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Spirits Immortal in and out of Time

The Temporality of Milton's Angels in *Paradise Lost*

Milton's angelic hosts provide a major structural counterpoint to the destiny of humans. This essay examines their world and fate specifically from the point of view of their existence in time. Angels are immortal, but they are not eternal beings. The annihilation of angels is not beyond God's power. Despite similarities in their prelapsarian condition, angels and humans do not share a common destiny. Unlike the fall of humans, the fall of angels is temporally irreversible. Milton maintains a complex duality with respect to the fallen angels in that they are simultaneously fallen into, and out of, time. On the one hand, they are locked up in time and their own existence, unable to pass through the ultimate remedy, death. On the other hand, they have abused their freedom and are therefore outside time, which is no longer a potentiality for them, either to fall or to be redeemed. Cut off from God and thrown back on their own resources, the devils produce a closed, circular world. Their memories are clouded and confused, but it is part of their punishment that they should remember while they have no reliable knowledge of the future. At the heart of their enterprise is a subjective and manipulative reinterpretation of the past, with disastrous consequences for the present and the future. In the allegory of Sin, Milton provides a rather surprising counterpoint to infernal self-deception. While the analysis is carried out from the perspective of temporality, the result is a complex picture of a cluster of concepts that are central to Milton's epic like time, eternity, createdness, knowledge, hierarchy, and freedom.

There is time in Milton's heaven,[1] yet his angels do not seem to be subject to it in the way humans are temporal beings. "With the angels, time is essentially the variety and rhythm of experience," says Northrop Frye, and he soon adds, "The experience of time by Adam is similar."[2] The crucial difference is perhaps not between angelic

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1. See my "Time in Milton's *Paradise Lost,*" *The AnaChronisT* 1 (1995) 89–105.
2. Northrop Frye, *The Return of Eden: Five Essays on Milton's Epics* (1965; Toronto and Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 1975), p. 36.

and human, but between prelapsarian and fallen time although I will show that in terms of the latter, there is an all-decisive difference between the two rational orders of creation. Crucially, Adam and Eve became mortal with the fall, and bequeath that to their children. Angels, by contrast, remain immortal even in their sin. What they make of time and their own immortality will be two fundamental questions discussed in this paper.

Angels created immortal

Angels do not live in a timeless world; they have particular ages. Disguised Satan "a stripling cherub . . . appears, / Not of the prime, yet such as in his face / Youth smiled celestial" (iii.636–38)[3] while Michael's "helm unbuckled showed him prime / In manhood where youth ended" (xi.245–46). As Raphael's age is not indicated (and in fact both the above instances are linked with fallenness), Kathleen Swaim can make the contrasting point that "even so small a detail as the specification of a particular age for Michael . . . reflects the intrusion of temporal categories into the fallen world."[4] Unfortunately, the observation only holds within the limited context of the comparison between the two heavenly instructors. At the gate of paradise, next to Gabriel "exercised heroic games / The unarmed *youth of heaven*" (iv.551–52, my emphasis). Zephon also gave Satan a "grave rebuke / Severe in *youthful* beauty" (iv.844–45, my italics). The age distinction of angels, it must be allowed, is probably no more than a token of their position in the celestial hierarchy: a literal rendering of their juniority or seniority.[5]

Whether or not they actually age, angels cannot normally die. The bard calls them "spirits immortal" (ii.553) even in their fallenness. The full picture emerges from Raphael's account of the war in heaven. We learn that whatever injury it sustains, "the ethereal substance [is] / Not long divisible" (vi.330–31) and soon heals. Angels are "spirits that live throughout / Vital in every part" (vi.344–45), and "their

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3. All parenthesised references are to this edition: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667, 2nd ed. 1674), ed. Alastair Fowler, 2nd ed. (Harlow etc.: Longman, 1998). Editorial material is quoted as Fowler² followed by page number and line reference. The first edition of 1968 will be quoted, from a 1991 reprint that excludes the rest of Milton's poetry, as Fowler¹.

4. Kathleen Swaim, *Before and After the Fall: Contrasting Modes in Paradise Lost* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986) 9.

5. The possible double interpretation of iii.637 as "prime of life" or "chief cherubim" supports this view. See Fowler², p. 208 (ad iii.636–37).

liquid texture mortal wound [cannot] / Receive" (vi.348–49). And yet, they can "by annihilating die" (vi.347). Despite the obvious textual evidence, Fowler holds that "M[ilton] thought God unable to annihilate anything."[6] Helen Gardner agrees, "God is a creator and cannot destroy what he has created, for that would be contradiction of his essential being." She is right in the particular context she is writing about. "[T]he terror of his [the Son's] countenance drives the rebels before him. They are not destroyed. They are rooted out of Heaven."[7] But I think both authors overstate the case here, generalising from other sources and loci. I am not suggesting that Milton envisioned the actual extermination of any creature, but the possibility, at least theoretical, of annihilation, whatever it may be, seems to me quite important for his overall purpose.

In fact, in Gardner's context, too, that possibility is asserted even as its actuality is denied. Driving out the rebels from heaven "as a herd / Of goats or timorous flock" (vi.856–57), "half his strength he [the Son] put not forth, but checked / His thunder in mid-volley, for he meant / Not to destroy" (vi.853–55). In other words, he could have destroyed, had he deployed all his thunder. Again, as the celestial choir hails the returning Jehova for the six days' work, because "to create / Is greater than created to destroy" (vii.606–07), it implicitly affirms the possibility of divine destruction. Sin also warns Satan that Death's "mortal dint, / Save he who reigns above, none can resist" (ii.813–14). The threat works, and we have no proof positive that it was more than a mere bluff, but as I shall argue at the end of this paper, we have no reason to doubt Sin's claim here. Death's dart is stronger than Satan. It cannot be otherwise for creation cannot impose a limit on God's sovereign freedom; he[8] must not be objectively bound by his own creation. The ability to completely undo what he has created must be within his power. Otherwise, his actions would be temporally constrained because irreversible.[9] God would not be truly eternal. There is a distinction to be drawn between eternity and immortality. Creation on the one hand, and the possibility of annihilation on the other, mark off the limits of the latter from the former. And

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6. Fowler[2], p. 68 (ad i.116–17). He does not comment on my prooftext (vi.347).

7. Helen Gardner, *A Reading of Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965) 70.

8. I adhere to Milton's and the critical guild's convention of using masculine pronouns for God with the understanding that all human language about God is to some extent metaphorical. Masculine pronouns are not meant to entail statements about God's ontological genderedness.

9. See Catherine Gimelli Martin, "Fire, Ice, and Epic Enthropy: The Physics and Metaphysics of Milton's Reformed Chaos," *Milton Studies* 35 (1997) 73–113, p. 79 for her parsing of reversibility and irreversibility between the created and the divine realms.

knowledge of both marks off the good angels from the bad ones. It would be a mistake to consider Raphael's doctrine fallacious. On the contrary, he gets it right and thereby supplies an indispensable retrospective benchmark to evaluate an important class of arguments in the infernal council, to which I will return later. We shall see that the doctrine of uncreation shows up at decisive points in the epic. First, however, we must consider what perspectives the loyal angels have on past and future.

The unspoiled memory of angels exhibits qualities similar to those of unfallen human memory.[10] Most notably, Raphael's narration, besides all other merits, is an impressive demonstration of just how powerful that faculty of the angels is. Obviously, not all knowledge presented by Raphael can come from first-hand experience. He was absent on the sixth day of creation yet he can give an exhaustive exposition of all the happenings of that day.[11] The most plausible explanation as to where Raphael acquired the missing information from to fill all the gaps[12] is that probably God instructed him. An epitome of the lesson is given in v.233–43. Moreover, in vi.769 Raphael himself drops an aside identifying his source. Talking about the chariots of God, he gives a figure, "twenty thousand," and immediately adds in parentheses, "I their number heard." His prodigious memory can thus retain not only personal experience in tremendous detail but also casually acquired second-hand information. But he is not the only one among the angels who is endowed with good memory. Ithuriel and Zephon, returning to Gabriel from their mission, "brief related whom they brought, where found, / How busied, in what form and posture couched" (iv.875–76). This summary rendering on the narrator's part bears witness to the authenticity of the report. Its truth value is confirmed a little later by no less authority than God himself in a likewise concise manner (v.226–27). The allusions are definitive and so, indirectly, affirm the correctness of the original rendition. Gabriel fleetingly mentions Satan's fall (iv.905), but he could probably recall the whole story just as Uriel is able to recite a creation narrative, albeit in a much condensed version, to disguised Satan (iii.708–21). The irony is that unaware of the hypocrisy, Uriel introduces his recollections by stating the theoretical purpose of all such recollections, "wonderful indeed are all his works, / Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all / Had in remembrance always with delight" (iii.702–04). It is, of course, wasted on Satan, whose sole interest lies in the practical information of direction, but, hope-

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10. Cf. iv.449–91, v.30–93 (Eve), and viii.250–520 (Adam).

11. Cf. vii.449–550 and viii.229–46.

12. They include, in addition to the one already mentioned, e.g. the proceedings in Satan's camp during the nights of the rebellion or the hopes and thoughts of certain characters.

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fully, not on the reader. On one reading, the whole epic is just such a memory aid, keeping God's works before the mind's eye.

For humans, God's command is the most important thing to remember;[13] the vital issue for angels to recall is their own beginning. In this regard, Abdiel is the exemplary angel. His story is embedded in Raphael's narration, which elevates it to the level of universal truth. If Raphael repeats Abdiel's words approvingly, the opinion of the latter is confirmed and can be seen as the view generally held by the good angels. Abdiel asserts three times in his exchange with Satan before his flight that the rebellious angel was created by God.[14] In the first two instances, he states his point in a generic context: God "made / Thee what thou art, and formed the powers of heaven / Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being" (v.823–25). While as far as I am aware, no angel ever says in the course of *Paradise Lost* in the first person that he is created by God, the personal implications of Abdiel's collective testimony are obvious. The good angels are aware that their existence springs from God, nor do they anywhere pretend to remember things from before their creation. This is in marked contrast with Satan, whose heresy is indeed to deny his creation, on the grounds of lack of memory from before, and claim co-eternity with God.

Prelapsarian intelligences may have flawless memory, but they have no certain knowledge of the future. Angels are often portrayed as guessing at what is to come and not infrequently as making false predictions. The most conspicuous examples arise in the course of the war in heaven. Michael hopes, as he sees Satan approach, "to end / Intestine war in heaven, the arch-foe subdued / Or captive dragged in chains" (vi.258–60). When it comes to actual fighting, he aims at determining the duel with a single blow. But he must be disappointed in his expectations. His stroke apparently ends the duel but certainly not the war. Abdiel, too, has undergone a similar sobering experience. He thought "That he who in debate of truth hath won, / Should win in arms, in both disputes alike / Victor" (vi.122–24), but his mighty stroke does not finish Satan, the foe is still to show "that day / Prodigious power" (vi.246–47).[15] Yet victory he has won and it turns out to be no fleeting glory, for the Son will finally win it for him.

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13. Cf. vi.912, viii.323–28, x.12–13. Prelapsarian memory is a God-given gift sufficient to preserve humans in the state of innocence.

14. Cf. v.823–24, 836–37, 894.

15. Cf. Stanley E. Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (1967; Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1971) pp. 186–87, and William G. Madsen, *From Shadowy Types to Truth: Studies in Milton's Symbolism* (New Haven etc.: Yale UP, 1968) 112.

Abdiel's most important prediction of the future dates from a day earlier. On quitting Satan's camp he said to the archfiend:

> I see thy fall
> Determined, and thy hapless crew involved
> In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread
> Both of thy crime and punishment. . .   (v.878–81)

This was accurate foreknowledge of what was to ensue. Abdiel, and this is the important point, could foresee that with his eyes of faith. He had no secret knowledge; he was not privy to God's plans. His surprise at "war in procinct" (vi.19) on his arrival back at the courts of God proves that beyond doubt. He also had a previous sketch of a possible future, given in the form of urging Satan to repent.

> Cease then this impious rage
> And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
> The incensed Father, and the incensed Son,
> While pardon may be found in time besought.   (v.845–48)

I accept this as a plausible alternative scenario, no less true than the second, finally realised. Both are correct in the only meaningful sense of the word, for the single context in which they can be legitimately interpreted is that of obedience. Satan's obduracy does not disprove the first version but renders it meaningless by robbing it of the only context in which it could be understood. Similarly, Raphael's two, apparently contradictory, anticipations of human history can also be clarified in the framework of loyalty to God. The angel, who is faithful and has therefore clear vision of the future, describes the potential course of unfallen history culminating in humanity's ascension to the ethereal realm, ending with his famous clause "If ye be found obedient" (v.501). Exactly one book later, while recounting the invention of gunpowder during the war in heaven, he delineates fallen human history:

> yet haply of thy race
> In future days, if malice should abound,
> Some one intent on mischief, or inspired
> With devilish machination might devise
> Like instrument to plague the sons of men
> For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.   (vi.501–06)

Disturbing though it may seem that Raphael has a faulty conception of the future in conjecturing about sinless development for humans, or that the postlapsarian

world is postulated in prelapsarian eden, neither is the case. Both alternatives are valid, and both prove so: the latter in actuality, the former in its potentiality confirmed by God (vi.154–61).

Very simply, as with humans before the fall, foreknowledge is given on condition of obedience. Raphael is a loyal angel and is therefore granted prescience. The content of his knowledge, once more, depends on faithfulness, this time on Adam's. The realisation of the potential alternatives will be the result of the realisation of his unbroken obedience. Sadly for us, he ended up the wrong way, but that fact does not infringe on Raphael's credibility. The foreknowledge of angels is a matter of faith and obedience to God. Insofar as they abide these limits, their knowledge of the future is complete and accurate. Thus are Michael's and Abdiel's hopes fulfilled by the Son's triumph over Satan. Insofar as they break those limits, they are no longer good angels but fallen ones, whose foreknowledge is altogether a different matter.

Satanic predicament: locked up in time

There is a noteworthy analogy between the angelic and the human condition "in the beginning." Just as Adam's freedom was constituted on the day of his creation by God's command to "shun to taste" "the tree whose operation brings / Knowledge of good and ill" (viii.327, 323–24), so are the angels given the law on the day of the anointing to "confess him [the Son] Lord [and] / Under his great vicegerent reign [to] abide" (v.608–09). Significantly, both decrees threaten punishment on "the day" they are violated.[16] It is these positive laws that constitute creaturely freedom in *Paradise Lost* by endowing time with significance. There is a further parallel between the two ontological orders in that the temptation and fall of both can be seen in temporal terms. The big difference appears in the consequences. For the immortal angels, the punishment is to be "cast out from God and blessed vision," a fall "Into utter darkness," their "place / Ordained without redemption, without end" (v.613–15); for humans, it is death, which will ultimately also be a means of, and a way to, deliverance. Angelic fall is temporally irreversible; human fall is not. Or as Jackson Cope put it, "The fall of angels is literal; the fall of man metaphoric."[17] I will argue in this section that the fall of Satan and his followers is in an important sense a fall *into* time, which then becomes an inescapable prison for them.

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16. See v.611–15 and viii.329–31; cf. ix.762–63; x.48–53, 210–11, 771–73, 852–54, 1049–50; xi.272–73, and also Frye, p. 33.

17. Jackson I. Cope, "Time and Space as Miltonic Symbol," *ELH* 26 (1959) 497–513, p. 502.

In Milton's scheme, Satan's rebellion is provoked by the Son's anointing. Unable to distinguish between literal and metaphoric begetting, between intra-trinitarian event and its revelation in time,[18] Satan finds fault with the temporality of the edict. He is annoyed by its *novelty*. In the midnight speech to his best friend, he speaks of "the decree / Of yesterday, so late" (v.674–75), then the adjective *new* appears four times in three lines (v.679–81), twice as "New laws." The detail is revealing, for in the first rebellious council, the problem of freedom will very soon give way to the more fundamental issue of origin when Abdiel opposes Satan's "argument blasphemous, false, and proud" (v.809). "[T]he fervent angel" (v.849) reasons that obedience to the Son does not infringe upon angelic liberty because all the heavenly hosts are a priori his inferiors by virtue of being his creations. While Satan's initial problem seems to be the postulate of the Son's *a priori* lordship, the last issue becomes his real sticking point. Characteristically, he challenges Abdiel's interpretation of the past on the grounds of its innovation and argues its falsity on the force of his own memory as decisive evidence, subjecting time to his own person.

> That we were formed then sayst thou? . . .
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>   . . . Strange point and new!
> Doctrine which we would know whence learned: who saw
> When this creation was? Rememberst thou
> Thy making, while the maker gave thee being?
> We know no time when we were not as now;
> Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised
> By our own quickening power. . .   (v.853–61)

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18. It has long been recognised that Milton operated with a twofold distinction as regards the Son's anointing. On the one hand, he subscribed to a graded understanding of the generation of the Son; on the other, Milton distinguished between a literal and a metaphoric sense of begetting. Literally, it means the production of the Son; metaphorically, his exaltation, usually interpreted with reference to the resurrection. See William B. Hunter, C.A. Patrides and J.H. Adamson, *Bright Essence: Studies in Milton's Theology* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971) and cf. Frye, pp. 33–34, and John C. Ulreich, " 'Substantially Expressed': Milton's Doctrine of the Incarnation," *Milton Studies* 39 (2000) 101–28, esp. pp. 110 and 121. For Milton's own position presupposed in these interpretations, see, without prejudice to the work's (in)authenticity, his *De Doctrina Christiana* i.5, esp. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1953–1982) 6:205–206. The underlying biblical prooftexts include Psalms 2 and 8, esp. 2:7 and 8:6–7; and Hebrews 1–2, esp. 1:5 and 2:6–9.

Adam exhibited sharper insight and greater mental powers in the account of his own waking to life (viii.253–360). Not that Satan's failure here would be merely intellectual inadequacy. On the contrary, he is effectively making divine claims. He does not in fact juxtapose old, and precisely therefore temporal, custom with new law. Rather, what he challenges is the very creation of time. He denies that deathless life is still temporal existence. He refuses to recognise the distinction between immortality and eternity, perhaps the highest creaturely gift and a divine trait.[19] He is thus making a claim of eternity for himself, and repeats it variously in this short text. The denial of createdness in three rhetorical questions (v.856–58), the claims of time-indifference (859) and of absolute priority, both ontological and temporal, as well as the titles of unconditional self-sufficiency (860) are all restatements of the same idea, and all amount to blasphemy. The significant point is that Satan formulates his sacrilegious boast by declaring his own transcendence over time. It will be his punishment that his desire is granted. Two further characteristics of this scene will be important for the temporality of fallen angels. First, at the heart of the devils' enterprise is a reinterpretation of the past, with disastrous consequences for the present and future. In this case, future obedience is denied to the Son because of present liberty predicated on past equality (if not superiority). The whole edifice collapses when one realises that the ultimate premise about the past is false, but that is what the devils never do. Second, the reinterpretation of the past is highly subjective, and the closed world of satanic subjectivity, that will be their fallen predicament for ever, is shown here for the first time in its full rigour. The dogma of the rebels' eternity is proved by their own experience: from within, as it were. The failure to transcend their subjective selves leads to the elevation of that limitation to the level of existential principle. All their later reasoning will be equally circular. That Satan is not alone in all this is shown not merely by his plural usage but by the fact that Abdiel's zeal was "out of season judged" (v.850) by all: it was found temporally inadequate.

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19. Cf. God to Adam, "Who am alone / From all eternity" (viii.405–06). The satanic doctrine is clearly refuted in the larger epic scheme. In book iii, God (iii.100–02), the bard joining the angelic choir (iii.374, 390–91), and Uriel (iii.705) all bear out Abdiel's truth explicitly or implicitly. Satan's similar admission in the Niphates soliloquy (iv.43–44) is even more important (cf. also ix.145–47). Further, the Father (v.601), Satan (v.772) and Abdiel (v.840) all address their listeners with an allusion, on which cf. Fowler[2] 319 and 335, to Colossians 1:16 as "Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers," implicitly confirming the Son's creative role.

As a result of their rebellion, Satan and his cohort fall "Into utter darkness" (vi.614).[20] The verdict is carried out literally at the end of book vi, but Milton depicts it on an existential level throughout the epic. The devils undergo gradual decay, which is, of course, a temporal process. As such, ontologically, it is a brilliant illustration how wrong their initial boast was. Narratively, what they have become with their fall is shown through its effects revealed in time.[21] Milton can all the more effectively employ this technique as the narrative and chronological discrepancies all but disappear in this regard. Little beyond the very principle is asserted in book vi while the arc from i to x will be carefully drawn. Satan's first address to Beelzebub (i.84–87) and the deputy's gloomy summary of the general situation (i.141) begin, understandably rather pessimistically, articulating the doctrine. The graduality of the decay is then declared by the narrator in describing Satan's appearance to the assembled hosts, "their visages and stature as of gods" (i.570):

> his form had not yet lost
> All her original brightness, nor appeared
> Less than an archangel ruined, and the excess
> Of glory obscured. . .(i.591–94)

The point is insisted upon time and again in book ii. Beelzebub is "majestic though in ruin" (ii.305). A narratorial reflection on human pride states that damned spirits do not "lose all their virtue" (ii.483). Their song is "partial, but the harmony / (What could it less when spirits immortal sing?) / Suspended hell" (ii.552–54). In the paradisal scene, Zephon assaults Satan with the same point (iv.835–40), and in the narration of the war in heaven, Raphael explains to Adam why the rebels had difficulty freeing themselves from beneath the hills piled on them: "though spirits of purest light, / Purest first, now gross by sinning grown" (vi.660–61). This is chronologically the earliest phase of the decay, but Raphael's phrasing fits neatly into the larger pattern the reader can discern by moving from early to later books. Growing "gross" strikes me as a lower stage on the slope than the dimming of excess glory or the partial eclipse of majesty.

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20. Fowler[2], p. 321 glosses the adjective as "outer," but I see no reason so to restrict the meaning and destroy the pun. Of the early editors, the extravagant Richard Bentley is alone in feeling the need to reduce the ambiguity: see his *Paradise Lost: A New Edition* (London, 1732) 169 (marginalia ad v.614).

21. For this principle of "description by story telling," cf. Hans H. Schmid, "A bibliai teremtéstörténet – ma," trans. Zoltán Endreffy, *Diakónia* 6:1 (1984) 25–30, p. 29.

Satan himself is forced to realise how low he has to descend with his reluctant incarnation before the temptation.

> O foul descent! That I who erst contended
> With gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
> Into a beast, and mixed with bestial slime,
> This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
> That to the height of deity aspired. . .   (ix.163–67)

The point of dramatic irony is, of course, to contrast his unwillingness with the liberty of the Son's offer in book iii.[22] The Messiah was to die, surely, but he was not to be imbruted, in any sense of the word whereas Satan is, in every conceivable sense. The final stage of the fallen angels' loss of glory is the involuntary literal repetition of their chief's "imbrutation" on his return to hell. His "shape star bright appeared, or brighter, clad / With what permissive glory since his fall / Was left him, or false glitter" (x.450–52). The original angelic state is recalled to enforce a striking contrast to occur:

> he would have spoke,
> But hiss for hiss returned with forked tongue
> To forked tongue, for now were all transformed
> Alike, to serpents all as accessories
> To his bold riot. . .   (x.517–21)

Snakes hissing and spitting bitter ashes: this is our last picture of the fallen angels. What depth they are sunk into even in comparison with their partial but harmonious song of book ii! The last books of *Paradise Lost* amply recall the promise of Satan's final bruise by the Son, originally made in book iii and then announced in Adam and Eve's presence in book x.[23] Milton thus never lets us forget that the devils' punishment and sinking lower and lower, which began with their disobedience at the beginning of time itself, shall go on till the end of time. "Though sin, not time, first wrought the change" (ix.70) the disloyal angels have to undergo, it is revealed in time. As time presses on irresistibly, they cannot withstand the changes it brings. In glaring refutation of their blasphemous claim, the devils are unable to subject time; they are its prisoners.

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22. Cf. iii.227–65, esp. 238–41.

23. See iii.250–59 and x.181(–193); cf. x.1031–36; xii.148–50, 233–35, 310–12, 390–95, 429–33, etc.

That is not to say that time is bad. It is a gift that can be abused; it is a potentiality that may or may not be realised. The perceiving mind endows it with significance. "[T]he conceptions of time . . . exist on different levels, depending on the intelligence of the conceiving mind."[24] Paradisal time is good because it is viewed as God's time, who is the source of all that is good. The curse of time for the disloyal angels, and through that hell, is depicted by Milton by their comprehending it as a limit, something negative. Satan and his followers perceive time, as well as being, as a prison. Most notably their dominant temporal unit is the hour whereas in heaven time is structured in days.[25] "To the devils below mankind," writes Northrop Frye, "time is pure clock time, or simply one moment after another."[26] As time closes in on the fallen angels, so does existence. They cannot think of not being. As their heresy was to claim eternal being, the fulfilment of that wish is their torture. Whenever they try, and try they do repeatedly, to consider what options they have open for the future, the devils always stumble against the wall of existence. Of course, Satan often derives apparent optimism from the fact that angels, as they believe, cannot cease to be.[27] He asserts in the very first speech in hell that the cherubim's "empyreal substance cannot fail" (i.117). Beelzebub, on the other hand, can draw no solace from the fact, then and there a first-hand experience, that in the case of "gods and heavenly essences / . . . the mind and spirit remains / Invincible, and vigour soon returns" (i.138–40), for "what if our conqueror"

> Have left us this spirit and strength entire
> Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
> That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
> . . . .
> What can it then avail though yet we feel
> Strength undiminished, or eternal being
> To undergo eternal punishment? (i.143–55)

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24. Frye, p. 39.

25. Not only creation but the war in heaven and other major heavenly events are prominently measured in days. It is also the form of God's law. We have seen that the punishments threatened for insubordination to the Son in heaven or for violation of the forbidden tree on earth are formulated in days; cf. also ii.694–95 and x.576, and for the ambiguity and negative connotations of *hour*, see i.697; ii.91, 526–27, 796–97, 846–48, 934, 1055; vi.396–97; ix.406–07, 780, 937, 1067; x.440; xii.549.

26. Frye, p. 36.

27. Cf. e.g. i.657–59, ii.12–14, vi.433–36; also the more doubtful i.317–18.

Angels have interminable existence, so the argument goes, but only because through their eternal substance can God's unremitting wrath be exercised. The point is raised again in the infernal council, and the same arguments are played out once more as between the rebel leaders: another indication of the closed world of fallen angels.

In his 'keynote address,' Satan argues from the premise, one of his central tenets, that "no deep within her gulf can hold / Immortal vigour" (ii.12–13), obviously referencing the angels' vitality even in their fallenness. Moloch is rather uncertain. God's "utmost ire," he weighs the options,

> Will either consume us, and reduce
> To nothing this essential, happier far
> Than miserable to have eternal being:
> Or if our substance be indeed divine,
> And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
> On this side nothing. . .   (ii.95–101)

Apparently, Moloch genuinely hesitates between the possibilities of angelic extinction and eternity. The more rhetorically emphatic end position in which the latter view is placed suggests his greater inclination towards it. In any case, he is a militant spirit, excelling in deeds of war, not a very sophisticated or highly sensitive intellectual. Belial's response, a good deal more refined speech, attacks his argument point by point, not omitting a reference to angelic immortality. Given God's superior strength, so Belial, a renewed military attempt on his throne will cause him to

> spend all his rage,
> And that must end us, that must be our cure,
> To be no more; sad cure; for who would lose,
> Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
> Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
> To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
> In the wide womb of uncreated night,
> Devoid of sense and motion? and who knows,
> Let this be good, whether our angry foe
> Can give it, or will ever? How he can
> Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.   (ii.144–54)

In other words, it is an ontologically open question whether angels are at all destructible, but even if that can be answered in the affirmative, God will make sure it never

happens, for his aim is punishment, and prolonged suffering is worse than non-existence. He will not "give his enemies their wish, and end / Them in his anger, whom his anger saves / To punish endless" (ii.157–59).[28] That was precisely Beelzebub's point.

Interestingly, though, annihilation is not altogether denied. The "graceful and humane" (ii.109) devil locates non-existence in "the wide womb of uncreated night" (ii.150). Since, "in the later demonic theology, time and space are the official creative forces of the world,"[29] non-being is only imaginable where they are lost, that is, in chaos. The point is endorsed by Satan some three hundred lines later in his offer to spy out the new created world. Describing the difficulties that the volunteer must face, he says,

> These [hell gates] passed, if any pass, the void profound
> Of unessential night receives him next
> Wide gaping, and with utter loss of being
> Threatens him, plunged in the abortive gulf.   (ii.438–41)

Neither Belial nor Satan seems, however, seriously to believe in this view. Belial concludes that God will not uncreate them, and Satan is really patting himself on the back.

All the vain speculation of the devils is thrown into sharp relief by a twofold retrospective dramatic irony. On the one hand, we have seen that the correct doctrine is learned from the loyal angels in the central books. The celestial hosts are not eternal but immortal, created and, at least in principle, exterminable. Whether that is God's ultimate plan is a secret hidden from created eyes, but that it is within his power is indubitable. Every member of the hellish crew is wrong, then. Either because they overestimate the endurance of angelic substance, or because they underestimate the gift of immortality. Ultimately, nothingness might be worse than suffering. There is nothing to suggest that Raphael and Abdiel were instructed by special revelation. More likely, their grasp of angelic ontology is common to all in heaven; every angel knows what they do. That "Heaven's fugitives" (ii.57) can no longer recall it is an eloquent sign of their memory's corruption, whether wilful or involuntary.

The second aspect of the dramatic irony is the gradual unfolding of God's plan. We first learn that the fallen angels will not find grace (iii.129–32), then that their punishment is to be cast out "without redemption, without end" (v.615), and finally

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28. Cf. ii.126–27, 182–86.
29. Frye, p. 35.

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that once happiness was "fondly lost," immortality "served but to eternize woe" (xi.59–60). Angelic substance is not innately eternal; in what the devils revel is in fact God's punishment. God gives them their choice and lets their existence turn in on itself, from which there is no way out. The eternal damnation of the devils was a theological commonplace in Renaissance thought.[30] Milton upholds the doctrine but makes it very clear that it is not so by necessity but by God's sovereign will. Further, he does provide a brilliant metaphoric representation of the rebels' annihilation. Their names are blotted out of the celestial records.[31]

What we see here is a complex duality that Milton maintains with respect to the fallen angels' temporal status. On the one hand, they are locked up in time and their own existence, unable to pass through the ultimate remedy, death. On the other hand, they have abused their freedom and are therefore outside time which is no longer a potentiality for them, either to fall or to be redeemed. They are simultaneously fallen into, and out of, time. This paradox is fundamental to understanding their predicament. Milton cannot avoid talking about the fallen angels, their doings and thinking, in time. This is a narrative difficulty impossible to escape. But it is perhaps best understood with the help of Schmid's principle. When he wants to describe what the fallen angels' world is like, Milton narrates the events that take place in it. Further, he devises some ways, beyond the metaphor of blotting out of their names, to indicate their position outside time. Among such strategies are their depiction beyond change, and their internalisation of hell, the spatial coordinates within which the horrid crew is confined.

Beyond change: out of time

Satan best illustrates the fact that the disloyal angels are beyond hope of change, at least change in a more than mechanical sense. Right at the beginning of his hellish career, in his very first speech in the entire poem, Satan makes that clear. Addressing his deputy, recalling their happier celestial state, and talking of "the force of those dire arms" of the Son – though as if they had been the Father's – he says,

> Yet not for those
> Nor what the potent victor in his rage

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30. Cf. Fowler[2], p. 117 (ad ii.159–61).

31. See i.361–63 and cf. v.760–62, vii.131–33, x.425–26, and John Leonard, *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 67–132.

> Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
> Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind
> And high disdain. . . (i.94–98)

The same unchangeability, implicitly a divine claim, is the trait with which he identifies himself as he takes possession of his new abode. In the inaugural speech to hell, he makes the sweeping claim, based on Amaury de Bene's medieval heresy that heaven and hell are states of mind,[32] that he is not only outside time but also detached from space.

> [H]ail horrors, hail
> Infernal world, and thou profoundest hell
> Receive thy new possessor: one who brings
> A mind not to be changed by place or time.
> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
> What matter where, if I be still the same,
> And what should I be, all but less than he
> Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
> We shall be free. . . (i.250–59)

Here we see again the subordination of external reality to his own subjectivity. The somewhat unexpected upshot of that is that Satan's boastful assertion is built on very shaky foundations, on the foundations of his own integrity. The clause "if I be still the same" lies at the heart of the argument, and the archfiend speaks truer than he intends. Cast out from God through his disloyalty, "fallen, to disobedience fallen, / And so from heaven to deepest hell" (v.541–42), he is not his former self any more. The point will be driven home to him rather forcefully by Zephon during their encounter in paradise.[33]

Satan's notion of liberty is, conversely and erroneously, place-bound. Soon he has to learn, and admit if only to himself, that his freedom is restricted to creating hell out of heaven but not vice versa. His mind indeed seems to be unchanged by place or time, but his mind is apparently unchangeable altogether. In the Niphates soliloquy (iv.32–113), Satan comes as close to repentance and change as he ever can,

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32. Fowler[2], p. 76 (ad i.255).

33. "Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same, / Or undiminished brightness, to be known / As when thou stoodst in heaven upright and pure" (iv.835–37).

but, the beneficial workings of prevenient grace denied, he ends with a hardened heart and reconfirmed resolution to spite God.

> So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,
> Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost;
> Evil be thou my good; by thee at least
> Divided empire with heaven's king I hold
> By thee, and more than half perhaps will raign. . .   (iv.108–12)

He, like his peers, can only think of "feigned submission" (iv.96).[34] That would be only pretence, the *appearance* of inward change, and as such would not do. He is right in that. But he is unable even to seriously entertain the thought of genuine change. That fact finds a splendid expression in the bard's introduction to his private speech. It presents the foregone conclusion of his deliberations, undermining not their trustworthiness but their efficacy. Unlike Satan himself, the reader knows where he will end up even before he starts. He cannot escape from himself.

> [H]orror and doubt distract
> His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
> The hell within him, for within him hell
> He brings, and round about him, nor from hell
> One step no more than from himself can fly
> By change of place. . .   (iv.18–23)

Satan's cry of utter despair, "Which way I fly is hell; my self am hell" (iv.75), is but an epigrammatic summary of the bard's words. The doctrine is reiterated much later, in book ix before the temptation scene: "But the hot hell that always in him burns, / Though in mid-heaven, soon ended his delight" (ix.467–68). His mind is truly its own place, but as his – and thus its – place after his fall is ordained by God to be hell, it "back recoils / Upon himself" (iv.17–18), and his mind, in turn, is to be hell.

