resisted.[31] The starting point for such analyses being the manner in which buildings adhered to Chartres' canons of design: the single bay elevation, the flat elevation, the three storey elevation, the rejection of multifarious members and the large clerestory. By doing this one is at least getting close to the ways of comparing and contrasting buildings used by Gervase.

Interculturalism

Students of English Gothic architecture in Hungary should not miss the opportunity of adding an intercultural dimension to their studies. Not only

[28] For Gothic as period see: Götz, W., *Zentralbau und Zentralbautendenz in der gotischen Architektur* (Berlin, Mann, 1968), p. 12.

[29] See Gillingham, John, *The Angevin Empire* (London, Arnold, 2000)

[30] See Branner, Robert, *Burgundian Gothic Architecture* (London, A. Zwemmer Ltd, 1960)

[31] The idea of "the resistance to Chartres" being posited by Jean Bony in his famous article of that name published in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* in 1958.

will it provide an opportunity to examine how artistic ideas spread, but also allow students to study artefacts and buildings first hand.

The Kingdom of Hungary, like England was a recipient of French Gothic ideas, and like England had a rich cultural heritage throughout the medieval period.[32] Interestingly, the details of the early Gothic building projects at Esztergom, Pilisszentkereszt and Kalocsa amongst other places, suggest that they had design sources very close to those of Canterbury Cathedral, namely from that part of northern France lying in the area between Arras, Valenciennes, Reims and Noyon. Whilst one usually has to rely on the analysis of details in the Hungarian examples, there are still enough fragments available for Hungarian students to devote time to considering the medieval fabric first hand. They might then offer suggestions as to why a carved details at Esztergom Cathedral resemble those at Canterbury Cathedral. It is a phenomenon which provides rich pickings for those wishing to take their art historical interests further into the realms of research.[33]

Case Studies

Thus, by placing Hungary and England in the same contextual environment, students can engage first-hand in debates currently going on within art historical circles. Possible study areas crop up throughout the Gothic period from the reception of the Gothic style into Hungary up until King Sigismund's famous visit to England in 1416.[34]

One of the issues which has been occupying the minds of art historians for many decades is trying to discover what Villard de Honnecourt did and where he went during his visit to Hungary. So far we know that during his visit, which probably happened between 1235 and 1246, he drew some tile patterns he probably saw at the Cistercian abbey at Pilisszentkereszt.[35]

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[32] Marosi, Ernő, *Die Anfänge der Gotik in Ungarn* (Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984), p. 169. and Marosi, Ernő, Mitteleuropäische Herrschafthäuser des 13. Jahrhunderts und die Kunst, *Künstlerischer Austausch Akten des XXVIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin, 1992), p. 16.

[33] Takács I., "A gótika műhelyei a Dunántúlon a 13–14. században", *Pannonia Regia: Művészet a Dunántúlon 1000–1541* (Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 1994), pp. 23–33. The book itself provides a useful starting point and a good bibliography.

[34] A popular topic amongst historians, historians and art historians alike are turning their attentions to whether what Sigismund saw in England (Leeds Castle, Westminster Hall) influenced royal projects in Hungary (Tata, Visegrád). See Bárány A.'s abstract for the "Albion" Conference on British History and Political Science, Debrecen, 2000.

[35] Gerevich, op. cit. pp. 82–85.

One more recent observation of particular interest to students of English Gothic architecture is Imre Takács's suggestion that there may be English design sources, namely Bristol Cathedral, for the rood screen from the Pilisszentkereszt of c. 1360, currently on display at the Historical Museum of Budapest. By analysing this possibility students would be able to test some of the rather vague and general statements regarding the influence of English vaulting systems in Central Europe put forward by Abkarovits.[36]

Indeed, Late Gothic architecture in the Kingdom of Hungary would provide a useful means of analysing the Perpendicular style and Nikolaus Pevsner's premise that the Perpendicular was the quintessential English style. Pevsner indeed says it himself: "Now, before the Englishness of the Perpendicular style can be assessed, it must be remembered that a certain amount of what has so far been analysed belongs to the Late Gothic of northern Europe in general rather than to England".[37] By admitting that there is a wider frame of reference and that groundwork needs to be done before the target material can be approached, Pevsner is indeed close to the British Council's intended aim in promoting Intercultural studies, namely to "achieve an anthropological understanding of one's own country before engaging a foreign culture".[38] By making a day trip to St Elizabeth's Kassa (Košice, Slovakia), for instance, students of the EKF would be in a much better position to judge whether "all-over pattern", "illogicality" and "emphasis of verticalities and grids" were purely English virtues.[39] Indeed, we believe without being introduced to medieval fabrics first-hand, and without some knowledge of Hungary's own Gothic tradition, English Gothic art will continue to feel extremely, and unnecessarily, distant.

Conclusion

On 8th June, 1406, the English students from the English *natio* of the University of Paris, the same "nation" attended by Paris's Hungarian students, demanded that one of their former tutors, Benedek Makrai, be released from prison following his participation in an armed uprising in Óbuda against King Sigismund in 1403. Their plea was heard, Makrai was

[36] Abkarovits quoting Martindale: "In Lincoln ribs began to get separated from the vaulting long ago, and the English influence is felt as far away as in the Vladislav Hall in Prague" (op. cit. p. 60).

[37] Pevsner, op. cit. p. 94.

[38] Jones, op. cit., and quoted in Palmer, M., "Culture, Media, Language: The Present and the Future of Contemporary Cultural Studies in Hungary", *Framing the Issues: British Studies — Media Studies*, Pécs, 1996.

[39] Pevsner, op. cit. pp. 102–121.

released and his career was allowed to continue and blossom. Makrai was to accompany Sigismund to Paris and England in 1416, a journey during which Sigismund made a point of visiting Makrai's former university. Makrai was to become Gubernator of Eger Cathedral shortly before his death in either 1421 or 1427.[40] In 1411, Lőrinc Tari, cupbearer to the Queen and local magnate, left his residence in Heves County to make a pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory in the middle of Lough Derg in Ireland. It was an experience which caused him to promise to build a church dedicated to his patron saint St Nicholas, suggested by some to be the chapel added onto the southern side of the parish church in Pásztó, also dedicated to St Nicholas.[41] These two episodes tell us how close Hungary and the Brithis Isles were during the Middle Ages. While Hungary and England may not have sealed any dynastic marriages, and architectural ideas were shared through common sources rather than direct influence, the fact that they shared a common western Christian civilisation suggests it would be wrong to avoid Hungary's cultural heritage when analysing England's. Furthermore, by using primary rather than secondary sources students may indeed be better placed to decide for themselves how English Gothic Art really is.

[40] Fraknói V., "Nyomozások egy középkori magyar tudós élet-viszontságainak földerítésére", *Századok*, 1894, pp. 387–395; Mályusz E., *Kaiser Sigismund in Ungarn 1387–1437* (Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990), pp. 292–3.

[41] Kropf L., "Pászthói Rátholdi Lőrincz zarándoklása. 1411", *Századok 30*, 1896, p. 724; Gragger, R., "Beiträge zur Visionenliteratur im Mittelalter" *Ungarische Jahrbücher, 1925*, pp. 309. The less than flattering visions Lőrinz had of Sigismund and his wife Barbara of Cilly in the purgatory are also said to have prompted the king to build the church of Saint Sigismund in Buda, just outside the walls of his palace.

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Culture in Translation: Strategies and Operations

Albert Péter Vermes

This paper, by analysing Judith Sollosy's English translation of Péter Esterházy's *Hrabal könyve* (see Sources), aims to show what happens to culturally embedded expressions in the process of translation, to systematise and, within the frames of relevance theory, to explain the phenomena in question. It is suggested that in translating such expressions translators have four basic operations at their disposal: transference, translation proper, substitution and modification, which are defined here and explained in relevance-theoretic terms. The analysis is based on the assumption that translation is a special form of communication, aimed at establishing interpretive resemblance between the source text and the target text, governed by the principle of optimal resemblance (Sperber and Wilson 1986, and Gutt 1991). The findings suggest that considerations of how the semantic content of such expressions may be preserved in the target communication situation depend heavily not only on what overall strategy the translator chooses to adopt for the given translation but also on whether it can be done in a cost-effective way, in consistency with the principle of relevance.

1. Introduction

In some previous papers (see, for instance, Vermes 2003) I have shown that, since proper names, beyond their referential (identifying) function, often carry some semantic content, the translation of proper names is not a trivial issue but, on the contrary, a delicate decision-making process. I found that proper names are not simply transferred but may as well be translated, modified, or substituted by a conventional TL correspondent. These findings were easily explained on the basis of the assumption that translation is a communicative process, governed by the principle of optimal resemblance (Gutt 1991). It then seems an obvious move to suppose that the descriptive and explicatory apparatus will be applicable to an even wider range of culture-specific expressions, traditionally referred to as cultural realia, and this is what the present study will explore. In particular, it aims to answer two questions. (1) How is the translator's strategy manifested in the operations which are actually selected to tackle culture-specific expressions? (2) How can we explain the choice of a particular operation in a particular context?

One basic assumption is that translation is a form of ostensive-inferential communication, as explicated in Sperber and Wilson (1986) and Gutt (1991). A brief outline of relevance theory is presented in Section 2.1, followed by, in the next section, a discussion of translation as a form of interpretation and of the context of translation. Section 2.3 will clarify what I mean by the terms 'culture' and 'culture-specific expression'. Section 3, in turn, introduces, along with a short explanation of translation strategies, the translation operations, which will be discussed through examples in Section 4.

2. Background

2.1. Ostensive-Inferential Communication, Relevance and Meaning

The terms ostensive and inferential describe two complementary aspects of communication. It is an ostensive process because it involves communicators in producing a stimulus that points toward their intentions, and inferential because the audience uses the stimulus in an inferential process of comprehension as evidence for what those intentions may be.

Any individual will only pay attention to a stimulus when they can expect that it will prove relevant to them. Thus, when communicators produce a stimulus with the intention to convey a certain set of assumptions, they will have to, in a way, implicitly promise the audience that, on the one hand, the stimulus will lead to the desired effects and, on the other, it will not take more effort than is necessary for achieving these effects. This requirement is at the heart of ostensive-inferential communication and is called the principle of **relevance**: "Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance" (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 158), where optimal relevance means that the processing of a stimulus leads to **contextual effects** that are worth the audience's attention and, moreover, that it puts the audience to no unnecessary **processing effort** in achieving those effects.

A contextual effect arises when, in the given context, the new information strengthens or replaces an existing assumption or when, combining with an assumption in the context, it results in a contextual implication. The effort required to process a stimulus in a context is the function of several factors. According to Wilson (1992: 174), the three most important of these are: the complexity of the stimulus, the accessibility of the context, and the inferential effort needed to compute the contextual effects of the stimulus in that context.

In relevance theory, an assumption is defined as a structured set of concepts. In this framework the meaning of a concept is made up of a

truth-functional **logical entry**, which may be empty, partially filled or fully definitional, and an **encyclopaedic entry**, containing various kinds of (propositional and non-propositional) representational information about the extension and the possible connotations of the concept (e.g. cultural or personal beliefs), stored in memory. The concept may also be associated with a lexical entry, which contains linguistic (phonological, morphological, semantic and categorial) information about the natural language item related to it (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 83–93). The three different types of information (lexical, logical and encyclopaedic) are stored in different places in memory.

It is suggested that the content of an assumption is the function of the logical entries of the concepts that it contains and the context in which it is processed is, at least partly, drawn from the encyclopaedic entries of these concepts (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 89).

2.2. Context and Translation

Utterance interpretation is an inferential process whereby the audience infers, by combining the stimulus with a set of contextual assumptions (**context** in the narrow sense), the intended meaning of the communicator. For this to happen, the audience must use the context envisaged by the communicator, otherwise the stimulus may be misinterpreted and the communication may fail. Let us call the situation when this condition is fulfilled a **primary communication situation**, and the second where the audience uses a more or less different set of contextual assumptions a **secondary communication situation** (Gutt 1991: 73). A secondary communication situation is likely to occur when the communicator and the audience are representatives of different socio-cultural contexts (**context** in the wider sense), that is, when there is a marked difference between their background assumptions and circumstances, which constitute, roughly, the **cognitive environment** of an individual (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 39).

Interpretive resemblance between utterances (or any representation with a propositional form) means that the two representations share at least a subset of their analytic and contextual implications (their **explicatures** and **implicatures**) in a context (Wilson and Sperber 1988: 138). Translation can then be seen as the act of communicating in the secondary context an informative intention that interpretively resembles the original one as closely as possible under the given conditions. Thus the principle of relevance in translation becomes a presumption of **optimal resemblance**: the translation is "(a) presumed to interpretively resemble the original [...] and (b) the resemblance it shows is to be consistent with

the presumption of optimal relevance" (Gutt 1991: 101). In other words: the translation should resemble the original in such a way that it provides adequate contextual effects and it should be formulated in such a manner that the intended interpretation can be recovered by the audience without undue processing effort.

Apparently, in intercultural situations it is very rare that the original context (in the narrow sense) should be available in the target culture. It is possible perhaps in circumstances where different language communities have shared the same geographical, political, and economic environment for a long enough time to eliminate major cultural differences but in most cases the secondary communication situation will be substantially different to exclude the possibility of complete interpretive resemblance, the ideal case which Gutt calls **direct translation**, that is, when the translation "purports to allow the recovery of the originally intended interpretation interlingually" (Gutt 1991: 163). This, then, implies that the default is not direct but **indirect translation**, which covers various grades of incomplete interpretive resemblance.

2.3. Culture and Culture-Specific Expressions

Being interested in translation as a process cutting across cultures, it seems in order to clarify here what I mean by 'culture' and 'culture-specific expressions'. Some scholars, like Pym, even use the notion of translation in defining culture: "It is enough to define the limits of a culture as the points where transferred texts have had to be (intralingually or interlingually) translated" (Pym 1992: 26). Translation can thus be seen as an indicator of the existence of cultural differences. In our present cognitive framework, these are best regarded, I think, as differences in the shared cognitive environments of groups of individuals or, rather, the **mutual cognitive environments** of groups of individuals, which means a shared cognitive environment in which it is manifest which people share it (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 41). **Culture**, then, in the wide sense, may be defined as consisting in the set of assumptions that are mutually manifest for a group of individuals and cultural differences are differences between sets of mutually manifest assumptions. What we need to pin down more precisely is the actual nature of these differences.

There will obviously be assumptions which all humans are likely to hold, due to the existence of phenomena which are universally observable, such as 'People have two legs' or 'The Sun rises in the east'. Other phenomena are not universal in this sense and will give rise to assumptions that, provided they are shared by a whole community of individuals, may be said to be

culture-specific. **Culture-specificity** thus means that an assumption which figures in the mutual cognitive environment of one community is not present in the mutual cognitive environment of another.

Trivially, any assumption about the language system of a community, and the meanings it can express, will be culture-specific and, in this sense, any expression in a language is culture-specific. However, for our present purposes it seems more useful to exclude from our objects of examination assumptions about the language system. Beyond this, any culture-specific assumption will be our concern, and any expression in a linguistic form which activates any such assumption will be relevant for us in a non-trivial sense. These are what I call **culture-specific expressions** (or culturally bound, using Duff's (1981) words).