Being unable to change, the mutinous angels are no longer really alive, nor are they properly in time any more. They are like Swift's Struldbruggs in *Gulliver's Travels*, who, "whenever they see a funeral, they lament and repine that others are gone to an harbour of rest, to which they themselves never can hope to arrive."[35] Pushing a

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34. Cf. Mammon's speech in i.237–52 and Beelzebub's in i.335–40.

35. Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) in *Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings by Jonathan Swift*, ed. Miriam K. Starkman (1962; New York etc.: Bantam Books, 1986) 206.

step further my distinction between eternity and immortality, Northrop Frye avers that the devils' fate is to live perpetually in a fallen world, "[T]he devils cannot die because they cannot make the act of surrender involved in death: hence what they have is a kind of parody of immortality. They are not really immortal; they are merely undying."[36] I think their undying can justly be viewed as that of the Struldbruggs, who, over eighty, "are looked on as dead in law."[37] The theological overtones are difficult not to hear in the Miltonic context. "For I through the law am dead to the law," writes Saint Paul to the Galatians (2:19).[38] The unfaithful angels are, then, beyond hope of change and not within the kingdom of life whose source is God, "their names . . . / . . . blotted out and razed / By their rebellion, from the books of life" (i.361–63).[39] It must then follow that they are outside time, too. In the Miltonic universe, time is both the potentiality to fall and the potentiality to be redeemed. Time works neither, but it creates the possibility of both – but with a crucial difference. The change from the active to the passive voice between *to fall* and *to be redeemed* is an accurate indicator of the freedom, and thus the scope of agency, the subject possesses under the respective conditions. Or as Milton's God puts it, "I formed them free, and free they must remain, / Till they enthral themselves" (iii.124–25). Unable to set themselves free, with redemption denied from outside, the devils must remain perpetually enthralled and thus without time.

A further detail to register about the devils' quandary is that Satan's time-indifference is characterised in terms similar to, but certainly not identical with, that of God. What is not in time Milton depicts in space. Satan's damnation is eternal because hell is inseparable from him; the temporal infinitude is expressed in terms of spatial identity. God's eternity, which has existential relevance, is expressed in spatial terms; he is portrayed above time.[40] The spatial quality of Satan's being outside

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Incidentally, a careful reading of the Struldbruggs' description in the second half of part iii ("A voyage to Laputa. . ."), chapter 10 can prove a highly instructive exercise with its remarkable similarities to Milton's devils.

36. Frye, pp. 81–82.

37. Swift, p. 206.

38. See also Romans 7:9: "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Bible quotations are from the King James Version, cited from *BibliaTéka CD-ROM: A bibliatudomány elektronikus könyvtára* (Budapest: Arcanum, n.d.).

39. Although I take this to be a metaphoric representation of their annihilation, I certainly do not deny that they actually exist; cf. Leonard, pp. 145–46 vs. Fish, p. 337.

40. Cf. esp. iii.56–79 and vi.4–12.

time, in hell, is rendered in existential terms; his hell is psychologically internalised. God's realm is infinity and perfect freedom; Satan's world is the narrow confines of the self and the total loss of liberty. The universe with its unthinkable entirety is contained and incorporated in God. Satan's universe is turned inside out, or rather outside in, and it is locked up within the impenetrable dungeon of his subject. "He finds himself walled in by the jail of his individuality."[41] God turned himself into a world or, indeed, a part of himself into many worlds.[42] Satan turns the boundless vastness of the cosmos into the prison of his psyche. It is in this sense that Satan, while having fallen out of time, is still locked up in it.

Another way in which Milton depicts the devils beyond change is through their knowledge of time. Talking of their memory and foresight, Valerie Carnes notices an inability to transcend time.

Because he has lost the redemptive powers of memory and of foresight alike, Satan sees times as essentially static. The only temporal values which he recognizes are those of the present, the immediate past and the immediate future.[43]

It is true that Satan is not very much concerned with his doom "understood / Not instant, but of future time" (x.344–45), nor has he, or any other devil for that matter, appreciably unerring foreknowledge of events to come. So they may have lost *the redemptive powers* of memory and foresight, but they certainly did not lose their *faculty* of memory. And, I presume, they very much cherish the value of the past as they interpret it. Their memories are clouded and confused, but it is in fact part of their punishment that they should remember. The Lethean stream "flies / All taste of living wight, as once it fled / The lip of Tantalus" (ii.612–14) when they attempt to drink the water of forgetfulness.

Probably the most unmistakeable indication of the fallen angels' memory is their continual adherence to their original titles. Speakers of public utterances in hell frequently address their audiences with their former celestial titles as does Satan in his first call: "Princes, potentates, / Warriors, the flower of heaven, once yours, now lost" (i.315–16).[44] In one form or another, every speaker alludes to their former glorious state.[45] In fact, the main task of the fallen angels on regaining consciousness in hell is to come to terms with the past. They may, indeed, think that past more immediate

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41. Frye, p. 81.

42. Cf. i.650, ii.915–16, iii.565–67, v.268, vii.168–72, 620–22, viii.148–49.

43. Valerie Carnes, "Time and Language in Milton's *Paradise Lost*," *ELH* 37 (1970) 517–39, p. 527.

44. Cf. i.622–23; ii.11, 310–13, 391, 430.

45. Cf. i.84–105, 128–42, 157, 244–50, 272–78; ii.57, 165–69, 263–68.

than it is as they do not seem to remember anything of the nine-day period between their fall and the epic's opening scene. William Empson comments on i.169–77,

> Satan remembers for ten lines what happened while they were falling from Heaven, and ignores the chains altogether. But he imagines that the pursuing troops have only just been recalled; the rebels are as if emerging from a drug, and remember nothing of the intervening period.[46]

But that is not the only instance of devilish amnesia. An even more remarkable instance is Satan's apparent forgetfulness of his own family, whom he finds at hell's gate. The scene provides arguably the most spectacular illustration of the significance of apostrophes in Satan and Death's power game at the end of book ii.[47] The archfiend's boastful self-assertion "Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof, / Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of heaven" (ii.686–87) is answered to by Death's contemptuous "Hell-doomed" (ii.697) and "False fugitive" (ii.700), the latter echoing Moloch's "Heaven's fugitives" (ii.57). A further clash of titles, or rather another hit at Satan's vanity, is Death's claim of sovereignty in hell: "Where I reign king, and to enrage thee more, / Thy king and lord" (ii.698–99). Satan ought to realise that his perception of the situation falls somewhat short of precision.

But to return to the infernal council, it is almost possible to read its story as the minutes of a historical symposium. If so read, it will be noticed that the proceedings are subject to political interests. What is more, the debating historians have no other access to the past than their memory, which is fallen, too. The historical analysis they perform in books i–ii moves in a full circle from Satan's initial addresses, which deny the finality of their fallenness (the present state of it is impossible not to admit), through Belial and Mammon advocating "ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth" (ii.227), to Beelzebub's return to Satan's original idea of corrupting the newly created world. Again, Satan's definition of an objective state of affairs, victory and defeat in a war, is subjectivised, and the fact is denied on the basis of his own rejection to accept it.

> All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield:
> And what is else not to be overcome? (i.106–09)

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46. William Empson, *Milton's God* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961) 43.

47. For similar episodes, see Ithuriel and Zephon's (esp. iv.823–35), Gabriel's (esp. iv.920–21, 926, 971) Abdiel's (esp. v.877–78; vi.131, 135, 152, 167, 172) and Michael's (esp. vi.262–63) encounters with Satan, some of which I will discuss below; cf. Leonard, pp. 50–85, 119–32.

"In *Paradise Lost*," writes E.J. Wood, "not only Satan, but all those who follow him move in the rigidly prescribed circles of their own fallacious vision."[48] The observation is certainly true of their vision of time, past as well as future. Thus Satan ends up, like later Adam (x.137–43), blaming God for his own sin.

> But he who reigns
> Monarch in heaven, till then as one secure
> Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
> Consent or custom, and his regal state
> Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,
> Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
>
> (i.637–42)

This is in fact the theoretical foundation of all that is to follow. Because God is to blame, the angels' just cause is to be pursued. The question to decide is not *whether* they should oppose the almighty, but *how* they should do it. Satan leaves no doubt. The point is clearly made in both his summoning and opening speeches of the hellish convention: "peace is despaired, / For who can think of submission? War then, war / Open or understood must be resolved" (i.660–61).[49]

The first speaker Moloch's "sentence is for open war" (ii.51). His argument is based on historical evidence as anybody else's. His logic is rather simple. Hell is a pretty bad place, the worst conceivable in fact, so there is nothing to lose, and, being no sophist himself, he would attack God's hosts head-on again. It is exactly his interpretation of the historical facts that provokes Belial's and Mammon's more cautious stratagems. What is interesting about their speeches is that they present a far more factual analysis of the past than Moloch's, and they articulate transcendental truths whose validity the reader either knows or will shortly learn from the remaining portions of *Paradise Lost*. Belial acknowledges God's omniscience (ii.189–93). They are also fully aware that God is unpollutable, invincible, and omnipotent.[50] They even suppose that he "in time may much remit / His anger" (ii.210–11). Their vision is closed, nonetheless. Like other fallen angels, Belial and Mammon cannot think of genuine repentance and it does not occur to them that God may forgive their rebel-

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48. Elizabeth J. Wood, " 'Improv'd by Tract of Time': Metaphysics and Measurement in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies* 15 (1981) 43–58, p. 49.

49. Cf. also ii.37–42: "we now return / To claim our just inheritance of old, / . . . and by what best way, / Whether of open war or covert guile, / We now debate: who can advise, may speak."

50. Cf. ii.137–42, 144, 198–99, 231–35, 264.

lion. Consequently, their proposals cannot possibly present a solid alternative to continued resistance of God's order. The conference arrives at its foregone conclusion with Beelzebub's help (ii.310–78). His argument is based on a critical analysis of historical facts allegedly mistakenly presented by those who spoke before him. Hell is not out of God's jurisdiction, it is not meant to be a safe haven for them. Nor is there any hope, as is evidenced by past experience, to wage a successful war against heaven. The only option left, the argument springs from a piece of historical knowledge yet once more, is to discover the truth of the "ancient and prophetic fame" (ii.346) and to revenge themselves on the inhabitants of the new world. The circle is thus completed and Satan's suggestion approved of.[51]

What is true of the infernal council, namely, that historical considerations are dominated by political aims or, in other words, that the past is subordinated to the future, seems also true in the more general terms of satanic public remembrance.[52] For instance, the past serves to justify Satan's proposed corruption of the new world because it shall be thereby reformed to its "original darkness" and "the standard . . . of ancient Night" will be erected there "once more" (ii.984–86). The fallen angels do remember a great many things, even from the remote past. Their memory of the old prophecy is apparently correct; they can recall various details of the war in heaven; they can pretty well recollect the particulars of their actual fall (though not, it seems,

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51. Cf. i.650–56: "Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife / There went a fame in heaven that he ere long / Intended to create, and therein to plant / A generation, whom his choice regard / Should favour equal to the sons of heaven: / Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps / Our first eruption." Allen H. Gilbert sees different compositional strata in the various references to God's plan to create humankind, and would not admit deliberate circularity in the narrative structure (*On the Composition of Paradise Lost: A Study of the Ordering and Insertion of Material* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947) 131–35, sec. 40). Gary Anderson, on the other hand, argues for a carefully devised christological-soteriological pattern in the chronology of fame of intended creation–anointing of Son–creation of humans ("The Fall of Satan in the Thought of St. Ephrem and John Milton," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 3:1 (Jan 2000) online journal at http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/). Historical criticism is often at cross-purposes with canonical criticism.

52. Instances of private remembering are far less numerous and are treated elsewhere. Thus I have already mentioned Satan's admission of his createdness in the Niphates soliloquy (iv.43–44) while his non-recognition of Sin (ii.744–45), briefly alluded to above, will be treated below in more detail. What is to be noted here is the existence of independent evidence (in the form of narratorial comments like i.55, ii.294–95, iv.24) that the devils remember and the fact, amply demonstrated by Satan's encounter with Sin, that their memory is certainly not impeccable.

of the intervening period of nine days while they "Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf," i.52). As a rule, however, their memories, because they are frequently manipulated according to political ends, are not really trustworthy. Unless their recollections can be supported by independent evidence from more reliable sources, one reads them with reservations like Satan's genealogy of his reign.

> Me though just right, and the fixed laws of heaven
> Did first create your leader, next free choice,
> With what besides, in council or in fight,
> Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss
> Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
> Established in a safe unenvied throne
> Yielded with full consent.   (ii.18–24)

The laws of heaven creating Satan a leader are, conspicuously, "fixed," as opposed to the emphatically "new laws" of the anointing.[53] Once more, the past is invoked and considered not in preparation to, but in manipulative justification of, the future. The paradisal order of past and future is reversed. Abdiel penetrates into the heart of this perversion, early in the course of fallen angelic history but relatively late in poem time. Having given up on Satan's conversion, he momentarily adopts the satanic logic to understand the past through the future and makes his point in such terms: "Then who created thee lamenting learn, / When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know" (v.894–95). Satan is refuted on his own grounds.

Fallen angels' foreknowledge

The good angels' foreknowledge was based on their proper understanding of the past and their faith. The rebels have neither, so they must by necessity be ignorant of the future.

Just as Satan has not God's perspective of space, he has not God's perspective of time. Satan cannot have foreknowledge, and thus his attempts on man are true attempts, in that he cannot know, in spite of his supernatural craft, success or failure.

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53. Cf. v.674–81. Martin finds "Satan's irreversible attachment . . . prejudicial to creative order" (p. 79).

So much more powerful and sophisticated than Adam, Satan knows no more of the future than he. Indeed, he knows less.[54]

There is plentiful illustration for this thesis in the epic. While roaming on the surface of earth, Satan is repeatedly shown as hoping to achieve something by good luck. He learns by accident of the interdicted tree (iv.512–22) then he walks round the garden because he thinks,

> A chance but chance may lead where I may meet
> Some wandering spirit of heaven, by fountain side,
> Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
> What further would be learned.   (iv.530–33)

Later he sets out, already in the serpent, on a quest to find Adam and/or Eve.

> He sought them both, but wished his hap might find
> Eve separate, he wished, but not with hope
> Of what so seldom chanced, when to his wish,
> Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies. . .
>
>   (ix.421–24)[55]

Fowler notes that "in Satan's world picture, events usually occur either by necessity or by *hap* (chance)."[56] It is precisely "necessity and chance [that] / Approach not" God, whose will is fate (vii.172–73). Leaving aside the problem of how exactly necessity and fate interrelate, the prominent role assigned to the latter in infernal ideology should not go unnoticed. It is also illuminating that almost half of all occur-

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54. Rosalie L. Colie, "Time and Eternity: Paradox and Structure in *Paradise Lost*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 23 (1960) 127–38, p. 131.

55. By some commentators even Satan's weeklong roaming around earth (ix.63–69) has been interpreted as a random search whose purpose was, at least in part, to find (an entrance to) Eden; see Jonathan Richardson, Father and Son, *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's Paradise Lost* (London, 1734) 395–96, ad ix.76; Gunnar Qvarnström, *The Enchanted Palace: Some Aspects of Paradise Lost* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967) 39; and Sherry L. Zivley, "Satan in Orbit: *Paradise Lost* IX.48–86," *Milton Quarterly* 31:4 (1997) 130–36, esp. pp. 133–34. This reading seems to me no less conjectural than Malabika Sarkar's contrary view of "Satan's movements show[ing] knowledge and perfect control" ("Satan's Astronomical Journey, *Paradise Lost*, IX.63–66," *N&Q* 26:5 [vol. 224 of cont. ser.] (Oct 1979) 417–22, p. 422). Since she also takes Satan's purposefulness to be a hard-won confidence, even these dubious critical positions can serve to indicate how widely Satan's spatial and temporal disorientation has been perceived.

56. Fowler[2], p. 493.

rences of *fate* come in the first two books, notably in the second. It is by fate that "the strength of gods [read, angels] / . . . cannot fail" (i.116–17), that God can maintain "his high supremacy" (i.133), or that the rebels are subdued (ii.197–98).[57] The devils, of course, speak truthfully when they ascribe sovereign traits to fate, but they conceive of it in autonomous terms, denying (or at least passing over in silence) its origin in God's will. "[T]hey abstract the will of God into fatalism," summarises Northrop Frye the devilish move.[58] The transmutation has temporal overtones. The living, dynamic though eternal will of God that both creates time and expresses itself in it (consider the history of Israel or the incarnation) is replaced with an impersonal, rigid concept that freezes time. The shift is quite emblematic of Satan and his cronies' predicament.

All the strategies outlined in the hellish conference are conjectures at the future. Despite Satan's conceited claim, rendered ridiculous by the retrospective dramatic irony, that after their fall the rebels are "in foresight much advanced" (i.119), the predictions naturally contradict each other though they all begin with the same premise: God is to be fought against. Will God remit his anger or will he not? Will the devils be consumed by his wrath or are they imperishable? Can they storm heaven's high walls or is the almighty's stronghold unapproachable? Does he only reign by their delay or is he invincible anyway? The confusion as to what might ensue demonstrates the futility of the enterprise at the very outset. While Beelzebub *hopes* that if they succeed in seducing the inhabitants of the new world "their God / *May* prove their foe, and with repenting hand / Abolish his own works" (ii.368–70),[59] God not only *knows* that they *will* fall but also that he will be merciful to them. Beelzebub's presumption that God's joy can be interrupted (ii.371) betrays how little he knows the nature of the almighty – and of eternity.

The futility of any action aimed in God's spite was, chronologically, and will be, narratively, proved by the war in heaven. There the rebels' plans are time and again uncovered as fully known to their enemies, and the result is a stupefyingly awkward situation for them. Raphael tells Adam of the insurgents' intentions:

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57. Cf. further ii.232, 393, 550, 559–60, 610, 809.

58. Frye, p. 34.

59. My italics. Fowler², p. 127 (ad ii.369–70) notes a reference to Genesis 6:7: "And the Lord said, I will destroy men whom I have created from the face of the earth; . . . for it repenteth me that I have made them." The list could be extended: Jeremiah 18:8–10, 26:3; Jonah 3:10. But cf. also: 1 Samuel 15:28–29, Psalm 110:4, Romans 11:29.

> they weened
> That selfsame day by fight, or by surprise
> To win the mount of God, and on his throne
> To set the envier of his state, the proud
> Aspirer, but their thoughts proved fond and vain
> In the mid way. . .   (vi.86–91)

Less than fifty lines later Abdiel encounters Satan in the opening duel. He first addresses his opponent as "proud" (vi.131) and then very soon as "fool" (vi.135). Pride may be a greater sin than stupidity, but the second apostrophe is certainly the more insulting.

> Proud, art thou met? Thy hope was to have reached
> The height of thy aspiring unopposed,
> The throne of God unguarded, and his side
> Abandoned at the terror of thy power
> Or potent tongue; fool, not to think how vain
> Against the omnipotent to rise in arms. . .   (vi.131–36)

Abdiel's point is plain enough, and it is reinforced to the reader by the fact that at the very rise of the rebellion God was shown foreknowing and limiting all that was to come (v.711–42). Yet the mutinous hosts carry on in the like manner, ever contriving new schemes and ever trusting that they will bring them victory. But their designs, like the gunpowder plot, infallibly fail them, of course.

The archfiend's speech in the war council after the first day of battle exhibits all the characteristic features of satanic foreknowledge.

> [We] have sustained one day in doubtful fight
> (And if one day, why not eternal days?)
> What heaven's lord had powerfullest to send
> Against us from about his throne, and judged
> Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
> But proves not so: then fallible, it seems,
> Of future we may deem him, though till now
> Omniscient thought. (vi.423–30)

In one sense, this is again a serious (that is, blasphemous because earnestly meant, not well-founded) claim to eternity, arguing the comparability of their own timelessness to that of God and questioning the validity of his. The double meaning of *of future* as "in the future" and "about what concerns future events" seeks to chal-

lenge both God's infinite perfection and his foreknowledge. The whole edifice is built, however, on the shaky grounds of wishful thinking. There is no creaturely way from one day to endless days. The chasm between time and eternity is infinite; no induction will bridge it. Also appears the usual pattern of a past distorted in order to justify a wished-for future, whose prognostication is patently wrong. As the rebels, too, will soon be forced to realise, God has neither deployed his most powerful forces, nor has he (mis)judged his army to be sufficient to subdue the foe.[60] Of course, the forecast of his future weakness is equally pathetic.

There are, nevertheless, a few other predictions of Satan for the future that turn out to be correct, notably those which speculate on the fall of humans.[61] That, however, proves nothing beyond the strength of God's permissive will. Satan is on the whole no more sure, in fact he is less certain, of the fall of humans than he was of his own victory over God. He keeps making evil forecasts, simply prognosticating the success of his plans, which come true apparently randomly. More truly, they are governed by God's will, of which he is entirely ignorant, and his occasionally correct precognition cannot be regarded more than accidental from his point of view.

The fallen angels have, then, no foreknowledge at all simply hopes and fears for the future.[62] God's plans and the order of creation are revealed for the faithful, and through them the righteous may gain prescience as far as they trust in God. The unfaithful have lost their relationship with God and they are therefore left to their own resources, which inevitably produce a circular, closed, self-reflexive world. In it, the understanding of the past is moulded by the fallen intellect's desires for the future, ultimately originating from the subject, and is used in turn to prove the plausibility of that future that determined it in the first place. There is no way out, the devils can indeed find "no end, in wandering mazes lost" (ii.561). While the circularity of their reasoning and the enclosed nature of the resulting hellish universe is masterfully imaged in the self-reflexivity of despair both in the opening and the closing infernal scenes,[63] the two episodes possibly mirroring each other, Milton provides a rather surprising counterpoint to infernal self-deception. Sin literally embodies, in more

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60. Cf. vi.49, 692–94, 710–14.

61. Cf. e.g. ii.840–44; iv.381–85, 522–27.

62. Cf. the "false presumptuous hope" of ii.522 and Satan's admission to Sin: "dire change / Befallen us unforeseen, unthought of" (ii.820–21).

63. Cf. "and each / In other's countenance read his own dismay / Astonished" (ii.421–23); and "hiss for hiss returned with forked tongue / To forked tongue" (x.518–20) as well as "for what they saw, / They felt themselves now changing" (x.540–41).

ways than one, the corruption of the rebels and their cause,[64] yet her perception of time is factual and indifferent. From a point of view of literary technique, it is easy to understand. She is an allegorical figure, and allegories are by nature atemporal. But it can also be interpreted from an ontological point of view. Sin is not a moral agent whose sense of time should be clouded as a result of her will's rebellion.

On first encountering them, Satan recognises neither Death nor Sin, "I know thee not, nor ever saw till now / Sight more detestable than him and thee" (ii.744–75). "[I]t is part of the change in Satan that he himself should have forgotten and should not even recognize his sin for what it is."[65] Sin, by contrast, has an unfailing memory. Conspicuously, she also remembers her beginnings in pretty impressive detail, like Adam and unlike Satan. She carries on with her story, and there is no reason to question her reliability in recalling the particulars of her affairs with both her father and then her son. She also confirms the angelic fall, which swept her, too, out of heaven, and her possession of the keys of hell is in turn confirmed by the narrator.[66]

It has often been noted that Satan, Sin, and Death form an unholy trinity parodying the holy one, which Milton may or may not have rejected.[67] Yet from the point of view of time and its perception, I think, Sin is also parodying Satan himself.[68] Sin's past recollections are disinterested, not subject to her future interests. She also makes a point of being an "Inhabitant of heaven and heavenly-born" (ii.860), but does not conclude that she would therefore have any claim on her former state. On the contrary, she goes on to acknowledge Satan as her father, the origin of her being, whom she is to obey.

> Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
> My being gav'st me; whom should I obey
> But thee, whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon
> To that new world of light and bliss, among

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64. Sin's body is begotten in the course of the rebellion which it then bodies forth (ii.748–58); her body is disfigured (ii.650–66, 783–85) as the rebellion disfigured the empyrean body politic, and her body has been the locus of unnatural desires turning multiplied on themselves (ii.762–67, 779, 790–95), imaging the self-enclosure of fallen angelic existence.

65. Fowler¹, p. 126 (ad ii.752–61). It ought to be noted, however, that when Satan last saw her she was pleasing and had "attractive graces" (ii.762), but in the meantime, at the birth of Death, her "nether shape . . . grew / Transformed" (ii.784–85).

66. Cf. ii.774–77, 850–53, and 871–79, 883; x.234.

67. See the essays in Hunter, Patrides and Adamson.

68. On a similarly contrapuntal function of Chaos, see Martin, pp. 101–02.

> The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
> At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
> Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.   (ii.864–70)

That is much more than Satan would ever concede to God.

Sin's foreknowledge is also more credible than Satan's. I do not mean to quote the above passage as a proof. In fact, I see it is part of the parody, once more directed not simply against the Son but also Satan, who does not obey his creator and is thus excluded from the world of light and bliss. The irony is that Sin's trust in her false father, in the ethical and not the ontological sense of the adjective, is not disappointed, and the prediction based on that trust, notwithstanding that it is misplaced, comes by and large true. The only erroneous detail is her reign "without end." Sin knew better. She knew that God had ultimate power over her and Death, and that they were his servants. And when she bears that in mind, her foreknowledge of the future is credible. She keeps Death from killing Satan, saying,

> What fury, O son,
> Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
> Against thy father's head? and knowst for whom;
> For him who sits above and laughs the while
> At thee ordained his drudge, to execute
> Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids,
> His wrath which one day will destroy ye both.
>
> (ii.728–34)[69]

And again at the end of her introductory speech, Death

> knows
> His end with mine involved; and knows that I
> Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
> When ever that shall be; so fate pronounced.
> But thou, O Father, I forewarn thee, shun
> His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
> To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
> Though tempered heavenly, for that mortal dint,
> Save he who reigns above, none can resist.   (ii.806–14)

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69. In Milton's world, the reference to God's laughter is probably an authenticating detail; cf. v.733–37 and Psalm 2:4.

There is not much joy in her knowledge, but it is authentic knowledge nonetheless. With respect to fate, she adopts the demonic terminology, but it being the will of God, it is still dependable, especially as she is fully aware of the Father's omnipotence.

After the human fall and the building of the bridge through chaos, Sin forgets about the almighty and becomes too much absorbed in her reign over the newly corrupted world.[70] She then eulogises Satan (x.354–82) making him equal to God.[71] When the scene is taken up again some two hundred lines later, Sin addresses her son as "all conquering Death" (x.591), and glories in their command of the new empire. It is now that she makes the first and only reference in *Paradise Lost* to "The scythe of time" (x.606). Corruption is otherwise repeatedly associated with sin rather than time. They are now in the fallen world where time is also fallen. When Sin's objectivity is lost, when she forgets that God is almighty, the Father himself delivers a reminder by placing the scene in proper perspective. The powerful rulers of the fallen world, Sin and Death, are identified by God as the "dogs of hell" (x.616), "hell-hounds" that "lick up the draff and filth" (x.630). Their inevitable end is then pronounced again.

"This unskilful allegory" of Sin and Death has been called "one of the greatest faults of the poem."[72] Addison was less severe in his stricture, he allowed for the beauty of the allegory but did not think "that Persons of such a chymerical Existence [were] proper Actors in an Epic Poem."[73] I think Sin and Death are not only superbly drawn allegorical figures but also have an important structural role in certain ways to contrast Satan. As long as Sin does not fall for the power offered by her father but accepts the role assigned to her by God, her memory and foresight, including knowledge of her origin and limitations, are clear. She thus serves in yet another way to exemplify Milton's wider point that the proper perception of time is dependent on knowing God aright.

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70. As usual, Gilbert suspects compositional discrepancy between the allegory's appearance in books ii and x (pp. 127–30, sec. 38).

71. On the possible ironies at the end of the speech (x.381–82) invoking God's ultimate rule over the entire world and thus subverting Satan's equality with him, see Fowler[2], p. 561 (ad x.381).

72. Dr. Samuel Johnson, "Milton" (1779) in *Samuel Johnson*, ed. Donald Greene (1984; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 698–716, p. 712.

73. Joseph Addison, *Criticism on Milton's Paradise Lost: From "The Spectator" 31 December, 1711–3 May, 1712*, in *English Reprints*, ed. Edward Arber, 8 vols. (London: 1869–1871; repr. New York: AMS, 1966), 2:1–152, p. 23 (No. 273, 12 Jan 1712).

Andrea Kirchknopf

Character Constitution in Heinrich von Kleist's *Der Findling* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

The aim of this study is to examine the similarity of character constitution in Kleist's short story and Emily Brontë's novel, which seems to work in a diversity of identity creating attempts supplied by the characters themselves, the multiplicity of narrative voices as well as by the reader. The exploration of the identity quest is based on the analysis of the rhetorical ways of creating an origin for the foundlings by the use of nature analogies, through moral discourse and social positioning. The foundling figures in both narratives are closely connected with corresponding female characters and their identification process is interrelated. I will argue that in both texts, due to the complementary nature of individual figures and the complexity of the narrative design, identification attempts fail on all levels, thus character constitution itself is necessarily frustrated.

At first sight it might seem an absurd project to try to find any meaningful parallels in a comparative analysis of two texts, *Der Findling* and *Wuthering Heights,* that are not directly related to each other. They come from two distinctly different linguistic and cultural backgrounds; they are set widely apart in time, the dates of publication being 1811 and 1847 respectively; and they are the compositions of authors who differed in gender and most certainly never heard of each other. One more important factor that makes difference more obvious than similarity is the difference in narrative medium: *Wuthering Heights* is a novel whereas the *Der Findling* belongs to the genre of the short story. Their use of narrative techniques also differs. The novel applies a multilevel narration where the narrative of one character is embedded into that of the other, both narrative voices, though being conventional in different ways, are emphatically set against the destructive passion they are supposed to transmit. The short story is also built upon the contrast between the characters' intensity of moves and the mostly matter-of-fact style of narration. Still, in the novel the narrators get involved to a greater or lesser degree, in the short story an illusion is created

by the author of the neutral attitude of an omniscient and trustworthy narrator, but, in fact, the narrative voice's reliability is limited to the particular scene it narrates, and shifts perspectives even there.

In spite of all these differences, there are a number of remarkable analogies that provide valid grounds for the comparative analysis of the two texts. Such are the foundling figures, the repeated substitution of family-members, instances of character naming and repetitive illnesses and deaths. A few attempts have been made so far to compare them, usually together with other Romantic texts: Cecil Davies sees them related in blurring genre boundaries and regards *Wuthering Heights* as a text written in the framework of the tradition of the 18th-century German short story as an example of which *Der Findling* is also categorised,[1] and Carol Jacobs describes them as narratives that both exclude their readers from a teleological reading, i.e. from the possibility of interpretation.[2]

My comparison also aims to point out some ways in which these texts behave similarly. I will follow up the attempts at identification that apparently promise to give coherence to characters and show how they fail in the end. The status of the foundlings, their lack of origin, naturally raises the question of identity. The other characters, the narrators and the readers make repeated attempts to provide them with some kind of selfhood by associating them with physical objects, with natural phenomena as well as by defining them in a moral and social context. The narratives create a mirror effect by the continual presence of the two female characters, which supply "the other" in the identification process. Since, however, the female characters are also in search of identity, the foundlings and their counterparts assume the function of mutual sources of identification for each other. Whenever this contrastive process fails, self-expression takes alternative routes such as psychosomatic reactions or illnesses. If the mistake is too great, the result is death. Looking into these analogies, both texts richly lend themselves to different methods of interpretation, each adding to a more comprehensive understanding. As opposed to naïve reading, J. Hillis Miller describes all critical approaches to literary texts as acts of demystification, the two main forms of which are rhetorical, i.e. attentive to linguistic devices, and ideological, i.e. looking for referential verities such as class, race or gender.[3]

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1. Cecil Davies, "Art within a Tradition: *Wuthering Heights* and the German *Novelle*," *Brontë Society Transactions* 17 (1978), pp. 202–203.

2. Carol Jacobs, *Uncontainable Romanticism: Shelley, Brontë, Kleist* (Baltimore, London: John Hopkins, 1989), p. ix.

3. J. Hillis Miller, *On Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 122–123.

In the following, these forms of reading will be mingled, thus the analysis enters deconstructive as well as comparative motif analysis oriented and gender sensitive discourses.

The foundlings: natural and mythological analogies

> "But where did he come from, the little dark thing, harboured by a good man to his bane?" . . . And I began, half dreaming, to weary myself with imaging some fit parentage for him, and *repeating* my waking meditations, I tracked his existence over again, with grim *variations*, at last, picturing his death and funeral . . . and, as he had no surname, and I could not tell his age, we were obliged to content ourselves with the single word, "Heathcliff."[4]

This is how one of the narrators, Nelly Dean, ponders upon Heathcliff, trying to conjure up possibilities of an origin for him, but she does not succeed. The italicised words are a good example of what I am trying to prove, namely that there are repetitive attempts and accounts of character identification with endless variations. There is no similar textual reference as to the question of origin of Nicolo in *Der Findling,* the title, however, implies that this controversial problem remains unresolved per definition.[5] The origin, genetic and biographic, stays a riddle and provides no frame for constituting either foundling's identity.

In view of their absence of origin, the foundlings are read as if they belonged either to sub- or to superhuman realms. Heathcliff, for example, is abundantly associated with different animals. The most characteristic reference may be the metaphor of the cuckoo, which Nelly uses to describe his history to Lockwood: "It's a cuckoo's, sir – I know all about it, except where he was born, and who were his parents, and how he got his money, at first . . ." (*WH*, 50.). Helena M. Ardholm, who conducts an

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4. Linda H. Peterson, ed., *Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights: Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism* (Boston: Bedford, 1992), p. 279 (my italics). All subsequent parenthesised references to the text of *Wuthering Heights,* marked as *WH*, will be to this edition.

5. Irmgard Wagner reports on the contemporary meaning of the word *Findling*, which describes a child abandoned by its parents, predominantly the mother. Irmgard Wagner, "*Der Findling*: Erratic Signifier in Kleist and Geology," *The German Quarterly* 64.3 (1991), p. 294. She also associates another meaning of the term describing Swiss and North German granite blocks with the story of the foundling on the basis of their inexplicable origin, p. 285.

emblematic research of the text, argues for the ungrateful nature of Heathcliff by analysing the emblem of the cuckoo and its subscriptions in emblem discourse. She underlines that the cuckoo is a bird that takes over alien nests, pushes out eggs or baby birds, lays its eggs but does not feed its offsprings, and uses one of the subscriptions to support her argument: "As soon as the changeling grows up, it steals the food from the rightful young and devours its benefactor with its jagged beak."[6] Besides the description of the foundling's actions parallel to that of a cuckoo, it has also been pointed out that there is one more important trait the bird and Heathcliff have in common, namely their strong attachment to their chosen lifelong mate.[7] This is how one image can be used to underline different aspects of a character depending on the ideological background of the reading.

Both foundlings are ambiguously related to either god/heaven or evil/hell, depending on the actual narrative perspective they are seen from.[8] At the point he enters the family, Heathcliff is ambiguously evaluated by Mr. Earnshaw, his adoptive father: "you must e'en take him as a gift of God, though it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil" (*WH*, 51). Later, while he carries out his revenge plan, the dark side of his character is underlined and abundantly referred to by other figures: Hindley calls him the *imp of Satan*, Catherine *a wolfish man*, Isabella *a lying fiend, a monster, not a human being*, Nelly *an evil beast* and Joseph is convinced that *th' divil's harried off his soul* when he dies. This comprehensive picture might, of course, be misleading if the reader forgets that all these remarks are made through Nelly Dean's narrative voice mediated by Lockwood,[9] consequently they cannot be taken for granted as judgements of Heathcliff's character but rather as signs of some beliefs and superstitions such as demonism, Satanism and lycanthropy common in

6. Helena M. Ardholm, *The Emblem and the Emblematic Habit of Mind in "Jane Eyre" and "Wuthering Heights"* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Bothoburgensis, 1999), p. 132. Interestingly, instead of giving a comprehensive emblematic analysis of the two novels, Ardholm ends up questioning the value-system emblem discourse represents.

7. Sheryl Craig, "Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*," *The Explicator* 52 (1994), pp. 157–159.

8. For a detailed analysis of the shifting meanings of moral terms cf. Marjorie Burns, " 'This Shattered Prison': Versions of Eden in *Wuthering Heights*," in Jeremy Hawthorn, ed., *The Nineteenth-Century British Novel* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), 31–45.

9. For a deconstructive review of Lockwood's interpretative mistakes see: J. Hillis Miller, "*Wuthering Heights*: Repetition and the 'Uncanny,' " in: Peterson, *Wuthering Heights*, pp. 371–384.

Victorian literature.[10] One example for this is the traditionally believed desire of the devil to imitate the father, which Heathcliff does by taking the position of all father figures. This is also reflected in the text when, in answer to Nelly's question who his master is, Hareton uses the term *devil daddy*. Though I describe them in different sections, note how the terms of nature analogy, moral discourse and social context mingle. The common sense mind would give Heathcliff's gestures an ethical relevance, still, the multiple perspective of interpretation creates a void where moral judgements are to be suspended, just as Dorothy Van Ghent remarks: "It is impossible to speak of him in terms of 'sin' and 'guilt' as it is to speak in this way of the natural elements or the creatures of the animal world."[11]

Similarly, all attempts at moral identification are frustrated in *Der Findling*: the narrative voice uses moral terminology, still, the framework of traditional Christian moral values is destroyed in the text, through the words' successively losing their meanings the moral discourse deconstructs itself. As László F. Földényi argues, the characters do not conform to traditional religious norms:

> But there is no reliable God standing behind Kleist's heroes who could put an end to all earthly distrust. . . . The missing divine, metaphysical guarantee *from behind* them comes alive *within them*. Chaos, hell and the grave threaten to devour Kleist's figures because they carry all of them within themselves.[12]

Just like Heathcliff, Nicolo is also ambiguously judged when he enters the tradesman's life: he is an orphan and described as the son of God: "the wardens of the hospital, upon the broker's asking whether the lad was free to get in, smiled

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10. Marianne Thormählen interprets Heathcliff and his actions along the lines of a Faustian pact with the devil, cf. Thormählen, "The Lunatic and The Devil's Disciple: The . . . Lovers' in *Wuthering Heights*," *Review of English Studies* 48 (1997), pp. 191–195, and Giles Mitchell investigates the connection between demonism, lycanthropy and Heathcliff's behaviour. Cf. Giles Mitchell, "Incest, Demonism and Death in *Wuthering Heights*," *Literature and Psychology* 23 (1973) 27–36.

11. Dorothy Van Ghent, *The English Novel: Form and Function 1953* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 164.

12. László F. Földényi, *Heinrich von Kleist: A szavak hálójában* (Pécs: Jelenkor, 1999), pp. 177, 377 (my translation).

and assured him that Nicolo was a son of God whom nobody would miss,"[13] on the other hand, Piachi's son dies because of him. He even shows characteristics associated with the devil in folklore traditions of superstition,[14] such as having black hair, cracking and eating nuts, let alone textual references like *höllischer Bösewicht* (devilish spirit) meaning his person or *satanischer Plan* (satanic plan) referring to his revenge plan. Just like in the case of the novel, here it is also important to note, that these remarks are made by the narrator whose reliability is questioned by the ever-shifting perspective.

Social context

The social identification of the foundlings happens through determining the ever-changing roles they take up in the social unit of the family, which is accompanied by the continuous adjustment of their legal status as to proprietorship. Due to the repeated family reorganisations, the basic roles within the families are continuously re-evaluated in relation to one another[15] and the foundlings do not seem to fit any of these, they remain outsiders.

Heathcliff arrives at Wuthering Heights as a surrogate for the family's dead child, either as adopted or fathered out of wedlock by Mr. Earnshaw.[16] This unclarified initial role of the son already shows that his function is void of meaning and challenges repeated interpretations. It is in the same manner Heathcliff acquires the role of brother to Catherine and Hindley, which, after Mr. Earnshaw's death, changes to that of a would-be lover and son/rival, respectively. His fatherhood to his own son is almost the opposite of Mr. Earnshaw's to him: he does not admit his own child

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13. Heinrich von Kleist, *The Marquise of O—, and other stories*. Trans. Martin Greenberg. (New York: Ungar, 1973), p. 233. All subsequent parenthesised references to the text of *Der Findling*, marked as *DF*, will be of this edition.

14. Cf. Günter Oesterle, "*Der Findling*," in Walter Hinderer, ed., *Kleists Erzählungen* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1998), p. 166.

15. Imre Kurdi describes *Der Findling* as a story in which the triangular family keeps multiplying itself. Cf. Imre Kurdi, "Liaisons dangereuses: Heinrich von Kleist, *Der Findling*, ein Kommentar," *Jahrbuch der ungarischen Germanistik* (1995), p. 48. Cf. also: ". . . duplication of names, places, events, seems endlessly to re-enact itself, like some ritual that must be cyclically repeated. . ." (Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* [New Haven: Yale UP, 1979], pp. 257).

16. Cf. Thormählen, p. 185.

into the family circle for too long. Thus, due to the undefinability of his function in the family, Heathcliff's social performance is a matter of perspective: he can be seen as anything from a strongly neglected illegitimate son and mistreated lover, acting rightfully by taking possession of the Earnshaw and Linton properties, to a monstrous intruder destroying families and usurping their wealth.

A parallel argument can be drawn in the case of Nicolo in *Der Findling*, who also enters the family with an unclarified status: he is an adopted surrogate for a dead child and at the same time also speculated on as Elvire's possible son.[17] Later he assumes the position of a would-be lover to Elvire though he is married and competes with Piachi for the father role while he is father to his own child whom he neglects. So, Nicolo's assessment hovers between the same two extremes as Heathcliff's, that of the mistreated son and lover rightfully revenging himself and the satanic outsider destroying his benefactors.

It is tempting, in the case of both texts, to fall into the trap the denominations offer and interpret characters as combinations of different traits, such as Linton Heathcliff as a combination of the Lintons and Heathcliff, or the young Catherine as her mother, and Hareton as the second Heathcliff; still, it must not be forgotten that these characters only resemble but are not identical to one another. The same is to be kept in mind when examining the blurred identities of the characters of the *Novelle*: the names of Colino and Nicolo are made up of the same letters (also the name of Pa*olo* ends similarly), together with the remarkable physiognomic similarity of the two, which give way to speculations like viewing them as doubles. I think that these possibilities show not only the variability of the characters' relationship to one another, and do not just break the boundaries of identity, but also deconstruct the possibility of any definition of relationships.

The tool of identification: the whip

It is not only in the context of the natural, the mythic and the social order that the foundlings frustrate identification; they also have a deep-seated connection with an object in the physical reality that defies definition. At the beginning of the novel Mr. Earnshaw asks his children what presents he should bring them from his journey, and while Hindley wishes for a fiddle, Catherine opts for a whip. Though broken to pieces, Hindley receives his present but Catherine's gets lost while Mr. Earnshaw

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17. Cf. Andrew J. Webber, "Kleist's *Doppelgänger*: an Open and Shut Case?" *English Goethe Society* 63 (1992–93), p. 111.

attends to the foundling, who is thus seen as a substitute present: Catherine's whip. Feminist critics regard the whip as a phallic symbol identical with Heathcliff, who symbolises male power. Catherine's choice of it is interpreted as an expression of the female wish for power in patriarchy, and after she receives it in the shape of Heathcliff, she is viewed as a perfect androgyne. This term is applied to underline that Catherine has the same amount of male and female characteristics, especially if Heathcliff is seen as her double. Later, as she has mental and physical problems, it is maintained that the whip is turning against her, and that she is figuratively whipping herself.[18]

Self-inflicted pain and sexual pleasure are also mentioned by Kleist-critics examining the function of the whip in Elvire's life. Attention is called to the fact that Elvire has once already been whipped by the windstorm when she was saved by Colino, thus "[i]t is in the whip where resignation, death, danger, sexual delight, self-reproach, play and hatred are concentrated."[19] The whip is also regarded as a device serving as a substitute for verbal communication when Piachi takes it off the wall and shows Nicolo the way out with it. This is a stage of aggression, which is beyond communication.[20] Thus, just like in the novel, the whip seemingly has to do with power and sexuality, still, besides this signalling gesture, it is never shown in use, therefore, its function can only be speculated on by strongly appealing to the readers' moral and ethical prejudices.[21] It might represent masculinity in the case of the novel, a substitute for language in the *Novelle* or power in both, however, it would be opportunistic to reduce its meaning to any of these possibilities since it is a narrative gap. It is important, however, that the whip certainly functions as a strong connector between characters.

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18. Gilbert & Gubar, p. 264. Even Mr. Earnshaw's statement introducing Heathcliff can be read as an allusion to the whip or being whipped: "See here wife, I was never so beaten with anything in my life" (*WH*, p. 51).

19. Földényi, p. 250 (my translation).

20. Gail M. Newman, "Family Violence in Heinrich von Kleist's *Der Findling*," *Colloquia Germanica* (1996), p. 289.

21. Cf. Dániel Lányi, "Was sucht die Peitsche an der Wand? Kleists *Findling* oder die Rolle des heuristischen Erkennens in der Interpretation," *Jahrbuch der ungarischen Germanistik* (1992), p. 366.

Self-identification through "the other"

As it has already been suggested in the previous sections, there is a strong attachment to a connected female character in the case of both foundlings. The relationship between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff and Elvire Parquet and Nicolo is so determining that it even serves as a means for self-identification for each of these characters. Looking at Heathcliff's revenge, for example, it is claimed, that it is not his actions which are important but the process he goes through, because that is the way he ensures his self a survival in isolation after Catherine's death.[22] However, it is not to be neglected that Catherine and Heathcliff are not detachable from each other even after her death since they annihilate the life/death boundary when they define each other as their own selves:

> "I shall not be at peace," moaned Catherine . . . "I'm not wishing you greater torment than I have, Heathcliff. I only wish us never to be parted – and should a word of mine distress you hereafter, think I feel the same distress underground" (*WH*, 148).

Heathcliff's perspective is similar: "Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest, as long as I am living! . . . I cannot live without *my life*! I cannot live without *my soul*!" (*WH*, 154, my italics).

Thus, during the rest of his life, Heathcliff is in constant contact with Catherine through remembrances:

> for what is not connected with her to me? and what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped on the flags! In every cloud, in every tree-filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day, I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men and women – my own features – mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her! (*WH*, 274).

The question is how their relationship could be defined. Traditionally, they are regarded as star-crossed lovers finding no social acknowledgement for their passion and thus suffering a tragic end. However, I am more inclined to agree with the subtler point of view feminist criticism adopts, which distinguishes the unfulfilled

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22. Thomas Vargish, "Revenge and *Wuthering Heights*," *Studies in the Novel* 3 (Spring, 1971), p. 14.

Romantic love, where sexuality is triumphed over by death, and the socially accepted romantic love, where sexuality wins over death and argues that Catherine wants both, but this option is refused by society. Patsy Stoneman also shows that because of her double choice, earlier criticism has judged Catherine negatively, for, it declined to accept her wanting to integrate both men in her life and rather saw this conflict as her *inability* to choose.[23] Even her deterioration is interpreted in these terms, namely, that she develops different psycho-neurotic symptoms such as anorexia nervosa, fits and suicidal impulses eventually leading to her death, as an answer to the other characters' lack of understanding and empathy in the face of her passions which defy the prevalent rigid Victorian gender distinction.[24] Opposing this view, some critics emphasise the perversion of emotions and regard the couple as an entity that does not know and fit into any concept of love: "Catherine and Heathcliff . . . have no tenderness or compassion for anybody, not even for each other."[25] In these texts the traditional concept of love does not seem to function, because the identification process of these figures seems to have priority over clear-cut emotions.

In the case of *Der Findling,* there is also a love-hate relationship depicted between Elvire and Nicolo, but just like in the novel, it is part of their attempt to find their identities and thus, subordinated to that process. Elvire hides her true self in her bedroom[26] through an intensive relationship to a fetish, the picture of her dead beloved, Colino, but at the same time she also takes an intense interest in Nicolo's sexual life. However, when her secret is seriously threatened by the foundling, she fights to get rid of him:

> And in fact Piachi, too, was inclined to end the whole thing as quietly as possible; struck speechless by a few words from Elvira, who cast a look of horror at the wretch when she recovered consciousness in the old man's arms, he merely took a whip down from the wall and, drawing shut the cur-

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23. Patsy Stoneman, "Catherine Earnshaw's Journey to Her Home Among the Dead: Fresh Thoughts on *Wuthering Heights* and *Epipsychidion*," *Review of English Studies* 47 (1996), pp. 523–525.

24. Nóra Séllei, *Lánnyá válik, s írni kezd: 19. századi angol írónők* (Debrecen: Kossuth, 1999), p. 238.

25. Thormählen, p. 184.

26. Here the traditional key-symbolism is offered to the reader as a means to solving the riddle but, of course, "the truth" remains enigmatic. Cf. Jürgen Schröder, "Kleists Novelle *Der Findling*," *Kleist-Jahrbuch* (1985) 109–127.

tains of the bed on which she lay, opened the door and gestured Nicolo to get out that instant (*DF*, 245).[27]

Similarly, Nicolo's emotions change when he thinks that Elvire wants to intrude upon his privacy: "This incident, which humiliated Nicolo deeply, awakened a burning hatred for Elvira in his heart, for he thought he had her to thank for the affront the old man had given him before all the world"(*DF*, 238).[28]

It can also be seen how Nicolo's wish for an identity changes from wearing the mask of a Genevan knight unconsciously, to wanting to put it on for a second time with the purpose of identifying himself with the portrait in Elvire's room. Besides wearing the mask, that is, re-imag(in)ing himself, the foundling also rewrites his identity when he regroups the letters of his own name to that of Colino's, which has a strong effect on Elvire. As long as Colino functions as a/the channel of identification, it does not really matter if Nicolo is his double or not, as some critics claim.[29] In this respect Colino is a neutral figure and his resemblance to or equation with Nicolo is a matter of perspective.[30] As the story proceeds, Elvire and Nicolo's search is becoming increasingly interdependent: "Nicolo lets . . . Colino come alive, to awake Elvire from her state of death-in-life . . . and he wants to find himself leaving his non-existence behind the same way."[31]

Analysing the relationship of Catherine and Heathcliff, Dorothy Van Ghent points out that important boundaries are established between the conscious and the unconscious parts of the selves of these characters, which are symbolically represented throughout the novel.[32] However, I tend to agree with Elisabeth Napier, who claims that the importance of boundaries does not lie in their establishment but in the want of their dissolution: "the narrative is based on a scheme in which distinc-

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27. The translation "he merely took a whip down from the wall" is a little misleading, since it might imply that there are more whips on the wall. The original text uses the definite article here: ". . . nahm er bloss . . . die Peitsche von der Wand." Cf. Helmut Sembdner, ed., *Heinrich von Kleist: Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, Vol. 2 (München: dtv, 1984), p. 213.

28. The translation does not accurately follow the original text here either, since the word *Unglücklicher*, used to characterise the foundling, is an important instance demasking the make-belief of an impartial narrative voice the translator apparently falls victim to. Cf. Sembdner, p. 206.

29. Webber, pp. 107–111.

30. Marjorie Gelus, "Displacement of Meaning: Kleist's *Der Findling*," *German Quarterly* 55 (1982), p. 545.

31. Schröder, p. 119 (my translation).

32. Van Ghent, pp. 161–162.

tions collapse and the limits between characters dissolve, categories are not bounded and discrete but undemarcated and fluid."[33] Carol Jacobs, in her comparative analysis of these two texts, focuses exactly on this problem of boundaries and comes to the same conclusion.[34]

Illness as a means for self-expression

Illness is a recurring phenomenon in both writings. In effect, the actual telling of the stories is made possible by this notion, because the fates of the two families would never have been reported, if Lockwood did not become ill in the novel, and similarly, the events of the *Novelle* would not take place if there was not an epidemic, the Black Death with which Nicolo is infected. What I find particularly interesting is the parallel that can be drawn between Catherine and Elvire's nature and course of illness. Both develop nervous reactions to a possible trauma in their childhood. Elvire has to face the death of her rescuer whom she falls in love with and Catherine must put up with her separation from Heathcliff and his disappearance. The first time some symptoms of these reactions manifest themselves is when the trauma occurs: Elvire faces the loss of her hero again when she marries Piachi and Catherine has to come to terms with Heathcliff's disappearance which is connected to her marriage with Edgar. Besides the tears she cries for Colino, this time Elvire develops a very high temperature, and Catherine has a fit of crying which grows into a recurring feverish delirium: "People were accustomed to blame her fits of agitation on a strained nervous system, the result of a high fever into which she had fallen shortly after her marriage, and this put a stop to all inquiry into their cause" (*DF*, 236); "It proved a commencement of delirium . . . she had a fever. . . . and serious threats of a fit that often attended her rages . . . Edgar Linton . . . believed himself the happiest man alive on the day he led her to Gimmerton Chapel" (*WH*, 92–93). The second time this happens is when the heroes, in full view of the female characters, return: Colino in the shape of Nicolo and Heathcliff as his old self after his long absence from the Grange: "Trembling in every limb, Elvira was put to bed, where she lay ill for several days with a raging fever" (*DF*, 237); "I shall get wild. . . . I'm in danger of being seriously ill – I wish it may prove true" (*WH*, 114). These reactions are triggered for the third time in the most intense form by the female characters' last confrontation with

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33. Elisabeth Napier, "The Problem of Boundaries in *Wuthering Heights*," *Philological Quarterly* 63 (1984), p. 95. Cf. also Mitchell, pp. 27–36, Stoneman, pp. 521–533.

34. Jacobs, pp. 61–81, 171–197.

their male counterparts, which is in the case of both women fatal: "the unfortunate Elvira, who had died from the effects of a high fever brought on by the episode" (*DF*, 246); "she was all bewildered, she sighed, and moaned, and knew nobody. . . . that night, was born . . . a puny, seven months' child, and two hours after the mother died, having never recovered sufficient consciousness" (*WH*, 151).

The reason for these illnesses may be the repression of sexual desire resulting in aggressive outbreaks leading to longer illnesses and deaths. Nóra Séllei treats illness in *Wuthering Heights* as a central motif that can closely be related to the characters' relationship to their bodies, sexuality and identity often resulting in the loss of these.[35] Kleist seems to use the motif in a similar way in *Der Findling*. According to Dirk Oschmann, through the extensive use of body language terms, Kleist's texts reflect the breaches of the body, identity or actions in breaches of expression, thus language is sensualised.[36] Attention has also been called to the possible meanings of the mental imbalance to be depicted in both cases: Elvire's hysterical reaction is judged as a tool for avoiding reality, that is, it functions as a substitute for the belief in facts.[37] I do not think that it is made so clear by Kleist that these faints or fits are performed on purpose, whereas in the novel it is made obvious that Catherine chooses illness as a means of communication: "I am in danger of being seriously ill – I wish it may prove true. He has startled and distressed me shockingly! I want to frighten him" (*WH*, 114). This is also how Susan Sontag comments on sickness in her book *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its metaphors,* as a language that expresses the dramatisation of consciousness.[38]

Not only Catherine and Elvire's psycho-neurotic tendencies are noteworthy in this respect, but also the psychosomatic reactions of Nicolo and Heathcliff: just like Elvire, Nicolo in many cases behaves like a shy schoolboy and develops physical signs of his psychological trembles: "Nicolo, turning red and white by turns . . . and, quite unable to hide from Xaviera's teasing looks the embarrassment into which this

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35. Séllei, pp. 205–210.

36. Dirk Oschmann, "How to Do Words with Things: Heinrich von Kleist's Sprachkonzept," *Colloquia Germanica* (2003) 3–26.

37. Erna Moore claims that this is exactly what makes Elvire similar to Piachi and both different from Nicolo, namely their substitution of reality for fiction. Erna Moore, "Heinrich von Kleists *Findling*: Psychologie des Verhängnisses," *Colloquia Germanica* (1974), p. 282.

38. Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), pp. 38–49. In this book Sontag analyses cancer and consumption, the latter being a typical illness of the 19th century, which was feared as being inherited from one generation to the next, especially by the Keats and Brontë families.

disclosure had thrown him . . . picked up his hat with an ugly twitch of his upper lip, said goodbye, and left" (*DF*, 244). Heathcliff, on the other hand, shows strong masochistic and sadistic tendencies. Probably he dies of starving himself to death in the same way Catherine threatened to die earlier: "He took his knife and fork, and was going to commence eating, when the inclination appeared to become suddenly extinct. . . . 'I am animated with hunger, and, seemingly, I must not eat' " (*WH*, 277).

To sum up, I think that it can be established that both of these relationships are strongly interdependent, so much so that separation, probably metaphoric for the repression of the powerful erotic desire, leads to illness, psychic disturbances and the surfacing of the wish to die: Eros is replaced by Thanatos. This means that Catherine and Heathcliff as well as Elvire and Nicolo constitute an androgynous entity which cannot be seen as simply the interaction of the traditional male and female protagonists but rather as a unified identity defined by the organic nature of the bonds holding them together: as soon as the sexual drive making them into one is repressed, their body fails them as well: they become disturbed or get ill and die.

Prosopopoeia and death – repeated

As a further argument for the intractability of characters, I will use J. Hillis Miller's reading of *Der Findling* as a version of the Pygmalion story of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* and also extend it to *Wuthering Heights*.[39] In his analysis there are a few short remarks referring to the novel, one of which underlines the foundlings' "Christlike" entering their new families, which, if of any importance at all, may strengthen their position as god-related and, at the same time, also give ground to speculation or disbelief. Miller argues that characters, narrators and readers are all unavoidably inclined to make mistakes while interpreting textual events. Interpretation is necessary for understanding, but understanding is governed by reason and reason binds events into causal chains to make them comprehensible. For example, Pygmalion identifies Galatea with the idealised image of a woman in his mind and acts accordingly, although her statue, which can only be brought to life through divine intervention, only resembles this idol but is not identical with it. The same types of mistakes are made in *Der Findling*, where characters also identify inanimate figures with animate ones: Piachi, the father adopts Nicolo, the foundling as a substitute for his dead son, Paolo. Elvire, Piachi's young wife and Nicolo's step-mother repeatedly falls into the trap of taking Nicolo for the dead Colino, the Genevan knight

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39. J. Hillis Miller, *Versions of Pygmalion* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1990).

who saved her life. Nicolo makes the mistake of identifying himself with Colino based on his similarity with the dead knight. Heathcliff is also viewed as a substitute for the family's dead son and is even given his name by the Earnshaw-parents. The daughter of Catherine gets her mother's name, who dies in childbed, and all figures with combined names are implied to expect similar destinies to their predecessors whose names they bear and whose identities they inescapably assume. Mentioning the novel shortly, Bettine Menke calls the attention to the dangers of the figure of prosopopoeia as one that increases the uncertainty of interpretation by its nature, figuration and defiguration happening at the same time.[40] So the identification of individual figures is questioned and the focus is rather on their interactive modification.[41]

Thus, it can be concluded, there are similar linguistic and narrative tools used by Kleist and Brontë which subvert the ideological reading of the texts. The most obvious of these are the attempts to validate the reading of the characters of unknown origin and their actions both as god-given, thus benevolent, and as stemming from the devil; to attribute to these fluid figures widely differing social roles such as that of a member of a nuclear family from prodigal son to revenging father or the participant of a love relationship as ever-loving or unfaithful. The deaths of certain figures easily seem to lend themselves to ideological interpretation, which, however, becomes nullified by the repetitiveness of the motif as a reinforcement of interpretative mistakes, thus this event also remains pure functionality. Thus readers must be content with the conclusion that in both texts obtaining a comprehensive picture of individual characters and their actions, even if there were such, is made impossible.

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40. Bettine Menke, *Prosopopoiia: Stimme und Text bei Brentano, Hoffmann, Kleist und Kafka* (München: Fink, 2000), p. 163.

41. Cf. Séllei, pp. 241–253; Gilbert & Gubar, p. 255 for the Brontë text and Schröder, p. 113; Anthony Stephens & Yixu Lü, "Die Ersetzbarkeit des Menschen: Alter Ego und Stellvertreter im Werk Heinrich von Kleists," *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft* (1994), p. 127; Wagner, p. 295 for the Kleist text.

Jarlath Killeen

Oscar Wilde and Feminism

Prolegomena[1]

Oscar Wilde has recently been appropriated by feminist scholars in two distinct ways. On the one hand he is read as a proto-feminist writer, with feminist sympathies, whose editorial work publicised many women writers, and who publicly supported the causes of female education – especially to university level – female suffrage, and female participation in the workplace. However, many others have pointed out that despite this, there remains a powerful and important level of extreme misogyny running throughout his work, and that this must be read back into his political and aesthetic commitments. This article warns that, before we peremptorily attempt to assimilate Wilde into either a feminist or a misogynist paradigm, we must engage with the interpretive model in which he understood relations between the sexes: Roman Catholicism, which, while politically conservative, contained radically subversive gender possibilities.

In July 1876, Oscar Wilde sent his friend, Oxonian William Ward, a letter, outlining some of his religious concerns:

> My dear Boy, I confess not to be a worshipper at the Temple of Reason. I think man's reason the most misleading and thwarting guide that the sun looks upon, except perhaps the reason of woman. Faith is, I think, a bright lantern for the feet, though of course an exotic plant in man's mind, and requiring continual cultivation. My mother would probably agree with you. Except for the people, for whom she thinks dogma necessary, she rejects all forms of superstition and dogma, particularly any notion of priest and sacrament standing between her and God. She has a very strong belief in that aspect of God we call the Holy Ghost – the divine intelligence of which we on earth partake. Here she is very strong, though of course at times trou-

bled by the discord and jarring of the world, when she takes a dip into pessimism.

Her last pessimist, Schopenhauer, says that the whole human race ought on a given day, after a strong remonstrance firmly but respectfully urged on God, to walk into the sea and leave the world tenantless, but of course some skulking wretches would hide and be left behind to people the world again I am afraid.

I wonder you don't see the beauty and necessity for the incarnation of God into man to help us grasp at the skirts of the Infinite. The atonement I admit is hard to grasp. But I think since Christ the dead world has woken up from sleep. Since him we have lived. . .[2]

William Ward was Wilde's best friend at Oxford, "the only man in the world I am afraid of,"[3] and an ardent opponent of Anglo- and Roman Catholicism. This letter was written in the aftermath of the dramatic conversion of David Hunter Blair, the third member of Wilde's circle, who had "gone over" to the Catholic Church while in Rome in March 1875.[4] Blair had set earnestly to convincing Wilde to follow him, though Wilde prudently objected that the financial threats of his father stood in the way. Sir William had been eager to see his son transfer to Oxford from Trinity College in Dublin as he had become concerned about Wilde's relationship with the Jesuits in St. Francis Xavier's Church on Gardiner Street. Writing his memories of Wilde at Oxford, Blair notes that had Wilde converted, his father would have cast him off altogether.[5] That this fear was a justified one was confirmed when Wilde's half-brother Henry Wilson died in June 1877, his bequest to Wilde being conditional on his remaining Protestant for three years.

Richard Ellmann points out that, at the time this letter was written, "Roman Catholicism threads its way through all of Wilde's activities" (63). Ellmann's interpretation of the letter is as a statement of doubt, an intellectual means of avoiding the religious snares that Blair was setting for him (63). While Ellmann remains Wilde's best and most penetrating biographer, his reading of Wilde's attraction to Catholicism

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2. Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis eds., *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde* (London: Forth Estate, 2000), pp. 25–6.

3. All parenthesised references are to this edition: Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Penguin, 1989), p. 43.

4. Ellmann, p. 51.

5. David Hunter-Blair, "Oscar Wilde at Magdalene College, Oxford," in *Oscar Wilde: Interviews and Recollections*, Volume 1, ed. E. H. Mikhail (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 6.

is one of the weak points of his study. Addressed to the ultra-Protestant Ward, the letter reads more like an exercise in apologetics. It attempts to wrest Ward from the "Temple of Reason" to the "bright lantern" of Faith, synonyms for, respectively, Protestantism and Catholicism. Although Protestantism was founded solidly on the Lutheran claim of "sola fide," the faith it was arching towards had by the eighteenth century become purely rational. This can be most clearly observed in the period when, as Catholic monarch, James II seemed in danger of "reconverting" England to Catholicism. The outpouring of controversial pamphlet literature that debated the issues emphasised the rational basis of the Protestant religion,[6] and concomitantly lambasted Catholic dependence on a non-rational "faith," and this remains the "official" position (although the new incumbent of Lambeth Palace may offer some interesting reflections on the role of rationalism in the "modern" world). Protestantism was faith in that which was the most rational to believe: for that reason "faith" became a tautology.[7]

The letter makes a curious incursion into a gendered discourse of spirituality. Writing to a Protestant rationalist, Wilde warns against the dangers of relying too heavily on "man's reason" which he labels the "most misleading and thwarting guide that the sun looks upon," a direct reference to the archetypal rational philosophy, Plato's Myth of the Cave, found in the seventh book of the Republic, where the development of reason is outlined as an epistemological journey from an inadequate state of knowledge, gaping at the shadows, to a sufficient cognitive state, staring at the sun. The prisoners in the cave are the majority of mankind, the masses, "the people," doomed to view only shadows of reality and hear echoes of the truth, distorted by "their own passions and prejudices, and by the passions and prejudices of other people as conveyed to them by language and rhetoric."[8] They are in the prison-house of language. The philosopher has escaped, and has emerged from the cave into the sunlight, where he can observe the truth and is able to see the sun itself, which represents the Idea of the Good, the highest Form, the cause of all right thinking and beautiful things, and the ultimate source of truth – the generator of Reason. According to Plato, and echoed within Protestant rhetoric, this can be achieved only by activating the faculty of reason. One must have faith only in that which can be assented to as reasonable.

However, this letter suggests that to Wilde, the path to the sun of philosophical rationality is the wrong course to the real sun, the metonymic Son of God, who requires a

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6. Raymond D. Tumbleson, *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination: Nationalism, Religion, and Literature, 1660–1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

7. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991).

8. R. L. Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato* (London: Macmillan, 1898), p. 260.

faith-journey. Man's reason is termed the most disastrous instrument to use in the search for truth, "except perhaps the reason of woman," and here Wilde has a particular woman in mind: "My mother would probably agree with you." With this letter we are entering an especially controversial area in Wilde studies, as the issue we are forced to deal with is Wilde's 'philosophical' attitude towards women, an issue that necessarily invokes the problems associated with gender itself and the discourse of the sex war.[9]

Wilde has evoked two binary oppositions, Male/Female, and Reason/Emotion, dualities at the heart of feminist theory. French feminist Hélène Cixous has made such binary oppositions the centre of her theories,[10] and under the heading "Where is she?" has compiled a compendium of antitheses:

> Activity/Passivity
> Sun/Moon
> Culture/Nature
> Day/Night
> Father/Mother
> Head/Heart
> Intelligible/Palpable
> Logos/Pathos (62).

She links these to the primary binary, the pair behind every other binary, Male/Female, and claims that all are heavily imbricated in the patriarchal value system: each opposition can be analysed as a hierarchy where the 'feminine' side is always configured as the negative, powerless instance, the lacking term. She powerfully argues that the biological opposition, Male/Female, is used to construct a series of negative 'feminine' values and behaviour characteristics, which are then imposed on, and always confused with, biological 'femaleness.' Cixous claims that Western philosophical and literary

9. For Wilde and feminism, see Victoria White, "Women of No Importance: Misogyny in the Work of Oscar Wilde," in *Wilde: The Irishman*, ed. Jerusha McCormack (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 158–165; Patricia Flanagan Behrendt, *Oscar Wilde: Eros and Aesthetics* (London: Macmillan, 1991); Sos Eltis, *Revising Wilde: Society and Subversion in the Plays of Oscar Wilde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Melissa Knox, *Oscar Wilde: A Long and Lovely Suicide* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994); Gary Schmidgall, *The Stranger Wilde: Interpreting Oscar* (London: Abacus, 1994).

10. All parenthesised references are to this edition: Hélène Cixous, "Sorties: In and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays," in *The Newly Born Woman*, eds. Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clement, trans. Betsy Wing, intro. Sandra M. Gilbert (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 63–132.

thought is and has always been caught up in this endless chain of hierarchical binary oppositions, which in the end can always be reduced to the fundamental couple, Male/Female, and she locates a constant death at work in the proliferation of these binaries (63). For the first term to acquire meaning it must destroy the latter one. The couple cannot be left intact: it is a battlefield where the struggle for signifying supremacy is forever re-enacted. In the end, victory is equated with activity, and defeat with passivity. Under patriarchy, the male term is "always already" the victor. Cixous denounces this schema, and undoes logocentric ideology: she proclaims woman as the source of life, power and energy, and hails the advent of an écriture féminine which will highlight the negated sign of the binary as the creative force.