At this point, let me briefly explain why I refrain from using the term 'cultural realia'. Klaudy (1994: 112) defines it in the following way: "it may mean an object characteristic of a linguistic community, or the very word which names this object" (my translation). The latter one is obviously an extended meaning, which may be used for ease of expression but which, in my view, also obscures the difference between language and what language may be used to express. Other authors extend the meaning of the term in another direction. Vlahov and Florin (1980: 51), for instance, distinguish three groups of cultural realia: geographical, anthropological and socio-political, including categories like geographical objects, plant and animal species, foods, drinks, clothes, occupations, tools, music, instruments, festivals, customs, nicknames, measures, administrative units, organisations, institutions, social movements, social classes, political symbols, military units and ranks etc. The list is clearly not complete, and it need not be, but it shows that the term may be understood in a very wide sense to include all possible aspects of a culture. Yet it obscures another crucial point, which is that what we are interested in is not the complete inventory of a culture but, rather, what makes a culture different from another. I think the term 'culture-specific', in the sense outlined above, highlights much better the main idea that what we are concerned with in translating from one cultural context into another is, first and foremost, the differences between these contexts. In this sense, I share the view, expressed by Valló (2000: 44), that in a given situation anything that carries some special meaning for the intended audience may become culture-specific, and the question of culture-specificity can be resolved only with regard to the relationship between two languages. Or, I would rather say, with regard to the relationship between two cognitive environments. For this reason, I do not think it is necessary to make a complete list of categories that define a culture. What is more important is that we need to be able to assess how specific assumptions in

a context contribute to the relevance of an utterance and how the possible lack of such assumptions in another context leads to the choice of a certain translation operation.

3. Translation Operations and Translation Strategies

For the purposes of description, the various treatments that culture-specific expressions are subject to in the process of translation are categorised here into four **translation operations**, which are defined by the four possible configurations in which the logical and encyclopaedic meanings of an expression may be conveyed in translation. These configurations can be illustrated in the following way: (1) [+L, +E], (2) [+L, −E], (3) [−L, +E] and (4) [−L, −E], where L stands for logical meaning and E, for encyclopaedic meaning.

(1) **Transference**, as Newmark (1988: 81) puts it, is "the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure". This is essentially the same as Catford's definition: "an operation in which the TL text, or, rather, parts of the TL text, do have *values set up in the SL*: in other words, have *SL meanings*" (Catford 1965: 43, italics as in original). In simple words, this is when we decide to incorporate the SL expression unchanged into the TL text; either because it only contributes its referent to the meaning of the utterance, or because this makes possible the recovery in the target text of some assumptions, even though at the cost of an increased level of processing effort, which would not otherwise be accessible in the target cultural context.

(2) **Translation**, in the proper sense, will mean the process of using a 'dictionary equivalent' of the original. In relevance-theoretic terms this means rendering the SL expression by a TL expression which, preserving the logical content of the original, gives rise to the same relevant analytic implications in the target text as the original did in the source text (English *Free People* for Hungarian *Szabad Nép*, the title of a newspaper) but which, by the same token, will activate different encyclopaedic assumptions in the secondary context (since we are dealing with cases involving a lack of certain relevant assumptions).

(3) By **substitution** I will refer to those cases when the source language expression is replaced in the translation by a TL correspondent which is different in terms of logical content (or form, if it has no logical content) but carries with it the same relevant encyclopaedic assumptions as the original (English *commuter train* for Hungarian *HÉV*, acronym for 'local railways', English *for a song* for Hungarian *bagóért*, or Hungarian *Anglia* for English *England*). In a relevance-theoretic framework we could say that

an expression substituted this way, by directly activating relevant contextual assumptions in the target context, is the one that requires the least processing effort and any digression, increasing the amount of processing effort, would need to be justified by a substantial gain in contextual effects.

Substitution, in my understanding, also subsumes cases where the graphological units of the SL expression are replaced by TL graphological units, based on conventionally established correspondences (Hungarian *Moszkva* for Russian *Москва* or Hungarian *Csingacsguk* for English *Chingachgook*), where the TL form makes explicit the phonological value of the original expression. The inclusion of graphological substitution, traditionally called transliteration (cf., e.g., Catford 1965: 66), within this operation is justified, I think, by the conventional nature of the correspondence between graphological units and by the fact that its application is motivated mainly by considerations of optimising processing effort.

(4) **Modification** I understand as the process of choosing for the SL expression a TL substitute which is semantically, or conventionally, unrelated to the original. In relevance-theoretic terms this means replacing the original with a TL expression which involves a substantial alteration of the logical and encyclopaedic content of the SL expression (English *the market* for Hungarian *közért*, 'grocery shop', or English *shoe repair shop* for Hungarian *harisnyaszemfelszedő*). This operation is clearly aimed at minimising processing effort, even if it means losing some relevant assumptions and, thus, contextual effects.

We thus have a relatively simple set of four operations, which are defined generally enough, hopefully, to allow for any possible cases. Transference is an operation which preserves both the relevant logical and encyclopaedic content of the original expression, translation proper preserves the logical but not the encyclopaedic content, substitution preserves only the encyclopaedic content and, finally, modification preserves neither.

In general, the use of modification and substitution seems to be motivated mainly by considerations of processing effort, while the other two, transfer and translation, through preserving relevant assumptions, seem to occur mainly for reasons of ensuring adequate contextual effects in the target text. This is remarkably in line with Sperber and Wilson's definition, whereby an assumption is said to be relevant in a context, on the one hand, to the extent that it has adequate contextual effects in this context and, on the other hand, to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is not unnecessarily great (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 125), insofar as both processing effort and contextual effects, the two factors to

be balanced in the interest of achieving relevance, are taken into account by our operations.

As was suggested in some of my earlier papers (see, for instance, Vermes 2003), the translator's strategy concerning the given translation task may be traced down through the regularities in the translator's use of the different operations. Basically, two **translation strategies** are distinguished in the literature as the two essential ways to relate a source text to the values of the receiving culture, commonly termed foreignising and domesticating. In Venuti's words, **domesticating** is an assimilationist approach, conforming to the dominant values of the target culture, while **foreignising** is "motivated by an impulse to preserve linguistic and cultural differences by deviating from prevailing domestic values" (Venuti 1998: 241). In this sense, a domesticating translation will typically alter, or even cancel out, assumptions which are absent from, or alien to, the target cultural context, thereby minimising the processing effort that the target reader needs to exert in interpreting the target text. On the other hand, a foreignising translation will aim at preserving such assumptions, thereby making it possible for the target reader to access the originally intended interpretation, even at the cost of a higher level of processing effort, which may, however, be counter-balanced by the increase of contextual effects. It would appear, then, that a domesticating approach will be implemented primarily through the use of modification and substitution, whereas a foreignising strategy will crucially involve the transfer and translation proper of ST expressions into the TL text.

4. The use of the operations in implementing strategies

For the purposes of the discussion, I will bring examples from Péter Esterházy's *Hrabal könyve* and Judith Sollosy's English translation of the novel (see Sources). Every culture-specific expression in the original was recorded and matched with the corresponding textual equivalent (see Catford 1965: 27) in the translation. Recurring expressions were recorded more than once only if they were treated in the translation in different ways. The various culture-specific expressions were categorised into nine classes and were then sorted out according to the operation which the translator applied to them. It has to be noted here that the categorisation is not meant to be determinate or complete; it is simply a way of organising the data, without any theoretical importance attributed to how it is actually done. The reason for this, as already alluded to above, is that I am concerned here not so much with setting up an inventory of categories for the various elements of a culture as with pointing out actual differences between cultures.

The most frequent operation is substitution with a total of 80 occasions, followed by transference with 67 occasions, translation proper with 30 occasions and, finally, modification with only 17 occasions. What seems interesting still at first sight is the relatively great number of substitutions and translations in the material and intellectual culture category, the domination of transference in the persons and the topography categories, and the excessive domination of substitutions in the situation schemas category. However, to check out what the numbers mean, we will need to look behind them and see what we can learn from the individual examples.

4.1. Transfer

The use of transfer dominates two categories, those of expressions referring to persons and topographic features. These expressions, being among the most numerous categories in the text, can be identified as the prime indicators of the cultural and physical setting of the story, and are mainly transferred (or in certain cases substituted, as will be seen later), with very few exceptions, to provide for the accessibility of the appropriate background assumptions concerning the setting of the story. In one extreme case even the common noun head of a street name is transferred (*Váci utca*), presumably because it marks one of the best-known places in Budapest and is supposed to figure as a unit in the target reader's cognitive environment. The exceptions are either simple mistakes, as with the modification of three personal names (*Bólyai*, in the translation, for *Bolyai*, *Odon Suck* for *Sück Ödön Mihály* and *Dansco* for *Dancsó*) or are due to the relevance of the logical content of the expression, as with the translation of three topographic expressions (*Inner City* for *Belváros*, or *Black Forest* for *Fekete-erdő*). Other transferred expressions can be found in the categories of administrative culture (*ÁVÓ*, discussed below), history, material and intellectual culture, social culture and units and measures, all contributing to the preservation of the original spacial, temporal and cultural setting for the story, serving thus as tools of foreignising.

4.2. Translation

Translation proper is a means of preserving the logical content of the original, in order to ensure that the translated utterance gives rise to the same analytic implications as the original. This can be the most obvious solution when the source expression activates some relevant encyclopaedic assumptions which, however, cannot be preserved in an effort-effective way. Thus, in the English version the pronoun *you* is used for both *maga* and *önök*, which share the same logical content but are loaded with different

stylistic values in terms of the formality of the relationship between speaker and listener.

In other cases the encyclopaedic content of the original expression can be regained with relatively little effort through activating some global contextual assumptions (English *community work* for Hungarian *társadalmi munka*, English *council* for Hungarian *tanács*, which roughly corresponds to 'local authority'). Similarly, in the English text we have *counter-revolution* for the original *ellenforradalom*, which is a precise translation of the logical content, and in the context gradually built up in the story it also carries the relevant encyclopaedic assumption that it refers to the events of 1956.

On the other hand, there are also cases where translation proper is used to introduce completely new concepts into the target reader's cognitive environment. This happens, for example, when Hungarian *paprikás krumpli* (a typical Hungarian dish) is rendered as *paprika-potato* in the translation.

There is another interesting example which shows that translations, when combined in delicate ways, may also serve the preservation of culturally induced implicatures through the extension of the context.

> Volt cukrászda, két konkurens (1a) kocsma, melyet mindenki a régi nevén hívott, a (2a) Serház meg a Kondász (az öreg Kondász még élt, asztala volt a sarokban, és pintenként rendelte a sört, amiről a gyakran cserélődő csaposok ritkán tudták, mennyi, *hát, fiacskám, egy* (3a) *korsó meg egy vágás!* [...]). (Esterházy, p. 10, italics as in original)
>
> There was a café of sorts and two rival (1b) taverns, which everyone called by their old names, the (2b) Beerhall and the Kondász (old man Kondász was still kicking, he had his own table in the corner and ordered beer by the pint, an unknown quantity for the succession of ever new barkeepers, *it's a* (3b) *pitcher and a dash, son!* [...]). (Sollosy, p. 4, italics as in original)

The problem here is that the Hungarian word 'ser' in (2a) *Serház*, the original of (2b), is associated with an encyclopaedic assumption to the effect that the expression is old-fashioned, it is not used any longer, and evokes the atmosphere of "the golden days" of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. Since in this part of the book the writer describes the layering upon each other of the past and present, this assumption definitely has some contextual importance here. However, the English word 'beer' does not carry a comparable assumption and this part of the context is thus lost in the translation. On the other hand, it has a near synonym in English, 'ale', which does contain in its encyclopaedic entry the assumption, waking images of the past, that this drink is brewed in the traditional way, as it used to be in the past, without adding hops. Moreover, the related compound

'alehouse' is further loaded with the encyclopaedic assumption that the expression is outdated, old-fashioned, and its use in the translation would thus have resulted in the closest possible interpretive resemblance with the original. Thus, while (2b) is a close enough rendering of the original in terms of logical content, part of the context is lost. However, going back to (1b), we see that the target expression, *tavern*, compared with the original expression, (1a) *kocsma*, meaning something like 'a cheap pub', gains in encyclopaedic content in just the opposite way: it activates assumptions relating to the past, whereas the original does not. Thus the translation in (1b) serves the purpose of compensating for the loss of contextual assumptions later in (2b). The same can be observed in (3b), where the English word *pitcher* also brings in encyclopaedic assumptions about long-gone days, not activated by the Hungarian original (3a) *korsó*, which simply means 'beermug'.

4.3. Substitution

When a particular expression makes reference to a concept which is not present in the target cultural context, it can sometimes be substituted by a target language expression that activates a different concept, which is, however, similar to the original in terms of relevant encyclopaedic content and, being familiar for target readers, will ensure the relevance of the whole utterance for a reasonable processing effort. The substitution may effect a partial change of logical content (English *bologna* for Hungarian *parizer*, a kind of cold meat, English *shopping bag* for Hungarian *cekker*, a kind of shopping bag,) or a complete change (English (union) *dues* for Hungarian (szakszervezeti) *bélyeg*, '(union) stamp').

The fact that substitution dominates the situation schemas category is no surprise. Situation schema expressions, in my interpretation, include phraseologies, idioms, proverbs and conventional metaphors and the like, all being characteristic ways of how members of a culture categorise the wide range of possible situations. This is obviously an area of cognition where cultures tend to be very different. Moreover, these schemas are so deeply rooted in the thinking of people and are so easily activated in the proper context that to exchange them for different ones would surely result in a great amount of extra processing effort. In these cases, it is not the logical content of the expression which carries relevant information but the encyclopaedic assumptions which are activated by the expression and for this reason, almost all examples of such expressions in the original are substituted by ones native to the English cultural context (English *simple as a pie* for Hungarian *pofonegyszerű*, 'simple as a slap'), that is, they are domesticated. In the same way, expressions activating assumptions

relating to social relations and attitudes can be substituted (English *dear* for Hungarian *fiam*, 'my son').

Also often substituted are several expressions relating to topographic objects which have their own names in the target culture (English *Danube* for Hungarian *Duna*). What is important in such cases is that the reference remains invariant, and since the reference here is determined not by the logical entry, which may be empty, but by the encyclopaedic entry, it will take less processing effort to recover the referent through an expression whose encyclopaedic content is readily accessible for the target reader.

For the same reason, substitution is prevalent with the full names of persons in the translation. In Hungarian, the order of names is family name first, first name second, and since English readers are not supposed to have access to this assumption, the reversed order is substituted in each case (English *Laci Bárány* for Hungarian *Bárány Laci*), with the constituent elements of these names transferred.

In a somewhat similar fashion, when a name in the original activates an encyclopaedic assumption which is not likely to be present in the target cultural context, the relevant assumption can be provided by the translator in the form of a substitution, combined with transference (English *former prime minister Károlyi* for Hungarian *Károlyi Mihály*, English *the poet Petőfi* for Hungarian *Petőfi*), which serves to spare the target reader from some extra processing effort.

Another such example is provided by the expression *ávó*, meaning 'state defence department', which occurs in three different renderings in the target text. The first occurrence is a substitution, combined with transference (*secret police ÁVÓ*), the second is a substitution (*secret police*), and the third a simple transfer (*ÁVÓ*). This then also suggests that although substitution is basically a means of domesticating source language expressions, it can nevertheless be used in ingenious ways to lead the readers toward the source culture by smuggling into their cognitive environments assumptions which originate in the source culture.

One further interesting example is provided by the following sentences.

> (4a) Az, ami az amerikaiaknak a blues, az a magyaroknak a *keserves* — (5a) erre a felismerésére büszke volt, ezért, és nem másért, szerette jobban a kurucokat a labancoknál. (Esterházy, p. 158, italics as in original)

> (4b) The *keserves*, or lamenting song, means for the Hungarians what the blues does for Americans. (5b) He was proud of this discovery, and for this and for no other reason did he prefer the *Kurucz* to the *Labancz*. (6) The anti-Habsburg *Kurucz* soldiers knew how to cry into their wine, not like those pro-Habsburg *Labancz*. (Sollosy, p. 139, italics as in original)

The Hungarian expressions *keserves*, *kuruc* and *labanc* are first all transferred (though it could be argued whether the last two are substitutions, rather), but then the translator, feeling a need to explicate some background assumptions, substituted the expression *lamenting song* in (4b) and added sentence (6), which does not occur in the original but makes explicit an encyclopaedic assumption implicit in (4a) and (5a). Clearly, the substitutions took place here because the assumptions that they make accessible are necessary for working out the relevance of (5a), and since the target readers do not have access to these assumptions as part of the encyclopaedic entries of *keserves*, *kuruc* and *labanc*, the translator probably thought the readers need help in order that the necessary processing effort is not gratuitously high.