This kind of thinking is the basis of Jonathan Dollimore's assimilation of Wilde into a theory of the "transgressive aesthetic."[11] He argues that Wilde recognises the binaries on which Western culture has been erected, and in a desire to undo the inherent oppressiveness of this construction configured a philosophical tactic to invert the binary and raise the previously 'dead' term to dominance:

> (In)subordinate inversions if at all successful, provoke reaction. The result is a cultural struggle between unevenly matched contenders, a struggle in which the dominant powers, which transgressive inversion fiercely disturbs, now react fiercely against it. But the case of Wilde suggests why, as a strategy of cultural struggle, binary inversion so often provokes such a reaction . . . Because in any historical instance the binary holds in place more than it actually designates, its inversion typically has effects beyond itself: inversion may for instance give impetus to cultures denigrated by its subordinate term, and simultaneously throw into disarray the cultures officially sanctioned by its dominant term.[12]

In feminist terms, then, to privilege the 'feminine' side of the binary is to set in motion the struggle to deconstruct the idea of hierarchy itself.

However, if we take the letter to Ward as our starting point for such an argument, Wilde does not fit comfortably into either Cixous's or Dollimore's model. For Cixous you can either be patriarchal or deconstructive; yet by privileging "emotion" over "reason" Wilde remains strictly within binary oppositions, though he privileges the "negative" term. Here he might seem to conform to Dollimore's interpretation.

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11. Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: From Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 64.
12. Dollimore, p. 66.

Yet in consigning Reason to the dustbin of history Wilde retains another binary – God/Man – at the core of Western civilisation, even more foundational than Man/Woman.[13] Wilde placidly rejects the Protestant view of creation and asserts that not only is Reason an aspect of the sinful nature of mankind rather than the means of salvation, but that it is given to both sexes. He claims that there is an entire Western religious system based on the privileging of Faith and Emotion over Reason, Roman Catholicism, a claim which, if true, would render both Cixous's and Dollimore's conception of Western civilisation far too unsophisticated as they fail to deal with philosophies that privilege different sides of binary opposites as they encounter them, rather than as dominated by a masculinist configuration of the cosmos. In suggesting that Catholicism has a monopoly on "irrational faith" Wilde is capitalising on the claims of his contemporaries about the "unreasonableness" of Catholicism.[14]

Wilde is being transgressive and conservative, privileging God over Man, but Faith over Reason. The letter's position on the opposition Male/Female is more difficult to pin down. Man's reason is declared the "most misleading and thwarting guide that the sun looks upon, except perhaps the reason of woman." Reason is the chief culprit here. It is part of the fallen world. While the Protestant mind associates it with the divine intelligence, in Eden it was not one of the cultivated plants. After the Fall humanity was cursed with Reason leading eventually, to Protestantism. However, historically it has been men who have cultivated Reason, which is why Wilde labels faith "an exotic plant to man's mind," suggesting that it has long been grown by women.

Utilising the discourse of Culture/Nature, Wilde maintains that the association of woman with Nature has been to their benefit, as it has brought them closer to God, and proportionally been harmful to men, as it has led them away from God and drawn them towards Plato's sun, the god of Reason.[15] It is not that faith is a property biologically inherent in women; it has merely been better cultivated by them. This exhorts

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13. The binary God/Man is the foundational philosophical opposition from at least the Pythagoreans onwards within Western metaphysics, rather than Speech/Writing, as Jacques Derrida claims (in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak [Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976], 6–27), or Man/Woman as in Cixous, p. 64.

14. E. G. Berryman, *Is the Christian Religion in Accordance with Reason and Common Sense?* (London: E. G. Berryman, 1884). To characterise Catholicism as a religion that pays little or no attention to reason would be misleading. In the system of Thomas Aquinas for example, reason takes a vital place. However, it always stays subordinate to faith.

15. Some ecofeminists would agree with this. They argue that mainstream feminism should stop trying to break the link between woman and nature, and claim that the problem has always been men's alienation from it.

both sexes to adopt the conventionally 'feminine' quality of faith as the means of divine communion. Wilde assures Ward that he has misunderstood history by seeing it teleologically as the development of Reason, the movement towards a world where superstition is banished and the light of Plato's sun illuminates everything.

This position is, however, one well out of favour with many strands of contemporary feminism and with most of the elements in arguments for women's liberation. From its modern inception, the movement has been involved in the repudiation of any appropriation of the claims of reason by men and the assignation of emotion to women.[16] The call for the use of Reason as a means of liberation is misguided to Wilde here in the sense that he believes that women are already liberated in religious terms (though not, it is clear, in material reality), and have only now, presumably through the phenomenon of the 'New Woman,' begun to trammel this freedom by trumpeting 'reason' as an attractive category.[17] It is the integration of feminism with reason that Wilde is objecting to here. It is not that women do not possess Reason – indeed he states blandly that his mother possesses far too much of it – but that historically, they have failed to develop it. The recent move in human history towards the deployment of Reason by women is a negative one in terms of salvation history, because it is only by subordinating Reason that one can find the keys to the kingdom.[18]

The problem with the dream of Reason is that it cannot cope with the unreasonableness of the universe. Its only solution to the irrational is despair. When his mother

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16. See Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Miriam Brody Kramnick (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978); Elizabeth D. Harvey, and Kathleen Okruhlik, *Women and Reason* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1984); Janet Radcliffe Richards, "Why Feminist Epistemology Isn't," in *The Flight from Science and Reason*, eds. Paul R. Gross, Norman Levitt, and Martin W. Lewis (Baltimore and London: New York Academy of Sciences, distributed by Johns Hopkins Press, 1997), 385–412.

17. For the 'New Woman' see Lyn Pykett, *The 'Improper' Feminine: The Woman's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992); Sally Ledger, "The New Woman and the Crisis of Victorianism," in *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*, eds. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 22–44.

18. See Lucy Bland, "The New Woman, the Married Woman and the Feminist: Sexual Politics in the 1890s," in *Equal or Different*, ed. Jane Rendell (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 141–164; see A. R. Cunningham, "The 'New Woman' Fiction of the 1890s," *Victorian Studies* 17 (1973) 177–186, for Reason and the New Woman. See also Carol McMillan, *Women, Reason, and Nature: Some Philosophical Problems with Feminism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982).

finds that intelligence does not provide reasons enough for the "discord and jarring of the world" she turns, not to faith but to "pessimism," like Schopenhauer, whose only resolution to the problem of evil is mass suicide. This is why Dollimore and Cixous are both insufficient in explaining either philosophy or Wilde, as neither concedes that patriarchy more often than not allows binary opposites to operate fluidly in discourse. Wilde privileges the 'feminine' side of one binary (Reason/Faith), the 'masculine' side of another (God/Man), and unites another binary into one (Man/Woman becomes Humanity). This also pulls the plug on attempts to paint Wilde as either a feminist,[19] or a misogynist,[20] because neither formulation can cope with his advocation that men and women drop the claim to reason and find faith in God. Generalising from this inability to adequately understand Wilde suggests that the kind of a priori positions advocated by a feminist philosophy fail in analysing Wilde's formulations, because much of current feminist thinking is itself caught up in a Protestant conception of the world – with 'binary oppositions' themselves a peculiarly Protestant obsession – and refuses to examine or believe in a system that jettisons reason for theism.[21] It is not, ultimately, that men have to become more like women to be saved, but rather that they must look to the faith/superstitious aspect of life that women have cultivated like a plant, and grow that same aspect within themselves.

This letter gestures what has more recently and more controversially been called "The Myth of Male Power,"[22] though Wilde remains on a purely spiritual plain here.[23] While it is men who are given status and hold the highest office, the potent forces governing reality – the truth behind the facts, the link with God – is out of their hands primarily because of socialisation. It is significant that it was during this period, the height of the Victorian patriarchy, that a sizeable academic industry began to grow which pored over the evidence relating to the possibility that there once existed matriarchal societies worshipping goddess figures. The common view of male

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19. See Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: the Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 7; Flanagan, p. 7; Ruth Vanita, *Sappho and the Virgin Mary: Same-Sex Love and the English Literary Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 83–88.

20. See White; Norbert Kohl, *Oscar Wilde: The Works of a Conformist Rebel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 221.

21. Camille Paglia, *Sex, Art, and American Culture: Essays* (London: Viking, 1993), p. 246.

22. Warren Farrell, *The Myth of Male Power: Why Men are the Disposable Sex* (London: Fourth Estate, 1994).

23. In other words he is not suggesting that women have not been materially oppressed throughout history.

religious leaders in the nineteenth century was that women had a greater religious instinct than men, and a greater capacity for worship.[24] Such an obsession with female sites of religious power grew during the period in which a "crisis of faith" was besieging the established churches, a crisis extrapolated from the exhortation to rationalism and the erection of a temple of Reason based on geology and the Higher Criticism – male dominated categories of study pushing the belief in science to logical conclusions.[25] While male confidence in over-masculine versions of the spiritual world began to crumble a variety of alternative alliances began to form for women.

The interest in powerful female faith-links to divinity exposed the inadequacies of the prevailing models of male omnipotence and omnicompetence. The creation of a subculture of feminine knowledge tantalisingly held the possibility of a spiritual escape route for men watching the metaphysical edifice of their world crumbling under the weight of the empirical sciences. While male university faculties and churches went to academic and spiritual war with their souls at stake, women seemed to be congregating and organising a spiritual counterculture. Some sociologists have argued, controversially, that due to the historically direct role of women in childraising, they have and create a "moral community" that is unavailable to men except through their relationships with their wives and mothers who embody the virtues of this moral community. Moreover this community itself, made up as it is of mothers and wives, appears to men as a specifically female site that is available to them only through the actions of the women in their lives:

> . . . women, the primary carers, have much more direct experience of the moral community than do men, whose own position is mediated by a few key relationships to women. Men's experience of community is as sons and lovers, so to speak. It is their mothers and wives who consequently appear to embody the virtues . . . which community life entails. This is not all though. Not only are women closer to the heart of the caring community,

24. Brian Heeney, *The Women's Movement in the Church of England, 1850–1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

25. For the crisis of faith as a male obsession, see Ruth Y. Jenkins, *Reclaiming Myths of Power: Women Writers and the Victorian Spiritual Crisis* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1995), p. 18ff; for the Genesis and geology debate see C. C. Gillespie, *Genesis and Geology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959); for the Higher Criticism see M. A. Crowther, *Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1970), and John Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany* (London: S.P.C.K., 1984).

but the web of mutual obligations and services which make it up are pre-
dominantly between women . . . . So the community itself does have a dis-
tinctly female character.[26]

This view corresponds to that of Emile Durkheim who believed that religion was not
ultimately about hard theology, but rather a representation of social bonds and group
consciousness, a symbolic statement about membership of family and community.

Thus, while the male Protestant churches had elevated men and rationalism,
women began to predominate in three other religious areas. The first feminised reli-
gion was that of occultism with its great Occult Mother, Madame Blavatsky.[27] The
evidence for female influence over mysticism in this period is overwhelming, and in
novels written by men, the occurrence of the mystical female demonstrates how a
masculinity in crisis sought female deities to salvage them: Ayeshavn Bulwer Lyt-
ton's *A Strange Story* (1862); Rider Haggard's *She* (1887); Arabella Donne in
Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1896); the Duchess of Towers in George du Maurier's
Peter Ibbetson (1892); Theodora in Disraeli's *Lothair* (1870); Lewis Carroll's Queen
of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland*.[28] Wilde's letter states that the Infinite wears
"skirts," thus implicating him in this kind of thinking.

Instinctual values[29] were proclaimed specifically female virtues by feminists in this
period, the same instincts that Wilde is professing to admire in the letter at hand. The
distance between men and women's intellectual drives is to be regretted for him, but
regretted on the side of men. For women to move towards the use of Reason is a disas-
trous turn in history because it functions to misdirect the whole community, male and
female, deeper into male rational factionalism and a godless society. Wilde would have

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26. Geoff Dench, *The Frog, the Prince, and the Problem of Men* (London: Neanderthal
Books, 1994), p. 129.

27. See Diana Basham, *The Trial of Women: Feminism and the Occult Sciences in Victo-
rian Literature and Society* (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1992), and Alex Owen, *The Darkened
Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (London: Virago, 1989).

28. Basham, 178–9.

29. Or lateral thinking as it has come to be termed: see the notorious Peggy McIntosh, *In-
teractive Phases of Curricular Revision: A Feminist Perspective* (Wellesley, Massachusetts,
1983); see also Alice Echols, "The taming of the Id: Feminist Sexual Politics: 1968–1983," in
Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality, ed. C. S. Vance (Boston: Routledge and
Kegan Paul, 1984), and Mary F. Belenky, Blythe M. Clincy, Nancy R. Goldberger, and Jill M.
Tarrule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (New York:
Basic Books, 1986). See also Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter, eds., *Feminist Epistemologies*
(London: Routledge, 1993).

echoed the feminist Margaret Fuller when she argued that "The electrical, the magnetic element in women has not been fairly brought out at any period. Everything might be expected from it; she has more of it than man. This is commonly expressed by saying that her intuitions are more rapid and more correct. You will often see men of high intellect absolutely stupid in regard to the atmospheric changes, the fine invisible links which connect the forms of life around them, while common women . . . will seize and delineate these with unerring discrimination."[30] Wilde would have only one adjunct to this. It would be to warn that women do not possess these features by nature but by "cultivation," hence he urges William Ward to begin to shore up this exotic plant in his psyche. His reference to "the people" is in part a reference to the feminised masses of Irish society, 'feminised' in the sense that dogma and superstition dominate their intellectual modes of conception.

Wilde holds women up as the potential transformers of society, recognising the second area of power for women: as the angels-of-the-home.[31] For this concept was not only the misogynistic repression by a patriarchal society. It was also the desperate expression of a frightened, religiously crumbling society of its belief that women could change the world by making men better creatures through their spiritual influence, recreating the now desolated church in the home. As Houghton writes, "The Victorian home was not only a peaceful, it was a sacred, place. When the Christian tradition . . . was losing its hold on contemporary society, and the influence of the pastorate was declining, the living church more and more became the 'temple of the hearth.' "[32] The desperation inherent in this conception can be seen in Ruskin's argument defining the home: "This is the true nature of home – it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far

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30. Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Facsimile edition, University of South Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 90–91.

31. Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830–1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 341–8. The term, 'angel-in-the-house,' is of course Coventry Patmore's phrase, and was developed to its highest pitch by John Ruskin in his celebrated and attacked essay, *Sesame and Lilies* (1865). He saw the woman in the home as a quasi-spiritual being selflessly dispensing love and moral advice to her family, and draws an extreme division between the public and the private spheres.

32. Houghton, p. 346. For an attack on this theory, see Kate Millett, "The Debate over Women: Ruskin versus Mill," in *Victorian Studies* 14:1 (September, 1970) 63–82. See also Nancy Cott, "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790–1850," *Signs* 4 (1978) 219–236, who interestingly argues that angelic status did give women a dignity absent in other interpretations of womanhood.

as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband and wife to cross the threshold it ceases to be a home; it is then only a part of the outer world which you have roofed over and lighted fire in. But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those whom they can receive with love, – so far as it is this . . . so far it vindicates the name and fulfils the praise, of Home."[33] Ruskin's plain desire is to prevent the crisis of faith intruding into the only sanctuary left from the pernicious influence of doubt. Hence his insistence that women cannot (must not) study theology. While Mary Daly claims that the designation of women as 'angels-of-the-home,' along with the model of the Virgin Mary, left women in a quandary as they could not identify with such sacralised idealisations thus forcing them to be "essentially identified with Eve,"[34] men, with either Jesus and God the Father as their religious models, or a besieged church, looked with envy on their 'naturally' divine wives and mother, holy by virtue of their maternal connection to Mary.

Julia Kristeva claims that the emphasis on Mary within Catholicism had a debilitating effect on Catholic women: ". . . the blossoming of feminism in Protestant countries is due, among other things, to the greater initiative allowed women on the social and ritual plane. One might wonder if, in addition, such a flowering is not the result of a lack in the Protestant religious structure with respect to the Maternal. . ."[35] If we take this letter as one possible response, Wilde appears to be worried about the direction which such feminism appears to be taking. Although in late modernity women increased their participation in the outer technological world, a technological world largely shaped through the imagery of a masculinist and mechanistic Protestant theology, they have been strongly pressurised to do so in traditionally masculine ways. 'Feminine' faith has collapsed into 'masculine' reason, allowing the material world to usurp the role of the Creator, as humanity rejects its traditionally 'feminine' dependence on Him. Rejecting a theology of Mary may be one aspect of this thorough masculinising version of the physical and metaphysical world. And Mary is a key figure in the third domain of women's power in the Victorian period, and the one at the very heart of Wilde's letter, as evidenced by that cryptic reference to "the peo-

33. John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (Kent: George Allen, 1887), p. 136–37.

34. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (London: The Woman's Press, 1985 reprint), p. 81.

35. Julia Kristeva, "Stabat Mater," in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 167–8.

ple," the mass of the Irish: the Catholic Church.[36] The Catholic Church and its Anglo-Catholic ally were excoriated as "female movements" by the Established Church as they both contained a disproportionate number of active female participants.[37] Octavius Ellis argued in 1868 that "The Ritual movement is a lay movement; but it is more than that; it is a female movement . . . . The Ritualistic clergyman is led, or rather misled, by a few ladies who have time and taste for ornamental work, for embroidering coloured stoles, chasubles, &c., and they allow themselves no rest until they have persuaded him to wear these things. . ."[38]

This is also audaciously hinted at in Wilde's first words: "I confess." The degenerate confessional was a recurrent theme in anti-Catholic polemic, site of sexual abuse and seduction of the lascivious 'celibate' and his gullible female victim.[39] The confessional served to undermine the authority of fathers and husbands over their daughters and wives as it reinforced the idea that God's authority over each individual was primary. The fact that women went in alone was affronting.[40] Charles Chiniquy drew on these fears in his breathlessly entitled *The Priest, the Woman, and the Confessional*:

> The husband respectfully requested the friends to leave the room with him, and shut the door, that the holy confessor might be left alone with his penitent during her general confession.
>
> One of the most diabolical schemes, under the cover of auricular confession, had perfectly succeeded. The mother of harlots, the great enchantress of souls, whose seat is on "the seven hills," had, there, her priest to bring shame,

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36. For the importance of Mary in the delineation of Protestants and Catholics see Andrew Greeley, *The Mary Myth* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), and Stephen Benko, *Protestants, Catholics, and Mary* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1968).

37. John Shelton Reed, " 'A Female Movement': The Feminisation of Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Catholicism," *Anglican and Episcopal History* LVII: 2 (June 1988).

38. Octavius J. Ellis, *Some Time Among Ritualists* (London: Hatchards, 1868), p. 10–11. The link between women and Catholicism in England goes back to the Reformation. See Arthur F. Marotti, "Alienating Catholics in Early Modern England: Recusant Women, Jesuits and Ideological Fantasies," in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. Arthur F. Marotti (London: Macmillan, 1999), 1–34.

39. Robert James Klaus, *The Pope, the Protestants, and the Irish: Papal Aggression and Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Nineteenth Century England* (New York: Garland Publishing Incorporated, 1987), p. 288–94.

40. Nigel Yates, "Jesuits in Disguise? Ritualist Confessors and their Critics in the 1870s," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 39 (1988) 202–216.

disgrace, and damnation, under the mask of Christianity. The destroyer of souls, whose masterpiece is auricular confession, had, there, for the millionth time, a fresh opportunity for insulting the God of purity through one of the most criminal actions which the dark shades of night can conceal.

But let us draw the veil over the abominations of that hour of iniquity, and let us leave to hell its dark secrets.[41]

By placing himself in the seat of the penitent, Wilde vicariously identifies with the one coherent 'feminised' religion, which he sees as offering a holistic attitude for both sexes.[42] Wilde is a 'feminist' in Kristeva's terms as one who is marginalized by the patriarchal symbolic order, Victorian Protestantism. As she insists, "a feminist practice can only be negative, at odds with what already exists so that we can say 'that's not it' and 'that's still not it.' "[43] This allows her to claim that men can be constructed as subsidiary to the symbolic order. However, Wilde's position in 'feminised' Catholicism is marginal in England but dominant in his native Ireland. Catholic Wilde is positioned in both a minority and a majority culture, a feminised and yet a patriarchal religion, associating with a set of doctrines that render one a non-being in one culture, irrational, absent, beyond the pale of humanity, woman-like but also in some eyes woman-abusing, while at the same time is associated with the universal church, the membership of which is deconstructed and authoritarian.[44] Wilde is on the edges of a patriarchal order and in the centre of it.

What Protestantism emphasises is the personal conscience, typical of which is the male scientist searching for the truth alone, while Catholicism is based on the concept of communal and inter-community worship. Wilde recognises that the community is a key feature in the gendered problems he has raised. His mother, a Protestant, has dismissed communally-held dogmas back to the population, "the people" – she does not require a confessional as she can relate to God directly. Wilde however, feels the

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41. Charles Chinquy, *The Priest, the Woman, and the Confessional* (1874; Chino, California: 1979), p. 57.

42. Pusey's *Eirenicon* (1865) pointed out that "the vast system as to the Blessed Virgin" was "the special 'crux' of the Roman Church" blocking any chance of reunion with Anglicanism.

43. Julia Kristeva, "La femme ce n'est jamais ça," an Interview with *psyché et po. Tel Quel* 59 (1974), trans. Marilyn A. August as "Woman Can Never Be Defined," in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, eds. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), p. 137.

44. On the 'deconstructed' nature of the universal Church see Eamonn Hughes, "Joyce and Catholicism," in *Irish Writers and Religion*, ed. Robert Welch (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1992), 116–137.

need to confess, to enter a mediation with God which involves the community, an approach which requires a faith rather than a fact. For him, Speranza has too many male values at the expense of God, and has rejected dogma as irrational. It is faith's very irrationality that attracts her son, paradoxy rather than orthodoxy.

This issue of gender also enters into the second part of the letter where Wilde attempts to justify Christian doctrine to Ward. Although Ellmann presents Wilde's position on the Atonement as one of reservation, he has misunderstood the tone of the letter: "Wilde praises the beauty, as well as the necessity, of the Incarnation, acknowledging doubts about the Atonement. 'But I think since Christ the dead world has woke up from sleep'" (63). Ellmann represents this final sentence as a statement of doubt, rather than of belief, the exact reverse of the intention of the letter itself. What Wilde actually claims is that, although the Atonement is "hard to grasp" or understand, the proof of it is that "since Christ the dead world has woken up from sleep," a perfectly orthodox position to hold. For the debate between Catholicism and Protestantism however, these issues of Incarnation and Atonement lead to a crucial crux: the position of the Virgin Mary within the economy of salvation, a key issue that feminism itself has yet to come fully to grips with.

This article has suggested that the issue of religion and religious doctrine must be tackled by any scholar or critic interested in tracing Wilde's position in the debate on gender which characterised late nineteenth century England, and that engagement with such issues cannot afford to elide the complexities of the religious traditions involved. This will mean, I suspect, that the terms 'feminist' and 'misogynist' may have to be displaced, and a discourse better able to handle the genuine complexities of lived traditions and subjects possessing at least limited agency will have to emerge. Both Wilde and Catholicism are interesting places from which this new discourse can start to come together.

Taek-Gwang Lee

The Politics of Realism

Lukács and Reflection Theory

This essay claims that the rejection of Lukács's realism is quite problematic, in the sense that his opponents such as Adorno and Althusser symbolically used the name of Lukács and perpetuated the suspicion of Lukács's compromise with Stalinism. The essay argues that Lukács's model of reflection is not couched in Stalin's socialist realism, a theory that assumes the transparency between aesthetic forms and reality, but rather raises the essential problems of the condition of writers in capitalist society. Lukács's realism aims at providing a practical strategy to overcome cultural reification, focusing on the mediation between an author and his material condition. An investigation of Lukács's realism reveals that Lukács's way of understanding realism arises from his emphasis on objectivity rather than subjective reflection such as Kantian philosophy. The essay claims that this is the kernel of Lukácsean reflection theory signified by an aesthetic of realism definitively opposed to Stalin's socialist realism. From this perspective, the essay takes Althusserian Marxism as the occasion to stage a wide consideration of anti-realism. I propose to elucidate the implicit assumptions behind the decline of Lukács's realism, and the reification of cultural fields that gradually came to dominate Western literary apparatuses.

Introduction

Lukács's defence of realism as a literary mode was one of the most controversial features of his aesthetics in the sense that it precipitated the conflict with other Marxist theorists of his time.[1] Today, Lukács's defence of realism is often misunderstood as an obsolete edifice after the advent of Western Marxism and Althusserian Marxism. In spite of intermittent debates about contentious aspects of his politics, there are few theorists who have produced a proper evaluation of his aesthetics of realism. It is

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1. For more details of the debates between them, see Ernst Bloch and others, *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1980).

my claim that the theoretical rejection of Lukács's realism is quite problematic, in the sense that his opponents such as Adorno and Althusser symbolically used the name of Lukács and perpetuated the suspicion of Lukács's compromise with Stalinism.

I contend that Lukács's model of reflection is not couched in Stalin's socialist realism, a theory that assumes the transparency between aesthetic forms and reality, but rather raises the essential problems of the condition of revolutionary writers in capitalist society. In this sense, Lukács's realism aims at providing a practical strategy to overcome cultural reification, focusing on the mediation between an author and his material condition. An investigation of Lukács's realism reveals that Lukács's way of understanding realism arises from his emphasis on objectivity rather than subjective reflection, as in Kantian philosophy.[2]

From this perspective, Lukács regards artistic form as "self-containment" in which the totality of the form is more intensively structured than material reality. That is to say, the Lukácsean concept of reflection is not the Kantian correspondence between consciousness and reality, but rather reflection in proper proportion as in a geographical map. This is the kernel of Lukácsean reflection theory, signified by an aesthetic of realism definitively opposed to Stalin's socialist realism. In this respect, Lukács's formulation of realism is a method of mapping out the capitalist social reality beyond fragmentation and reification.

Questions for Lukács's Reflection Theory

Despite the prejudice that his argument is a mere reflection theory, what Lukács's realism proposes is quite equivocal. At first sight, Lukács's realism seems to suggest a better method to copy reality, yet, paradoxically, his realism implies another meaning at the level of the practical message. As Galin Tihanov argues, Lukács's understanding of realism lies in the way in which he conceptualises method as the expression of *Weltanschauung*.[3] There is no doubt that Lukács's formulation of method is partly influenced by the neo-Kantian conceptualisation of the relationship

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2. For Lukács's own criticism of Kantian reflection, see Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), p. 200.

3. Galin Tihanov, *The Master and the Slave: Lukács, Bakhtin, and the Ideas of Their Time* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 108.

between an individual artwork and *Weltanschauung*. [4] Lukács confesses that Georg Simmel, a philosopher of *Lebensphilosophie*, gave him the idea of the social character of art. Yet Lukács also maintains that Simmel's influence was nothing less than "a basis for the discussion of literature that went well beyond Simmel's own."[5] For this reason, it seems to me that it is not the transcendental category of *Weltanschauung* in neo-Kantian aesthetic that is crucial to Lukács's formulation of realism, but rather the subject-object dialectic, responding to both Hegelianism and neo-Kantianism. According to Tihanov, for the early Lukács, who attempted to reformulate the neo-Kantian idea of aesthetics, "embracing Hegel for the purpose of establishing a systematic aesthetics involves a compromise between historical and *a priori* category."[6]

In other words, Lukács endorses the Hegelian category of mediation to substantiate the neo-Kantian conception, adapting the teleological view of totality. In this way, Lukács's idea of realism is inseparable from his early philosophical presupposition of form, which was developed in *Heidelberg Aesthetics* (1916–1918).[7] Lukács's doctrine of realism contains the tension between "the Hegelian postulate of the unity of content and form and the neo-Kantian prejudice that only form can upgrade content to essentiality."[8] This is the very principle whereby Lukács regards realism as "a perennial trend in literature . . . and a specific, historically determined mode of literary production."[9] For Lukács, *Weltanschauung* is not *a priori* about artistic creation,

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4. As a result of the decline of early neo-Kantianism in 1910, Cassirer and Lask reformulated neo-Kantian ideas in bringing about a convergence with *Lebensphilosophie* and phenomenology. For a more detailed discussion about this, see Craig Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle: Philosophy, Culture and Politics* (London: Pluto, 2002), pp. 16–21.

5. Georg Lukács, *Record of a Life: An Autobiographical Sketch*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 37. However, it is undeniable that the influence of neo-Kantianism is still evident throughout Lukács's whole works. Most importantly, Lukács retains the neo-Kantian idea of timeless form and modifies it, so that the form of a great realistic artwork is the eternal achievement of human progress.

6. Tihanov, p. 42.

7. According to Tihanov, in *Heidelberg Aesthetics*, "Lukács presents a more elaborate, if not completely enthusiastic, case for a Hegelian understanding of culture as a possible alternative to Kantianism" (Tihanov, p. 29).

8. Tihanov, p. 42.

9. Tihanov, p. 108. In this way, Lukács's realism has to be subsumed into his later study of Marxist ontology. Explaining the task of Marxist ontology, Lukács argues that "its object was the reality existing. And its task is to investigate the existing and trace it back to its being, and thus to discover the various gradations and connections contained within it." See Georg

but rather the mode of narrative produced by the mediation between an author and his circumstance.[10] This is the reason why, as Tihanov acknowledges, "Lukács's category of method seems more plausible and seamlessly attachable to his discussions of particular schools and movements."[11] That is to say, Lukács's conception of method, pertaining to the category of *Weltanschauung* can be properly applied for the periodisation of aesthetic ideologies.[12]

From this perspective, Lukács attempts to draw a distinction between the description of naturalism and the narration of realism. It should be noted that Lukács considers naturalism as "modern realism," the mode of realism without mediation between subject and object. Lukács's scathing criticism of the descriptive method in modern realism explicitly challenges the view that such a technique adequately mirrors the inhumanity of capitalism. Lukács does not admit the position that defends a descriptive method as more realistic, but rather reproaches the writers who employ description to dilute the essential capitalist reality. Along with this criticism, Lukács deplores "modern realism" for making the novel lose "its capacity to depict the dynamics of life, and thus its representation of capitalist reality is inadequate, diluted and constrained."[13] For Lukács, "modern realism" designates naturalism and, in Jameson's terms, the coded language of socialist realism. In addition, Lukács himself explicitly defined Stalin's socialist realism as socialist naturalism. [14] Lukács also criticised the way in which Stalin's socialist realism simply combines political dogmatism with *factum brutum* without mediation; it represents a configuration of objectivity that is nothing less than inverse subjectivity: Stalinist dogmatism as naturalism.

Lukács, *Conversations with Lukács*, trans. David Fernbach (London: The Merlin Press, 1974), p. 17.

10. This idea is even found in Lukács's non-Marxist criticism of Kantian aesthetics, when Simmel and Weber fully influenced him. At that time, Lukács already criticised the Kantian presupposition of transcendental aesthetic judgement. Lukács says that "my view was that aesthetic judgements did not possess such priority, but that priority belonged with being." See Lukács*, Record of a Life*, pp. 37–38. In a sense, this is a fundamental idea constituting Lukács's formulation of aesthetics necessarily followed by realism. Lukács still retains such an idea within his formulation of realism, arguing that "reality . . . has an intrinsic order of priority." See Lukács, *Conversations with Lukács*, p. 17.

11. Tihanov, p. 107.

12. This is the very point at which Brecht attacks Lukácsean realism.

13. Georg Lukács, "Narrate or Describe?" in *Writer and Critic*, trans. Arthur Kahn (London: Merlin Press, 1978), p. 147.

14. See "Die Gegenwartsbedeutung des kritischen Realismus," in *Essays über Realismus* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1971), p. 590.

As Fredric Jameson observes, "the concept of mediation has traditionally been the way in which dialectical philosophy and Marxism itself have formulated their vocation to break out of the specialized compartments of the (bourgeois) disciplines and to make connections among the seemingly disparate phenomena of social life generally."[15] The category of mediation is the way in which we actually grasp the heterogeneous relationships between the individual phenomena, which appear to be part of abstract homogeneity. Accordingly, mediation does not so much presuppose the conceptual antagonistic dichotomy, identity versus identity, but rather the pre-reified concrete relationship of particularity as such. In short, identity is not fully constituted in mediation. Hegel argues that mediation is "a conscious Being [the mediator], for it is an action which mediates consciousness as such; the content of this action is the extinction of its particular individuality which consciousness is undertaking."[16]

A significant philosophical factor in the Hegelian formulation lies in the conceptualisation of the mediator as an "action" resisting "consciousness" in which all difference is sublimated. Needless to say, Hegel believes in the final triumph of consciousness over the action. Even though Marx arguably draws on enlightenment strategies such as "de-mystification," more significantly, he seems to indirectly highlight the concept of mediation as an action in his discussion of Hegel. Obviously focusing on this principle in his explanation of Lukács's theoretical originality, Jameson argues that "the privileged relationship to reality, the privileged mode of knowledge of the world will no longer be a static, contemplative one, will no longer be one of pure reason or abstract thought, but will be the union of thought and action that the Marxists call praxis, will be one of activity conscious of itself."[17]

Putting an emphasis on mediation, Lukács distinguished his realism from "mirroring realism." Lukács plainly argues that writers should take the opportunity to reach a higher aesthetic level by means of realism rather than symbolism. In Lukács's view, therefore, symbolism is a mirror in which writers' subjectivity, not external objectivity, reflects itself. Lukács designates this non-aesthetic aspect as "mannerism," in the sense that this reflection comes to produce repetitively a mirror image as it works. It is in this way that the problem of Lukács's realism does not arise

15. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 40.

16. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 136.

17. Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 188.

out of his reflection theory, but rather its pedagogical purpose out of providing a user's guide to revolutionary literature.

In spite of the practical aspect of Lukács's realism, the theory of reflection is still the most suspicious element in Lukács's defence of realism. In particular, Adorno insists that Lukács simply considers the formal and stylistic aspects of an artwork to be reactionary decadence.[18] Adorno's argument is that form is "self-antagonistic and refracted, through which each and every successful work separates itself from the merely existing."[19] In short, Adorno's defence of form presupposes the autonomy of the artwork distinguished from reality – the artwork obtains its autonomous totality by rejecting realism. Adorno's anti-realist aesthetics has influenced both the defenders of Lukács as well as his opponents.

Despite their sympathetic reception of Lukács, for instance, Jameson and Michael Löwy are not interested in his formulation of reflection theory. Their focuses are on the early Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness* where he explicitly formulates his theory against the Kantian concept of reflection. What offers a philosophical ground for the Lukácsean formulation of realism is that form is a specific spatiality in which the temporality of reality has been fixed. For Lukács, therefore, form is a spatialisation of time in which the logic of content is structured by mediation between author and reality. In Lukács's terms, that is to say, "content" does not so much designate a monadic unity of reality as heterogeneous reality itself – one form does not have one content but many contents. This Lukácsean concept of content is incisively drawn from the way in which Lukács understands reality as the total sum of events.

The issue that Lukács seriously raises in this formulation of realism arises from his disenchantment with Kantian transcendental aesthetics, in which Kant presupposes space and time as *a priori* epistemological conditions. For Kant, space and time do not belong to experience but rather to the *a priori* condition of experience, in the sense that every experience is constituted within a specific combination of spatiality and temporality. In this respect, Kant regards time and space as "two sources of knowledge, from which bodies of *a priori* synthetic knowledge can be

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18. See Theodor W. Adorno, "Reconciliation under Duress," in *Aesthetics and Politics,* trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1980), p. 153. For more details on Adorno's defence of form against Lukács's stress on content, see Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 142.

19. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* p. 142.

derived."[20] In other words, time and space as the pure form of all intuition make *a priori* synthetic knowledge possible. However, Lukács refutes this Kantian proposition of time and space as *a priori* conditions of knowledge. Lukács presumes that time is not a homogenous medium, in the sense that the world is not constituted by a conglomerate of individual things but by a complex of events.[21] Largely endorsing the Hegelian dialectic, Lukács understands reality as combinations of essence and appearance – crucially for Lukács these categories of essence and appearance are not merely by-products of consciousness but the effects of the outer world. No doubt, this is where Lukács reverses the Kantian idea of representation.

Explicitly distinguishing reality from fact, Lukács defines reality as the changeability everlasting of essence and appearance. From this perspective, the Lukácsean category of totality comes to exist in its own right – "the category of totality . . . determines not only the object of knowledge but also the subject."[22] In other words, the subject of totality means the classes in capitalist society. Therefore, Lukács definitely designates the collective subjectivity of classes when he mentions the dialectical relationship between subject and object.

More controversially, what Lukács apparently rejected in *History and Class Consciousness* was the very Kantian concept of reflection; Lukács's realism seems to betray his early theoretical principle of non-reflection theory. Lukács criticised the Kantian concept of reflection because in this formulation "we find the theoretical embodiment of the duality of thought and existence, consciousness and reality."[23] According to Lukács, Kant strove to solve this duality by logic; yet, "his theory of the synthetic function of consciousness in the creation of the domain of theory could not arrive at any philosophical solution to the question," in the sense that Kant searched for the answer only in the realm of metaphysics. That is to say, there is the fundamental duality inherent in the Kantian formulation that presumes the dichotomy of phenomenon and the thing-in-itself. Lukács was well acquainted with this philosophical dilemma as follows:

> It must be clearly understood that every contemplative stance and thus every kind of "pure thought" that must undertake the task of knowing an

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20. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), p. 80.

21. See Martin Jay, *Downcast eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 196.

22. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 28.

23. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 200.

object outside itself raises the problem of subjectivity and objectivity. The object of thought (as something outside) becomes something alien to the subject. This raises the problem of whether thought corresponds to the object!

Even with a cursory reading, it is clear that Lukács decisively presents the meaning of reflection in this quotation as correspondence, not using the term as in his later conceptualisation of reflection. As Béla Királyfalvi argues, "in Lukács's system the term 'reflection' is a constant reminder of the objectivity of art, but it definitely does not have a passive, mechanical meaning, with implications of copying, photography, or any kind of naturalistic technique."[24] Seemingly, Lukács preserves his criticism of the Kantian concept of reflection even when he attacks naturalism as "mirror realism," adapting Lenin's reflection theory. Therefore, it must be stressed that Lukács depends on a different terminology in his defence of realism from his early theoretical articulation. Lukács regards Kant's philosophical impasse as an inevitable consequence of the "theory" itself – while he defends the positive feature of Kant's epistemology. In other words, Lukács does want to retain the optimistic factor of Kant's philosophical question as to the relationship of subject and object, while minimising a metaphysical aspect innate in Kant's theory. The solution that Lukács alternatively prepares for Kant's theoretical dead-end is to introduce the concept of totality. Even though many theoretical opponents harshly attack Lukács's concept of totality, few properly present an alternative to the concept, much less an acceptable criticism of it.[25]

Realism against Stalinism

Despite the constructive aspect of Lukács's aesthetics, it is interesting that most of his defenders even go so far as to regard Lukács's realism as another version of a vulgar reflection theory. The conspiracy of silence around Lukács's reflection theory, I suggest, arises from Lukács's political career and his compromise with "official Marxism." No doubt, this individual history leads to the prejudice that Lukács's defence of realism is nothing less than a by-product of his politics. Even for Jameson, who has consistently endorsed Lukács, it is the uncomfortable truth that Lukács used

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24. Béla Királyfalvi, *The Aesthetics of György Lukács* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 56.

25. Adapting Benjamin's terminology, for instance, Adorno attempts to substitute the concept of totality for that of constellations.

a naïve reflection theory to privilege the position of realism over other representational modes. In a rather coy reference to reflection theory, Jameson situates this disturbing aspect of Lukács's realism within the historical condition in which Lukács's theory was constructed. After describing the dichotomy of base and superstructure which is commonly attacked as a vulgar Marxist theory by non-Marxists, Jameson defends this classical Marxist schema in the sense that it can be extended into allegorical interpretation.[26] In his following discussion, Jameson states that "Lukács's essay on realism may serve as a central example of the way in which the cultural text is taken as an essentially allegorical model of society as a whole."[27]

For Jameson, allegory is a rhetorical strategy produced under conditions where one cannot represent something, but, at the same time, one cannot not represent something.[28] To put it another way, the represented narrative is essentially allegorical in the sense that form is always less perfect than material reality itself. Jameson's understanding of Lukács comes through an allegorical approach to realism. Jameson suggests the way in which "typification," Lukács's key concept in his conceptualisation of realism, can be grasped as an allegorical method that allows us to read the mode of production in terms of an ultimately determining reality. In short, Jameson depends on allegorical interpretation in order to recuperate Lukács's realism. He then reaches a resolution of criticisms of Lukács's reflection theory by historicising Lukács's work. A direct consequence of this historicisation is the theoretical eclipse of the most political dimension of Lukács's realism.

The hidden impetus behind Lukács's formulation of realism was his own intellectual demand to overcome the subjectivist tendency in *History and Class Consciousness*. The following quotation from "Preface to the New Edition" elucidates this transition undertaken by Lukács:

> My intention, then, was to chart the correct and authentic class consciousness of the proletariat, distinguishing it from "public opinion surveys" (a term not yet in currency) and to confer upon it an indisputably practical objectivity. I was unable, however, to progress beyond the notion of an "imputed" [zugerechnet] class consciousness . . . . Hence, what I had intended subjectively, and what Lenin had arrived at as the result of an authentic

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26. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, pp. 32–33.

27. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, p. 33.

28. For Jameson's own explanation of allegory, see Fredric Jameson, "Marxism and the Historicity of Theory: An Interview with Fredric Jameson," *New Literary History* 29 (1998) 353–83, p. 376.

> Marxist analysis of a practical movement, was transformed in my account into a purely intellectual result and thus into something contemplative. In my presentation it would indeed be a miracle if this "imputed" consciousness could turn into revolutionary praxis.[29]

If we consider that Lukács wrote this "Preface" in 1967, we realise that this statement aims to valorise Lenin's achievement. Lukács drew on Lenin as a symbolic authority in order to attack Stalinism's legitimacy. When interpreting Lukács's words, we become aware that his emphasis was not on Lenin as such but rather on a "practical" objectivity analysed by Lenin. In this sense, what Lukács initially intended in his transformation from "pure class consciousness" to a reflection theory was rooted in his political and philosophical resolution that appears to be in opposition to his early theoretical trajectory. It is not difficult to see that Lukács's way of accepting Lenin's reflection theory is entirely different from the official Marxist model. Michael Löwy argues that Lukács's book on Lenin is "in complete conformity with Leninist orthodoxy but, curiously enough, immediately enters into conflict with the official interpretation of Leninism in the Soviet Union, which is that of Stalin."[30] In this respect, the original idea of Lukácsean realism has no relation to Stalinist dialectical materialism. Unlike Stalin's socialist realism, Lukács's model does not presuppose the transparency of reflection between consciousness and the natural law – "thinking" is not merely a by-product of the mechanical causality outside of human consciousness. According to Stalinist dialectical materialism, "thinking" is nothing less than a cognitive function whereby human consciousness simply obtains knowledge of the natural law.[31] Describing the transitional moment in Lukács, Alex Callinicos states:

> It must be stressed, however, that *History and Class Consciousness* is a transitional work. The last two essays, "Critical Observations on Rosa Luxemburg's Critique of the Russian Revolution," and "Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organization," form a unity with Lukács's little book,

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29. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. xviii –xix.

30. Eva L. Corredor, *Lukács after Communism: Interviews with Contemporary Intellectuals* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 18. Around this moment, Lukács's views of Stalinism and the USSR became more radical. For a detailed discussion, see Michael Löwy, "Lukács and Stalinism," in *New Left Review*, 91 (1975) 25–45.

31. See Oskar Negt, "Marxismus als Legitimationswissenschaft: Zur Genese der stalinstischen Philosophie," in *Nikolai Bucharin/Abram Deborin: Kontroversen über dialektischen und mechanistischen Materialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974).

Lenin (1924). Together these texts represent a marked shift away from the messianism of his early Marxism, and an acceptance of Lenin's "revolutionary Realpolitik."[32]

It seems to me that this gives us a clue as to the reason why Lukács vehemently formulated a reflection theory, which seemed to be sharply contrasted to subjectivism. My contention is that after *History and Class Consciousness*, when he began strategically following Lenin, Lukács's aesthetic of realism was fundamentally opposed to the pseudo-socialist realism presented by Stalin. In this respect, Lukács's realism can be seen as a form of anti-Stalinist code disguising its political meaning under the veil of aesthetics. From the mid-1930s onwards, Lukács launched critical sallies against the naturalism of writers such as Zola and Flaubert. Interestingly, Jameson indicates that "in Lukács's work, 'naturalism' is a code word for 'socialist realism.' "[33] For Jameson, Lukács's criticism of Zola is a strategy to disguise his attack on "what is publicly impossible to attack as such."[34] In this way, Jameson says that "Zola was not only a writer with certain political positions who might demand to be judged on their basis, or evaluated on their basis, but he was also the inventor of a mode of writing, naturalism, which was current in Lukács's day and which Lukács indeed identified with socialist realism." In *Gelebtes Denken*, Lukács himself briefly mentions his Leninist differentiation as "opposed to Stalin's mechanical uniformity."[35] This fragment clearly reveals the complicated political and aesthetic meaning of Lukácsean realism.

Meanwhile, there is a broad consensus amongst Western intellectuals that Lukács's realism is nothing less than an aesthetic collaboration with Stalinism. For example, David Pike attempts to stress the Stalinist aspect of Lukács's realism, arguing that in the period of Soviet exile, 1933–1939, Lukács wittingly supported Stalin's doctrine with his aesthetic writings. Pike claims that "Stalin's remarks at the seventeenth congress were significant for Lukács because he claimed the struggle for objectivity in art, which for him was pre-eminently a question of form, to be part of the battle 'against capitalist residues in the consciousness of the people.' "[36] From this

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32. Alex Callinicos, *Marxism and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 78.
33. Jameson*, The Political Unconscious*, p. 37.
34. Corredor, p. 78.
35. Lukács, *Record of a Life*, p. 165.
36. David Pike, *Lukács and Brecht* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 144.

standpoint, Pike regards "Art and Objective Truth" as evidence that Lukács coupled his aesthetic idea to Stalinism.

However, the way in which Pike criticises Lukács's realism is quite problematic. His assertion that Lukács's realism is a by-product of Stalinism does not seriously consider the question as to how a political doctrine imposes on literary criticism. The problem lies in the way in which Pike reductively conflates Lukács's political agenda with his aesthetic idea. Lukács's formulation of realism is more complicated than what Pike describes. As Tom Rockmore acknowledges, "Lukács's early interest in German neo-Kantianism influenced his entire later development, specifically including his aesthetic views."[37] Tihanov also claims that Lukács's doctrine of realism "was shaped in the process of responding not only to Hegel's concept of totality but also to the attempts of *Lebensphilosophie* to reconcile form and life."[38] In this sense, a judgement that the principle of Lukácsean realism is nothing less than an aesthetic variant of Stalinism cannot be easily delivered.

More problematically, Pike overlooks the fact that Lukács completed the book on Lenin, which shows the essential idea of his realism, in 1924. In this book, Lukács argues that Lenin's assessment of reality is "far more *a purely theoretical superiority in accessing the total process*."[39] No doubt Lukács's understanding of Lenin's theory anticipates his later principle of realism: the realistic form of an artwork is superior to other aesthetic forms in its ability to access the total process of reality. Even though one can see a similarity between Lukácsean realism and Stalinism, it is difficult to consider it as an essential and fundamental reconciliation.

Rather than Pike's criticism, Rockmore's analysis of the affinity between Lukács's realism and so-called "official Marxism" might be better taken for granted. Rockmore points out an interesting aspect of Lukács's formulation of realism: "the reflection theory of knowledge has no demonstrable source in Marx, the source of Lukács's earlier critique of this view. Hence, in returning to the reflection theory which he had earlier criticised, Lukács now agrees with Marxism, even if necessary against Marx."[40] This logical syllogism discloses that Lukács's realism is no more than symptomatic evidence of his alteration of Marx; Lukács's formulation of Marxism is created by his theoretical reinvention emphasising the Hegelian aspect of

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37. Tom Rockmore, "Lukács, Marxist Aesthetics, and Truth," in *Jahrbuch der internationalen Georg-Lukács-Gesellschaft, 2001* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2001).

38. Tihanov, p. 103.

39. Georg Lukács, *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of his Thought*, trans. Nicholas Jacobs (London: NLB, 1970), p.42.

40. Rockmore, "Lukács, Marxist Aesthetics, and Truth," pp. 147–8.

Marx. As Tihanov indicates, "while an uncontested political affiliation was driving him towards a full embrace of Marx, a lasting sense of measure, historical continuity, and the unrestricted sway of reason was propelling him towards an appreciation of Hegel as the philosopher *par excellence*, whose thought, regardless of all delusions and limitations, posits the true scale and depth of Marxism."[41]

However, there is another issue raised by Lukács's modification of Hegel. Analysing Hegel's conceptualisation of the dialectic of labour in *The Young Hegel*, Lukács argues that

> Man becomes human only through work, only through the activity in which the independent laws governing objects become manifest, forcing men to acknowledge them i.e. to extend the organs of their own knowledge, if they would ward off destruction.[42]

According to Tihanov, this book, *The Young Hegel*, is Lukács's doctoral dissertation submitted to the Institute of Philosophy of the Soviet Academy of Sciences during Lukács's second stay (1933–45) in Moscow.[43] What is at stake here is that Lukács's analysis of Hegel can be easily compatible with the Stalinist doctrine of dialectical materialism. For Stalinism, the process of labour is an objectified system legitimated by natural law. This seems to be easily followed by the notorious confusion between economic mechanism and natural law. Lukács's discussion of Hegel seems to be insensitive to such a dangerous possibility. Not surprisingly, this is where Löwy raises issue with Lukács's political harmonisation with Stalin to solve the dilemma of "either 'reconciling with reality' by accepting the Stalinist Soviet Union or breaking with the communist movement."[44]

The Politics of Lukácsean Realism

For Lukács, there would be no choice except actually existing socialism, in the sense that his philosophical premise was grounded on a fundamental antagonism towards capitalism. This principle of his way of understanding the world system has frequently been considered the result of Lukács's dogmatic "evolutionism." When he

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41. Tihanov, p. 248.
42. Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1975), p. 327.
43. Tihanov, p. 246.
44. Corredor, p. 19.

drew on Lenin's reflection theory, Lukács presupposed that the evolution of the art-work necessarily reflects the material conditions of society. Lukács's theory of reflection according to the traditional dualism of base and superstructure remained established until the early 1930s. Criticising the Lukácsean exploration of a modernist work of art, for example, Perry Anderson says that "the basic error of Lukács's optic here was its evolutionism."[45] According to Anderson, evolutionism means that "time . . . differs from one epoch to another, but within each epoch all sectors of social reality move in synchrony with each other, such that decline at one level must be reflected in descent at every other." In the same way, Anderson uses evolutionism in his rumination on Lukács's criticism of modernism. It goes without saying that Lukács's understanding of "healthy art and sick art" can be criticised as the result of his evolutionism. This is the main point of Anderson's argument in that Lukács's attack on modernism is anachronistic. Anderson convincingly points out the problem of Lukácsean reflection theory, yet, at the same time, he fails to observe that Lukács's sense of evolution metaphorically alludes to the utopian unity of subject and object in artistic reflections. To quote Lukács:

> When we consider mankind's evolution through the ages, art is seen to be one of the most important vehicles for the production and reproduction and for the development and continuity of man's consciousness and sense of identity. Because great and healthy art fixes those moments of our development – otherwise transitory – that point ahead and enhance man's self-consciousness and are thus lasting and because perfected forms allow the re-experiencing of these moments, great and healthy works of art remain an ever-renewing treasure for mankind.[46]

What Lukács argues here implies that perfected forms are indicative of the utopian reconciliation between subject and object in narrative. That is to say, form must be grasped as the incarnation of an author's utopian impulses towards totality. Contrary to Anderson's argument, Callinicos maintains that the most important influence on Lukács, including other Hegelian Marxists such as Antonio Gramsci and Karl Korsch, was "the anti-naturalist revolt at the turn of the nineteenth century."[47] In short, a significant philosophical factor in Lukács was not evolutionist materialism

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45. Perry Anderson, "Marshall Berman: Modernity and Revolution," in *A Zone of Engagement* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 33.

46. Georg Lukács, "Healthy or Sick Art?," in *Writer and Critic*, trans. Arthur Kahn (London: Merlin Press, 1978), p. 109.

47. Callinicos, p. 71.

in the sense of naturalism, but anti-empiricist materialism in the sense of Marxism. What Lukács essentially aimed to do throughout his works was nothing less than "the reinterpretation of historical materialism."[48] In a sense, the suspicious aspects of evolutionism are inevitably internalised in Lukács's formulation, insofar as he endorses the orthodox dualism of base and superstructure. However, Lukács's case was not similar to Christopher Caudwell's vulgar dualism, precisely because from the outset Lukács's involvement with Marxism was based on an anti-empiricist materialism.

Lukács does not endorse the "empiricist ideology" but "experience" as such.[49] Certainly, the way in which Lukács privileges experience is drawn from Hegel's distinction between empiricism and experience. Regarding experience as "raw sensory material" distinguished from abstract philosophical thinking, Hegel believes that he can refute empiricism. In fact, Hegel's differentiating of experience and the abstract is derived from Kant and Hume, who emphasise the indeterminacy of the relationship between experience and thought.[50] This discrimination is implicit in the way in which Lukács defends realism in the sense that an author's own experience is more important than his abstract idea. It is in this sense that Lukács considers realism as more aesthetic than naturalism and modernism. That is to say, what Lukács pursues through his arguments about realism is this sensuous material that is independent of abstract thinking in the Hegelian sense.

Lukács inevitably drew on the orthodox concept of base and superstructure, as he did not yet have the appropriate narrative to manifest his idea of realism at that moment. In addition, the theoretical transition of Lukács's realism was definitely witnessed after the mid-1930s. In the face of Stalinism, Lukács launched a disguised criticism of official Marxism through the epistemological category of realism.[51] It is in this sense that Lukács's realism must be considered as the aesthetic surface of a

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48. Callinicos, p. 72.

49. See Lukács, *Conversations with Lukács*, pp. 13–14. Lukács claims: "someone is crossing the road. He might be the most obstinate neo-positivist in his epistemology, denying all reality, but he will nevertheless be convinced at the pedestrian crossing that, if he does not remain where he is, he will really be run over by a real car, rather than some kind of mathematical formulation of his existence being run over by the mathematical function of the car, or his idea by the idea of the car."

50. See Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 96.

51. See Georg Lukács, "Art and Objective Truth," in *Writer and Critic*, trans. Arthur Kahn (London: Merlin Press, 1978).

political contention aimed at correcting the Stalinist voluntarism. This is why Lukács precisely stressed objectivity in opposition to subjectivism.[52]

In general, Lukács stresses the philosophical doctrine of realism: first, materiality outside our knowledge determines language. Second, the process of thought reflects the world as reality. Third, appearance hides a more fundamental reality which exists independently of thought. This is the essential philosophical guideline that Lukács observes in his argument for realism. Therefore, Lukács emphasises narration rather than description in the sense that real entities are concealed by their visual appearance. In other words, Lukács's realism is an attempt to make a hidden reality visible. For Lukács, visualisation serves to suppress reality by means of an illusionary inversion in which subjectivity takes the place of objectivity.

In Lukács's sense, realism does not mean an imaginary correspondence, as in naturalism and symbolism, but a "self-containment" that intensively reflects everyday life in "proper proportion." Self-containment is the way in which the form of an artwork reflects social reality, as in the case of synecdoche. Lukács states that "the totality of the work of art is rather intensive." [53] In other words, the form of the artwork is "the circumscribed and self-contained ordering of those factors which objectively are of decisive significance for the portion of life depicted, which determine its existence and motion, its specific quality and its place in the total life process." Lukács's definition of form as self-containment incisively reserves the possibility of the changeability of form in each historical moment – in Lukács's terms, "history is the history of the unceasing overthrow of the objective forms that shape the life of man."[54] From this perspective, a specific artistic form is manifested by each particular historical epoch. Therefore, what Lukács called perfected forms designates a self-contained form in which the intensive totality of an artwork cognitively maps the social reality in proper proportion.

As we have seen, Lukács's realism was a detour to get the insight of an alternative socialist system in terms of aesthetic epistemology. For Lukács, aesthetics was always the reverse side of politics, so that his criticism of naturalism and modernism largely aimed to suggest the practical aesthetic criterion for socialist movements. In a

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52. For more detailed discussion, see Lászlo Illés, "Georg Lukács's Bemühungen um Realismustheorie," in *Literaturtheorie und Literaturkritiken der frühsowjetischen Diskussion* (Berlin: Weimar, 1999), p. 567. What Illés enumerates in this essay is that Lukács's realism must be understood in the historical context of Russian socialism. According to this argument, Lukács's realism can be regarded as a coded attack on Stalinist subjectivism.

53. Lukács, "Art and Objective Truth," p. 38.

54. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness,* p. 186.

sense, Lukács's realism can be said to be a "symbolic act" to solve contradictions in actually existing socialism. That is to say, Lukács's realism contains more politically significant implications than his opponents expect. Regarding his unflinching fidelity to the teleological aim of socialism, it can be argued that Lukács's theoretical pursuit towards realism in the 1930s came through the failure of his political career.

In 1928, Lukács drew up the "Blum Theses" for the Second Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party. As Michael Löwy points out, all that lies behind these draft Theses was "an application to Hungary of the right turn of the Comintern,"[55] and, at the same time, "both a continuation of the line of the years 1924–7 and an augury of the Popular Front strategy of 1934–8."[56] According to Löwy, Lukács's suggestions were too late and too early in the sense that "these Theses were to be the last echo of the right turn, coming as they did at the very beginning of the International's new 'left' turn."[57] This misfortune led Lukács to confront hostile criticisms and consequently to write his "hypocritical" self-criticism. Lukács acknowledged this in the "New Preface" as follows:

> When I heard from a reliable source that Béla Kun was planning to expel me from the Party as a "Liquidator," I gave up the struggle, as I was well aware of Kun's prestige in the International, and I published a "self-criticism." I was indeed firmly convinced that I was in the right but I knew also – e.g. from the fate that had befallen Karl Korsch – that to be expelled from the Party meant that it would no longer be possible to participate actively in the struggle against Fascism. I wrote my self-criticism as an "entry ticket" to such activity as I neither could nor wished to continue to work in the Hungarian movement in the circumstances.[58]

Regardless of some polemical problems arising from these remarks, Lukács's unconditional capitulation to his inner opponents was the consequence of his own circumstances. As Löwy explains, Lukács saw the situation as an "isolated phenomenon" and "temporary aberration."[59] As a result, we could consider Lukács's Theses to be an incorrect anticipation, in the sense that the new turn, which would provide an opportunity for the Theses, would only come when "it was too late, after Hitler's vic-

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55. Löwy, p. 29.
56. Löwy, p. 30.
57. Löwy, p. 29.
58. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. xxx.
59. Löwy, p. 31.

tory and the establishment of fascism in the heart of Europe."[60] This analysis would be incomplete without mentioning another important element manifested in the "Blum Theses." We need to realise that these Theses provide notable evidence for understanding Lukács's theoretical turn from early pure class-consciousness theory into reflection theory. Löwy's analysis is validated by linking Lukács's political non-fulfilment to his reflection theory. As Löwy points out, "the ebbing of the revolutionary tide, and the internal changes in the USSR after 1924" forced Lukács to feel disillusionment:[61]

> Disoriented by the disappearance of the revolutionary upsurge, Lukács clung on to the only two pieces of "solid" evidence which seemed to him to remain: the USSR and traditional culture. Seeing that the new, transcendent synthesis had failed, he would at least attempt a mediation, a compromise and an alliance between these two different worlds.

For Lukács, this "reconciliation" of bourgeois-democratic culture and the socialist movement may appear to be more realistic than the utopian Messianism that his early hopes presupposed. Lukács confessed that Lenin's intellectual personality, a "philosopher of praxis, a man who passionately transforms theory into practice, a man whose sharp attention is always focused on the nodal points where theory becomes practice, practice becomes theory," forced him to revise the Messianic features of *History and Class Consciousness*.[62] According to Lukács, this was the process in which he came closer to reality. From utopian Messianism to "Realpolitik," Lukács attempted to develop a reflection theory derived from Lenin, not in an abstract philosophical sense, but in a practical sense.

After the mid-1930s, Lukács intended to wrest realism from Stalinism. As Johan Vogt indicates, Lukács's harsh criticism of authors such as Hugo and Zola "struck also the panegyrical Soviet novels of the Stalin period."[63] As has been discussed, in distinguishing Stalinism from Leninism, Lukács emphasised that Lenin's policy was more "realistic" than Stalinism, in the sense that the Leninist method was nothing less than an attempt to present policy changes as "logical consequences and im-

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60. Löwy, p. 32.
61. Löwy, p. 39.
62. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. xxxii.
63. Johan Vogt, "The Harmony of Passions and Reason," in *Georg Lukács Festschrift* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1965), p. 34.

provements of the previous line."[64] For Lukács, Lenin's method was more suitable than Stalinism for reflecting the discontinuous reality of history. One of the reasons why Lukács emphasised the rupture between Lenin and Stalin was that Stalinism "presented all socialist history as a continuous and correct development." Convincingly, this statement reveals a clue whereby we can approach Lukács's reflection theory without any misleading prejudice. Once Lukács embraced this "discontinuity" of history, he would have had to correct his utopian Messianism which seemed to be the dominant feature of *History and Class Consciousness*. Lukács confessed to this transition to solve the problem of historical development as follows:

> In the twenties, Korsch, Gramsci and I tried in our different ways to come to grips with the problem of social necessity and the mechanistic interpretation of it that was the heritage of the Second International. We inherited this problem, but none of us – not even Gramsci, who was perhaps the best of us – solved it. We all went wrong, and today it would be quite mistaken to try and revive the works of those times as if they were valid now. In the West, there is a tendency to erect them into "classics of heresy," but we have no need for that today.

In these remarks, Lukács's intention appears to be quite obvious. What he wanted to historicise was his early epoch, in which he tried to establish the system of knowledge of necessity in historical process. This aim of his theoretical work led him to pronounce "pure class consciousness" based on utopian Messianism. As Lukács himself confessed, this was where the problematic aspect of his early subjectivism came into being. Lukács did not agree with Western Marxism's emphasis on his early work and the assessment that later Lukács is a digression from early Lukács. While this may have become the fate of Lukács's reception in Western intellectual contexts, it has, to an extent, paradoxically betrayed him.

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64. Georg Lukács, "Lukács on his Life and Work," *New Left Review*, 68 (1971), 49-58, p. 51. In this interview, Lukács says that a complete rupture with Stalinism is necessary, in the sense that Stalinism abandoned Leninist method.

Zsolt Sógor

Beckett between the Lines

From Murphy to Watt

This paper wishes to analyse two early novels by Samuel Beckett; *Murphy* and *Watt*. It takes a chronological point of view from which it argues that the later of the two, *Watt*, is closer to Beckett's mature voice, mainly due to its relation with language. This means, in other words, that though in *Murphy* quite a lot of emphasis is to fall on the role of language, in *Watt*, with a bit of exaggeration, there is hardly anything else to concentrate on but the language of the novel and language as such in general. The emphasis on language leads to considering Beckett's relation to languages. Since *Watt* was for a long time the last longer prose work that Beckett wrote in English, the paper regards this novel as a harbinger of the approaching change for French. Or rather, the approaching bilingual state, because, as it is argued, Beckett may be said to have been approaching an in-between state in, or beyond, the two languages of composition. Taking the author's bilingualism into consideration means, however, an author-oriented approach – this is what the paper undertakes to present; to find Beckett's fingerprints between the lines.

Reading Samuel Beckett's *Watt* might be enjoyable for a number of reasons. We find, for instance, a unique model for entering a house:

> Finding the door locked, Watt went to the back door. He could not very well ring, or knock, for the house was in darkness.
> Finding the back door locked also, Watt returned to the front door.
> Finding the front door locked still, Watt returned to the back door.
> Finding the back door now open, oh not open wide, but on the latch, as the saying is, Watt was able to enter the house.[1]

Obviously it would be too simple if meanwhile someone had opened the door; Watt is to find no one in who could have done so. How, then, was he able to get in? To my

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1. Samuel Beckett, *Watt* (London: John Calder, 1963), pp. 34–35.

mind, the best way to find an explanation is to leave this narrative and have a look at a similar problem in Beckett's previous novel, *Murphy*. In that work we face an inexplicable and unexplained fact already on the first page, where Murphy is shown sitting in his rocking chair, tied up:

> Seven scarves held him in position. Two fastened his shins to the rockers, one his thighs to the seat, two his breast and belly to the back, one his wrists to the strut behind. Only the most local movements were possible.[2]

The seven scarves are six, which might even be a simple mistake (though it is retained in Beckett's own French translation); however, another insoluble question is bound to remain, as we learn later that it was himself who tied the scarves: how did he tie himself up? We are not to know. The only solution of the riddle is to place oneself out of the level of the narrative and accept that what we are reading is a work of art, where anything may happen. With *Watt*'s footnote remark: "Haemophilia is, like enlargement of the prostate, an exclusively male disorder. But not in this work."[3] A door that is locked cannot normally be open a minute later without any external assistance, it can, however, be so "in this work."

In a way, the external assistance is that of the narrator and that of the reader; the former "lets Watt in" as this is a pre-requisite of the novel's structure and the events to follow, the latter, if intending to remain a reader till the end, cannot but simply accept that Watt could enter the house somehow. The critic John Mood discovered twenty-eight similar inconsistencies in *Watt*[4] – the number itself suggests that the reader should get accustomed to the phenomenon after a while. The narrator is aware of producing a novel and is ready to go to any lengths in order to make the reader realise this.

Murphy and *Watt* have this, and a lot more, in common. There are, nevertheless, significant differences as well. Both are worth examining, in my opinion, as the two novels together may throw some light on what was to remain and what to disappear in Beckett's world for the later, more highly appreciated works. This argument, of course, assumes that there is a sort of linear development in Beckett's writings and that a certain work could be regarded as a successor of the former ones, meaning, practically, that the works bearing the name 'Samuel Beckett' on their covers constitute one com-

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2. Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (London: John Calder, 1993), p. 5.

3. *Watt*, p. 100.

4. John Mood quoted in Rubin Rabinovitz, *The Development of Samuel Beckett's Fiction* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 119.

plex *oeuvre*, in which each piece has its place. This may easily seem an oversimplification of the matter, yet I agree with the critics arguing that there is truth in it.

The concluding chapter of Rubin Rabinovitz's book devoted to Beckett's fiction, for example, was given the following title: "The Deterioration of Outer Reality in Beckett's Fiction,"[5] pointing out that precise, identifiable places and names disappeared from Beckett's works with time, leading to a closed inner world. But place names are just a part of the process; put in a more general form he states that: "As Beckett's career developed, he began to abandon the dense, learned style that characterized his early works."[6] Lawrence E. Harvey, analysing Beckett's poetry, talks about Beckett's gradual "withdrawal from the macrocosm into the microcosm of the mind"[7] as the central experience of his poetry. Hélène L. Baldwin divides Beckett's career into four periods, out of which the first, she claims, is full of word plays and overt satire, while the second already, due to "the sobering works of the Resistance,"[8] brings a clearer, less ornamented style. André Topia goes as far as to talk about Murphy as "Beckett baroque,"[9] claiming that "the emergence of the voice aims to make all the unevenness and baroque flourish of the beginnings disappear gradually."[10]

Another critic, Leslie Hill, brings a counter-argument, by demanding more attention to the early works for their own sake:

> To take Beckett's early work, the essays on Joyce or Proust, the stories in *More Pricks than Kicks* or the novel *Murphy*, as being important for what they tell us about Beckett's better known later writings, is to grant these early works secondary status, while still maintaining that they contain more transparent evidence of the author's underlying intentions and his formative (yet already formed) ideas. The contradiction seems plainly untenable.[11]

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5. Rabinovitz, p. 176.

6. Rabinovitz, p. 176.

7. Lawrence E. Harvey, *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 184.

8. Hélène L. Baldwin, *Samuel Beckett's Real Silence* (University Park: The Pennsylvania UP, 1981), p. 163.

9. André Topia, "Murphy ou Beckett baroque," in *Beckett avant Beckett*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté (Paris: P.E.N.S., 1984), 93–119.

10. "[L]'émergence de la voix aboutit à gommer peu à peu toutes les aspérités et les efflorescences baroques du début" (Topia, p. 94; all the translations, if not otherwise noted, are my own).

11. Leslie Hill, *Beckett's Fiction in Different Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), p. 1.

It seems tenable to me, since I see no contradiction in the ideas having been formed well before they could gain a finally satisfactory form. In other words, just because later works show no sign of a clear authorial intention, they may be according to such intentions, those intentions probably aiming exactly at disposing of anything easily identifiable. Also, it may be imagined even without mentioning intentions at all that the signs of what later works of art will contain are clearly present in earlier ones.