4.4. Modification

Modification seems to occur for two main reasons. It may be an obvious solution when a concept is missing from the target culture and the preservation of the logical content would entail an increase of processing effort not justified by the gains in contextual effects. For instance, the Hungarian expression *önkéntes rendőr*, meaning 'voluntary policeman' is left out in the translation, because in the target culture there is no comparable institution and the concept is not vital in terms of the development of the story, thus the translator decided that the loss in contextual effect is more tolerable here than the potential increase of processing effort which would result from the preservation of the expression. In other instances we find that the translator renders the original by an expression activating a completely different concept, but which, being familiar for the target reader, requires less processing effort (English *shoe repair shop* for Hungarian *harisnyaszemfelszedő*, meaning 'stockings mender', English *the market* for Hungarian *közért*, meaning 'a kind of grocery shop').

Another typical case is when some encyclopaedic assumptions are not present in the target cultural context and the relevance of the utterance can be ensured in the most cost-effective way by modifying both the logical and the encyclopaedic content of the original (English *Silly Billy* for Hungarian

Bunkócska te drága, reference to a Russian song well-known in the Hungary of the Communist era.).

5. Conclusions

As for the use of the different operations in implementing strategic intentions, the examples seem to justify the assumption that transference and translation proper, motivated by an attempt to preserve the contextual effects of the original, serve as the essential means of foreignising, while substitution and modification basically serve the purposes of domesticating, since their use is sanctioned primarily by the need to optimise the level of processing effort.

The foreignising approach is most marked with expressions referring to persons and topographic features which serve to establish the cultural and physical setting for the story and are predominantly transferred, while the domesticating approach is most apparent in the case of expressions relating to situation schemas, which are almost exclusively substituted, since these are so deeply entrenched in the cognitive environments of readers that any deviation here would probably result in irrelevant effects because of an unwarranted increase in the effort required to process the expressions in question.

What a closer look at the examples suggests is that the target text is fairly balanced in the sense that while it reveals a strong overall inclination toward the foreignising strategy, this is not accomplished in a rigid manner and it gives way to domesticating procedures when their use seems more appropriate. Naturally, in a secondary communication situation the ideal of direct translation, which could only be achieved, if at all, though by no means indubitably, through an uncompromising foregnising strategy, is not a realistic aim. It makes a lot more sense to accept that the differences between the cultural contexts will inevitably lead to losses in translation and to try and do the best one can in such a situation: compromise and let go of certain communicative intentions of the original in favour of other more directly relevant ones which can be saved.

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Interpersonality and Textuality in Discourse

Ágnes Deli

Lingusitic literature abounds in discussions of speech events, discourse and conversation, and to these issues there are multiple approaches. Among other perspectives the linguist may be interested in social roles and behaviour, various pragmatic principles, the structure of discourse, the organisational perspectives, providing a framework for conversational sequences and the ethnography of speech or she may be concerned with the psychological plane of discourse where the interpretation takes place. This means an assessment of the function of an utterance in a particular context involving the investigation of the procedures working behind the surface realisations of discourse acts.

> In my research I have been led by Brown and Levinson's (1978: 99) proposal:
> "in general the abundance of syntactic and lexical apparatus in a grammar seems undermotivated by either systemic or cognitive distinctions and psychological processing factors".

My approach to discourse being primarily linguistic I'm not concerned with the social aspect of conversation. I restrict my analysis to the discourse itself, its linguistic formation, while tracking down the mental processes involved in both the production and the interpretation side. In this paper I address myself to two tasks. First of all, I am concerned with how the participants interpret certain non-interrogative utterances in an initiation move and what is it that implicates the elicitative function in these cases, i.e. how the implicature is arrived at. In other words: what makes the addressee—apart from subjective factors—respond. Secondly, I am interested in how two levels of discourse, viz. the interpersonal and the textual—the two terms are taken from Halliday's work—arise and intertwine in discourse. The analysis is based on linguistically observable conditions, and the conversational extracts provided come from the author's own recordings of natural English talk.

The hypothesis put forward here is that the elicitative force of an Initiation move is frequently due to a prevailing contextual factor, which is labelled here the **U-factor**, and that there is another discourse factor present in several elicitations which I propose to call the **K-factor**. The former obtains from **the unknown, the unspecific** or **the uncertainty**

component of the context, while the latter is, in fact, the underlying bf knowledge of the participants of some textual patterns, which gets activated in the collaboration of the two speakers in a dialogue. It works as a guide for the second speaker to make a relevant contribution in the response move. In non-interrogative initiations it is these two factors that establish the function of the initiation as elicitation for response.

Being familiar with Austin and Searle's indirect speech acts we can say that by now it has become a truism that in conversation a linguistic form may occur virtually irrespective of its discourse function, i.e. there is no one-to-one correspondence between form and meaning.

The speaker has several options when formulating his utterance and it may also happen that while planning the linguistic realisation he hesitates about the form to opt for:

1. A: ***So wasn't it***
   B1: [**]
   ~A: ***it it***
   ~B1: John Carr [**]
   ~A: ***it wasn't obviously built*** as a hospital, though.
   B2: No, it was originally stables for the duke's horses.

2. A: But ***it must have started*** before that, Keith, I mean, ***you must as a [præk], did you have*** a very good English teacher? We were talking about English teachers earlier on.
   B: I did. I did have a good English teacher. [ə] #...

3. A: ***I thought is it a it was what I was wondering, is it a comedy, or a tragedy, so what's the feeling?***
   B: Well, what can I say? It is a very very funny play, but it will also make you cry. So that's all I can say. It's a sort of a saga, you know. ...

4. A: ***Is that, so you specialize*** totally in African violets.
   B: Indeed.

In unplanned, natural speech such hesitation phenomena as false starts, self-repair or reruns, as well as repetitions are generally considered normal non-fluencies, which may be due to a slip of the tongue or a temporary loss for the selection of an appropriate form. Our examples, however, also suggest that the linguistic form is overridden by some prevailing discourse factor, which obviously contributes to the context.

In elicitations interrogative and non-interrogative forms can obviously interchange, therefore it seems sensible to assume that both the production

and the interpretation processes are governed by the context in a way or another, that meanings do not evolve at random and the speaker's intention is—more often than not—linguistically detectable. A thorough investigation of elicitations in conversation shows that indeed, there are certain signals, discourse markers, which—however indirect—are revealing for the experienced listener as to the function of the utterance. My assumption is that these signals manifest some discourse factors, which, clearly, as a constituent of the context contribute to the elicitative function of the utterance.

Let us consider some non-interrogative elicitations.

5. B: 1956. It was at Wembly. We sang we we danced and swam.
   A: ***I never actually knew*** she came over and did a show over here.
   B: Yes, she did. I think that was the only show she ever did here.
6. A: ***I must ask you*** about the spelling of your name, incidentally. It's [ilein]. Is 'e' double 'l', 'a', 'y', 'n', 'e'. It's a # long way round.
   B: (laughs) Well, it's in a an effort to get it pronounced like the French Heléne.
7. A: You just have been made redundant, ***I gather***, talking of other things.
   B: Unfortunately, yes, just recently.
8. A: But ***it seems to me*** you're just looking for tolerance rather than unity.
   B: Yes, I want tolerance, you see, # you are not going to get unity with all the Christian people. You don't have unity in the # in the Jewish faith. They have # progressives and they have the Hassids, but they've got [ə] they're still all Jewish.
9. A: Anyway it's lovely to have spoken to you John. And ***I understand*** I can have a photograph.
   B: You can have a photograph, yes, but you can have a sticker as well
10. A: Judith, ***I take it***, that, broadly speaking, women get paid between two thirds and three quarters of the income of their male counterparts.
    B: Yes, I'm afraid, that's true.
11. B1: (laughs) Well it's in a an effort to get it pronounced like the French Heléne.

A1: Successful, ***I hope.***
B2: Mostly.
A2: Good.

12. A: ***So*** there are no drums in there at all.
B2: No. It's it's # the idea is to, well, it's been happening for hundreds of years, of course, composers have written the rhythm into the orchestra # inherently. . . .

13. A: ***Presumably***, the the sort of glamour of films, and how you create an effect on films [w] got itself into your brain in those very early days.
B: | those very early days [mm] [mm] | Well, it must do, because I did see them over and over, I mean, when you [əə] you know, you buy films, or there's nothing else to hire, you know, you do tend to do that.

14. A: It ***sounds*** fascinating this. ***I never*** [riəl] I'm a great lover of the African violet, but now you [s] now you mention it ***I've never seen*** a yellow one.
B: Well, it's it's surprising how many people think they ***have*** seen a yellow one until I ask them to go and find it for me,
A: Oh!
~B: and then they run into problems.

There is definitely some shortage of shared knowledge in each of these situations. In extract No 5 the speaker makes it explicit that there was something he didn't know by which he elicits confirmation of a situation as a fact. No 6, similarly refers to **lack of knowledge**, so both examples involve a common discourse factor, that of the "UNSHARED".

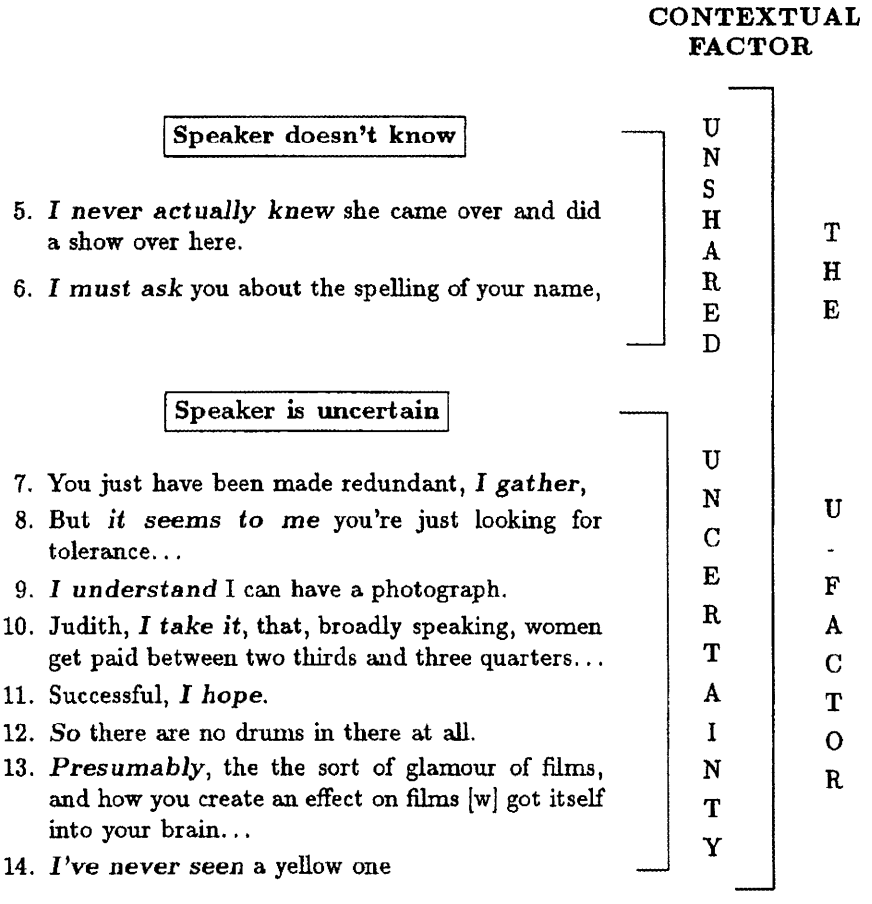
The following eight extracts 7–14 show the first speaker's uncertainty about the truth of his statement; another highly effective component of the context, which is linguistically realised in multiple ways. The lexicalisations vary from modal adverbials referring to potentials—as *presumably*—or inferential adverbs—like *so*—to such hypothetical verbs as *hope, take, gather, seem, understand.* The speech events of 7–14 definitely have one discourse feature in common, viz., that the first speaker's utterance represents a **hypothesis**, which the second speaker interprets as an elicitation for response.

Extract 14 is somewhat different from the previous examples. The first speaker's contribution here consists of two hypothetical acts. The first one,

which is signalled by the verb *sounds*, introduces an evaluation, and it is followed by the implicit hypothesis: "there may be none", which definitely requires a response.

Clearly, the hypothesis or the expression of lack of knowledge operate on the interpersonal level of discourse, so as regards their discourse function these utterances are not much different from interrogative questions.

I propose that the need for a response, the elicitative force of declaratives in discourse is due to a prevailing discourse factor, which I label the **U-factor**. As the following diagram shows it obtains from the "unshared" or from the uncertainty of the speaker, which can be lexically signalled in by a U-verb or by an H-marker (*hypothesis marker*).



Naturally, the discourse process involves a considerable amount of **shared knowledge** on the participants' part, both non-linguistic and linguistic. The shared knowledge, as a matter of fact, is a contextual factor influencing both the interpersonal and the textual levels. It pertains to some real world experiences, as well as to social conventions, a constituent of which, I assume, is cooperative behaviour (cf. Grice, 1975). Conversational data show that cooperative behaviour involves familiarity with certain rhetorical structures, i.e. conventional patterns of text, too. Writing and participating in conversation are very different activities from the point of view of the technical realisation. However, written text and conversation show a great deal of similarity in terms of the organisational perspectives of textuality. In the following I will focus on two rhetorical patterns: the General–Particular and the so-called Problem–Solution (Winter, 1986, 1992, 1994; Hoey, 1983, 1994), which are originally considered as processes of written text. In terms of its textual organisation natural spoken discourse reveals a great deal of similarity to written text. It is obvious that several textual patterns also occur in spoken discourse and these can work even across speaking turns. Assuming that behind the phenomenon there is some shared knowledge of the textual patterns we can say that these contribute not only to the coherence of the conversation but also to the interpersonal realisation of the discourse, in other words, they work at both the textual and the interpersonal levels.

For illustration let us see some further conversational extracts.

15. A: ***I gather you*** had ***problems*** getting # getting back into the country last night.
    B: We got back fairly late 'nd got held up for an hour at Heathrow waiting for our luggage because some of the security people # [ə] # thought that the Archbishop's cross # [wə] was a machine gun. So that kept us waiting.

16. A: You see, [ts] a couple of callers so far used the word commitment, ***so women must have*** a real ***commitment*** to these careers which, **clearly**, you have.
    B: You have to. You have to prove it's not so much that you have to prove yourself better than the men, but you have to prove your commitments that you will stay at it, you will not run away and become pregnant, or, you know, become very emotional at every little outburst, you have to say I've got to be tough. You have to become one of the lads.

The elicitative function of speaker A's utterance in extract 15 is introduced by a hypothesis (*I gather*) but it is actually accomplished by the unspecific noun phrase *problems*. Obviously, a simple "yes", which would remove the first speaker's uncertainty, would not be a satisfactory response here; it is rather the specification of the *problems* that makes the second speaker's discourse act appropriate. It is the "unshared" that is lexically signalled here by the general noun *problem*. The General–Particular text pattern arches through the speaking turns.

Speaker B gives account of the unpleasant experiences he had the night before as a response to the elicitation expressed by the reporter's hypothetical statement as well as by the unspecific noun phrase.

In extract 16 the noun *commitment* seems to be considered as general in the context. The second speaker confirms the first speaker's hypothesis as true, and then specifies what she means by commitment.

The two extracts above represent the operation of the General–Particular pattern occurring in conversation and working across speaking turns:

GENERAL UNSPECIFIC GENERAL NOUN PHRASE		PARTICULAR SPECIFICATION
A: you had *problems*	B:	— *we got held up for an hour at Heathrow* — *some of the security people thought that the Archbishop's cross was a machine gun* — *that kept us waiting*

A: women *must have a real commitment* which, *clearly*, you have	B:	— *you will stay at it* — *you will not run away and become pregnant* — *you will not become very emotional at every little outburst* — *you have to say I've got to be tough* — *you have to become one of the lads*

Apparently, a noun phrase with a general meaning is context-sensitive and, as such, it can contribute to the elicitative force of an utterance in the initiation move. When such an unspecific discourse element is specified by the second speaker the relevance of the response is realized through the cognitive process of **specification**. The phenomenon is very much the same as when the elicitation is realised by a wh-question, which is also an unspecific discourse element.

There are several other conventional patterns detectable in narratives. Winter (1994) and Hoey (1994) identify the following semantic units in text:

Situation
Problem
Response/Solution
Evaluation
Basis for Evaluation.

The units can be identified by lexical signals, by position, and also by the verb tenses. Another method of testing is using a dialogue test, i.e. a projection of the text into a dialogue, which means using a question-answer system where the questions introduce into the discourse what is not there explicitly (cf. Hoey, 1994: 42). According to Hoey (1983: 33), although the resources of discourse organization are finite in number, i.e. the semantic types of textual units are definite, the patterns of organization are various, and the number of these is indefinite.

Spoken language data show that the patterns commonly occurring in narratives similarly obtain in conversations. The following are examples of the occurrence of the so-called Problem–Solution pattern.

17. A: But it's particularly ***a problem*** if the person who is under hypnosis has been told to deny that he or she is under hypnosis by the hypnotist.
B: Oh, yes. This is a terrible problem, because the unscrupulous hypnotist puts up blockages and and in-programmes the the subject he is abusing, first of all not to be hypnotisable by anyone else, and then, if [ə] the person should be hypnotised by someone else [əm] not to remember various things, and # there are famous cases where it took years for the deep-programming hypnotists to unscramble the mess made by the unscrupulous hypnotists over many years...

18. A: *So*, from a sheer protectionist point of view you ***fear*** a unification.
B: I feel the present war is a trade war, it's not a war with with [ə] weapons like we used to have # in history.

The semantic unit Problem is lexically marked in both extracts: in 17 by the NP *a problem*, in 18 by the verb *fear*. In the former the confirmation is lexicalised, whereas it is not expressed explicitly in extract 18 Still, the implication is there, which is obvious from the fact that the lexicalisation *yes* could be inserted here, too. So we can say that the two exchanges share the following pattern:

TEXTUAL PATTERN:	**HYPOTHESIS–PROBLEM–EVALUATION AS PROBLEM–REASON**
EXCHANGE PATTERN:	
INITIATION:	**HYPOTHESIS OF A PROBLEM**
RESPONSE:	**CONFIRMATION (= EVALUATION AS PROBLEM)–REASON**

Extract 19 below is an example of the exchange pattern:

INITIATION:	**SITUATION = PROBLEM**
RESPONSE:	**SOLUTION**

19. A: The *trouble* is that the only way of coming back at you is by coming back at you with the very # stick # which is your stick, really, the stick of the Law.
B: We have rules which govern the way that we conduct our affairs and also the affairs of our clients. # And if we breach any of those particular rules then we are liable to be disciplined. By the Law Society. ...

The *trouble* referred to by the first speaker above (= PROBLEM) can be controlled or solved by the *rules* mentioned by the second speaker (= SOLUTION).

In extracts 20 and 21 the first speaker, A, describes a Situation, a fact, which the second speaker, B, evaluates after confirming it. In the latter case (21) B also adds the reason for her evaluation:

20. A1: Hmm. Was an American swimming ***champion***,
B1: Oh yes, | she was |
~A1: | and then | and then became ***a filmstar***.
B2: She was *a wonder* and so beautiful. And she was a wonderful swimmer, wonderful swimmer. She wasn't very good on dry land. She was very shortsighted, she was very funny on dry land 'cause she kept bumping into people, I remember,
A: (laughs)
~B2: but she was wonderful in the water and very beautiful 'nd great fun to work with
A2: Joe Pasternak said: "Wet, she was ***a star***!"
B3: Yes.
A3: I remember that | one of the |
B4: | No, really, |

~A3: famous quotes about her
~B4: she was. She was fantastic.

21. A1: You're playing Ann Harrad.
B1: I am playing Ann Harrad, yes.
A2: It's a sort of
B2: She's a wonderful woman. She's [**] kind of woman I've always wanted to be. I've always liked to be like Ann Harrad. She is very forthright. She speaks her mind.

The exchange pattern of the two extracts is the following:

INITIATION: **SITUATION**
RESPONSE: **EVALUATION (+ REASON FOR THE EVALUATION)**

Exchange 22 is an example in which the two speakers describe the situation in collaboration, i.e. B continues the description using her knowledge of the standard situation of an operation in hospital, so it is a simple Situation–Situation exchange pattern, in which both speakers participate in the specification of the situation.

22. B1: He's just been checked, looked over by the doctors, temperature checked and name tagged 'nd the anaesthetic put into his hands to numb it ready for a radical injection. Just sitting down, just getting him used to being here, I think #
A: And you are just waiting to go down now
B2: Yes.
~A: to the theatre.

One of Winter's Basic Clause Relations is the Denial–Correction pattern, which he considered a type of the crucial Unspecific–Specific relation (Winter, 1994: 50). In spoken discourse the process of specification, as we have seen above in the case of unspecific noun phrases, can arch over two speaking turns. It is also typical that a negative statement, the denial of a situation requires further explanation or specification, which may be expected to come from the addressee. The following is an example of this common discourse phenomenon.

23. A: *I don't imagine* that you just write straight on the page.
B: No. The whole art of easy writing, of course, is to make it look as if it were [ed] [ed] [ed] as if it were dashed off, as if it were knocked off, but you know you can write a sentence five times and then # it reads as if it's been # just # knocked off.

The implication of the first speaker's words is as follows:

You don't write straight on the page, I think/imagine.

Similarly to exchange 15, the simple confirmation *No* would not be a sufficient response. The unspecific negative *You don't write straight on the page* requires specification, which is most probably due to the cooperative principle of quantity (cf. Grice, 1975). Following this principle means making a contribution as informative as required for the current purposes of the exchange. The confirmation here would not be informative enough as the U-factor is present with double force. Its manifested in the hypothetical act of the speaker lexicalised by *I don't imagine*, and also in the unspecific negative situation.

The exchange pattern here is as follows:

INITIATION:	HYPOTHESIS OF AN UNSPECIFIC SITUATION (NEGATIVE)
RESPONSE:	CONFIRMATION–SPECIFICATION

In extract 24 below the first speaker introduces a hypothetical Situation, which involves some negative features (*you are an anti-clockwise ballet dancer, you can't do the polka*). The second speaker confirms the hypothesis and also adds the Reason for this Situation:

24. A: ***I gather*** you're ***actually*** an anti-clockwise ballet dancer. You can't do the polka [**]
B: No. I was taught to do it but [ə] the wrong way. Because I think he came from Hungary. Our teachers came from Hungary. They do it in the wrong way in Hungary.

The discourse pattern of extract 24 is as follows:

INITIATION:	HYPOTHESIS OF A SITUATION WITH NEGATIVE CIRCUMSTANCES
RESPONSE:	CONFIRMATION–REASON

A simple negative response would not be acceptable here either. Kiefer (1983) also observes that in a question–answer pair the adequacy of a simple *yes* or *no* answer after a question is a pragmatic issue and he notes that a negative answer typically requires some explanation. This is what in such a context the adequate communicative attitude is and this is how the speaker's behaviour becomes cooperative.

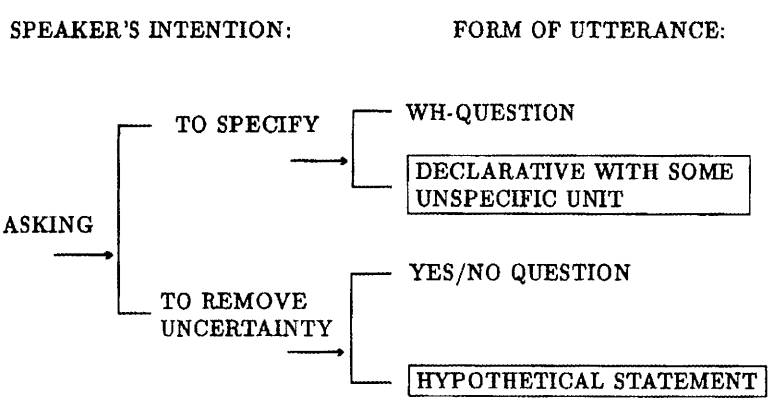
The above examples are but a few of those that clearly show the shared knowledge of some conventional discourse patterns by the participants. These patterns can work in conversational exchanges across speaking turns in the same way as they do in narratives. In conversation, however, they

can be considered one factor of the context, which contributes to the flow of the discourse by operating on both the textual and the interpersonal levels.

To summarize what has been said about the contextual factors of the interpersonal and the textual levels of elicitations we can pin down the following:

- There are basically two crucial factors operating in the context of elicitations:
- The so-called U-factor, which obtains from the lack or shortage of shared knowledge and/or from the uncertainty of the speaker.
- The so-called K-factor, which comprises the shared knowledge of the participants in terms of real world experiences and familiarity with social conventions including rules of cooperative behaviour.
- The presence of the U-factor is often lexically marked by U-verbs, by H-markers (hypothesis-markers) or by a USP (unspecific) unit, whereas the K-factor can be tracked down within the framework of certain textual patterns in some identifiable semantic units.
- The two factors contribute to the interaction of the interpersonal and textual levels of discourse.

On the basis of the observations about discourse exchanges made in this paper we can describe the nature and the realizations of **elicitations** in the following way:



The speaker's intention is to ask the hearer either to specify the "unshared" element of the context, that which he does not know or to remove his uncertainty about what he thinks he may or may not know. The linguistic forms available for the former are wh-questions or declaratives containing an unspecific (USP) unit, while the latter intention can be expressed by yes/no questions or by hypothetical statements. A further

conclusion can be made: if the U-factor is in operation interrogatives and declaratives are interchangeable in initiation moves.

Abbreviations and Symbols

[1]	number of extract
A	speaker A's move
~A	speaker A continues his/her move
A1	speaker A's first move
A2	speaker A's second move
B	speaker B's move
~B	speaker B continues his/her move
B1	speaker B's first move
B2	speaker B's second move
#	pause
[**]	incomprehensible speech consisting of two syllables
⎪ ⎪	parallel talk

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The Diachronic Development of Phrasal Verbs in English

Éva Kovács

In this paper I set out to discuss the diachronic development of phrasal verbs from Old English through Middle English to Modern English. Modern English phrasal verbs seem to have a long history. While in the Old English period prefixed verbs were dominant, in the Middle English period, when the language became SVO, most English prefixes were no longer productive and disappeared altogether. The most notable new development in Middle English was the emergence of phrasal verbs, in which the particle was either a preposition or an adverb, and they almost completely replaced the Old English prefixed verbs. As far as their semantics is concerned, the majority of OE phrasal combinations had literal, spatial meanings, though some of them could have metaphorical meanings in certain contexts. But it was not until eME that we find a growth of aspectual/figurative senses. Their syntactic and semantic flexibility no doubt contributed significantly to their subsequent productivity and popularity.

In comparison with the vast literature on the problems of phrasal verbs in Modern English, which has considerably grown in volume since the 1970s, (cf. e.g: Bolinger (1971), Lipka (1972), Sroka (1972), Fraser (1976), Lindner (1981), Lakoff (1987) etc.), the diachronic studies are not so numerous. The most important studies on the historical aspects of phrasal verbs to have appeared so far are those of Curme (1913/1914), Kennedy (1920), Konishi (1958), Kiffer (1965), de la Cruz (1969), Hilliard (1971), Von Schon (1977), Mitchell (1978) Hiltunen (1983a, 1983b) and Brinton (1988).

Examining the diachronic development of phrasal verbs and their relation to prefixed verbs from OE through ME to Modern English, we can see a structural shift from verbal prefixes to post-verbal particles and that the non-spatial, aspectual meanings of phrasal verbs developed from their concrete, spatial meanings.

1 From verbal prefixes to post-verbal particles

From Old English to Early Modern English, the language underwent an important structural shift, from a productive system of verbal prefixes to a new system of post-verbal particles. In this shift, phrasal verbs as well as prepositional verbs came to be the equivalents of the older prefixed verbs

(see Curme 1913/14: 325, de la Cruz 1975: 55). Though many of the modern post-verbal particles are the etymological counterparts of the verbal prefixes, Konishi (1958: 118) and de la Cruz (1972: 74, 84, 86) point out that the system of post-verbal particles represents a new development.

In the OE period prefixes were predominant, but verbal particles also occurred, both following and preceding the verb. It is, however, generally acknowledged that preverbal position of the particle is more common in the OE phrasal verb than post-verbal position. De la Cruz (1975: 11) and Hiltunen (1983a: 105–26) show that although p [...] V order is more common in Old English, the frequency of V [...] p order increases steadily from late Old English to early Middle English.

The ME period was characterised by the loss of some prefixes and the continued productivity or partial productivity of others, but also by the increasing frequency of verb particle combinations. Hiltunen (1983a: 92) sees the rapid decline of prefixes and sudden rise of particles in early Middle English as "remarkable".

By the Modern English period, verbal prefixes were no longer productive, and the phrasal verb was fully established in the language (see Kennedy 1920: 13–14; Konishi 1958: 121–2) and has increased steadily in frequency and productivity.

In Modern English, however, prefixed verbs survive in remnant forms preserving the stress pattern of Old English, for example, *arise, bereave, forbear, outdrink, overtake, upbraid* or *withdraw.*

A number of reasons have been proposed for the structural shift from prefixes to post verbal-particles. Some of the explanations include the following:

- the general analytic tendency of English (Konishi 1958: 118, 119; de la Cruz 1975: 67; Traugott 1982: 250);
- the shift in word order from OV to VO (Konishi 1958: 118; Traugott 1982: 250; Hiltunen 1983a: 125, 144–6, 222);
- the model of Old Norse, which had lost verbal prefixes at an early stage (Roberts 1936: 477; Samuels 1972: 60, 163–4; Hiltunen 19830a: 43, 97);
- the lack of stress in the particles and subsequent loss of phonetic content (Samuels 1972: 163; de la Cruz 1975: 78; Hiltunen 1983a: 52) or, conversely, the stressing of the prefixes (Curme 1913/14; Kennedy 1920: 11, 16–17);
- the weakening of the meaning of the prefixes, their syncretism, and grammaticalization (Samuels 1972: 164; de la Cruz 1975: 78; Hiltunen 1983a: 94–8, 100);
- the development of adverbial functions in the particles (de la Cruz 1972: 79);

- the greater clarity and expressiveness of phrasal forms (de la Cruz 1975: 49, 77; Hiltunen 1983a: 96, 97, 99)

Brinton (1988: 191), however, points out that there are several aspects of the shift which are not dealt with by the above scholars, namely why some prefixes have counterparts as particles and others do not, why new particles develop, what the meaning relationships are between prefixes and particles, and how and when non-spatial meanings develop in the prefixes and particles.