Returning now to *Murphy* and *Watt*, I will attempt to search for those early signs of the later voice. By doing so, I must admit, I will hardly hit upon anything that has been left unsaid so far, critics have thoroughly treated not only these two novels but also an alarmingly large number of possible inferences. The reason for which I still do not consider my analysis totally redundant is that I will attempt to give a complex picture of Beckett's way towards the language of his late works. I would not only like to suggest, on the basis of the two early novels, that Beckett's works concentrated more and more on language, on trying to cease to be language after all, but also that this tendency has a lot to do with the author himself, especially with his bi-, or, possibly, multilingualism. This, I think, might be of interest as *Murphy* and *Watt* were both written *before* Beckett started writing in French and also because the author is not taken as a source in the analysis; on the contrary, the examination of the language of the two novels draws attention to the unique linguistic situation of the author.

On the basis of chronology it is to be expected that *Watt*, completed in 1945, nine years after *Murphy* (but published fifteen years later than the other novel), is closer to the mature Beckett, and, to my mind, this is what one can find. What disappeared after *Murphy* were, for instance, the already mentioned place names. It was quite usual for the early Beckett texts to be full of references to the outside world, it is hardly surprising that John Pilling should point out how "*Murphy* builds handsomely on its predecessor [*More Pricks than Kicks*] in its presentations of what Murphy calls 'the big world.' "[12] It is worth noting that Murphy's big world is in fact

> quite small, for all practical purposes bounded by West Brompton, South Kensington, the Caledonian Road and – full of Eastern promise – the mental asylum 'a little way out of town . . . on the boundary of two counties' (in real life the Maudsley Hospital at Beckenham).[13]

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12. John Pilling, "Beckett's English Fiction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, ed. John Pilling (Cambridge, CUP, 1994), 17–42, p. 33.

13. Pilling, p. 33.

The point is not the actual size of the big world, much rather the later unusual real geographical basis; even the MMM, Murphy's mental hospital has an existing model. Interestingly enough for an Irish writer, Dublin's importance in the novel is nowhere near that of London; it appears "as if Beckett's sojourn in London had compelled him, in spite of his personal difficulties there, to register its existence. (Beckett's native Dublin, by contrast, is merely a shadowy elsewhere. . .)."[14]

Another substantial feature is the novel's novel-identity. *Watt*, and the later sizeable prose works do not build on traditions to a great degree, their experimental nature gives way at most to a sort of anti-novelish character – being attached to traditions by turning against them. (The French *nouveau roman* is of course a literary tradition with which Beckett's prose is connected, it was not yet shaped as such, though, at the time of Beckett's writing *Watt*.)

Murphy, on the other hand, feeds on a number of literary traditions, even if very often it presents a rather satiric view of them. The connection is not only created by occasional references, such as Murphy "never ripped up old stories,"[15] or the novel's first sentence: "The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new,"[16] where "nothing new" may be understood as "scouting the very idea of the novel as *something* new."[17] In *Murphy* "Beckett adopted pre-existent structures and strategies, almost all of which can be found in Cervantes and the English novelists of the eighteenth century."[18] The novel's 'realism' (i.e. the connection with the "big world"), the narrator's commenting on the events, or the summarizing, interpreting chapter (in *Murphy* chapter six) are all instances of such strategies.

The immense quantity and diversity of parody elements connects *Murphy* to the "great tradition that D.W. Jefferson called, in connection with Sterne (another Irishman), 'learned wit' embodied by Rabelais, Jonson, Donne, Swift, Sterne."[19] Stylistic ornamentation in general is highly characteristic of *Murphy*, meaning thereby the usage and parody of scientific and technical languages (André Topia counts ten different disciplines mocked), flourishing sentences, countless verbal and structural repetitions, word plays and the coinage of new words. Also, there is a narrator who is

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14. Pilling, p. 33.
15. *Murphy*, p. 14.
16. *Murphy*, p. 5.
17. Pilling, p. 30.
18. Pilling, p. 29.
19. "Tout ce recours systématique à une érudition parodique inscrit *Murphy* dans la grande tradition de ce que D.W. Jefferson a appelé à propos de Sterne (autre Irlandais) le 'learned wit' (érudition parodique) illustré par Rabelais, Jonson, Donne, Swift, Sterne" (Topia, p. 112).

always eager to comment on characters, events – again a factor that might be considered to reach back to Sterne or Fielding.

This can also be seen from a different point of view: the questioning of the characters' own existence, the utter reliance on the narrator points forward to the later prose works. As far as narrating is concerned, *Murphy* clearly shows the importance of the experimentalist's basic question (coming from Mr. Kelly's mouth when Celia relates the story of her getting acquainted with Murphy):

> 'How do you know all this?' said Mr. Kelly.
> 'What?' said Celia.
> 'All these demented particulars,' said Mr Kelly.[20]

The narrator's insisting on knowing all the particulars, "on always recalling the umbilical cord that attaches them [the characters] to him, anticipates a novel like *Malone Dies* where the characters are never more than fiction created by a creator's arbitrary decision."[21]

Within the novel itself, using Murphy's terminology, the key element is retraction from his "big world" into his "little world." It is the little one where Murphy is said to find happiness, yet, he cannot fix himself there, being too much bound by the other one. As mentioned above, Murphy is seen for the very first time tied up in his rocking chair, where he faintly hears "the echo of a street cry, which now . . . gave *Quid pro quo! Quid pro quo!* directly."[22] A couple of pages later Murphy again concentrates on the rhythm of the rocking chair: "Slowly the world died down, the big world where *Quid pro quo* was cried as wares and the light never waned the same way twice; in favour of the little, as described in section six, where he could love himself."[23]

Great indeed, but why should anyone shout *Quid pro quo* in the street? Assuming that the expression (something for something else, usually for a false representation) does not appear out of sheer eccentricity, its role seems worth pondering over a little. On the one hand, it is useful as a queer sounding expression occurring in the English text, standing, after all, in place of an English equivalent itself. More than that, however, it practically becomes the motto of the big world from which Murphy

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20. *Murphy*, p. 12.

21. "[C]ette insistance à toujours rappeler le cordon ombilical qui les rattache à lui anticipe un roman comme Malone meurt où les personnages ne sont jamais que des fictions créées par la décision arbitraire d'un créateur qui leur a donné naissance mais peut aussi bien décider de les détruire" (Topia, p. 101).

22. *Murphy*, p. 5.

23. *Murphy*, p. 8.

strives to escape. This might mean that this big world, i.e. 'reality,' is a false representation of an inner world, or rather that it simply does not know what it stands for. Murphy tries not to be a part of all this, he "is fundamentally out of step with the world," which suggests to him "the contingency of human connections, and hence, the commodification or public trading of the self."[24]

Taking into account the role of language in Murphy, however, it is possible to go even farther. Throughout the whole novel, the consciousness of the story's being language is to be seen. When Neary talks to him about love requited, describing it as "the single, brilliant, organized, compact blotch in the tumult of heterogeneous stimulation," Murphy's response is to the point: "Blotch is the word."[25] It is no surprise, consequently, that when Celia, Murphy's lover, being disappointed by Murphy's reluctance to start working says: " 'I'll be sorry I met you' ," Murphy should once again reply: " '*Met* me!' said Murphy. 'Met is magnificent.' "[26]

Murphy seems to be what his words are, though this is, according to Celia, not necessarily a compliment:

> She felt, as she felt so often with Murphy, spattered with words that went dead as soon as they sounded; each word obliterated, before it had time to make sense, by the word that came next; so that in the end she did not know what had been said. It was like difficult music heard for the first time.[27]

The novel's being language, what is more, the futility of this language, is also emphasized by the already mentioned focus on technical languages, wordplays and the eternal search for the right word. When Neary and Wylie are trying to find out what it might possibly be that makes Murphy attractive for the other sex, the latter says: " 'It is his –' stopping for want of the right word. There seemed to be, for once, a right word."[28] Then, when after a short silence Wylie is certain to have found the right word ("his surgical quality"), it is the narrator who does not lose a moment to remark: "It was not quite the right word."[29] All in all, I tend to believe that not only Murphy the character, but also *Murphy* the novel, is what its words are. Any reader-

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24. Wendy Foster, "Murphy's Aporia: An Examination of the Spaces of Desire as Structured Absences in Samuel Beckett's Murphy," http://www.themodernworld.com/beckett/paper_foster.html (Accessed on 1st April 2004).

25. *Murphy*, p. 7.

26. *Murphy*, p. 25.

27. *Murphy*, p. 27.

28. *Murphy*, p. 39.

29. *Murphy*, p. 39.

oriented approach would lay much more emphasis on the role of reception. While I must be aware that my reading of these novels is also only one possible reading influenced by a number of critical opinions, I wish, as much as possible, to concentrate on the relationship between the works and the source towards which, as far as I see, they point; language and the author.

'Quid pro quo,' after all, may be taken as the arch structuralist view on the relation of signifier and signified. Murphy is no true structuralist, however, as the tyranny of 'quid pro quo' is what he wants to be released from, he complains exactly about the impossibility to represent. In an early critical essay of his on the painting of the two van Veldes, Beckett formulates the view that

> The essence of the object of representation is its unrepresentability. . . . Beckett suggests that there are now three routes open to art: to return to an old and discredited naivety and to ignore the subject-object problematic; to continue to struggle with the old subject-object relation or the van Veldes' way, which admits defeat but finds a new object in the conditions of unrepresentability.[30]

Unrepresentability gains key importance. By bringing Beckett the person into the picture it also throws light on the writer's compulsion to use words for describing what cannot be described by them. "Confronted with a language that lends itself for all the ambiguities and all the mutations, Beckett is going to exploit this original fault and turn it to his advantage."[31] He does so exactly by, as seen in the beginning, proving that in the language-tissue of his novel anything "unreal" may happen, as reality is simply not to be described by language; language is not something to describe reality. Murphy's "big world," in the end, might mean language as well to Beckett, from which he struggles to escape into his own "little world." It has to remain impossible, though, to step beyond language while still using it.

The solution might be the same for character and writer alike; to go on, with the famous words of *The Unnamable*, even if it is not possible to go on. Or, to put it in a more exact form, the solution is Murphy's truncated version of the saying of one of Beckett's favourite philosophers: " 'I am not of the big world, I am of the little world' was an old refrain with Murphy. . . . In the beautiful Belgo-Latin of Arnold Geulincx:

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30. Rupert Wood, "An Endgame of Aesthetics: Beckett as Essayist," in *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, ed. John Pilling (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 1–16, p. 11.

31. "Confronté à un langage qui se prête à toutes les ambiguïtés et à toutes les mutations, Beckett va exploiter cette faille originelle et la tourner à son avantage" (Topia, p. 105).

Ubi nihil vales, ibi nihil velis."[32] The original Geulincx-saying goes like this: "Ubi nihil vales, ibi etiam nihil velis (want nothing where you are worth nothing)," since "according to Geulincx, because man enjoys true freedom only in the mental world, he would do best to abstain from desiring the things of the physical world."[33]

Murphy achieves the Cartesian split of the physical and mental world and would vote for the latter with pleasure, yet he fails because he cannot find the basic method of leaving behind physical bonds: indifference. He is unable to want nothing, as it is best symbolized by his chess-game with Mr. Endon. Mr. Endon is the enigmatic inhabitant of the MMM hospital, the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, where Murphy is employed as a male nurse and where he gets ever so close to his little world. The final step, however, is beyond him. He wishes to become like Mr. Endon (a telling Beckettian name; end on) and he could do so if only he were able to forget about bonds like the rules of chess. In the party between them (all the steps given in chapter eleven, Murphy with white), Murphy cannot handle Mr. Endon's nonchalance. Once, for example "without as much as 'j'adoube,' [Mr. Endon] turned his King and Queen's Rook upside down, in which position they remained for the rest of the game."[34] As a matter of fact, Mr. Endon's "goal is not to win but to arrange his pieces in a pleasing pattern."[35] This indifference concerning winning is what Murphy cannot learn and the result is that he loses and realizes that he is not yet ready to find peace in his little world.

It is at this point that he dies, and dies rather mysteriously. His room, a garret, has a radiator that works with gas, the gas-tap, however, is downstairs in a toilet. There are no stairs, in fact, to this garret, Murphy gets in by climbing up a ladder and pulling it up with him afterwards. The last but one time when Murphy is at home, he wants to turn on the radiator but has to realize that he has forgotten to switch on the gas. He is saved the effort: "Almost at once gas, reminding him that he had forgotten to turn it on, began to pour through the radiator."[36] Murphy does not start thinking about who might have possibly turned the gas on, but feels "greatly obliged, that he had not to let down the ladder and go and repair his omission."[37]

Similarly, after the game of chess with Mr. Endon, he goes home and wishes only to take a quiet ride in his rocking chair, not bothering about the gas once again. Though it is not mentioned that the gas-tap was closed after the previous night spent

32. *Murphy*, p. 101.
33. Rabinovitz, p. 91.
34. *Murphy*, p. 137.
35. Rabinovitz, p. 92.
36. *Murphy*, p. 108.
37. *Murphy*, p. 108.

there, it is very likely to have been so, as there had neither been an explosion during Murphy's absence, nor when he lit the candle on his arrival. Murphy thus calmly tied himself up (we still cannot know how) and started rocking in the chair. "The rock got faster and faster, shorter and shorter, the gleam was gone, the grin was gone, the starlessness was gone, soon his body would be quiet."[38] The way Murphy died is suggested by the narrator: "The gas went on in the wc, excellent gas, superfine chaos. Soon his body was quiet."[39]

The question is then: who turned on the gas-tap? Rabinovitz has suggestions but also finds that in fact all the characters have their alibis.[40] My guess is the same as it was with Watt's entering the house; the culprit is the narrator. Murphy had to die as this was in the interest of the novel. He failed to grasp how he could go on, therefore he was lost. What is more, his role seems to have been taken over by another character, the only one who, besides Murphy, had the chance to understand the importance of indifference:

> It falls not to Murphy but to Celia to become, or rather for the novel to suggest that she might become, 'a mote in the mind of absolute freedom.' It could almost be said that, without Celia, *Murphy* would have had no real plot above and beyond that which could be borrowed from 'old stories.' Yet it was by way of Celia that Beckett moved towards the plotlessness of *Watt*.[41]

Indeed, it is Celia who, already in the middle of the novel, in the small room Murphy and she move into, "achieves a kind of identity with Murphy and his rejection of the 'big world.' Celia becomes a voyeur of life which, seen through the 'small single window' becomes 'condensed,' a fragmentary apperception."[42] In the end it is she again who can indifferently return to her profession (a prostitute, almost naturally with Beckett) and wheel her father, Mr. Kelly, so that he can happily fly his kite. The concluding lines of the novel, then, show her identifying with the impenetrable peace of the 'little world': "The yellow hair fell across her face. The yachting-cap clung like a clam to the skull. The levers were the tired heart. She closed her eyes. *All out*."[43]

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38. *Murphy*, pp. 141–142.
39. *Murphy*, p. 142.
40. Rabinovitz, pp. 113–115.
41. Pilling, p. 35.
42. Foster.
43. *Murphy*, p. 158.

Watt is the difference?

All out – thus *Murphy* ends. And *Watt* already does not begin with all in. As mentioned above, one of the crucial differences between the two novels is the lack of precise, identifiable places in the later one. The effacement of these names is of course not complete (nor is it in still later works), yet the stress falls on a world that has no real connection with anything like outer reality. *Watt* is a strictly structured novel, the protagonist is first to go to Mr. Knott's house, second, to be a junior servant on the first floor, third, to be a senior servant on the second floor, and fourth, to leave Mr. Knott's house and return to the station from where he had set off. It is interesting enough, then, that the first part of the novel, in which we find the single identifiable place of the whole work, "was written *after* the central body of material, a fact that in itself compels some revaluation."[44] This first section

> has often been seen as the portion of *Watt* closest to *Murphy* and as therefore preceding the increasingly subjective and interiorised passages at Mr. Knott's. Doubtless this is the impression that Beckett wanted to give, since he deliberately frames his 'inner' narrative in the outer sections by the canal and at the station, making the reader experience with Watt the plunge into, and out of, the inner world of Knott's house.[45]

Mr. Knott's house is, after all, a sort of nowhere, arguably the very thing that Murphy and Watt have been craving for, as Knott himself embodies unattainability and indifference. Thus, once again, it is not the protagonist who represents the wished-for state of being beyond the "big world." Murphy and Watt are much alike, to dwell on further similarities, both of them are rather queer to look at. "Seen from above and behind," the narrator informs us, "Murphy did look fairly obliging,"[46] though one of the chandlers who saw him has an alternative opinion: " 'E don't look rightly human to me."[47] As for Watt, "Mr. Hackett was not sure that it [Watt] was not a parcel, a carpet, for example, or a roll of tarpaulin."[48] "Like a sewer-pipe, said Mrs. Nixon. Where are his arms?"[49] Also, both of them may be said to be true Cartesians, Murphy

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44. Ann Beer, "*Watt*, Knott and Beckett's Bilingualism," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 10 (1985) 37–75.
45. Beer, p. 51.
46. *Murphy*, p. 57.
47. *Murphy*, p. 47.
48. *Watt*, p. 14.
49. *Watt*, p. 16.

in realizing the split of the body and the mind, Watt in representing now the mind only, and applying rationalism, exclusively on the basis of what he can see, for all problems. His, and all the other characters', eagerness to examine every trifle in full detail gives the basic tone of the book – the parody of rational thinking and of language hand in hand with it. A short passage from Arsene, Watt's predecessor in the house, on Mr. Knott's habits in selecting his servants might suffice for tasting:

> For though it is rumoured that Mr. Knott would prefer to have no one at all about him, to look after him, yet since he is obliged to have someone at all about him, to look after him, being quite incapable of looking after himself, then the suggestion is that what he likes best is the minimum number of small fat shabby seedy juicy bandy-legged pot-bellied pot-bottomed men about him, to look after him, or, failing this, the fewest possible big bony seedy shabby haggard knock-kneed rotten-toothed red-nosed men about him, to take care of him, though at the same time it is freely hinted that in default of either of these. . .[50]

Characteristically enough this sentence runs on and on listing variants, types and names of servants. It is not difficult to see that a book containing two hundred pages full of sentences like this one is scarcely a traditional novel. It is, "by any standards, distinctly odd, arguably the oddest of all Beckett's works, whether in prose or drama."[51] This book, too, may be attached to the Sternian tradition to some degree; on the basis of the use of the narrator as well as some typographical surprises. The narrator is first omniscient, then, after some hundred and fifty pages, suddenly identifies himself as Sam, an ordinary character. Also, a musical score (with lyrics, naturally) is inserted when Watt is listening to a choir of birds and other animals in the ditch. A less well-known tradition to refer to here is the 'Big House' novel; as John Harrington writes

> *Watt* makes use of several staples of the 'Big House' novel: mistreated servants, including Watt; the questionable morals of a local fisherman's wife, Mrs Gorman; the shiftlessness of a pair of local workmen, 'the Galls, father and son'; and the physical misery of a diseased but prolific peasant family named Lynch.[52]

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50. *Watt*, pp. 57–58.
51. Pilling, p. 35.
52. John Harrington quoted in James M. Cahalan, *The Irish Novel* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd. 1988), p. 251.

Yet the differences between *Murphy* and *Watt* are a lot more noteworthy than the similarities. Perhaps the single most important point, as far as the characters are concerned, is that Watt, unlike Murphy, "has reached the freedom of indifference" in the end, when there are "no desires left."[53] In the end, that is, after leaving Mr. Knott's house, he is able to give up the wish to understand things and to indulge happily (that is, indifferently) in contemplation – in other words he manages to become a Mr. Endon at last.

If the style carries out a Cartesian parody, this freedom from desire may be the influence of Schopenhauer's or Dante's.[54] Dante may also be influential as regards language and the already mentioned signifier-signified relation, since for him

> [t]o the concept of sign there always has to belong an *only*. Man can *only* know deeper truth by means of signs, what is more, he is not even able to express everything – for example the experience of the mystic – with their help. (One of the basic traits of Danteian poetics derives from here: the thematization of the "ineffable," the idiosyncratic allegorism of the attempt at uttering the in "effable.")[55]

It also seems remarkable that in the passage from Dante's *Inferno* which János Kelemen analyses (Inferno XIII) with respect to references to language, "the state of suffering is identified with the discord of voices and languages described in the scene. It is important to emphasize the distinction: language here does not simply *express* suffering, it is suffering *itself*."[56]

So is it in *Watt*. As discussed above, the realm of 'quid pro quo' was already for Murphy a world to flee from. Watt has the same experience but even more forcefully, his permutations show what is possible in language, how with words he can try to find some meaning, and how inevitably he has to fail with his method. Watt needs to

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53. Rabinovitz, p. 138.

54. Rabinovitz, pp. 134–138.

55. "A jel-fogalom mellé Danténál mindig odakívánkozik a *csak*. Az ember *csak* jelek révén ismerheti meg a mélyebb igazságot, sőt nem is tud a segítségükkel mindent – például a misztikus élményt – kifejezni. (Innen ered a dantei poétika egyik alapvonása: a "kimondhatatlan" tematizálása és a "kimondhatatlan" kimondásának kísérletét jelentő sajátos allegorizmus)" (Kelemen János, *A filozófus Dante* [Dante, the philosopher] [Budapest: Atlantisz, 2002], p. 104).

56. "[A] szenvedés állapota mintegy a jelenetben leírt nyelv- és hangzavarral azonosul. Fontos hangsúlyoznunk a distinkciót: a nyelv itt nem egyszerűen *kifejezi* a szenvedést, hanem a szenvedés *maga*" (Kelemen, p. 127).

get close to Mr. Knott, "what Watt's cryptic words . . . stress is the desire for fusion with Knott."[57] He wishes to reach and become that something beyond all thought, all language, that nothing, probably, which is represented by Knott. Yet his thinking in language will keep him far from that which is incomprehensible by means of language. His suffering, his failure is in language, he understands Mr. Knott only when he leaves him, after he stops thinking about him, only when Mr. Knott becomes an absence for him. Because Mr. Knott, the end of all Watt's desires, is absence, the freedom from the obligation of presence. Mr. Knott is unrepresentable, that is why the method to reach him can again only be indifference and the absence of desire.

It is certain, at least, that Watt is in need of another language, "as he speaks in riddles, [he] seems to express the desire for another tongue in which it would be possible to speak something other than what is available in his original language."[58] As *Watt* was, for more than a decade, the last prose work that Beckett wrote in English, Watt's wish to go beyond language, to prove its utter futility may even be regarded as reflecting Beckett's own feelings at that time.

Already in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, a "pot-pourri of volatile but irreconcilable elements, part-autobiography, part-fiction, and part-looseleaf folder for any passing expressive gesture"[59] written before *Murphy,* Beckett writes on Racine and Malherbe: "They have no style, they write without style, do they not, they give you the phrase, the sparkle, the precious margaret. Perhaps only the French language can do it. Perhaps only the French language can give you the thing you want."[60] Indeed, if one thinks of the appreciation Beckett was given in France for his trilogy and of course with the original French *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame,* the above statement appears to be literally true.

Watt is, however, an English book. Yet, it has a sort of transitory character, it presses the problematic of language so much that the reader is bound to feel some doubt at least concerning language. Ann Beer, dealing extensively with Beckett's bilingualism, also throws light on why *Watt* can already be regarded as partly a French book. She claims that in *Watt* Beckett's altered relation to English can be discovered, what is more, this is the book that "reveals the pressure of bilingualism in its most acute form in Beckett's works."[61] Beer draws a parallel between Beckett's externalization of English in this work and the function of the two languages in the bilingual mind: the languages are seen as different codes, and have far less reliability

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57. Hill, p. 35.

58. Hill, p. 35.

59. Pilling, p. 20.

60. Quoted in Rabinovitz, p. 179.

61. Beer, p. 37.

than does his or her only language for the monolingual person. She then goes on to argue that, when writing *Watt*, Beckett had already been under the influence of French (the time of writing is 1941–1945, when Beckett already lived in France and assisted the Resistance) as can be seen from the French marginalia, the large number of sentences having a French-like word order and so on.

To my mind her evidence is totally convincing, yet once again I find it necessary to refer to the question of the author. That Beckett, the writer, and his bilingualism may be the cause of *Watt* the novel's queer experiments with language can hardly pass as a fashionable idea in recent literary thinking. Nevertheless, a lot of valuable insights would be lost were we to utterly dismiss the writer's situation and intentions from analysis. Interestingly enough, especially after talking about Beckett's lurking behind the problems of unrepresentability in his novels, Sean Burke, on reacting to the work of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, is ready to go as far as to declare that "what Roland Barthes has been talking of all along is not the death of the author, but the closure of representation."[62] He bases his argument, after pointing to a number of contradictory ideas in "The Death of the Author" and *S/Z*, mainly on Barthes' *Sade Fourier Loyola*, where Barthes himself talks about the return of the author in the cases of the three title authors. The inference is that "if a text has been 'unglued' of its referentiality, its author need not die; to the contrary, he can flourish, become an object of biographical pleasure, perhaps even a 'founder of language.' "[63]

I suggest that we regard, to gain Roland Barthes' sympathy as well, Samuel Beckett, too, as a founder of a sort of language and assess his writing on that basis. I would not like to go to such lengths as a publisher who, while refusing to publish *Watt*, blamed the Irish air for producing writers like Joyce and Beckett ("It may be that . . . we are turning down a potential James Joyce. What is it that this Dublin air does to these writers?").[64] If not to the air, however, I do attach importance to Beckett's intentions in the final shaping of *Watt*, for instance.

It appears scarcely questionable that Beckett wished to break down language somehow, he talked about this often himself (in his critical essays or in an interview with Lawrence E. Harvey, for example) and it seems that his bilingualism was an attempted method to reach his goal. Remarkably, he was to come back to English, especially in drama, that is, he "does not reject one language in favour of another, but

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62. Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 48.
63. Burke, p. 47.
64. Quoted in Beer, p. 45.

benefits from the knowledge and use of both in exploring the nature of language it-self."[65] In a 1937 letter of his (written in German, as a matter of fact), complaining of the pointlessness of writing in English, he compares that language to a veil that has to be torn apart in order that he could reach the thing, or the nothing behind it. "From this letter it is to be suspected that Beckett changed for French for at least two reasons: in the short term he wanted to get rid of Joyce's depressing impact, and eventually, in the long run, he wanted to destroy, what is more, he wanted to eliminate language."[66]

Watt is perhaps one of the best examples for this endeavour. It parodies language while pushing it to its limits, and also shows the fade-in of French behind an English texture. Unlike *Murphy*, it goes so far in experimentation that perhaps even its being a work of art is questionable. It is probably "saved" by its rich language and its inimitable humour only. All in all, the novel has a special place in the Beckett world, which is verified by the fact that "as if symbolically, the central character of *Watt* makes a brief reappearance in the next work of long fiction, having passed from English to French."[67]

Murphy and *Watt*, then, appoint the way on the non-existing road leading beyond language. The question remains now only what is to be expected there, what would a writer do if he could realize his plan and destroy language. As far as I see, the question has always been meant to be poetic. The beauty of the problem is exactly that the goal is unrealizable. Beckett, the writer at least, was never able to leave behind languages, though always ready to manipulate his works:

> Taking into consideration that the writer interfered in the production of the German version of *En attendant Godot*, and during working on *Malone Dies* he eliminated the tone and the expressions that were foreign to the American language, the question might be asked if it is not misleading to call Beckett a bilingual author. It is perhaps more correct to emphasize the purposeful approaching of being between languages in his activity.[68]

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65. Beer, p. 41.

66. "Ebből a levélből azt lehet sejteni, hogy Beckett legalábbis két okból tért át a francia nyelvre: rövid távon meg akart szabadulni Joyce nyomasztó hatásától, végső soron, hosszú távon pedig le akarta rombolni, sőt meg akarta szüntetni a nyelvet" (Szegedy-Maszák Mihály, "Kétnyelvűség a huszadik századi irodalomban" [Bilingualism in twentieth-century literature], in *Újraértelmezések* [Budapest: Krónika Nova, 2000], pp. 101–110 and 105).

67. Ann Beer, "Beckett's Bilingualism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, ed. John Pilling (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 209–221, p. 213.

68. "Ha tekintetbe vesszük, hogy az író beleavatkozott az *En attendant Godot* német válto-zatának elkészítésébe, a *Malone Dies* munkálatai során pedig amerikai barátai tanácsára kiik-

It seems that remaining between languages is his answer to the challenge of reaching the nothing behind them. Nothing as the centre around which he could move in language was not far from him in his early thought, either. In the already mentioned treatise on van Velde's painting "we are shown the impossibility of foundation; there is nowhere to start . . . . What van Velde in fact is and does was never really on the agenda, and so the whole text has been circling around an absent centre. However deconstructive the logic of his philosophizing may be, Beckett can never quite stop playing the game."[69]

This thought is of course quite well-known from Derrida's works, indeed, deconstruction as such is probably not far from Beckett's own method, in Hugh Kenner's words "when Beckett wrote *Watt*, he was busy deconstructing the English novel, with Derrida a mere 14 years old."[70] What I find more significant is, however, that, as the simple fact of writing on and on reflects, Beckett's own journey beyond language was writing itself, he could "convert nothingness into a fertile source of continuous imaginative effort."[71]

Beckett can never stop playing the game of talking about absence, that is, as long as he speaks, or writes. It is the theatre that might lead to a sort of solution. The two *Acts Without Words* manage to place wordless action on the stage, "in *Film* pantomime totally dominates. Bilingualism can lead to silence."[72] Prose writing, however, cannot but yearn for silence. Even if "Beckett's *oeuvre* is a continuous search for minimal compromise between speaking and keeping quiet, a search for a way of speaking which is false to the least possible degree, a search for true silence which is about something yet,"[73] the dwelling place of this true silence can only be approached, but never quite entered with words. It is a place, as *Worstward Ho* in the grammatically distorted, typically rhythmical style of the latest prose works puts it, "where none. Whither once whence no return. No. No place but the one. None but the one where none. Whence never once in. Somehow in. Beyondless. Thenceless there. Thitherless there. Thenceless thitherless there."[74]

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tatta az amerikai nyelvtől idegen hangnemet és kifejezéseket, föltehető a kérdés, nem félrevezető-e Beckettet kétnyelvű szerzőnek nevezni. Talán helyesebb a nyelvköziség célelvű megközelítését hangsúlyozni a tevékenységében" (Szegedy-Maszák, p. 107).

69. Wood, p. 14.

70. Cahalan, p. 251.

71. Shira Wolosky, "Samuel Beckett's figural evasions," in *Languages of the Unsayable*, ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 165–186, p. 184.

72. "A *Film*-ben a némajáték veszi át a teljes uralmat. A kétnyelvűség csöndhöz vezethet" (Szegedy-Maszák, p. 110).

73. Takács Ferenc, "Utószó," in Samuel Beckett, *Előre Vaknyugatnak*, trans. András Barkóczi, Ágnes Klimó *et al.* (Budapest: Európa, 1989), p. 387.

74. Samuel Beckett, *Nohow On* (London: John Calder, 1992), p. 104.

Anna Kérchy

Corporeal and Textual Performance as Ironic Confidence Trick in Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*

This paper examines performativity in its relation to textuality, corporeality and femininity in Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984). I wish to reveal parallel spectacular, seductive and tricky performances of bodies and texts. My reading of spectacular corporeal and textual performances focuses on the heroine, revealing how Fevvers' parading deconstructive performances of ideologically prescribed femininity, and its limiting representations, coincide with the narrative's spectacular revisions of literary genres and writing styles, identified by discursive technologies of power with femininity and thus conventionally canonized as sentimentally kitsch or incomprehensibly hysterical modes of writing. My gender sensitive, reader-response approach also highlights the bifocal pleasures, tender irony and sisterly burlesque of the self-mockingly silly and histrionic hysteric "feminine" textual performance in order to reveal that the conventional concepts of a domineering patriarchal language violently incorporating and domineering weaker *écriture féminine* are demythologized. My final aim is to examine how Fevvers' confidence trick unveils that there are other wor(l)ds available for daring women writers and readers alike.

Angela Carter has always been the performer *par excellence*: she is associated with a self-created authorial persona constantly *enacting* a fantastic being, a "spellbinder,"[1] a "Fairy Godmother," a "friendly witch," a "very good wizard,"[2] a ravishing yet funny grotesque figure, a loquacious "yarn-spinner, Mother Goose," a "wolf in Grandma's nightcap,"[3] who never ceases to *perform* her verbal magic, writing play-

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1. Lorna Sage, *Angela Carter* (London: Northcote House, 1994), p. 1.
2. See Margaret Atwood, J. G. Ballard, Salman Rushdie in Sarah Gamble, *Writing from the Front Line* (Edinburgh UP, 1997), p. 131.
3. Lorna Sage, *Flesh and the Mirror: Essays on the Art of Angela Carter* (London: Virago, 1994), p. 2.

fully in a carnivalesque polyphonic, hybrid, in-between genre, melting fairy tale, demythologized myth, magic realism, surrealist fantasy, historiographic metafiction, rewritten female Gothic, *Bildungsroman*, eroticism, picaresque, poetry and nursery rhyme in a spellbinding, *spectacular* narrative.

In the following, my aim is to examine the Carterian performativity in its relation to textuality, corporeality and femininity in my favorite of Carter's original works, the 1984 *Nights at the Circus*,[4] a novel called by Tamás Bényei a narrative of seduction, magic, play and primarily *spectacularity*.[5] I wish to reveal parallel spectacular, seductive and tricky performances of bodies and texts by providing a complex analysis of the semioticized body in the text and of the subversively somatized text on the body.[6] My reading of spectacular corporeal and textual performances focuses on the winged giantess aerialiste heroine, revealing how the grotesque Fevvers' parading deconstructive performances of ideologically prescribed femininity, of the normatively beautiful feminine body and its limiting representations coincide with the Carterian narrative's spectacular revisions of literary genres and writing styles, which are identified by discursive technologies of power with femininity, and are thus conventionally canonized as less valuable, that is, sentimentally kitsch or incomprehensibly hysterical modes of writing by silly lady novelists or raving mad women for a "lesser," laic female audience. My gender-sensitive, reader-response theoretical approach highlights – besides Fevvers' spectacular, subversive body – the bifocal pleasures, tender irony and sisterly burlesque of the subversively, (self-)ironic silly and histrionic hysteric "feminine" textual performance, in order to reveal that the conventional concepts of a domineering patriarchal language violently incorporating and domineering weaker *écriture féminine* are demythologized, as the journalist becoming clown-poet readily enters the carnivalesque grotesque narrative, laughing together with the confidence trickster winged aerialiste author. My final aim is to examine how Fevvers' confidence trick reveals that besides ideologically prescribed silence,[7] superficiality, stereotypes and incomprehensibility, there are other wor(l)ds available for daring women writers and readers alike.