2 Semantic change in the verbal prefixes and particles

During the structural shift from prefixes to post-verbal particles, a change in the semantics can also be observed. The development of 'aktionsart' or aspect meanings in the verbal prefixes or particles is traditionally seen as resulting from one of two kinds of semantic change: 'bleaching' or 'metaphorical change'. In the view of bleaching, the particles are thought to lose their 'original' adverbial meaning and they are seen as fading gradually from concrete to more abstract meanings. This view goes back as far as Streitberg (1891: 102–3), who considers that the meaning of the prefixes has 'disappeared', 'evaporated' or been 'blown away'.

In the other standard view, i.e. the metaphorical shift, the particles are understood as participating in a figurative shift from concrete to abstract, or more specifically from spatial to aspectual meanings (e.g. de la Cruz 1972: 115–16; Hiltunen 1983a: 148).

Brinton (1988: 193), however, points out two aspects of the meaning of prefixes and particles which weaken the standard explanations of bleaching and metaphor. First, Brinton notes that both concrete and non-concrete meanings can be present in the same expression. The possibility of such meanings occurring simultaneously argues against the theory of bleaching, which proposes that particles and prefixes fade from one meaning to another. Second, Brinton also points out that the semantics of the particles is explained as a continuum from spatial to aspectual meanings. She (1988: 197) suggests that "the relation between spatial and aspectual expressions is based on an analogous relation of parts between objects in space and situations developing through time. Spatial expressions which indicate directions (or lines) yield telic aktionsart expressions, whereas spatial meanings which indicate locations yield continuative/iterative aspect expressions."

Brinton (1988: 198) regards the shift not as metaphoric, but metonymic because "the particles themselves do not assume figurative value, nor does the combination of verb particle effect some figurative shift." The author

observes that metaphorical shifts in prefixed and phrasal verbs affect only the root of the verb, not the particle and the particle usually preserves directional meaning.

3 Meanings of prefixes in OE and ME

3.1 Meanings of prefixes in OE

A standard grammar of Old English lists the following prefixes

	OE prefix	Meaning	Modern German cognate
(a)	ā-	away, out	er-
	be-, bi-	about, around	be-, bei-
	for-	forth, away	ver-
	full-	full	voll-
	ge-	together	ge-
	of-	off, away	ab-
	to-	apart, away	zer-
	þurh-	through	durch-
(b)	forð-	towards	fort-
	ofer-	over	über-
	up-	up, away	auf-
	ūt-	out, away	aus-
	ymb-	around	um-

The prefixes in (a) express 'perfective', 'intensive', or 'completive' senses (Quirk and Wrenn 1957: 109–19), while the ones in (b) are said to have only 'adverbial' or concrete senses. Although Quirk and Wrenn list *ūt-*, and *up-* as prefixes, Brinton (1988: 280) notes that they are extremely rare as verbal prefixes in Old English. Brinton (1988: 22) argues that "when not purely spatial in meaning, all these prefixes may, like the post-verbal particles in Modern English indicate the goal of action. Thus, they are better analysed as expressions of telic aktionsart than of perfective or intensive aspect." For an understanding of the development of aktionsart meaning in these forms, it is important to note that in their concrete sense, the above prefixes except *ge-* and *full-* all have a directional meaning of movement from or to.

Þurh- is a verbal prefix which according to Quirk and Wrenn (1957: 118) modifies verbs with the sense of 'through, completely', e.g.:

(a) Þurhirnan 'to run through' where the prefix is primarily directional in meaning and occurs with a verb of motion.

(b) Þurhclænsian 'to cleanse thoroughly' where the prefix may have both meanings 'to clean through' (directional) and 'to clean to the end, completely, thoroughly (telic)' according to Brinton (1988: 205).

(c) Þurhtēon 'to carry through or out, to an end, to accomplish' where the root of the verb undergoes a metaphorical shift from the physical to the mental domain, bringing the prefix along.

(d) Þurhlæran 'to persuade' where the meaning of the prefix is restricted to the meaning of non-spatial goal or endpoint.

Of- usually gives 'perfective aspect' (Quirk and Wrenn 1957: 114) or normally occurs with an 'intensive value' (de la Cruz (1975: 56). Brinton (1988: 208), however argues as follows:

(a) ofgifan 'to give up, leave, abandon', which is primarily telic but retains some directional meaning.

(b) ofsettan 'to beset, press hard, oppress' in which a metaphorical shift from the physical to the mental domain has affected the root and the prefix marks the endpoint of psychological pressure, namely oppression.

Tō- is a prefix which "with many verbs, especially verbs of force... gives perfective aspect" (Quirk and Wrenn 1957: 114), while Brinton (1988: 206) interprets it like this:

(a) tōcwisan 'to shatter, to break to pieces' with the notion of goal

(b) tōsyndrian 'to separate'; fig. 'to distinguish' in which the root has both a literal and a figurative meaning, i.e. the physical action of dividing and the mental action of dividing.

For- "intensifies, often with a shift to perfective aspect" (Quirk and Wrenn 1957: 110). De la Cruz (1975: 51) suggests that it may have developed the connotation of "wrongness" or "the contrary with a negative connotation." Brinton (1988: 208) points out that the adverbial notion of "forth, away" yields by iconic principles the notion of the endpoint of an activity, which may result in intensification, or destruction, e. g.:

(a) forwisnian 'to wither away'

(b) forrotian 'to become wholly rotten'

Although Quirk and Wrenn (1957: 114) say that *ofer-* "has straightforward adverbial sense" with verbs and indicates 'superiority in degree or quality' with nouns, Brinton (1988: 208) states that it frequently denotes telicity with verbs as well, e.g.:

(a) oferseglian 'to cross by sailing'

(b) oferseolfrian 'to cover with silver'

(c) oferdrincan 'to overdrink'

The semantics of the prefix *be-* is quite complex. Frequently, *be-* seems to have a transitivizing function in OE or sometimes has an Aktionsart meaning (de la Cruz 1975: 64) or it may add the sense 'round, over', often with only intensifying or perfective effect (Quirk and Wrenn 1957: 110). According to Brinton (1988: 209), the concept of goal can be understood to follow from the directional meaning of surrounding or encompassing, e.g.:

(a) bewindan 'to wind round' in which *be-* has directional and telic meaning.

(b) bestandan 'to stand by, surround', in which an intransitive verb is made transitive by the prefix *be-*.

Brinton (1988: 210) states that the prefix *ymb-* 'around', with a concrete meaning similar to that of *be-*, acquires aktionsart meaning in much the same way, e.g. in *ymbhlennan* 'to crowd about, surround' directional and telic meanings coexist.

Though *forð-*, too, is considered by Quirk and Wrenn (1957: 116) to modify verbs only with a concrete meaning of 'motion forwards', it may assume telic meaning according to Brinton, eg.:

(a) forðfaran 'to forth, depart, die'

(b) forðberan 'to bear or carry forth, bring forth, produce' where in both cases, the verbal root has undergone a metaphorical shift.

Neither *ā-* nor *ge-* provides clear evidence for the semantic shift from directional to telic, since back in OE their meanings are widely extended. Both Quirk and Wrenn (1957: 119) and de la Cruz (1975: 73) point out that *ā-* has an intensifying meaning. Nonetheless, Brinton (1988: 210) lists examples in which directional and telic meanings co-exist in OE, e.g.:

āfyllan 'to fill up'

āsceacan 'to shake off '

āwrītan 'to write out, down'

OE *ful-* is also said to have perfective meaning (Quirk and Wrenn 1957: 116) or denotes the "fullness, completeness or perfection" of the meaning of the word with which it is joined (Bosworth and Toller 1973: 68), but Brinton (1988: 211) points out that its origin and subsequent history differ from those of the above-mentioned verbal prefixes. *Ful-* is clearly adjectival rather than adverbial in origin. As a verbal prefix, it is fairly productive in OE, e.g.:

fulbrecan 'to break entirely'

fulgangan 'to fulfil, accomplish, finish'.

It is not at all productive in ME. Instead, *ful-* becomes a very frequent intensifier, especially with adjectives, adverbs and verb phrases.

No prefixes in OE are said to mark continuation or iteration, as *on-* does in Modern English. OE *on-* often indicates the inception of an action (Quirk and Wrenn 1957: 111–12), e.g.:

ontendan 'to set fire to, to kindle'
onslæpan 'to fall asleep'

3.2 Meanings of prefixes in ME

During the ME period some of the OE verbal prefixes continue to be productive as aktionsart markers. However, the meanings of *a-*, *ge-*, and *on-* are seriously over-extended, and as these prefixes become semantically unclear or empty, they cease to be productive derivational forms.

New formations with the prefixes *bi-*, *for-*, *forth-*, *of-*, *out(e)-* and *over-*, as well as with *to-* and *thurh-*, are attested with directional, telic, and various extended meanings. In fact, ***of-***, ***out(e)-*** and ***over-*** are deemed very productive in the ME period and have telic (a) and extended meanings, especially of 'superiority and 'excess' (b).

(a) outbāken 'to bake thoroughly'
ofernen 'to overtake ; flee; run (a horse) to exhaustion'
overbrennen 'to destroy with fire'
(b) outrennen 'to outrun'
ofrīden 'to outride'
overchaufen 'to overheat'

The prefix ***bi-*** continues to have both transitivizing and Aktionsart functions in ME, e.g.:

bicasten 'to surround or cover'

For- is likewise productive in ME, especially with negative connotations (of failure, opposite results) with goal interpretations, e.g.:

forlēten 'to forsake, give up'
forwerpen 'to cast out, banish'

The prefix ***to-*** continues to have directional and telic force in ME, e.g.:

toreaven 'to take completely away'

The values of the prefixes ***forth-*** and ***thurh-*** remain in ME much the same as in OE, though neither prefix is highly productive, e.g.:

forthcasten 'to cast out, reject'
thurhcostnen 'to provide completely'

4 Emergence of the phrasal verb: from spatial to aspectual meanings in OE and ME

Although verbal prefixes were productive during the OE and much of the ME period, there is evidence for the origin of the phrasal verb even in OE.

It appears clear that the particles of phrasal verbs at first have literal, spatial meanings (as noted by Curme 1913/14, Kennedy 1920: 16, Konishi 1958: 119). Hiltunen (1983a: 146–7) also determined that the 'basic' meaning of the 'phrasal adverb' was 'the direction or the location of the action denoted by the verb'.

In the shift from prefixes to verbal particles, there are losses and additions to the set of forms used. The prefixes *ā-, be-, for-, ge-* and *tō-* fall out of favour, and only the adverbial equivalents of *of-* (off), *ofer-* (over), *þurh-* (through) and *forð-* (forth) remain as common verbal particles in the OE and ME periods. The innovated forms, *away, down, out, up*, and *along*, function only as adverbs, not as verbal prefixes in OE and have claer directional, or in the case of *along* locative meaning. According to Brinton (1988: 215), the directional markers may assume telic values and the locative may assume continuative/iterative values. Furthermore, spatial and non-spatial meanings often also co-exist, and in such a context, the particles may acquire pure aktionsart or aspect meanings by a change of focus from one kind of meaning to another. Where metaphorical shifts have occurred in the verbal roots, the particles retain spatial meaning.

Among the verbal prefixes and particles of OE, three groups can be distinguished: prefixes which have no corresponding particles, prefixes which do have corresponding particles, and new particles which have no corresponding prefixes.

Among the first group are OE prefixes *ā-, be-, for-, ge-* and *tō-*; de la Cruz (1975) terms these 'pure prefixes', that is, prefixes without prepositional counterparts or with widely differing functions from their counterparts.

Among the second group of particles, those which correspond to verbal prefixes, are *þurh, forð, ymb, on, ofer* and *of*. In OE most occur only occasionally as adverbial particles, usually with quite literal meaning. However, *of* and *forð* show fairly full development as verb particles in OE. As Brinton (1988: 217) states, *of* most commonly denotes 'separation, removal', notions which combine directional and telic meanings, especially with verbs of physical action such as *cut, drive, pull, knock*, etc, e.g.:

Gif man cealf *of adrife.*
'If someone drives off a calf'

Forð also commonly exhibits particle functions. The sense of *forð*

is generally spatial 'forwards, forth', but it may also express combined directional and telic meaning 'away, to the end' or almost pure telic meaning, e.g.:

Abraham *eode forð.*
'Abraham went forth.'
& *fere* se ceorl *forð*
'and (if) the man dies.'

The third group, consisting of those verb particles which do not correspond to prefixes are the adverbs *up, ūt, onweg/aweg*, and *ofdūne/adūne.*

Combinations with these adverbs seem to be quite fully developed as phrasal verbs, with the particles often undergoing the change from directional to telic meaning, and with figurative shifts taking place in the verbal roots. Brinton (1988: 220) states that these combinations clearly represent the beginnings of the new system of post-verbal particles which in later ME will replace the system of prefixation.

Ofdūne/adūne usually carries directional meaning with verbs of motion (a), but it also has telic meaning (b). e.g.:

(a) He *adūne astah.*
'He descended (went down).'
(b) *Wendaþ* min heafod *ofdūne.*
'Move my head down.'

Onweg/aweg also occurs with verbs of motion with its directional meaning (a), but also with verbs of driving, taking, removing etc. with both directional and telic meanings (b), e.g.:

(a) Sceall þonne *feran onweg.*
'He shall then travel away.'
(b) He hi rașe *aweg aþ ywde.*
'He quickly drove them away.'

Both *ūt* and *up* are frequent and well-established adverbial particles in OE. ***ūt*** may be used with verbs of motion and of communication with more or less literal directional meaning (a), but is more often used with verbs of casting, pouring, freeing, leading, putting, etc. with combined spatial and aktionsart meaning (b), e.g.:

(a) Vtan *gan ūt.*
'Let them go out.'
(b) *Geote* hit man *ūt.*
'Let one pour it out.'

Up, the most common post-verbal particle in Modern English, is also the particle of highest frequency in Hiltunen's corpus (1983a: 208). Both Hiltunen and Brinton have found that *up* frequently expresses both

directional and goal meanings as in *lift up, dig up, pull up, grow up* and *blow up* (a). It is also used commonly in figurative phrasal verbs (b).

(a) He *upp asœ*.
'He sat up.'

(b) Þe læs þe God *up brede* ðone godspellican cwide.
'lest God bring up words of the gospel against thee.'

In conclusion, one can say that both the semantics and the syntax of the phrasal verb appear to be quite well-developed even in OE, especially with the particles *of, forð, ofdūne, onweg, up*, and *ūt*. Though they occur primarily with verbs of motion or physical activity, the particles in these combinations express, at the same time, directional meanings, *off, forth, down, away, up, out*, and telic meanings, 'completely' or 'to an end'. The verbs in these combinations have both literal and metaphorical meanings, though the former are more common in OE. Finally, one can say that the syntactic development lags somewhat behind the semantic development. While aktionsart meanings appear early, the establishment of post-verbal and post-object order of the particle takes a long time. Both orders appear in OE, but preverbal order is still predominant.

As the verbal prefixes continue to be weakened and overgeneralized, the phrasal verb extends its domain in Middle English. Although pure directional meanings of the particles still abound, the contexts in which both directional and telic meanings co-exist increase and then the telic meaning of the particle seems to be foregrounded. In addition, there are more figurative uses of phrasal verbs and more purely telic particles. Finally, idiomatic senses of phrasal verbs begin to appear.

As Brinton (1988: 226–231) points out, the common telic particles in OE continue to be used in ME; these include *of, forth, (a)down, awei, out(e)* and *up*.

As in OE, *of* may have both directional and telic meaning with verbs of cutting (a) and the putting off of earthly things, of events, or of fears and the breaking off of activities are, of course, figurative. (b), e.g.:

(a) The devyl *smyte of* here hed.
'The devil smote off her head.'

(b) We schulde *putte of* material and erþeliche þinges.
'We should reject material and earthly things.'

Forth is primarily directional in the meaning 'forth, forwards' (a), but it has both directional and telic meanings (b). In the figurative bringing forth of reasons or news and the putting forth of presumption or the active life, the particle has a strong telic sense (c), e.g.:

(a) So there com a squyre *brought forthe* two sperys.

'So there came a squire (who) brought forth two spears.

(b) What helpeth it to *tarien forth* the day.
'What does it help to tarry forth the day.'

(c) þe contemplatijf lijf. *bringiþ forþ* his actijf lijf.
'The contemplative life brings forth his active life.'

Again as in OE **(a)doun** has both directional and goal meaning in the senses 'down to the ground' or 'down to destruction' (a) and figurative phrasal verbs with *(a)doun* are also common b), e.g.:

(a) He *hew adoun* a god sapling of an ok.
'He felled a good oak sapling.'

(b) Trouthe is *put doun*, resoun is holden fable.
'Truth is put down (eradicated), reason is considered fable.'

Awei has both directional and telic meanings (a) and combination with it can also be metaphorical (b), e.g.:

(a) In fure he *berneþ* al *awey*.
'In a fury, they burn all away.'

(b) To *puten* alle wraththe *away*.
'To put all wrath away.'

Out(e) occurs with a wide variety of verbs with a strong telic and little directional meaning, especially in the senses 'to an end', 'into prominence', and 'to extinction' (a), but it can also have telic (b) and figurative meaning (c), e.g.:

(a) The thef entrith þe hous and *doth oute* the fire.
'The thief enters the house and puts out the fire.'

(b) A coward is but as a drane in an hyue, and *etiþ out* þe hony.
'A coward is but a drone in a hive and eats up the honey.'

(c) If euyl thoghtes our hertes tak, *Kast* þam *oute* for godes sake.
'If evil thoughts take hold of your hearts, cast them out for God's sake.

By ME, ***up*** had become a very common particle. One can observe an increasing change in emphasis from directional to goal meanings (a), and figurative phrasal verbs with *up* are also common (b), e.g.:

(a) Aurora hadde *dreyed up* the dew of herbes wete.
'Aurora had dried up the dew of wet plants.'

(b) *Plukke up* yuore hertes, and beeth glad and blithe.
'Pluck up your hearts and be glad and happy.'

The clearest continuative/iterative marker in ME is ***along***, e.g.:

In that gardyn gan I goo, *Pleyyng along* full meryly
'Into that garden I began to go, playing along very merrily.'

Locative *on* is not yet a frequent continuative/iterative particle in ME. A more common continuative/iterative particle with verbs of communication is ***forth***, e.g.:

Now wol I *telle forth* my tale.

'Now I will tell forth my tale.'

5 Conclusion

The present study has been an attempt to trace the evolution of some prefixed and phrasal constructions in OE and ME, which involved extremely complex linguistic changes. Modern English phrasal verbs are doubtless a problem not only to learners of English as a foreign language but also to those trying to describe them linguistically. As we have, however, seen, their early history was even more complicated, and their syntactic and semantic complexity reached its peak at the end of the OE and the beginning of the ME period. The above discussion has shown that in the course of the development of both verbal prefixes and post-verbal particles in Old and Middle English, it is possible to see a semantic shift in some of these forms from spatial meanings to aspect/aktionsart/figurative meanings. It has consequences for an understanding of the meaning of phrasal verbs in Modern English as at least a subset of the post-verbal particles functions in quite a systematic way in expressing aspect or aktionsart meaning, and this is a direct consequence of their original spatial meaning. These meaning relations have served as a basis for the analysis of prepositions/particles/prefixes by cognitive grammarians, who considered metaphoric processes to be the major factors in this semantic shift. Cognitive-semantic studies of polysemy structures such as verb-particle constructions with the particles UP and OUT by Lindner (1981), the meanings of OVER by Brugman (1981), Taylor (1989) and Lakoff (1987) have succeeded in uncovering motivation and order behind previously random-looking groupings of meanings. They have pointed out that the meanings of prepositions/particles/prefixes are not completely arbitrary but motivated by their spatial meanings and by metaphors in our conceptual system.

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Promoting a Particular View of Learner Autonomy Through an English Language Syllabus

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A particular view of learner autonomy for language learning and a syllabus to promote that view of autonomy are presented and discussed in this paper. The discussion is the result of an in-depth analysis of an existing* English language syllabus at Eszterházy Károly College in Eger, Hungary (Macdonald 2003). The intention of the analysis was to address the problem areas of the existing syllabus relating to the lack of opportunities currently available on the syllabus for student-centred negotiation and decision-making and to propose an alternative syllabus designed to support the promotion of learner autonomy in the context in question. Discussion here will show that the syllabus presented does support the view of autonomy put forward in this paper, and that the type of learner autonomy to be promoted and the syllabus created to incorporate that view of autonomy are justifiable as contextually appropriate proposals for the educational environment in question. However, further data collection and discussion are necessary within the specific department before implementation of the proposed syllabus to ensure the feasibility of the proposals. In addition, continued data collection and discussion are necessary during implementation in order to measure the viability of the proposals in practice, to measure how far learners actually increase their level of autonomy for language learning purposes and how far learners improve their English language ability as a result.

1 Introduction

This paper is an examination of the conclusions drawn from an in-depth analysis of an existing English language syllabus at Eszterházy Károly College in Eger, Hungary (Macdonald 2003). The analysis of the syllabus in question highlighted a number of problem areas, in particular those relating to the lack of opportunities currently available on the syllabus for student-centred negotiation and decision-making, and the analysis concluded that learner autonomy should be promoted in the setting in question through

* References in this paper to the *existing* and *current* syllabus apply to the programme in the context in question at the time the research was conducted, namely 2002. In addition, the initial proposals presented here have recently been used as the basis for a new programme in the department. Data collection regarding outcomes is continuing.

an alternative syllabus. In order for the proposals for change to be both potentially beneficial and feasible in the environment under consideration, the wider social context of the educational setting, the norms of the institution in question, the teachers and the students involved were taken into account in deciding the type of learner autonomy to be promoted and in creating the proposed syllabus. As well as feedback data collected from teachers in the department in question, analysis was based on my own observations as teacher of the syllabus under examination. This paper will thus focus on the discussion surrounding the type of learner autonomy to be promoted in the specific higher education institution under examination and the syllabus designed to support that view of learner autonomy.

2 The Definition of Autonomy in Language Learning Appropriate for the Specific Context

Autonomy in language learning has become an increasingly accepted pedagogic goal in recent years and a variety of definitions regarding the notion exist, representing a number of perspectives on the matter. As Benson and Voller point out, "monolithic definitions of autonomy and independence have proved elusive, and it is perhaps more productive to speak of different versions of the concepts which correspond to different perspectives and circumstances" (1997b: 13). The definition of autonomy proposed for the context under examination in this paper is: **the promotion of the learner as an active participant in the language learning process within an instructed environment, where his/her active participation is to be encouraged through the development of the learner's ability to make decisions, think critically, work collaboratively and on an individual basis in a way which will help his/her studies in the educational setting in question.**

The fundamental principle behind the definition of autonomy offered here is the importance of the context within which autonomy is to be incorporated. Little's discussion of autonomy makes use of the term 'freedom' but he nevertheless recognises that these freedoms are conditional and constrained as, "our essential condition is one of interdependence" (1991: 5). In addition, Nunan highlights the important role that contextual factors play in defining autonomy by pointing out the following:

> There are different degrees of autonomy, and the extent to which it is feasible or desirable for learners to embrace autonomy will depend on a

> range of factors to do with the personality of the learner, their goals in undertaking the study of another language, the philosophy of the institution (if any) providing the instruction, and the cultural context within which the learning takes place. (1996: 13)

He recognises that contextual variables will affect the version of autonomy to be promoted in a particular setting and they will affect whether that form of autonomy is both practicable and beneficial. Although Benson argues that, "autonomy is fundamentally concerned with the interests of learners, rather than the interests of those who require their skills" (2001: 21), by necessity, a definition of autonomy must acknowledge the interests that exist beyond the learners themselves. For example, there are clear economic reasons for learners to choose certain languages for particular contexts and the learners' priority may simply be to achieve success in those societal terms. Benson warns against the danger of autonomy being "viewed simply as a matter of consumer choice" (2001: 20) and it is indeed important to avoid a misinterpretation of autonomy which might encourage employers to save money on hiring teachers in the name of promoting the autonomous learner. However, as with any innovation, contextual factors are an essential consideration, as the effective implementation of innovation depends on it being acceptable to all those involved (Nicholls 1983), which includes the learners, teachers and the institution, who are all in turn influenced by the wider cultural setting.

The definition of autonomy presented in this paper promotes the learner as an active participant in the language learning process within an instructed environment. This statement attempts to address the concern expressed by myself and other teachers with regards to our observations of learners who sit in classes as passive recipients of presented information and display an apparent reluctance and/or inability to voice opinions and contribute effectively to their learning in and out of class. This part of the definition is loosely related to Holec's definition of autonomy which he describes as "the ability to take charge of one's learning" (1981: 3), as 'taking charge' does suggest positive action on the part of the learners. Active participation is used here instead, however, to underline the fact that the learners are expected to be active members of a group of learners within an instructed environment. The statement therefore recognises the contributions learners can make whilst nevertheless accepting the need for continued guidance on the part of the teacher.

The difference between the definition here and Holec's is mainly in terms of the level of control the learners are likely to have. Holec's definition resulted from his report on the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project, which was concerned with adult lifelong learning. His

definition therefore addresses the need for those adult learners to take full responsibility for the content and organisation of their learning. For the instructed setting in question here, the learners' level of control will change and develop as their studies progress but they are unlikely to gain full control of all aspects of their studies due to the requirements and demands of the educational institution of which they are members. Nunan's levels of autonomy are a helpful reference point for the innovation proposals in this paper. The autonomy proposals for the syllabus in question are similar to levels one and two on Nunan's scale: level one being concerned with raising learners' awareness of pedagogic goals and content of the materials they are using and level two allowing learner involvement in the selection of their own goals from a range of alternatives on offer (1997: 195). It is important to note, however, that these levels of autonomy are general guidelines only as the levels will differ from learner to learner and according to the particular task at hand.

'Active participation' therefore reflects a view of autonomy specific to a particular educational setting where the level of autonomy is constrained but appropriate for that setting. 'Active participation' also reflects a philosophy of learning where learners work in cooperation with each other and their teachers. Kohonen describes cooperative learning as a situation where learners work to accomplish shared goals (1992: 33) and "the extent to which the decisions are taken together reflects a shared management of learning, with the teacher functioning as guide and expert consultant of learning" (1992: 32). His experiential model allows a more learner-centred approach in language instruction but acknowledges the roles the learners as a group and the teacher can play in 'positive interdependence' (1992: 34). Kohonen's summary of experiential learning is directly in line with the view of autonomy here as he states that personal awareness and responsibility are part of autonomous learning but "personal decisions are made with respect to social and moral norms, traditions and expectations" (1992: 19). The definition for autonomy offered here concerns the development of the learners' ability to work collaboratively and on an individual basis in a way which will help his/her studies in the educational setting in question. This therefore argues in favour of a learner-centred approach but where a learner's autonomous decisions are made in positive cooperation with the expected norms of the educational setting. Language classes should therefore give the learner plenty of opportunities for interactive communication and for reflection on the language itself, on ways of learning, and on the learners' progress.

In addition, learners' active participation, as described so far, needs to be supported through the development of the ability to make decisions and

think critically, an essential part of the definition of autonomy offered here. Ridley argues in favour of developing learners' thinking skills and states that learners need to develop the ability to reflect both on the learning process as a whole and on individual tasks, for planning, monitoring or evaluation purposes (1997: 1). Referring to students in a higher education setting, Heron also argues that a learner needs "the capacity to learn, the capacity to know how to learn, the capacity to know that he has learned" (1988: 78). Little defines autonomy as "a capacity—for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making" (1991: 4) but, although similar, the definition in this paper goes further in underlining the argument that the decision-making process does not occur randomly but takes place within the constraints of a particular context.

The promotion of learner autonomy, as defined here, is also dependent on the role of the teachers involved in the language programme in question. An atmosphere of 'positive interdependence' between learners and teachers means that teachers will need to allow learners to play an active part in some of the decisions regarding their learning. The definition of autonomy here particularly favours the teacher's role as facilitator, as it is associated with motivating learners, raising learners' awareness, and helping learners to plan and carry out learning and to evaluate themselves effectively (Voller 1997: 102). The role of counsellor is also a useful one in the higher education setting in question as it refers to one-to-one interaction for consultation and guidance (Voller 1997: 103–104). The view of autonomy in this paper also favours collaboration between teachers, mirroring interdependent roles in the classroom. Collaboration in the context in question will involve coordinating elements of teaching to ensure continuity across the programme, negotiating possible changes and sharing ideas and materials. This might resemble a, "Coordinated Team Type" of team teaching where there is some joint planning by teachers teaching the same curriculum to different learners (Bailey et al. 1992: 163).

The definition of autonomy developed for the college in question is a contextually constrained one and is appropriate only for a specific educational setting. However, this raises the question whether the type of learner autonomy to be promoted here can actually be referred to as the promotion of 'autonomy' in language learning. The fact that "autonomy is not a single, easily described behaviour" (Little 1991: 7) means that certain aspects of autonomy will be emphasised in different contexts. Benson discusses three versions of autonomy: technical, psychological and political (1997: 19). He refers to technical versions as those involved in equipping learners with the skills and techniques for taking charge of their learning. The psychological versions, on the other hand, are concerned with

developing a capacity which allows learners to take responsibility for their learning. Finally, he refers to the political versions in terms of control over the processes and content of learning (1997: 19).

The definition of autonomy here draws on aspects of all three versions of autonomy described by Benson, though the psychological version is emphasised the most. For example, the reference to the learner as an active participant as part of the definition here is concerned with developing the learner's ability to be proactive in the learning process and thus to take more responsibility. In addition, the reference to learner development in terms of critical thinking skills etc. in the definition concerns "an internal transformation within the individual" (Benson 1997: 19) evident in psychological versions, but also involves equipping learners with the skills necessary to take more responsibility, similar to technical versions. Furthermore, the reference to collaboration, critical thinking and decision-making in the definition could be interpreted as involving control over content and learning processes, as suggested by a political version of autonomy. The proposed syllabus designed to support the view of learner autonomy here does interpret autonomy to include elements of negotiation and control over some content and processes such as personal learning styles and strategies.

The definition is thus justifiable in its representation of *a type* of learner autonomy. However, as a teacher at the institution in question, my concern regarding the language programme is both for the learners and the institution itself, and the type of learner autonomy offered is actually intended to benefit both parties. It is therefore clear that the learner autonomy here contrasts with the other uses of the word 'autonomy' in language education, which include situations in which learners study entirely on their own, a belief in the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning, a belief in an inborn capacity which is *suppressed* by institutional education, and self-directed learning (Benson and Voller 1997a: 1–2). The version of autonomy presented here is appropriate to a traditional instructed environment, where resources are limited for self-directed learning and where learners' and teachers' first concern lies with succeeding within the accepted standards of the institution. The advantage of the definition lies in the fact that it does not accept 'autonomy' as an unquestionably desirable goal which becomes "yet another version of the free, enlightened, liberal West bringing one more form of supposed emancipation to the unenlightened, traditional, backward and authoritarian classrooms of the world" (Pennycook 1997: 43). The definition in fact offers a clear direction for both students and teachers, drawing on aspects of other

versions of autonomy but appropriate for the educational setting for which it is designed.