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4. All parenthesised references are to this edition: Angela Carter, *Nights at the Circus* (London: Vintage, 1994).

5. Tamás Bényei, "Bohócok könyve: Angela Carter: *Esték a cirkuszban*," in *Apokrif iratok: Mágikus realista regényekről* (Debrecen: Kossuth, 1997), 299–351.

6. On the semioticization of the body and the somatization of the text see Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1993).

7. On feminine authorship and silence see Séllei Nóra, *Lánnyá válik, s írni kezd: 19. századi angol írónők* (Debrecen: Kossuth, 1999).

Parodic bodily performances, spectacular gender trouble

The picaresque *Nights at the Circus* narrates the magical adventures of Fevvers, the winged giantess, a born (or rather hatched) performer, trickster, trapeze artist, starring in the 1899 Grand Imperial Tour of Colonel Kearney's circus. Fevvers, the monstrous aerialiste with wings, incorporates all conventional tropes of mythical femininity, fusing freak and angel into one. Antagonistically, she acts out the "feathered frump" "cripple" (19), the "marvellous monster," the estranged "alien creature" (161), a giantess bound to Earth, with useless wings, her mutant bodily protuberances recalling the deformations of a hunchback, while simultaneously she also performs the role of the sexually threatening yet sublime aerialiste, the angelic winged wonder, a "fabulous bird-woman" (15) defying the laws of gravity in her graceful and erotic art on the trapeze. Fevvers becomes the "New Woman," who subverts the conventional, limiting concepts of femininity by enacting them all, without reserve, to the extreme, and thus embodying the carnivalesque grotesque defined by Mihail Bakhtin as transgressive corporeality's potential of subverting systems, violating boundaries, and resisting closure by its ambiguous, open, changing, unfinished, irregular, heterogeneous, protruding, corporeal, and excessive performance[8] that may also provide enough space for feminist authorial agency, female revision and winged women's words. Fevvers, an irregular, heterogeneous, changing grotesque being is the "Queen of ambiguities, goddess of in-between states" (81), her slogan "Is she fact or is she fiction?" underlines the polysemic nature of her performative, spectacular identity. Fevvers mocks the spectators' (the readers') epistemophiliac, fetishistic gazes, she never provides a final answer to her being a fact or a fiction. Walser can merely ponder the paradox: "an authentic miracle must purport to be a hoax, in order to gain credit in the world (?)" (17), while Fevvers laughs at him (at us), adding ironically "Oh, Lizzie, the gentleman must know the truth!" (35). Fantastic and freak, Fevvers embodies the Kristevian subject in process/on trial[9] balancing on a borderline in a grotesque body always becoming another, performing a carnivalesque subversion of the hierarchical social order, of the homogeneous subject, of transparent language and of conventional representations of femininity. She is simultaneously "Cockney sparrow" (41) and "tropical bird," cripple and celestial, vulgar and sublime, bird and woman, virgin and whore, giantess and aerialiste, the "anomaly" of univer-

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8. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1968).

9. Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), p. 37.

sally feminine "symbolic Woman" (161) and singular, heterogeneous "a-woman"[10] in her subjective corporeal reality, thus – playing on the subversive grotesque pregnant body – she can give birth to herself again and again anew.

Fevvers' spectacular performances in Ma Nelson's brothel and Madame Schreck's Museum of Woman Monsters, her posing in *tableau vivant* as Cupid, "the sign of love," as Winged Victory, "a perfect, active beauty . . . mutilated by history" (37), and as the castrating femme fatale Angel of Death, also carry ambivalent meanings. She repeats patriarchal stereotypical representations of women with a wink, via a "perverse dynamics of transgressive reinscription,"[11] a parody turned into politics, she performs à la Judith Butler a "gender trouble" with the aim to denaturalize the regulative fiction of a true gender identity, and to reveal the culturally constituted, ideologically-discursively reproduced, repetitive and overall performative aspect of gender, that is always already a "copy of the copy,"[12] and thus to provide in the long run an ironic critique of the ideology of representation limiting female identification. According to Butler and Fevvers, it is only within the (patriarchal) practices of repetitive signifying that alternative domains of cultural intelligibility, new possibilities of gender contesting the rigid codes of hierarchical binarisms and subversions of substantive identity may become possible.[13] Butler's description of "doing gender trouble" is particularly fitting for Fevvers' carnivalesque grotesque performance: "doing gender [she] repeat[s] and displace[s] through hyperbole, dissonance, internal confusion, and proliferation the very constructs by which [her possibilities of doing gender] are mobilized."[14] Fevvers' wings recall patriarchal topoi as the Victorian Angel in the House, defined uniquely in relation to man as subordinated wife and mother, the Muse exploited to inspire male creativity and muted herself, Fairies objected to the rape of the male gaze, as well as the winged statue of Nike of Samothrace, which simply lacks a head. However, realizing her performative possibilities for proliferating alternative gender configurations, she subverts these clichés of femininity from within: she acts out an angel in the house of suffragette whores, her sexual activity mocks the Victorian angel, yet she also challenges the stereotype of the whore, the

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10. On Symbolic Woman and a-woman see Teresa De Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987), p. 124.

11. Jonathan Dollimore, Sexual Dissidence. Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991), p. 33.

12. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 31.

13. Butler, p. 145.

14. Butler, p. 31.

supernatural succubus, as her confidence trick is based on her claimed virginity. She continuously uses her heterogeneous body as a space for the narrative deconstruction of her identity, by technologies of the self working against Foucaultian technologies of power, she erases and rewrites traditional stories of femininity, weaving her own texts, becoming an author of her own. Fevvers is a self-parodic *and* self-made woman (de)constructing her patchwork wings by recycling the divine Leda and the Swan just as much as a lowly London pigeon. She flies by reweaving myths and gossip, art and craft, by relying subversively on the established knowledge of library books just as much as on Lizzie's innovative calculations, and on Baudelaire's albatross-artist. She is never what she seems to be, she performs *simulacra*, her repetition is a revision of icons of femininity and an embodiment of her multiple selves, constituting a part of her confidence trick, a subversive feminist tactic, revealing a liberating play of carnivalesque identities and narratives inspired by a heterogeneous body, rendering engendered, homogeneous identity "radically incredible."[15]

Paulina Palmer[16] celebrates in *Nights at the Circus* Fevvers' feminist performance of identity, passing from coded mannequin to bird woman, and turning from the investigation of femininity as entrapping, regulatory fiction towards a subversive play with femininity, its mimesis and role reversals. Linda Hutcheon and Mary Russo[17] highlight Fevvers' parodic feminization revealing a decentered politics of representation, and Russo goes further by claiming that the winged heroine "revamping spectacle" unveils how the cultural production conceals work, sweat and materiality via stylized spectacle, and how Fevvers enacts the grotesquely deformed female body as cultural construct in order to reclaim it and to rechart aeriality as a corporeal space of revisionary repetitions and new possibilities.

Fevvers' parodic enactments of femininity incite the subversive laughter of Butlerian gender trouble as they highlight that the original, authentic and real (gender, identity, language, hierarchy, etc.) are merely constituted themselves as effects in the social theatre of illusions. Her parodic performance embodies a feminist political tactic described by Carter in her "Notes from the Front Line," as a "questioning of the nature of [my] reality as a woman. How that social fiction of [my] 'femininity' was

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15. Butler, p. 141.

16. See Paulina Palmer, "From Coded Mannequin to Bird Woman: Angela Carter's Magic Flight," in *Women Reading Women's Writing*, ed. Sue Roe (Sussex: Harvester, 1987), 179–205, pp. 197–201.

17. See Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1983); and Mary Russo, "Revamping Spectacle: Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*," in Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque* (London: Routledge, 1995), 159–183, pp. 177, 179.

created, by means outside [my] control, and palmed off on [me] as the real thing."[18] Fevvers performs her "authentic womanliness" as a socially constructed, re-presented, non-essential identity, recalling Butler's drag, Sontag's camp, Irigaray's mimicry and Riviere's masquerade[19] (her irony substituting the anxiety of the latter). Her dress always appears theatricalized as cross-dressing, she displays all the compulsory markers of femininity excessively, almost in a hamming, buffoonish manner: "she batted her eyelids like a flirt. She lowered her voice to a whisper. . . her breath flavoured with champagne, warmed his cheek 'I dye sir!' 'What?' 'My feathers, sir! I dye them!' " (25). Thus, with a difference, she seems to act out a "~~femininity~~" that is always already under a deconstructive line of erasure or in quotation marks. The carnivalesque excess of her self-ironic, playful performance of "becoming woman" shatters the "iron maiden of beauty myth"[20] and the illusory feminine body framed in it by the normative ideological technology of gender and body discipline working through representations perpetuating patriarchal (beauty) myths about women through a painfully paradoxical iconography of femininity to be carved onto the female flesh. Fevvers' greasepaint in her dressing room does not reconstitute but rather deconstructs the conventionally beautiful femininity, as it demythologizes patriarchal images of the abject female or the ethereal feminine, and in "becoming women" puts emphasis on becoming, heterogeneity and revision.

Fevvers, a subversive seductress, defies the male gaze by taking advantage of her feminine "being-looked-at-ness";[21] to her slogan "LOOK AT ME!" she adds "Look! (but) Hands off!" (15) to provide a self-conscious metatext on her spectacular femininity in the voice of the ambiguous intacta-whore, who is an exhibitionist-voyeur as she finds pleasure in her female gaze as well. The giantess aerialiste's eyes, the most grotesque

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18. Angela Carter, "Notes from the Front Line," in *On Gender and Writing*, ed. Michelene Wandor (London: Pandora Press, 1983), 69–77, p. 70.

19. See Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'est pas un* (Paris: Minuit, 1977); Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as a Masquerade," in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin (London: Routledge, 1989), 35–44; Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp," in *A Susan Sontag Reader* (New York: Vintage, 1983), 105–119.

20. On the beauty myth see Naomi Wolf, *A szépség kultusza*, trans. Follárdt Natália (Debrecen: Csokonai, 1999).

21. On the "female gaze" see Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," in *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, ed. Katie Conboy *et al.* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), 176–195; and Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Robin R. Warhol *et al.* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1991), 432–443.

body parts in the Bakhtinian corporeal topography, gain an erotic investment and a feminist re-visionary potential:

> She turned her immense eyes upon him, those eyes made for the stage . . . Walser felt the strangest sensation as if these eyes of the aerialiste were a pair of sets of Chinese boxes, as if each one opened into a world into a world into a world, an infinite plurality of worlds, and these unguessable depths exercised the strongest possible attraction, so that he felt himself trembling as if he, too, stood on an unknown threshold.
>
> <div align="right">(29, see 40, 48, 78, 87)</div>

As Mary Russo claims, the grotesque body of the trapeze artist destabilizes gender by an ambiguous relation to the gaze: on the one hand her being objected to the scopophilia of the male spectator reinforces masculine power position, but on the other hand the voyeur is obliged to look upward, and is hence diminished, becoming "dwarfed, clownish or infantilized"[22] due precisely to the gaze destined to master the woman as spectacle. Fevvers subverts her spectacularity to her own ends, ambiguous, ever-changing she can never be pinned down as a trophy of the male Collector, she resists the final meanings desired by journalist Walser aiming to decode her as a great humbug of the world. Fevvers looks back laughing and contemplates her being a spectacle with a wink.

The tender irony and sisterly burlesque of textual performance

Whereas Fevvers' femininity is clearly portrayed as a confidence trick, a spectacular parodic performance, a *mise-en-abyme* of stereotypical feminine beauty and gender roles with meta-reflexive, critical self-consciousness, it is less explicit that the traditionally feminine modes of writing; styles and genres (f)used in the narrative are also of a tenderly ironic, performative, spectacular, meta-reflexive nature. Several critics interpret *Nights at the Circus* as a postmodern sentimental love story. Pitying its limiting stereotypical feminine literary representation or praising its utopian feminist, recycled feminine potential, they think that the novel remains within the frames of the feminine romance tradition. Carolyn See describes the novel as an old-

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22. Russo, p. 171.

fashioned romance,[23] while in Sarah Gamble's view the novel with an idyllic happy ending is "absolutely serious in maintaining the desirability and the perils of romantic love," and in stressing the need for "authentic emotion to be had in the world outside the circus," whereas according to Andrzej Gasiorek, the novel "envisages the closing of the last century as the opening of a brave new feminist world,"[24] and Magali Cornier Michael claims that its rewritten femininity seriously combines didactic material realist feminism with utopian feminism.[25] Although the former two interpretations seem rather simplistic and the latter may look like over-politicized programme readings, unlike Beth A. Boehm, I would not call them misreadings – in Boehm's exact words "failures to employ the interpretive strategies the author has imagined to be available to the reader."[26] After the Barthesian death of the author, in a pantextual deconstructive era of self-disseminating meanings and inevitable misreadings, in my view, the concept of "misreading" as a standard of value has lost its validity, and – regarding any process of significance that, instead of closing, opens up the free play of multiple meanings of a text – it is better to avoid the patriarchal binary hierarchization between good and bad, laic and elite, feminine and feminist readings. Recalling my first reading of *Nights at the Circus*, in the late 1990s, in my early twenties, I remember having found pleasure in reading the novel – which I found somehow similar to my former favorite, Carter's short-story, "The Company of Wolves" – as the celebration of a blissful reunion of violent binary gender oppositions, a common initiation into the paradisiac realm of shared sexual pleasures, in the spirit of Eastern philosophy of the Foucauldian *ars erotica*. I do not think that the enthusiasm of my past, romantic reception of the novel is a less valuable readerly experience, even less an interpretative failure, as compared to my present, perhaps less naïve, and critically more self-conscious, feminist re-reading. Elaborating on Susan Rubin Suleiman's concept of bifocal vision, I would like to call these two different readerly gazes, looking alike for textual pleasure with a shared scopophiliac curiosity, bifocal and myopic readerly point of view. Suleiman – fusing Gertrude Stein's bipolar beauty-constitutions, and compressing Roland Barthes's readerly

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23. Beth A. Boehm, "Feminist Metafiction and Androcentric Reading Strategies: Angela Carter's Reconstructed Reader in *Nights at the Circus*," in *Critical Essays on the Art of Angela Carter*, ed. Lindsay Tucker (New York: Macmillan, 1998), 191–206, p. 198.

24. Sarah Gamble, *Writing from the Front Line* (Edinburgh UP, 1997), p. 162.

25. Magali Cornier Michael, "Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*: An Engaged Feminism Subversive Postmodern Strategies," in *Critical Essays on the Art of Angela Carter*, ed. Lindsay Tucker (New York: Macmillan, 1998), 207–227.

26. Boehm, p. 193.

pleasure of *studium* and jouissance of *punctum* into one gaze – defines bifocal vision as a view combining a restful, classicizing contemplation of a reassuring aesthetic ideal and a restless, contemporary struggle with and against an inventive, irritating, witty alternative anti-aesthetic.[27] Speaking of contemporary women's writing's body-texts, I think that bifocal vision implies a parallel perception of the restful feminine literary tradition and of (its) restless, ironic, feminist metatext, that is, a simultaneous reading of the ideologically prescribed, engendering, disciplining text of "femininity" *written on the body* and of the self-conscious feminist, daring, other voices, the poetic, political, playful subversive (*re*)*writings from the heterogeneous body.* Whereas the myopic reader's sedentary satisfaction means to under-*stand* calmly the literary work within its own *episteme*, its own prison house of fixed representation, the bifocal vision is an open double-take performed by a reader willing to come face to face with her own unmasked self mirrored in the window through which she watches the textual landscape passing by in a figurative literary journey, it is a revision by a nomadic reader willing to err, to deviate, to wander, to *run* risks, and to fly with the text. The theoretical premises of bifocality coincide with the Carterian narrative, which is always an excessive, spectacular, risky performance; as Carter puts it in a literary theoretical comment: "We travel along the thread of the narrative like high-wire artists. That is our life."[28] Thus both author and reader may be identified with the high-wire artist; accordingly, to me it seems feasible to identify the implied author of *Nights at the Circus* with the winged aerialiste, Fevvers; however, I do not think that the ideal reader, or, in Boehm's words, the "authorial audience," must necessarily be a risk-taking rope-dancer. The bird-woman trapeze artist's performance may provide unique amusement from the direct bodily closeness of the myopic perspective, as seen from the theatre-box's first row by the ravished, naïve, laic spectator, spellbound by the identification, and it may just as much enchant from the bird's-eye view distance of the critically self-conscious, professional gaze, constituting the elite view of the expert voyeur, connoisseur of acrobatic arts, specific weight of female bodies and the nature of gravity; but it also carries charms of its own, when viewed from an in-between space of "now you see it, now you don't," allowing for the bifocal pleasures of self-reflection along with identification. One should note that before becoming a reader performing a bifocal (re)vision one is always already a myopic reader, one must pass through the stage of ideologically prescribed feminine

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27. Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Risking Who One Is: Encounters with Contemporary Art and Literature* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1994), p. 147.

28. Angela Carter, *Expletives Deleted* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 2.

reading in order to provide a subversive feminist reading (which will inherently incorporate the feminine reading). The ambiguous, revisionary feminist-feminine bifocal perspective reflects the paradox of parodic metafiction that has to invoke the very ideology it aims to subvert.

The Carterian "demythologizing business" reweaves fossilized (patriarchal) myths into innovative (feminist) texts, refills old bottles with new wine "especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode,"[29] dissects conventionally limiting representations of femininity to revive a new woman, a neither monster nor angel (or ironically both?!), female Frankenstein, a self-made winged freak writing a text of her own, reconstructed from bits and pieces of the lesser genres, despised styles, silly themes of a marginalized feminine literary tradition. By feminine literary tradition I mean here any piece of (but especially initial attempts at) women's writing that is in a phallogocentric logic biologically determined, by patriarchal literary institutions canonized and through ideologically governed interpretive strategies conventionally decoded as sentimental, kitsch, expressively confessional, incomprehensible hysterical, odd modes of popular writing, speaking up in the compulsory prescribed feminine voice of the submissive angel or the screaming madwoman. Carter is a woman writer situated in a tradition of nineteenth century fellow female writers labeled as silly and sentimental and of modernist women artists with voices coined irrational and hysteric, she has to speak from a position located in a patriarchal society (some reproach her staying within a heterosexual scenario in which her heroines remain women, self-consciously but still feminine), thus one lens of her bifocal view always focuses on already ideologically femininized literature, while the other looks for possibilities of re-vision. My aim is to disentangle the subversive meta-text weaved upon debilitating narratives of the phallogocentric master-text of patriarchal canon and its feminimized mistress-text by submissively silly lady novelists or incomprehensible, mad women writers, constructed by canonization's engendering ideological technology. I will trace the irony of a text performing – like Fevvers' spectacular body – clichés of femininity, in order to reveal the confidence trick, to read the difference in the deconstructive feminist, mocking repetition of the feminine voice.

While Linda Hutcheon quotes *Nights at the Circus* as a *par excellence* example of postmodern parody, Lorna Sage highlights the pastiche nature of Carter's text "littered with quotations and allusions," and Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton stress "the carnivalesque fun, the mordant wit, the biting irony that turn

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29. Angela Carter, "Notes," p. 69 and p. 71.

Shakespeare into a burlesque and bring Sade into the feminist bedroom [being] very much part of a serious intellectual stand that Carter took on Western culture,"[30] I prefer to refer to Carter's subversive repetition of the feminine literary tradition as a tender irony, a knowing, metatextual, sisterly burlesque laughter shared with women writers of the mimed feminine literary tradition in a comic text that is also a dialogic, intertextual *hommage* to the pioneers of women's literature bound by patriarchal limits. As Sarolta Marinovich-Resch notes, parody in women's writing is not necessarily a crude joke, a disgracing, trivializing, ridiculizing caricature at the expense of the imitated text, but rather, contrarily, it challenges women's literary norms to renew and renovate, not to discredit them. Thus, it may ensure, from its shifting, dialogic, satiric perspective, a swipe at literary and social patriarchy by a parodic defence of reading and writing by women.[31]

Although Butler, Hutcheon and Marinovich-Resch use the term "parody" with reference to subversive, metafictional rewriting (of narratives of femininity), as for me, instead of parody – which I feel somewhat closer to the scornful and contemptible, maliciously diminishing and derogatory, sometimes narcissistic "tendentious wit" of caricature, satire and sarcasm – I find the concept of "irony" – that is, a deliberate dissembling or hiding of the actual case not to deceive but to achieve special, usually humorous rhetorical or artistic effects[32] – more adequate to characterize the Carterian textual performance for several reasons. Firstly, irony's mocking self-understatement matches the buffoonish masked spectacle of self, while the ironic reversal equals the grotesque inversions recurrent in the text. Secondly, the ironic perception implies the bifocal perspective's interpretive pleasures, recalling, in Wayne C. Booth's view, the optical illusion of the famous figure used by Wittgenstein and Gombrich, on which you see either a rabbit or a duck, as the figure clicks back and forth in the process of recognition and reconstruction, surpassing the naïve pleasure of a single view (seeing only one figure), whereas our attention focuses on the trickiness of the process and our awareness of duplicity provides delights of ambiguity and results in the greatest intellectual and artistic achievement: "learning

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30. Linda Hutcheon, *The Poetics and The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge 1988), p. 61 and p. 101; Sage, *Flesh and the Mirror*; Joseph Bristow & Trev Lynn Broughton, "Introduction," in *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter: Fiction, Femininity, Feminism*, ed. Joseph Bristow & Trev Lynn Broughton (London: Longman, 1997), p. 8.

31. Sarolta Marinovich-Resch, "Interrogating the Iconography of the Female Gothic: The Parody of the Female Gothic," in *The Iconography of the Fantastic*, ed. Attila Kiss *et al.* (Szeged: JATEPress, 2002), 257–269.

32. M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993), p. 97.

how to say both-and, not either-or, when we see that people and works of art are too complex for true or false tests."[33] Thirdly, the more tender "irony conveys an implicit *compliment* to the intelligence of readers"[34] invited to play with the text and realize other meanings and metatextual levels, implying the tribute to all women attempting at the pen. And most importantly irony's harmless humor – although subtle, coded, and capable of remaining hidden – achieves its fullest effect when the tender ironic intention, the sisterly burlesque, the female grotesque fusing democratic solidarity with carnivalesque mockery, and the laughter provoked are *shared* by past and present authors and readers alike in a *communal* pleasure of laughing *with* instead of laughing *at* others and oneself. Therefore, in the case of Carterian narrative, the (self-)ironic textual performance incites a subversive and feminist laughter that signifies complicity, alliance, a shared wink, a common wisdom, and mutual healing.

A silly novel by an ironic lady novelist

On its first reading, *Nights at the Circus* certainly recalls the stereotypical romance plot, well known from popular feminine literature or Hollywood movie-scenarios: a simple, rational young man meets an enigmatic, unreachable, fantastic female star, their mutual attraction promises a reassuring romantic reunion, yet – according to the obligatory detour of the Brooksian plot,[35] in order to guarantee the maximal pleasure of the text – they have to have several adventures, affront evil adversaries aiming to separate them, and surmount innumerable obstacles and misunderstandings, including their own blindness before the hero can solve the waiting heroine's secret, save her for the final n^{th} time, and thus their love can finally be fulfilled in compulsory, socially sanctioned marriage and they can be each other's and live happily ever after. However, the close reader of Carter's text surely reveals how the traditional feminine romance plot, referred to by Gilbert and Gubar as "the Pamela plot,"[36] is multiply subverted: it is the apparently immature young man who is repeatedly somehow saved (from the tiger, the Strongman, the clowns, and the Sha-

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33. Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1974), p. 128.

34. Abrams, p. 97.

35. Peter Brooks, "Freud's Masterplot: A Model for Narrative," in *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1984), 90–112.

36. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship," in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979), p. 69.

man), healed, cared for by the seemingly much wiser heroine, who in her grotesque corporeal reality is not in the least way an ideal, immaculate, subordinate feminine woman, moreover her enigma cannot be solved, and her victorious laughter at their final reunion makes the hero wonder whether it is not *he* who is the butt of *her* joke. *Nights at the Circus* rewrites the traditional feminine *Künstlerroman*, as its heroine is always already a (woman) writer gifted with creative imagination from the beginning and speaking up in the polyphonic voice of (two Scheherezades, Fevvers and Lizzie) the authoress who has always been, in the fashion of Deleuze and Guattari, a legion. The feminine *Bildungsroman* is also subverted by its self-proliferation in the vertiginous multiplication of embedded life-narratives of marginalized creatures (Fanny Four Eyes, Sleeping Beauty, Wilthshire Wonder, Albert/Albertina, Cobwebs and Toussaint from the Museum of Woman Monsters, Mignon, Princess of Abyssinia from the Circus, Olga from the Panopticon) with whom the heroine feels solidarity and whose sister-texts are embedded in her cross-genre historical, picaresque, *Bildungs* novel, ironically made to be recorded by a rational journalist, a male *auktor* becoming "the amanuensis of all those whose tales we've yet to tell him, the histories of those women who would otherwise go down nameless and forgotten, erased from history as if they had never been" (285), and whose authoritative pen is ironically directed by the oral, private, half-magic, half-real autofiction of the stereotypically silly and hysteric female writer, who nevertheless self-consciously aims at a subversive canon de/reformation. Conventional feminine romance's idealization, moralizing, and hierarchical gender structure are repeated ironically only to be subverted: the heroine is heavenly sublime yet also abject grotesque, she is angelic yet always a woman on top, myths (femininity, motherhood, 21, 283; marriage, 21, 39, 46, 230, 280, 281, 282; nature, 61; normality, 220; Christianity, 176, 239; humanity, 110; law, 211) are mockingly demythologized, norms and values are questioned in a carnivalesque shifting tone in which kitsch sentimental exaltation (of traditional romance values) turns into overplayed hysteric excess transformed into a subversively (self-)ironic metatext commenting on the novel's own silly, happy ending, demythologizing feminine romance and radical utopian feminism alike:

> 'The Prince who rescues the Princess from the dragon's lair is always forced to marry her, whether they've taken a liking to one another or not. That's the custom. And I don't doubt that custom will apply to the trapeze artist who rescues the clown. The name of this custom is a "happy ending."'
>
> 'Marriage,' repeated Fevvers, in a murmur of awed distaste. But after a moment, she perked up.

> 'Oh, but Liz – think of his malleable look. As if a girl could mould him any way she wanted. Surely he'll have the decency to give himself to me, when we meet again, not to expect the vice versa! Let him hand himself over to my safekeeping, and I will transform him. . . I'll sit on him. I'll hatch him out, I'll make a new man of him. I'll make him into the New Man, in fact, fitting mate for the New Woman, and onward we'll march hand in hand into the New Century –'
>
> Lizzie detected a note of rising hysteria in the girl's voice.
>
> (281)

Fevvers' language and style certainly recall that of the popular feminine romances' heroines whom their authors intend to characterize – in George Eliot's ironic words – by a "general propensity to make speeches, and to rhapsodize at some length," a unique gift of "amazingly eloquent" and "amazingly witty" conversations, the linguistic genius of a "polking polyglot, a Creuzer in crinoline," picking up foreign languages "with the same aerial facility that the butterfly sips nectar," the creativity of a "superior authoress, whose pen moves in a quick decided manner when she is composing" lofty monologues in a philosophical, moralizing yet enthusiastic, high-spirited, wildly romantic "Ossianic fashion," fascinating and silencing even men.[37] George Eliot, an elite, rational, severe critic of "silly novels by lady novelists," labels their feminine style annoyingly affected, emotive, sentimental, banal, superficial, hypocritical, hysteric, hyperbolic and talkative, thus reinforcing all the clichés of the stereotypical concept of feminine discourse.[38] The patriarchally conventional idea of silly feminine style is oftentimes associated with the engendered concept of kitsch, that is – in Abraham A. Moles' definition – (also) dysfunctional, rationally inadequate, superficial, excessive, capricious, sensory totalitarian, yet popular, mediocre and comfortably comprehensible.[39] Accordingly, at first sight of the winged aerialiste the male gaze of Walser immediately interprets her as the *par excellence* embodi-

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37. George Eliot, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," in *Anthology of British Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, ed. Dale Spender & Janet Todd (London: Pandora, 1985), 518–535, pp. 518, 520 and 522.

38. On stereotypical concepts of feminine discourse see Marina Yaguello, *Les mots et les femmes: Essai d'approche socio-linguistique de la condition féminine* (Paris: Payot, 1987); Louise O. Vasvari, "A női kultúra más, mint a férfi kultúra? Avagy mit tud a feminista nyelvtudomány?" *Esztertáska* (2003); <http://www.nextwave.hu/esztertaska/vasvari.htm> (Accessed on 31st March 2004).

39. Abraham A. Moles, *A giccs: A boldogság művészete*, trans. Orosz Magdolna, Albert Sándor (Budapest: Háttér, 1996).

ment of femininity, synonymous with kitsch ("On the stage of Alhambra, when the curtain went up, there she was, prone in a feathery heap . . . behind tinsel bars . . . how kitsch," 14). However, Fevvers' reader has to realize that for the bird-woman, her being "a bird in a gilded cage" is, via an ironic excess staged as a spectacle with a wink, turning silly, submissive femininity (and frightening, female freak), as well as her languages, her ideologically available discursive self-representations into a sub-versive, metareflexive, carnivalesque grotesque performance. As the excessive overflow, the maniac accumulation of the too dense and overplayed clichés of kitsch, commonplaces of feminine style in Fevvers' pathetic, prophetic, poetic utterances suggest, the stereotypically silly feminine language is merely staged, in a spectacular performance with a finale of brief, mockingly disillusioning remarks, implicit (self-)ironic metatextual comments of the polyphonic woman writer, demythologiz-ing from a bifocal perspective, denaturalizing, deconstructing via a playfully border-line (both silly and self-ironic), balancing aerialiste-discourse the ideologically gendered concepts of feminine (or phallogocentric) language:

> 'And once the world has turned on its axle so that the new dawn can dawn, then, ah, then! All the women will have wings, the same as I. This young woman in my arms, whom we found tied hand and foot with the grisly bonds of ritual, will suffer no more of it, she will tear off her mind forg'd manacles, will rise up and fly away. The dolls' house doors will open, the brothels will spill forth their prisoners, the cages, gilded or otherwise, all over the world, in every land, will let forth their inmates singing together the dawn chorus of the new, the transformed –'
>
> 'It's going to be more complicated than that,' interpolated Lizzie. . .
>
> But her daughter swept on, regardless, as if intoxicated with vision.
>
> 'On that bright day when I am no more a singular being but, warts and all the female paradigm, no longer an imagined fiction but a plain fact – then he will slap down his notebooks, bear witness to me and my prophetic role. Think of him, Lizzie, as one who carries the evidence –'
>
> 'Cushie-cushie-coo,' said Lizzie to the restless baby.
>
> (285-286)

Fevvers' excessive spectacular performance of the silliest, "most feminine" texts of the popular feminine romance tradition signals a contemporary woman writer's tender irony on her own located position belonging to an ideologically constituted tradition of always already femininized subjectivity and literature, as well as her simultaneous deconstructive feminist gesture of performing femininity's debilitating

discursive (self-)representations with a difference, from a revisionary, metareflexive, bifocal perspective, aiming to subvert from within that which has been marginalized from within. The aerialiste, discovering an enabling parallel between feminine kitsch and subversive grotesque body-text, is able to produce her own excessive, antagonistic, mockingly sublime and vulgar, kitsch and grotesque, feminist (meta-)feminine, popular, pleasurable carnivalesque text. The kitsch-work provided with a self-conscious metaperspective is close to the carnivalesque by simultaneously, bifocally considering the limit and its transgression, while on the other hand, as Moles highlights, its delirious expenditure also approaches the surrealist text-flow. Thus the (excessive romance of the mock) silly lady novelist is replaced by a (just as much self-ironic) visionary hysteric, the mad woman, the model writer of surrealists (venerated in Breton's and Aragon's manifesto), the other stereotypical trope of the woman writer in the patriarchal canon, whose "much madness" carries the "divinest sense" à la Dickinson, via a carnivalesque imbroglio's subversive creativity.

A carnivalesque histrionic hysteric text

Hysteria, an ideologically engendered, biologically determined "female malady," refers to psychic conflicts finding their symbolic expression manifested in corporeal symptoms, resulting in a text written from the semioticized body. But in patriarchal readings the somatized text produced fails to be interpreted as an independent narrative of self-expression. The hysteric body-text – along with the considerable corpus of "feminine" writings affiliated with it – is primarily associated with bodily reality, being governed by the wandering womb, repressed excessive sexual desires, demonic drives, it is reduced to the level of indecipherable, invaluable delirious ravings, irrational frenzies, sub-representational, phobic and phantasmic association streams. Identified with pathological corporeality, women's symptomatic writing conventionally can only be solved by a male psychoanalyst-reader, who, in the process of healing meaning-fixation, unveils, objectifies, reads, writes and erases her and her mad writing on/from her body alike. The patriarchal cure of the madwoman (as propagated by Hippocrates as well as Freud) wants to eliminate the symptom distinctly marking her body by re-engendering and re-interpellating her into the socially prescribed feminine subject position, through the resurrection of her "natural" willingness to marry, to submit to masculine desires, to return the kiss of Herr K., to discipline and shut her body and thus end her madness, her body writing, and successfully become a "real" woman; that is, feminine, normal(ized), submissive, silent, unmarked and non-writing.