3 Designing a Syllabus for the Promotion of Learner Autonomy in the Specific Context

3.1 Establishing Syllabus Type

The relevant department of the higher education institution in question currently has an, "interventionist approach which gives priority to the pre-specification of linguistic or other content or skills objectives" (White 1988: 45) for all the syllabuses in operation there. The tradition of the institution prioritises a teacher directed approach as part of a linear curriculum model, where the aims of the course are specified, the content is selected and organised and where evaluation takes place according to whether the aims have been achieved (Nunan 1988: 12). However, this is in direct contrast to syllabuses normally associated with learner autonomy, as learner autonomy "has been formalised in the idea of the process syllabus, in which learners are expected to make the major decisions concerning content and procedures of learning" (Benson 2001: 163).

A process syllabus is typified by the fact that "selection and grading of communicative activities has been replaced by negotiating and planning of larger tasks which dictate their own content and the specific enabling skills that each student will need to achieve the task" (Gray 1990: 262). However, Clarke (1991) strongly questions the feasibility of implementing a fully negotiated syllabus into most teaching circumstances. He sums up the problems associated with such a syllabus as follows:

> Quite apart from difficulties engendered by the diversity of cultural expectations concerning the nature of a syllabus and the realistic demands of education authorities for a predetermined statement of objectives and means of reaching those objectives, there exists the equally problematic area of how consensus might be achievable amongst participants on a particular course. (1991: 19)

The introduction of a process syllabus into a traditional institution would make heavy demands on the teaching staff in terms of managing groups of learners, organising banks of materials and being willing to relinquish duties normally associated with teachers (Clarke 1991: 20–21). In addition, the learners themselves may not be ready or willing to take on roles that they see as more appropriate for their teachers, particularly in a system where assessment processes are imposed on learners and where "a student's sense of self as a learner is most often constructed against evaluative criteria

over which they have no control and through a process in which they have virtually no negotiating rights" (Breen and Mann 1997: 138).

On the other hand, the incorporation of project work, most associated with a 'weak' version of the process syllabus (Benson 2001: 165), could help to promote the form of autonomy presented in section 2 of this paper. The definition of autonomy already established includes the promotion of collaborative learning in an atmosphere of positive interdependence, and as Johnson and Johnson state, "positive interdependence exists when one perceives that one is linked with others in a way so that one cannot succeed unless they do ... and/or that one must coordinate one's efforts with the efforts of others to complete a task" (1990: 27). Indeed, project work by its nature "requires learning groups, whose members collaboratively seek outcomes that are beneficial to all those with whom they are cooperatively connected" (Legutke and Thomas 1991: 219–220). Dam (1995) carried out project work in a formal educational institution in Denmark and devised a planning model to prioritise such work. She claims that her procedures have led her school-aged learners to develop both an overall awareness of language learning processes and an awareness of personal possibilities and responsibilities within these processes (1995: 80). However, a completely project-based process syllabus is not predetermined but develops in character during the course and the burden on teachers is therefore heavy in terms of effecting programme continuity (Legutke and Thomas 1991: 240).

The burden of organisation and the lack of prespecified syllabus content of both the 'weak' and 'strong' versions of the process syllabus types discussed so far would seriously hinder their effective implementation in the institutional department in question. The implementation of a syllabus is "closely bound up with particular social and cultural settings" (Brumfit 1984a: 77) and the definition of autonomy established in section 2 is shaped by contextual factors as "the extent to which autonomy can be developed is constrained by a broad range of personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural factors" (Nunan 1997: 203). A solution such as that offered by Clarke (1991) with regards to syllabus design would therefore seem more appropriate than a process syllabus. He suggests a mixed syllabus solution where features of process syllabuses are incorporated into a predetermined framework, where learners are involved in some decision-making processes such as evaluating particular materials and tasks or negotiating ways that they may prefer to work or methods of assessment (1991: 24–25). A "conventional syllabus-as-inventory" (McCarthy and Carter 2001: 61) type of syllabus in line with the college requirements will therefore be proposed for the language programme in question but it is through the syllabus

content specifications that learner autonomy, as it is viewed here, will be promoted.

3.2 The Proposed Syllabus for Language Practice Units 1 to 4

3.2.1 The Aims of the Proposed Syllabus

The Language Practice (LP) semester 'blocks' have aims and content specific to each semester and for the purposes of this paper, the aims and content specifications are for LP units 1 to 4 only. The specific aims for LP units 1 to 4 are concerned with meeting the needs of new students and their progress in the first semester of the first year at the college. These aims are as follows:

- to help learners prepare for their English medium studies at the college and adjust to college life;
- to raise learners' awareness of pedagogical goals, the content of materials being learned, preferred learning styles and strategies;
- to involve learners actively in the learning process by providing opportunities to make choices regarding activities in and out of class;
- to give learners opportunities to work collaboratively and individually, and be supported in their differing roles;
- to explore language at the level of discourse to gain greater insight into different text types, media and the role of context in language use.

3.2.2 Specifications of the Proposed Syllabus

The syllabus covers a 13 week period (weeks shown in figure 1, column 1). Topics serve to contextualise skill-based and communicative activities and the themes change every two weeks across the units (shown in figure 1, column 2). The level of student active participation and level of involvement in decision-making is increased as the units progress. For example: whole class negotiation occurs in LP unit 3 regarding task choice from week 8 (figure 1, column 5); small groups of students collaborate to choose a specific focus for project work in LP unit 2 from week 10 (figure 1, column 4); and students choose and prepare on an individual basis for the focus of oral presentations in LP unit 4 (figure 1, column 6). However, despite the increase in student active participation on LP units 1 to 4, student choice of tasks and topics is still relatively restricted. This is in line with the belief that learner autonomy needs to be built up gradually and students need to be supported in becoming increasingly autonomous. Therefore, as LP units 1 to 4 address the needs of first year students in their first semester, only a small range of tasks are offered as choices on LP unit 3, and project work and oral presentations are limited to the themes featured in the last four weeks of the syllabus.

Figure 1 Proposed Syllabus for LP Units 1 to 4 *Key: Wk = Week*

Wk	Topics	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
1	Introduction to College Life	(Negotiated with other LP Teaching Staff)	(Negotiated with other LP Teaching Staff)	(Negotiated with other LP Teaching Staff)	(Negotiated with other LP Teaching Staff)
2	Travel and Tourism	Finding Information	Reading Strategies: Predicting/ Skimming/ Scanning	Listening Strategies: Predicting/ Language Functions	Developing Thinking Skills
3		Taking and Making Notes	Reading Strategies: Specific Information	Note-Taking from Listening	Asking Critical Questions
4	The Arts and Entertainment	Academic Writing: Establishing Focus	Vocabulary Strategies: Reading	Listening Discourse Functions	Asking Critical Questions
5		Academic Writing: Narrowing Focus and Planning	Finding Information: Dictionaries	Note-Taking from Listening	Seminar Discussion Strategies
6	Environment and Health	Academic Writing: Paragraphs	Extensive Reading: English for Academic Purposes	Listening Practice: Strategies	Discourse Analysis: Speech vs. Writing
7		Academic Writing: Summarising and Paraphrasing	Extensive Reading: English for Academic Purposes	Vocabulary Development Strategies	Speaking for Academic Purposes: Presentations
8	News and Media	Academic Writing: Text Cohesion Techniques	Text Cohesion: Analysis	Listening Practice (collective student task choice)	Organising Oral Presentations
9		Text Genres and Appropriate Register	Text Genres and Appropriate Register: Analysis	Communicative Tasks (collective student task choice)	Organising Oral Presentations
10	English as a Global Language	Contrastive rhetoric	Project Work (negotiated with students)	Listening Practice (collective student task choice)	Oral Presentations (student topic choice)
11		Proof Reading Strategies	Project Work (negotiated with students)	Communicative Tasks (collective student task choice)	Oral Presentations (student topic choice)
12	Hungary: Past, Present and Future	Conventions of Academic Writing	Project Work (negotiated with students)	Listening Practice (collective student task choice)	Oral Presentations (student topic choice)
13		Conventions of Academic Writing	Project Work (negotiated with students)	Communicative Tasks (collective student task choice)	Oral Presentations (student topic choice)

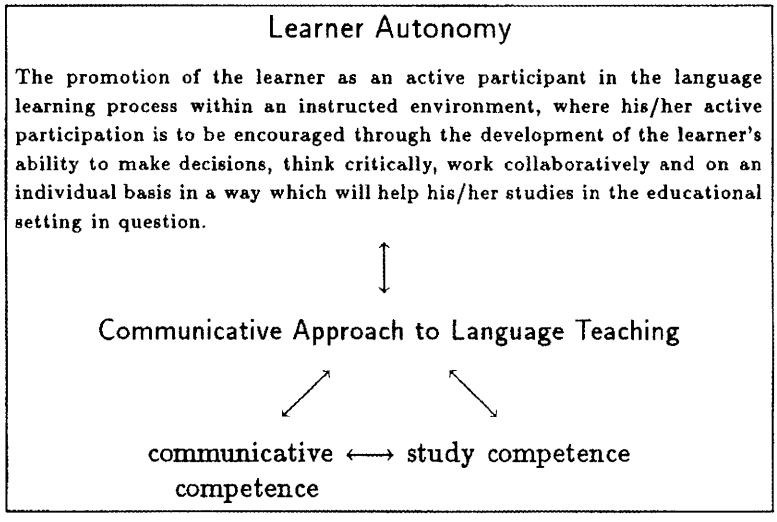
The proposed syllabus essentially prioritises the development of skills where "learning to do something *with* or *through* language is the primary objective" (Yalden 1988: 34). The skills featured are those involved with English for general academic purposes (Blue 1988) as the course is concerned with developing students' general study competence in preparation for their English degree course. Most of the syllabus presented in this paper is prespecified but there are elements to be negotiated between teachers and learners. Opportunities are given to learners to collaborate with each other and work on an individual basis.

The topics (figure 1, column 2) are intended to stimulate discussion and provide a platform to develop students' critical thinking skills, providing a bridge between study on LP units and subject specialist related studies in

semester 2. The topics have also been chosen to coincide with topics covered by the main textbook, Jones (1998), and other material already available at the college. In addition, the existing academic writing textbook, Oshima and Hogue (1991), can still be used to develop student writing skills and written discourse analysis.

Current practice at the college is for teachers to be assigned to one unit and teach all groups that unit (usually four different groups of students). First semester first year students are thus exposed to four different teachers in a week (i.e. LP units 1 to 4) and they can therefore experience different styles of teaching, ways of speaking etc. Planning time for the teachers is also saved, as essentially the same lesson is taught more than once in a week by the same teacher. Due to the existence of these norms, the four LP units are treated as separate entities, but analysis of the existing syllabus has revealed a lack of cohesion resulting from such treatment in the past. The issue of cohesion between the units is therefore addressed on the proposed syllabus by contextualising language work and using the same topic areas across the units and by repeating some discourse-based themes. Collaboration among the teachers is a prerequisite for the implementation of the alternative syllabus as the units need to be managed as a cohesive whole and teachers will need to consult each other, share materials etc.

Figure 2 Principles upon which Proposals are based



3.3 Principles on Which the Proposed Syllabus is Based

The principles governing the proposed syllabus are summarised in figure 2. Autonomy is the main principle at the top of the diagram and is to be promoted through a communicative paradigm, which in turn is intended to develop students' communicative competence and study competence. The diagram thus shows the hierarchical nature of the principles. The arrows point in two directions, however, to show the interdependency of the principles in the context in question. The fundamental guiding principle behind the language programme on the proposed syllabus is therefore the definition of autonomy presented in section 2. Through that definition it is recognised that learners in a higher educational institution are presupposed to have "the intellectual competence to acquire a fully rational grasp of a particular discipline or subject area" (Heron 1988: 78), but need to be supported in the organisation of their studies and their learning with a more learner-centred approach to language teaching and learning through the proposed syllabus.

The promotion of autonomy, as it is defined here, is to be achieved through a communicative paradigm for teaching and learning English at the college. Teachers at the college have already adopted communicative language teaching methods for the implementation of English language practice units. The communicative approach is supported to some extent by the existing syllabus through the specification of themes and functions and is reflected in the choice of main textbook for English units in the first year. To illustrate, Jones (1998), the main textbook used in the department, is designed to practice all four language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing, and includes a number of 'Communication Activities' (1998: 5). As Breen and Candlin state, "The use of (these) communicative abilities is manifested in communicative performance through a set of skills. Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills can be seen to serve and depend upon the underlying abilities of interpretation, expression and negotiation" (1980: 92). Language teachers at the college thus make use of materials and methods that support communicative language teaching principles. The teachers' existing familiarity with such methods is an advantage as the communicative paradigm serves as a useful base to promote the view of autonomy here. As Breen and Candlin argue, in a communicative curriculum, "the implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way" (1980: 100). Therefore the alternative syllabus is based on a view of teaching and learning in line with the communicative approach that:

- concentrates on language use and appropriacy as well as form;

- uses activities that are fluency-focused rather than simply accuracy-focused;
- limits the use of exercises *on* the language and encourages the achievement of communicative task objectives *through* the language;
- emphasises student interaction and limits teacher-centred approaches (Maley 1986: 88–89).

In addition, two types of learner competence are to be developed through the proposed syllabus: communicative competence and study competence. The notion of communicative competence has a number of different definitions but for the purposes of the new syllabus it is based on the categories identified by Canale and Swain (1980) and summarised by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain as follows:

(1) Linguistic or grammatical competence, which consists of the basic elements of communication: sentence patterns, morphological inflections, lexical resources, and phonological or orthographic systems.
(2) Sociolinguistic competence, which consists of the social and cultural knowledge required to use language appropriately with reference to formality, politeness and other contextually defined choices.
(3) Discourse competence, which involves the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and sentences/utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written whole with reference to a particular message and context.
(4) Strategic competence, which includes the strategies and procedures relevant to language learning, language processing, and language production. It activates knowledge of the other competencies and helps language users compensate for gaps or deficiencies in knowledge when they communicate. (2000: 16)

Communicative competence is therefore interpreted as involving the use of language as well as aspects of grammatical accuracy. The importance of dealing with language at a discourse level is an essential element in the interpretation of communicative competence here. As Celce-Murcia and Olshtain state, "it is in discourse and through discourse that all of the other competencies are realised. And it is through discourse that the manifestation of other competencies can best be observed, researched, and assessed" (2000: 16).

Study competence, on the other hand, is intended to address the particular needs of students in higher education. In a recent study of Hungarian university students studying English to degree level, it was found that students mainly use their English for study purposes during their degree course (Kormos et al. 2002). Although the research relates to university

level students, Hungarian university courses for English have a very similar structure in terms of options and type of work to the college of higher education in question and the research also confirms my own observations of student language needs at the college.

In order for (study) skills to be effectively taken up and adapted by the learners, Waters and Waters (1992) argue, however, that there is a need to develop an underlying study competence. According to Waters and Waters, teaching study skills techniques without addressing an underlying capacity for study does not necessarily result in the successful use of techniques. They argue that it is necessary to address deeper levels of processing which involve the development of students' logical thinking, critical questioning, self-awareness etc. (1992). They state, for example, that teaching a student the technique of note-taking is not enough as he/she will not be able to take *effective* notes unless the task is approached at a deeper level as well (1992: 267). In addition, developing study competence is a possible way to access the private domain of a student. Crabbe (1993) distinguishes between the public domain of shared activities in the classroom, and the private domain of learning, the place where a learner's personal learning occurs. He argues that it is necessary for the public domain task to have relevance to the private domain as "learners need to perceive the elements of the task that are conducive to their learning and to perceive how they might manage the task or a similar task for themselves, possibly by themselves" (1993: 445). The tasks he suggests involve classroom negotiation on such aspects as the aims of tasks, the difficulties in completing tasks and how tasks might effectively be tackled (1993: 450). Waters and Waters (1995) suggest tasks to develop study competence which have a similar interactional element to Crabbe's examples and include awareness-building tasks, problem-solving tasks and tasks involving critical analysis.

4 Evaluation of the Proposed Syllabus with Regards to Whether it Promotes the View of Learner Autonomy Presented for the Context in Question

According to the type of autonomy to be promoted, the syllabus framework must provide opportunities for students to develop their decision-making and thinking skills, cooperate with each other and their teachers, and work effectively on their own, in support of college language learning requirements in order to fulfill its role in promoting the particular view of learner autonomy presented here.

The learner as an 'active participant' in the language learning process is supported by incorporating elements of learner development into the

proposed syllabus. For example, strategies for language learning are included, and as Oxford and Nyikos point out, "cognitive psychology shows that learning strategies help learners to assimilate new information into their own existing mental structures or schemata, thus creating increasingly rich and complex schemata" (1989: 291). According to Chamot and Rubin, strategy development is most effective, however, if teachers find out about the strategies already used by the students and discuss them; then present new strategies, naming and describing them openly; model the strategies; give reasons for using the new strategies and explain when they can be used; and then provide opportunities to extensively practise the strategies (1994: 773). They state, "the evidence describing usage and intervention in both L1 contexts and L2 learning leads us to feel confident that such instruction, properly carried out, can positively assist language learners to become actively engaged in their own learning processes" (1994: 774). It is also important to emphasise that a number of variables exist, such as learner, context, task, teacher and text that affect the success of strategy instruction in helping language learning (Chamot and Rubin 1994: 774). Furthermore, Rees-Miller warns against students feeling pressured to use particular strategies chosen by the teacher and feeling stigmatised or patronised for choosing some strategies over others (1994: 779).

The strategies particularly emphasised on the proposed syllabus are those directly related to college level English requirements, such as strategies for extensive reading, skimming and scanning texts, strategies for dealing with unknown vocabulary in texts, planning strategies and proof-reading strategies. The assumption here is that students' immediate needs arriving at the college are to adjust to college life and prepare for the specialist subject English-medium seminars later in the academic year. The intention is to equip students with the capacity to actively participate in their English-medium studies through learner development of study techniques.

In addition, students' underlying capacity for study needs to be developed if study techniques are to be used effectively. Developing learners' study competence through the proposed syllabus is a principle in line with the definition of learner autonomy established here. The assumption is that the development of study competence involves the development of learners' critical thinking skills. It is the intention of the proposed syllabus that study techniques are explored through a number of engaging tasks such as those which require learners to solve problems, consider different options and ask appropriate questions. Study techniques, together with an underlying study competence, can be genuinely developed through the incorporation of project work and oral presentations on the proposed syllabus. Students are required to use a number of study techniques in an effective way to plan,

structure and complete such work and have to use critical thinking skills and decision-making skills to do so. Furthermore, the work incorporates and develops other general language learning strategies involving the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, as well as affective and strategic strategies during oral presentations, for example.

The proposed syllabus also provides students with the opportunity to interact through negotiation and collaboration. For example, students need to make collective decisions regarding communicative task choice in LP unit 3 (figure 1, column 5); student collaboration and student/teacher collaboration is necessary for group project work; and students work individually on oral presentations, but nevertheless need to collaborate with their teachers on the focus of the presentation, material collection etc. Opportunities for collaboration and working individually are therefore provided on the syllabus, in line with the view of learner autonomy to be promoted here. In addition, the implication of a communicative approach to language teaching and learning is that language can be described at a discourse level (McDonough and Shaw 1993: 33) and the added dimension of a "top-down" approach (Cook 1989: 79) to language learning further equips learners with the ability to analyse and understand language and thus increases the learner's chance to play an active role in the whole process. Opportunities for just such an approach have been provided on the proposed syllabus in the incorporation of discourse topics such as the analysis of text genre, appropriacy and register, and contrastive rhetoric (figure 1).

Evaluation of the proposed syllabus so far would thus suggest that the framework presented does in fact support the view of learner autonomy established here. The proposed syllabus has the potential to develop students' decision-making and thinking skills through activities that demand collaboration as well as individual effort and the type of skills and strategies included on the syllabus are intended to help students in the college language learning environment.

5 Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to present and examine a particular view of learner autonomy and a syllabus that supports that view as developed through an in-depth analysis of an existing English language syllabus at a specific college of higher education in Hungary. The challenge to be met was the creation of a viable version of learner autonomy for the setting in question and then to construct a realisable syllabus for its promotion. Discussion has shown that the type of learner autonomy to be promoted and the syllabus created to incorporate that view of autonomy are justifiable as contextually

appropriate proposals for the educational environment in question and that the syllabus presented does indeed support that view of autonomy.

However, a syllabus cannot define learning but only provides an accessible framework which can influence teaching, though it cannot actually control the teaching (Brumfit 1984a: 76). It cannot therefore be assumed that the implementation of the proposed syllabus will automatically result in the students becoming active participants in their learning through the implementation of the proposed syllabus. Once the proposed syllabus has been implemented, it is necessary for the teachers involved with the syllabus to establish a means to measure how far the syllabus does in practice support the definition of learner autonomy; whether students are indeed becoming active participants in their learning with the ability to think critically, work collaboratively and on an individual basis; and whether the promotion of learner autonomy results in more effective language learning. Furthermore, a means to record problems arising with regards to feasibility in the setting in question needs to be established. Measurement during the process of implementation might be possible through teacher observation of learner participation in class, questionnaires and interviews with learners regarding their own perceptions and the possible use of learner diaries to evaluate their involvement in decisions, their discussion of strategy use and their comments on cooperative learning and working individually.

In addition, further data collection and departmental discussion is necessary before the proposals can be effectively instigated, implemented and evaluated within the department in question. For example, before the proposed syllabus is implemented, further data collection would be necessary to ensure the feasibility of the proposals. Questions for data collection should explore opinions on the existing syllabus as well as the proposed syllabus in detail and all teachers involved with the language programme need to contribute to the data collection process. Future data collection should also include student questionnaires in line with the learner-centred nature of the proposals. Through careful planning and management of the alternative syllabus, it is hoped that the implementation of the proposals will benefit not only the students involved but also the teachers, the department and the institution itself.

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Testing Written English through Pairwork

Katalin Lazarevics

Introduction

No one doubts that testing is necessary. Lots of things are tested day by day and so is language performance in both oral and written forms. Normally, we want to find out about individual achievement of the candidates to check their progress, place them in appropriate groups, give them feedback, or award a certificate. It was not until the 70s of the past century that, due to political and economic reasons, crowds of people wanted to, or had to, learn a second or foreign language in order to get a job or survive in a foreign country. The expectations for intensive and efficient language training as well as for valid and objective assessment contributed to the development of methodology in general, and testing techniques in particular.

Most of us have some kind of experience about being tested. Usually, it is not part of everyday routine but a special occasion for which you have previously prepared. How do you feel when you know you are going to be tested? Are you relaxed or excited, looking forward to showing how much you know or, on the contrary: worried, nervous or in panic at the thought of being caught on something you do not? Most people feel the latter. There is some evidence that the higher the level of anxiety, the lower the performance (Vekerdy). It seems that we are trying to measure something that is being unfavourably influenced by psychological factors so, in most of the cases, examination situations are unlikely to give reliable results. Is there a way out? How can stress be reduced? Testing specialists have long been trying to make examinations less stressful, more human and more real life like (McNamara).

Test designers agree that a good test is objective, valid and realiable. We can add one more feature: testing normally happens individually. Candidates have to face the examination board alone, which can be rather discouraging, or sit for a written test to solve unknown and, sometimes, unexpected problems. Loneliness of candidates may contribute to their feeling of anxiety in examination situations, which could possibly be reduced by co-operation and sharing responsibility with another candidate. Would it affect the features of an effective test if testing happened in pairwork?

Testing writing through pairwork may sound unusual. Still, there is some evidence to support its feasibility. Having tested my own college students through pairwork, I asked some primary and secondary school teachers to cooperate and contribute to my investigation by piloting some tests of their own. Now a wider population has been involved and, as a result, more data are available to support the idea.

Theoretical Background

When we look back at the history of language testing in its written form we can see that, after the end of the hegemony of the grammar-translation method, the first attempts to create grammar tests were made around the 60s and 70s which resulted in multiple choice tests (MCQ). To their greatest pleasure, test designers managed to create a test that was really objective (Weir, 1990). Moreover, these tests were easy to correct with the help of optical readers (computers), and were suitable for assessing language competences for a lot of people in a short period of time. No wonder that MCQ tests quickly became popular all over the world.

But, is it the same skill to select one good answer out of four options as to produce it on your own? The answer is certainly: no (Weir, 1993). What do MCQ tests measure, then? Among other things, they measure the candidate's skill to solve MCQ tests which testees can be (and actually are) trained for. Apart from some possible, usually formal, deficiencies of test rubrics the main problem is that candidates have no opportunity to think: a limited (usually very short) time is given for this type of test. If you happen to know the correct answer, you are lucky. If not, there are some strategies that might help: "When in doubt, choose C or the longest", as some advice goes. Even if you do not understand anything of the stem or the distractors, you can be successful: a probability of 25% is guaranteed in four-option tests.

It did not take too long for testing specialists and item writers to realise the shortcomings of MCQs. In the early 80s they developed new and more reliable test types to measure language competencies. With the help of Cloze-tests and C-tests, yes/no type of decision making was replaced by more productive and flexible ways to find out about candidates' general understanding, vocabulary and grammar skills. These tests are still popular and, slowly but surely, are spreading even in a typically slow and resistant public education system like the one in Hungary (e.g. in intermediate and advanced level school leaving exams, from the year 2005).

No doubt that even the most candidate friendly test is able to create a lot of stress and anxiety which, in turn, can lower testees' performance.

Test designers today are striving to change the character of the tasks: once so popular multiple choice questions have gradually been replaced by more life like exercises to make candidates forget about the fact that they are being tested. Some of these tests look like puzzles, riddles or interesting problems to be solved in the target language. Another, really promising, experiment is connected to oral testing: pairwork is used by some official language examination boards where the candidates are free to choose their partners. Each performance is assessed individually, which, according to the findings of Csépes (2003) is not influenced in any way by the partner's level of competencies. This kind of exam organisation can definitely reduce the level of stress and can create a candidate friendly atmosphere.

Feasibility of Written Pairwork

However convincing the practice of paired oral testing can be, pairwork for written performance sounds astonishingly strange. You can ask questions like "How do you make pairs? How can you find out how much each candidate knows? What about marks? Will everybody get a five, then? There will be noise in the classroom! What should a worksheet look like?", and many more. With the kind help of co-operating colleagues, investigation was conducted in different school types and age groups last year to find out whether, and how, testing through pairwok made sense. It is a common fear that the points of score and, consequently, the mean will go higher, and the normal distribution curve will be deformed just because two co-operating people are supposed to produce better results than a single one.

Experience

In the experiment, language tests were written through pairwork in one German and two English groups of primary school students, and in several students' groups at college. Altogether 116 students (58 pairs) and four teachers were involved. This form of testing came as a surprise to the participants: they learnt about it on the spot. They were asked to form pairs and work with their partners. Surprisingly, test scores tended to give normal distribution, that is, points of score, percentages and marks did not seem affected by the mere fact of pairwork. The teachers themselves found that the results were not much different to the usual. Moreover, the German group took the same test twice: first individually and a second time through pairwork. The difference in marks was as low as 0.05 percent.

Participants

Testing written performance through pairwork is not possible unless candidates share the same idea about it, i.e. everybody agrees. Young adults (students) are usually happy to cooperate because of obvious reasons and, in return, they are ready to promise not to use cheat sheets. Primary school pupils were surprised at their teacher's proposal about paired testing but, after the first shock, they were quite positive about it. Anyway, testing in pairwork should never happen because of the authority, or under the pressure of, the teacher. It is also important that each student give their consent prior to test taking to accept the same score and the same mark awarded by the teacher, with no regard to their individual contribution.

Pairing Pupils

Making pairs can be organized in two ways: (1) candidates are free to choose their partners, or (2) it is the teacher who decides about it. Provided that pairwork had not been announced in advance and students did not have the opportunity to agree who is learning what for the test we can assume that they come to the classroom decently prepared. In this case friendship, realiability and trust are the major considerations for their choice. Motivation for choosing a partner was investigated in all groups concerned, and it was interesting to find that nobody wished to benefit from a much better student's performance. Moreover, all college students held the belief that everybody else was better prepared than themselves, consequently they were ready to accept anyone for a partner in the group.

Those college students who came late could work with a person left alone if there was one, or join an existing couple. A third choice was to work individually, which was not popular and can be considered evidence for feeling safer with a partner. The case is a little bit different in the lower forms of primary school where gender differences are a serious concern. Young children are not willing to choose a partner from the opposite sex which is natural for their age, but makes their choice limited. In certain cases it is the teacher who must take the responsibility for making couples.

Marks and Results

Is it always crucial to find out about each candidate's individual performance? Is it really so very important? In some cases, it is. But, if the couples have agreed to accept the same mark why should the teacher not rely on their judgement? Each pupil has an idea about how they are going to perform and they choose a partner accordingly. Accepting the same mark is part of their self assessment and peer assessment because they expect their

partner to equally contribute. So from the teacher's point of view, there should not be any concern about marks.

All teachers who participated in the experiment were looking forward to the paired test results. If you think that a miracle happened to the pupils and students when they worked in pairs, and they all got good marks, you are wrong. Let us see the evidence. Firstly, both primary school teachers and myself found that test results were realistic. That is, the mean of the given marks was more or less the same as usual. So there is no "threat" to the good old bell shape curve which, due to many other factors, can be easily distorted. Secondly, one of the teachers administered the same test twice: first through individual work, and then through pairwork. She got very similar results: 3.80 for individual work and 3.75 for pairwork, which sounds convincing.

Some more results are provided as shown in the table below:

GROUP	NUMBER	MARKS					MEAN
		1	2	3	4	5	
Form 3	6 pairs	0	0	1	0	5	4.300
Form 8	13 pairs	2	0	0	1	10	4.300
Form 9	8 pairs	0	0	4	2	2	3.750
Students	31 pairs	5	7	6	7	6	3.0645
All	58 pairs	7	7	11	10	23	3.603

As we can see, test results are not significantly higher than they normally are in a mainstream group.

Conclusion

We have some limited evidence to show that pairwork does not influence the objectivity, validity and reliability of tests that otherwise are objective, valid and reliable. Provided that they are valid for individuals, they should be equally valid for pairs of students in the same group. Drawing a conclusion, however, is impossible without further investigation. In addition, paired testing is not likely to be adaptable for all assessment types.

When looking at different test types we can see that placement tests, diagnostic tests and proficiency tests are designed for the specific purpose of gathering information about individual performance (Harmer, 2001). Moreover, very often there is a competition among candidates for a job, promotion or higher salary which would act against co-operation. Still, it

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would be interesting to find out if, and how, pairwork can be used in these test types.

Achievement tests however, which do not carry any special risk or stakes, are suitable for being conducted through pairwork. Both of the team members can benefit from collaboration and each will do their best for their partner and themselves. What is the benefit to be gained by this idea? Not more than making assessment less stressful, more relaxed, more of a pleasant experience for those who are acting as candidates. I firmly believe that paired testing can foster important competencies like self and peer assessment, solidarity and cooperation which are vital for our children. Even in a highly traditional educational environment, I can only encourage my colleagues to try it out at least once in a lifetime to see how it works and to check if my ideas are correct.

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