Nights at the Circus is set in 1899, an era when Charcot's possessed patients are displayed in the Salpetrière hospital (1889), when Anna O's malady and her "talking cure" are made public by Breuer (1895), when the disclosure of Dora's case brings fame to Freud (1901). It is the golden age of silenced madwomen giving birth to a legitimate male scientific discourse inspired by their hysteric body-text that becomes the hidden other text, with a metaphor "the madwoman in the attic" of psychoanalysis. In fact, the mock-historical novel claims that Fevvers, a model of Lautrec and all surrealists, a fiancée of Alfred Jarry, and a friend of Willy and Colette, "in Vienna . . . deformed the dreams of that entire generation who would immediately commit themselves wholeheartedly to psychoanalysis" (11); and, consequently, a true (simulating) daughter of her times, Fevvers apparently embodies several hysterical symptoms so as to stage adequately her patriarchal era's pathologized woman becoming a public spectacle. In Madame Schreck's museum of woman monsters – uncannily recalling Charcot's "museum of living pathology"[40] at Salpetrière – as in other stages of her career, she acts out the hysteric, "readily appear[ing] to be an arch simulator, deceiver, and seductress,"[41] performing simulacra of pathologic femininity. In the hysterical scenario, her theatrical(ized) emotional crisis are paroxysmal symptoms, her winged hunchback walk is abnormal movement due to psychosomatic partial paralysis, her aerialiste balancing and somersaults are abnormal motor movements and convulsions, her wings are phantasmic bodily protuberances or hysterogenic zones, her recurring spreading of her (pseudo)wings is a hysterical conversion, a neurotic defense mechanism against repressed anxiety. Fevvers' performance of femininity enacts a *par excellence* example of hysterical personality: she is egocentric, histrionic, emotionally unstable, a pathologically excessive, "hyper-feminine" yet "unreal" woman, embodying sublime transcendental femininity tainted with grotesque corporeality. On the other hand, Fevvers is also the New Woman of the new century, who refuses to be silenced by reviving a stereotypical trope of woman writer – much more dangerous than the submissive angel and her silly text – that of the madwoman speaking her subversive (m)other-tongues. Fevvers' storyteller persona indeed recalls the hysteric patient talking herself out in a disorganized speech to the analyst-audience making notes of her mental creations, yet Walser is a mere scribe directed by her voice, there is no need for his healing, corrective psychoanalysis, Fevvers' narrative bears independent pleasures of its own. Fevvers completely

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40. Elizabeth Bronfen, *The Knotted Subject: Hysteria and its Discontents* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1998), p. 174.

41. Bronfen, p. x.

rejects the hysterical symptoms of aphonia, aphasia and amnesia, it is the "note of rising hysteria in [her] voice" (281), the vibration of her utterances, the movement of her rhythmic, antagonistic (highbrow and Cockney, sublime and grotesque, kitsch and hysteric, corporeal and aerial), excessive, passionate, periodic overflowing sentences, "infecting" the Carterian text, that mimes hysteric convulsions and performs a pantomime creating a histrionic hysteric style – a corporeally convulsive *yet* highly verbal, even "ooververbalized," ironic text of the "wondering womb." Fevvers, the arch-simulator, stages herself in a spasmodic text as a riddle in constant spectacular self-deconstructive metamorphosis, a hysteric sham, dragging the subject in process from the dressing room to sea, sky, earth and even the wonderland behind the mirror, a nomadic subject's journey, almost too fast to follow:

> Fevvers yawned with prodigious energy, opening up a crimson maw the size of that of a basking *shark*, taking in enough air to lift a *Montgolfier*, and then she stretched herself suddenly and hugely, extending every muscle as a *cat* does, until it seemed she intended to fill up all the *mirror*, all the room with her *bulk* (52, my emphasis).

> Fevvers pushed back her chair, rose up on tiptoe and lifted towards the ceiling a face which suddenly bore an expression of the most heavenly beatitude, face of an angel in a Sunday school picture-book, a remarkable transformation. She crossed her arms on her massive bust and the bulge in the back of her satin dressing-gown began to heave and bubble. Cracks appeared in the old satin. Everything appeared to be about to burst out and take off. But the loose curls quivering on top of her high-piled chignon already brushed a stray drifting cobweb from the smoke discoloured ceiling. . . (42)

Fevvers appears as the histrionic hysteric, constantly winking at the audience in a joyously destabilizing fit of a convulsive text: "Am I fact? Or am I fiction? Am I what I know I am? Or am I what he thinks I am?" (290). Her paroxysmal discourse throbbing, pulsing, beating on the page, reflects how her irrational performance, her consciously convulsive, aerial grotesque movements mock reason and tradition and shock the skeptic, down-to-earth spectator:

> She gathered herself together, rose up on tiptoe and gave a mighty shrug, in order to raise her shoulders. Then she brought down her elbows, so that the tips of her pin feathers of each wing met in the air above her headdress, At the first crescendo, she jumped.

Yes, jumped. Jumped up to catch the dangling trapeze, jumped up some thirty feet in a single, heavy bound, transfixed the while upon the arching white sword of the limelight. The invisible wire that must have hauled her up remained invisible. She caught hold of the trapeze with one hand. Her wings throbbed, pulsed, then whirred, buzzed and at last began to beat steadily on the air they disturbed so much that the pages of Walser's notebook ruffled over and he temporarily lost his place, had to scramble to find it again, almost displaced his composure but managed to grab tight hold of his scepticism just as it was about to blow over the ledge of the press box.

(16)

Through a feminist revision of the female malady (propagated by Gilbert and Gubar, Cixous and Clément, Elizabeth Bronfen, Elaine Showalter and Dianne Hunter among others),[42] hysteria becomes a textual engine carrying subversive discursive potentials addressed against patriarchal thought and its phallogocentric representation. Fevvers identifies with the revolutionary hysteric who rejects the homogenous cultural identity, the silent or superficial symbolization offered to her, who tries to translate herself into another idiom by transforming her cultural discontent into somatic manifestation, projecting her dis-ease and (des)ire upon her body and converting this symptomatic bodily transcription into a somatized verbal language of her own, testing the limits of body, identity and symbolic representation alike. Fevvers' histrionic performance acts out the hysteric, described by Dianne Hunter as a "multilingual being," cleverly manipulating discourse, finding her own voice, and creating her stimulating, sympathetic listener audience.[43] As Gilbert and Gubar claim, the display of the madwoman's monstrous autonomy signals the female impulse to refuse to be killed into silence, to escape social and literary confinement through strategic re-definitions of self. The language of the hysteric, of Fevvers, reveals simultaneously the vulnerability of symbolic representation and identity, speaking the infected other tongues of the silly lady novelist and the raving madwoman, identifying with the repressed other and acting out femininity to the ex-

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42. See Bronfen; Gilbert and Gubar; Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *La jeune née* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1975); Dianne Hunter, "Hysteria, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism: The Case of Anna O," in *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, ed. Katie Conboy *et al.* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), 257–277; and Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture 1830–1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1985).

43. Hunter, p. 268.

tremes signifies miming symptoms of other dis-eases and staging the performative quality of syndromes of female maladies, in order to "negotiate the interface between mimesis, imagination, representation and deception"[44] and to reveal the hysteric's subversive ability to "invent, exaggerate, and repeat all the various absurdities of which a disordered imagination is capable,"[45] that is to simulate, fascinate, distress, fool, seduce and overall to subvert. Thus what Elizabeth Bronfen calls hysteria's grand fallacy recalls Butler's parodic performance of (pathologized) gender in a subversive spectacle producing a repetition with a différance, and a political meta-text in a voice of its own – in the pervasive way Fevvers does in her spectacular histrionic hysteric narrative-performance. Ironically, Fevvers' excessive performance of femininity coincides with what Stephen Heath calls the hysteric's failed masquerade, missing her identity as a Woman, that is, not playing the game of being or not having the phallus, not playing the game of accepting the phallus as a supreme signifier of an impossible identity.[46]

In Fevvers' interpretation, hysteria is a *commedia dell'arte* performance,[47] a carnivalesque subversion authored by the spectacularly grotesque hysterical body. Allon White claims that the hysteric discourse signifies an impossible, isolated, insane attempt at the private, phobic (re)articulation of a repressed, marginalized, fragmented carnival practice and its lost communal, regenerative pleasures. [48] However, the excessive narrative of the both winged and armed aerialiste has it both ways: instead of the broken fragments of a carnival debris or debilitating hysteria, the text embraces total carnivalesque celebration and unlimited hysteric festival within the cathartic sphere of the circus. The text performs the clownism phase of hysterical attacks, imitating animals and circus scenes in a compulsion to repeat, accompanied by the craziest capers, somersaults and grimaces.[49]

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44. Bronfen, p. 105.

45. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 139.

46. Stephen Heath, "Joan Riviere and the Masquerade," in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin (London: Routledge, 1989), 45–61, p. 51.

47. See Bice Benvenuto, "A hisztéria: komédia. . . dell'arte," in *Freud titokzatos tárgya: Pszichoanalízis és női szexualitás* (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 1997), 209–225.

48. Allon White, "Hysteria and the end of carnival: Festivity and bourgeois neurosis," in *The Violence of Representation: Literature and the History of Violence*, ed. Nancy Armstrong, Leonard Tennenhouse (London: Routledge, 1989), 157–170.

49. On clownism see White, p. 159.

The birdwoman's narrative flight is that of Cixous and Clément's newly born woman who can "fly and flee into a new heaven and new earth of her own invention"[50] in her heterogeneous text combining hysteric convulsions, witches' flights, mad tarantella and vertiginous rope dance, with acrobatic somersaults, grotesque contortions, clownesque grimaces and overall spasmodic fits of laughter – all out-maneuvering the symbolic order, in a histrionic hysteric festival of metamorphosis providing pleasures of a Fevverish text.

"A series of inside stories of the exotic, of the marvellous, of laughter and tears and thrills and all"

The feverish narrative performance staged in *Nights at the Circus* cunningly surpasses the traditionally restricted carnival and mild revolution associated with the conventional misreading of *écriture féminine*, which enables merely a "subversion from within" a patriarchal representational system that stays immobile on the whole and contains all attempts at subversion. In Carter's novel Fevvers' mock-sentimental and histrionic hysteric, carnivalesque grotesque language gradually embraces, engulfs and overflows the intentionally patriarchal narrative authored by the skeptic, rational, pragmatic journalist, Walser. As Paul Mags claims, Carterian women put men through every circus hoop they themselves have jumped, from beneath their false eyelashes flashing alarmingly and seductively all of the vertiginous possibilities of the postmodern text,[51] and over all the lure of women's writing. Although the intra-textual author in the novel is Walser who, after his interview with Fevvers (Book 1), decides to write as an incognito correspondent a "series of inside stories of the exotic, of the marvellous, of laughter and tears and thrills and all" (90) "invit[ing all readers] to spend a few nights at the circus" with him (91), he does not have a direct voice of his own. Instead, Fevvers' first person singular, autobiographical narrative voice and an omniscient, mocking, metatextual narrative voice take turns at weaving the text and eliciting its implied author, a grotesque winged aerialiste. Thus, as I will reveal in the following, woman's voice takes over to let female malady's Dickinsonian "infection in the sentence breed" in *Nights at the Circus*, a confidence trick challenging

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50. Cixous-Clément, p. xiv.

51. Paul Mags, "Boys keep swinging: Angela Carter and the subject of men," in *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter: Fiction, Femininity, Feminism*, ed. Joseph Bristow & Trev Lynn Broughton (London: Longman, 1997), 184–198, p. 185.

the engendering of canonization, a piece of women's writing posing ironically as if authored by a man invited to waltz with and *as* women.

The verbally talented Walser (9), fond of "cataclysmic shocks because he loved to hear his bones rattle" (10), readily subjects himself to Fevvers' performance, unaware that her narrative would change his story. As if a premonition, her first spreading her wings disturbs the air "so much that the pages of Walser's notebook [ruffle] over and he temporarily los[es] his place" (16). Walser acts like a member of the spellbound audience identifying with the actress, his reactions mime those of the winged star, he is becoming increasingly irrational, hysterical (feels composure almost displaced, 16), sketchily emotional and sentimental (feels "more and more like a kitten tangling up in a ball of wool it had never intended to unravel," 40). He simulates all symptoms of the aerial grotesque being, writing on his body the hysterical text of iterated difference: his clown-grimaces at little Ivan repeat Fevvers' terrifying, fascinating effect on him, his wounded shoulder prophesies Fevvers' broken wing, and most importantly, his typing, "flying fingers" (97) embody her subversive corporeal performance and narrative flight. Walser's personality-change coincides with the transformation of his language influenced by the two confidence-trickster Scheherezades directing his pen and destabilizing his subject, dismembering him via their remembering: "The hand that followed their dictations across the page obediently as a little dog no longer felt as if it belonged to him. It flapped at the hinge of the wrist" (78). The infection in the sentence spreads fast: when Fevvers interrupting Walser's report writes in his notebook with a "*fi*ne, *fi*rm, *fl*owing Italic hand" (my emphasis), on reading it Walser immediately exclaims "Good God" in fittingly alliterating, emotional, excessive words (78). On his joining the circus, Walser, the pragmatic, rational journalist is replaced by Walser, the grotesque clown who performs in a masquerade not only a newly acquired, self-deconstructive, heterogeneous identity but also a virtuoso linguistic play, a meta-reflexive, mocking, hyperbolic, catachrestic, polyphonic, unlimited, carnivalesque flow of silly kitsch and insane hysteric artifice of *écriture féminine*, a verbal drag, a laughing text matching the spectacular feverish narrative of the beloved winged woman:

> *Yes! Built as St Petersburg was at the whim of a tyrant who wanted his memory of Venice to take form again in stone on a marshy shore at the end of the world under the most inhospitable of skies, this city, put together, brick by brick by poets, charlatans, adventurers and crazed priests, by slaves, by exiles, this city bears that Prince's name, which is the same name as the saint who holds the keys of heaven. . . St Peters-*

burg, a city built of hubris, imagination, and desire. . . its boulevards of peach and vanilla stucco dissolve in mists of autumn. . . in the sugar syrup of nostalgia, acquiring the elaboration of artifice, I am inventing an imaginary City as I go along. Towards such a city the baboushka's pig now trots (96-97).

Walser reread his copy. The city precipitated him towards hyperbole, never before had he bandied about so many adjectives. Walser-the-clown, it seemed, could juggle with the dictionary with a zest that would have abashed Walser-the-foreign-correspondent. He chuckled. . . (98)

While Fevvers' native town is London, the home of the confidence trick, and with St Paul's Cathedral resembling a half-breasted Amazon, grotesque like Fevvers, the place of Walser's rebirth is St Petersburg, the home of the famous Russian circus, "a city stuck with lice and pearls, impenetrably concealed behind a strange alphabet, a beautiful, rancid, illegible city" (98), apt to inspire a linguistic turn, eliciting Walser's other writing and opening the gates to the heavenly bliss of a pleasurable text with a touch of irony. Walser's textual metamorphosis is directed by Fevvers. The once self-confident, rational journalist falls for the winged giantess, who dictates to him, stuffs a handful of cold cream in his mouth to silence him (143), seduces him with her narrative and makes him realize in a state of mental tumult that he has been duped, turned into a *real* clown and that with a broken heart and arm "he cannot write or type" (145). The journalist's disillusioned recognition of his being deprived of his pen and profession in the middle of the novel (Book 2, chapter 6) is followed by the most poetic, carnivalesque passages on the circus, a subversive text authored perhaps by Walser, the feverish clown, infected by the grotesque aerialiste's narrative:

Brisk, bright, wintry morning, under a sky that mimics a bell of blue glass so well it looks as if it would ring out glad tidings at the lightest blow of a fingernail. A thick rime of frost everywhere, giving things a festive, tinsel trim. The rare Northern sunlight makes up in brilliance for what it lacks in warmth, like certain nervous temperaments. . . . Amid laughter, horse-play and snatches of song, rosy-cheeked, whistling stable-boys stamp their feet, blow their fingers, dash hither and thither with bales of hay and oats on their shoulders, sacks of vegetables for the elephants, hands of bananas for the apes, or heave stomach-churning pitchforkfuls of dung on to a stack of soiled straw. . . . A lugubrious gypsy strays into the courtyard to add the wailing of his fiddle to the clatter of boot-heels on cobbles, the

> babel of tongues, the perpetual, soft jangle as the elephants within the building agitate their chains, the sound that reminds the Colonel, always with a shock of pleasure, of the outrageous daring of his entire enterprise.
>
> (146)

The pragmatic reporter gives birth to the clown poet to depart from homogeneous, disciplined subject position and compensatory phallogocentric representation, and experience the vertiginous sense of limitless freedom of the grotesque being (41, 103), "the freedom that lies behind the mask, within dissimulation, the freedom to juggle with being, and, indeed, with the *language* which is vital to our being, that lies at the heart of burlesque" (103). Throughout his illuminating journey with the circus, a Siberian train-crash turns Walser from ecstatic clown into a permanently delirious Shaman's disciple, a concussed, amnesiac, aphasiac *apprentice sorcier*, who speaks hysterically in tongues, considers the fragments of his English an astral discourse, babbles beating his drum and duly deepens his familiarity with the language of the other so that when Fevvers finds him, he is ready for the interview. After his apprenticeship in the highest forms of confidence trick, having waltzed with the giantess winged aerialiste, screamed with the clowns and raved with the Shaman, Walser, at the end of the novel, can make conclude that all his life, as the text, happened to him in the third person, with his watching but not living it, and can utter "I" for the first time in the text: "and now, hatched out of the shell of unknowing by a combination of a blow on the head and a sharp spasm of erotic ecstasy, I shall have to start all over again" (294). The rebirth of the patriarchal word starts with sharing the novel's final subversive female voice, that is, the "spiralling tornado of Fevvers' laughter" (295).

As Beth A. Boehm also highlights, Walser is the reconstructed reader who abandons his androcentric worldview and masculinized bias or normalized technologies of reading and interpretive conventions, and with his final-opening questions, "What is your name? Have you a soul? Can you love?" (291), reenacts the beginning of the narrative. This time, Walser, whom Fevvers "takes under her wings" in Paul Mags terms, appears as an appreciative, cooperative, Barthesian writerly reader, prepared to make love and jouissance with the text. The reliability of the narrative voice, the credibility of the story are mockingly questioned, the reader's expectations and the transparency of representation are playfully destabilized as Walser, the *reader* of Fevvers' indecipherable body, is invited to dance, to waltz with the text. Walser, as the waltzing reader, is curious and suspicious, surmising the ambiguous, multi-layered polysemy of Fevvers' performance, her narrative of self as either/both hoax or/and miracle, and is ready to take the alternative textual entry of the active co-producer of changing, plural meanings in a narrative that is seduction, spectacle and

a comic play in one. The cruel, voyeuristic collector Grand Duke – the old-fashioned, archetypal masculine reader seeking to consume a single, final, phallic meaning of a stable work that can be mastered – can interpret Fevvers' slogan "Only a bird in a gilded cage" only literally and thus threatens to entrap Fevvers in the form of a miniaturized artificial bird in the cage of stereotypical femininity, doomed to silence, silly small-talk or insanity. On the other hand, the *homo ludens* reader waltzing with the narrative realizes the winking, ironic, metatextual, merry side of the winged woman's narrative as well, and is ready to fly with her text. Thus the conventional concepts of a domineering patriarchal language violently incorporating and domineering weaker *écriture féminine* are demythologized, as the journalist becoming clown-poet readily enters the carnivalesque grotesque narrative, laughing together with the confidence trickster winged aerialiste author.

The portrait of the artist as a grotesque winged aerialiste

The grotesque Fevvers' carnivalesque life narrative (constituting the first part of the novel) is told to Walser, the young reporter, interpellated as a waltzing reader to be seduced by the winged giantess and her midget stepmother, intruding in each other's voice, commenting on, and complementing each other in a polyphony like a grotesque twin-set of "two Scheherezades, both impacting a thousand stories into the single night" (40), weaving the dialogic, dissonant text, thus embodying the polyphonic, subversive woman *writer*. The waltzing reader certainly notes that Fevvers' slogan "Is she fact or is she fiction?" is also a self-reflexive question of the implied author and that the description of Fevvers' ambivalent voice is a metatextual comment on Carter's playfully subversive text, a spectacular, seducing, enchanting, excessive and ecstatic narrative of the aerialiste writer:

> . . . her cavernous, sombre voice, a voice made for shouting about the tempest, her voice of a celestial fishwife. Musical as it strangely was, yet not a voice for singing with, it comprised discords, her scale contained twelve tones. Her voice, with its warped, homely, Cockney vowels and random aspirates. Her dark, rusty, dipping, swooping voice, imperious as a siren's. Yet such a voice could almost have had its source not within her throat but in some ingenious mechanism or other behind the canvas screen, voice of a fake medium at a seance (43).

The cheerful narrative is a confidence trick, as the cavernous and celestial, musical and disharmonious, homely and *unheimlich*, siren- and fishwife-like voice of the

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winged aerialiste turns out to be the very voice of the laughing woman writer, newly-being-born (hatched?) in her subversive text.

The aerialiste persona of the artist balances among the lines of numerous critics: according to Sarah Gamble, Fevvers' final laughter is a metafictional comment in the form of an *aerial double somersault*, in James Brockway's view, the winged woman *walks the tightrope* on discourse, while Paulina Palmer looks forward to see where the future *flight of fiction* would take her, and Mary Russo argues that the portrait of the artist as a young mannequin ends with Winged Victory keen on learning how to *fly in a high flying rhetoric* (my emphasis).[52] For me, the grotesque aerialiste, the winged freak supported by a midget stepmother personifies the woman writer located in a marginalized female literary tradition of sister-texts, lacking anxieties of influence or of authorship, writing from within yet subversively against the phallocentric language of patriarchal literary institution and canon, providing in the "voice of a fake medium" a parody of essentialist and exclusive phallic language and *écriture féminine* alike, from her unstable, heterogeneous, yet solid, located position.

Ironically, a double of the aerialiste implied author is personified by the baboushka, a deeply embedded female narrator, whose voice opens the second part, entitled *Petersburg*, as well as Walser's report on his nights at the circus. The baboushka's humble bow, her genuflection, her hands "slowly part[ing] and com[ing] together again just as slowly, in a hypnotically reiterated gesture that was as if she were about to join her hands in prayer" and starting to part before touching (95) repeat the movements of a ropedancer (though slowed down excessively in a grotesque way). Her never finished tale, her "constantly repeated interruption of [action and sentence] sequences" are interpreted by the unhatched Walser as the drama of the dignified hopelessness of a wretched old woman. Nevertheless, the baboushka's repeatedly restarted, unfinished tale, told to grandson Little Ivan on the little pig, succeeds in marking both Walser's narrative ("I am inventing an imaginary city as I go along. Towards such a city, the baboushka's pig now trots," 97) and influencing the flow of the novel (introducing the porcine assistant Sybil into the text: "If one pig trotted off to St Petersburg to pray, another less pious worker travelled to Petersburg for fun and profit between silk sheets in a first class *wagon lit*," 98). The "*infinite incompletion*" (Carter's emphasis) of the baboushka's work, suggesting that "woman's work is never done" (95), recalls the aerialiste's gravity-defying rope-dancing mid-air in the sense that it highlights the infinite possibilities of women's

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52. Gamble, p. 169; Palmer, p. 201; Russo, p. 170.

writing resisting final meanings for a pleasurable, challenging, creative balancing in-between inter-texts.

The aerialiste-text, as Fevvers' voice, balances on the thin dividing line between sublime and ridiculous, revealing poetic clichés, archaic diction, lofty tone, histrionic style, sentimental topos and sublime narrative – conventionally regarded as features of feminine literature – as mere mannerisms, semantically incongruous with the brute materiality of corporeal reality, of a-woman's presence. Since, as Lindsey Tucker also notes, Fevvers and Carter's text, "both grand and vulgar," revels not only in the sloppy second-hands of intertextuality and in the smells of carnival, but also in "many representations of physicality"[53] – paradoxically abject corporeality's un-speakable presence is repeatedly re-presented in shallow clichés of the sublime that nevertheless turn, via their excessive accumulation, deeply poetic, only to transform self-ironically into a ridiculous commonplace again in a textual trick-flow constantly duping the reader.

The enchanted audience balances on in-between borderlines, floats with the magical(-realistic) waves of the narrative, flies with the breezes and breaths of the text, as the winged aerialiste defies gravity, a primary trauma preceding symboliza-tion, and thus can re-experience the preverbal, paradisiac, free-floating intrauterine bodily space of the Kristevan, threatening yet tempting, sublime and abject, maternal *chora*,[54] an omnipresent otherness subverting symbolization, and becoming the en-gine of the revolutionary poetic language of the aerialiste authoring the vertiginous text. According to Paul Bouissac, semiotician of the circus quoted by Russo, the air is a space of negotiation for the aerialiste, less of an angel in the house than a working girl in the air, which highlights her normally concealed corporeality amidst simu-lated spectacle and in the air, defying gravity, negotiates space from which alterna-tive representative spaces for heterogeneous, somersaulting identities may be articulated.[55] Hélene Cixous, elaborating on Mauss and Lévi-Strauss, identifies the women in the circus – "carnies, drifters, jugglers and acrobats" – with the subver-sively speaking sorceress, hysteric, neurotic, ecstatic, and outsider, afflicted with a dangerous yet productive symbolic mobility, affecting the very structure whose lacu-nae it reflects, simulating imaginary transitions, embodying unrealizable compro-mises, incompatible syntheses, subversive configurations of a return to the other

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53. Lindsey Tucker, "Introduction," in *Critical Essays on the Art of Angela Carter*, ed. Lindsay Tucker (New York: Macmillan, 1998), 1–23. p. 2.

54. See Kristeva, pp. 22–30.

55. Russo, p. 176.

wor(l)ds of childhood.[56] Accordingly, the grotesque winged aerialiste embodies Cixous's newly born woman writer, creating her subversive text(ure) by fusing translinguistic, giggling child play, *unheimlich* witchcraft of Lizzie's household magic, hysterically excessive writing from/on the body, risky borderline rope-dance and revisionary flight of a birdwoman into her ironically playful *Nights at the Circus*.

Strangely, the sublime aerialiste image of the woman writer coincides with Carter's grotesque, self-ironic authorial persona, as this yarn spinning, tall-tale-telling wolf in grandma's clothing uncannily recalls – in a typically Carterian excessive catachresis – the fantastic freak Fevvers, the writing winged woman, "her white teeth are big and carnivorous as those of Red Riding Hood's grandmother. [as] She kisses her free hand to all. [and] She folds up her quivering *wings* with a number of shivers, moues and grimaces as if she were putting away a naughty *book*" (18) (my emphasis). *Nights at the Circus*'s narrative is constituted (and constantly self-deconstructed) as a spectacular performance, a tricky play, a subversive seduction, a "naughty book" flying with the quivering wings of the giantess aerialiste Fevvers, embodying the grotesque, winged, wayward woman-writer w(e)aving her whim, transgressive body-text.

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56. Cixous & Clément, p. 7.

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Rossitsa Terzieva-Artemis

Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Feminine Mystiques

Since its publication in 1987, this novel by Morrison has spurred an enormous wave of critical responses and interpretations. Undoubtedly, the most challenging aspect to any critic is the fact that *Beloved* rigorously defies hermeneutic foreclosures. I choose to read the novel as a key text which throws light upon liminal psychic experiences by using psychoanalysis and especially Julia Kristeva's theory of the abject, as well as the narratological approach of Bakhtin. Morrison deals with the problem of human survival on two levels, thus bridging the gap between historical narrative and personal history. One of these levels is the level on which the author makes a subversive record of the history of survival-in-suffering, and relates the communal history. The second level is the level of depiction of survival in the history-of-suffering, that is, each individual's history. Through analysis of the issues of language, memory, trauma, and the unconscious I will try to show how memory and trauma are both personal and communal, and how they shape – through language – the psychohistory of the individual.

Despite its effort to tell objectively the story of humankind through an account of events and facts, history seems to fail in passing on adequately the story of human suffering. Since suffering is ultimately a subjective experience, which means having more to do with the realm of the psychological, rather than the factological, it is very difficult to frame that experience in a linear narrative. A mother's voice can often speak about that experience: a voice deformed *through* and *in* suffering, transformed into the primal howl of a lawless, chaotic pre-Oedipal state, and tuned into the core of suffering.

By encoding black women's individual voices telling the story of the unspeakable history of slavery in America, Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* bridges the hiatus between purely historical representations of facts and the representations of horrible psychological traumas and suffering. Since its publication in 1987, Morrison's fifth, Pulitzer Prize winning novel has caused an enormous wave of critical responses and

interpretations.[1] Undoubtedly, the most challenging aspect to any critic is the fact that the book defies hermeneutic foreclosures and remains generously open to various interpretations and critical approaches. The only perspective that the novel does not accommodate, however, is the facile canonical interpretation of *Beloved* simply as a fictional record of slavery and reconstruction of historical facts, because the novel is undoubtedly much more than that. The book throws light upon liminal psychic experiences which arrest both black men and women into the unbearable, abnormal existence under slavery even if they are already free. In other words, Morrison uses an approach that a scholar like Bhabha considers "theoretically innovative and politically crucial," namely because she shares the need

> . . . to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself.[2]

Morrison is particularly interested in the depiction of such "in-between" spaces which create a possibility for the rise of a new sense of self in her characters. In *Beloved* such spaces appear in the analysis of black people's experiences in the epoch of slavery and immediately after the Civil War (1861–1865), when the abolition of slavery is officially proclaimed countrywide, yet the social realities in the United States – predominantly in the South, but also in the North – are harshly imprinted with memories from the slave past. The central themes in *Beloved* are the meaning of community and motherhood, the reciprocity between the integrity of an ethnic group as a whole and the status of its female members, and the equally problematic construction of masculinity. In her novel Morrison pinpoints especially well the anachronistic existence of two contradictory yet interdependent political, cultural, and ethical structures: of the slaveholders and the missing ideological structures of the slaves. To articulate those cultural differences, the writer delves into the respective opposing conceptions of history and memory, reason and irrationality, time and space, property and deprivation, kinship and "otherness." On the one hand, for the

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1. Just a few of the extremely interesting analyses published recently by scholars like Laura Doyle, Barbara Hill Rigney, Patricia McKee, Roger Luckhurst and Cynthia Hamilton, not to mention numerous dissertations and conference papers.

2. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 1.

slaves, these concepts are embodied in the performative panpsychism of the African folklore where everything, a living creature or not, is endowed with spirituality, while on the other hand, for the slaveholders these are the monotheistic, pedagogical beliefs of the Western Enlightenment and modernity.[3] Thus Morrison encapsulates the significance of the clash between these two world-perceptions by an extremely eloquent novelistic performance of what Paul Gilroy will define as a "desire" to subvert the continuous "colonization" of the present:

> The desire to put these cultural systems against one another arises from present conditions. In particular, it is formed by the need to indict those forms of rationality which have been rendered implausible by their racially exclusive character and further to explore the history of their complicity with terror systematically and rationally practised as a form of political and economic administration.[4]

Read from one personal perspective, I consider *Beloved* to be a novel about the inexorable metastasis of psychological destruction of the human soul incurred by, and proliferating in, slavery, but also surviving after the Abolition. However, the larger context of the novel calls forth the broader concept of modernity, and the vulnerability of the individual in it, and especially the vulnerability of women, which arises from the "sense of the vacuity, the inanity of the present."[5] As Morrison points out, what we generally consider modern[6] dates well back in history; in other words, she claims that "modern life begins with slavery":

> From a women's point of view, in terms of confronting the problems of where the world is now, black women had to deal with post-modern problems in the nineteenth century and earlier. These things had to be addressed by black people a long time ago: certain kinds of dissolution, the loss of and the need to reconstruct certain kinds of stability. Certain kinds of madness, deliberately going mad in order, as one of the characters says in

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3. For a discussion of the "performative" and the "pedagogical" see Bhabha.

4. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 220.

5. Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and Memory Crisi*s (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 4.

6. Among the many interesting titles on the problem of modernity, see Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, tr. by Catherine Porter (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).

the book [*Beloved*], "in order not to lose your mind." These strategies for survival made the truly modern person. . .[7]

Morrison deals with the problem of human survival on two levels, thus bridging the gap between historical narrative and intersubjective story, and creating what I would call a "psychic history" of slavery. One of these is the level on which the author makes a subversive record of the history of survival-in-suffering and narrates the communal history as constructed in a linear episteme, that is, as a linear story which locates the events in *Beloved* in the late 1860s. The second level is the level of depiction of survival in the history-of-suffering, which is the individual subjective history with its combination of linear and heterochronic, or cyclic,[8] events. Morrison uses a highly suggestive narrative mode to structure what seems to be an/the "unstructurable" flow of the past into the present in order to successfully work on these two levels. For Morrison, there is no hierarchy between these two levels: her goals are to expose once again slavery as a paramount social evil and to divest the numerous atrocities towards slaves of their long-standing, victimizing anonymity.

My aim in this paper is to read *Beloved* also on two levels: first, from a narratological point of view, in order to show how the narrative structure of the novel accommodates Morrison's project to create a psychic history of slavery, and secondly, from a psychoanalytic point, to analyze just one character in the novel, Sethe, in terms of the effects of her traumatic experiences and the way they mar her life after slavery as well.

The story without

The distinction between "fabula" and "sjuzhet" made by the Russian Formalists,[9] or the parallel distinction, between "story" and "discourse," as interpreted by the Structuralists,[10] is a useful starting point in the analysis of *Beloved*. This novel is remarka-

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7. Quoted in Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1994), p. 178.

8. The two terms are often used synonymously to refer to recurrences or dislocations in linearity. See Terdiman, for example.

9. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, tr. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). Bakhtin interprets "*fabula*" as a series of events, while "*sjuzhet*" is the story as narrated.

10. For example, in the works of Culler, Chambers, Barthes, and Todorov, "story" is understood as a sequence of actions (the text as narrated), and "discourse" is a narration of events

bly rich in complicated story lines and narrative instances, which complement each other to produce a text highly encoded in hermeneutic terms. Carden, for example, writes of "two endings" of the novel and "a triple interpretation of [the character of] Beloved."[11] As a consequence of this intricate narrative play, we can hardly speak of a single story in *Beloved*; it is rather a text of contesting stories which operate upon the principle of "embedding" (*myse en abyme*).[12] What this means is that different protagonists, events, and stories come alternatively to the foreground at different points in the narration to produce concentric discursive circles, or subtexts, rather than a single clear-cut, linear story. In their functioning, the multiple subtexts evoke the polyphony of the bigger, longer history analyzed by Morrison – the history of slavery. *Beloved* is also a novel which finely utilizes the Bakhtinian concepts of "heteroglossia" and "dialogism," and the "in-between spaces" and "splitting" in Bhabha. By producing the effects of heteroglossia through multiple subtexts, the contesting stories in *Beloved* undoubtedly challenge once again the monistic discourse of slavery as interpreted one-sidedly from the position of the dominant race. In this sense, heteroglossia means not only a varied discourse, but primarily a discourse implying a multiplication of social accents and registers. In other words, we realize how the dialogic concept turns to be "a double-talk, the necessary obliqueness of any persecuted speech that cannot, at the risk of survival, openly say what it means to say. . ."[13] From an even broader cultural perspective, the literary heteroglossia can be related to what Bhabha calls social "splitting":

> Splitting constitutes an intricate strategy of defence and differentiation in the colonial discourse. Two contradictory and independent attitudes inhabit the *same place*, one takes account of reality, the other is under the influence of instincts which detach the ego from reality. This results in the production of multiple and contradictory belief. The enunciatory moment of multiple

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(the text as narration). In a similar way the French narratologist Gerard Genette distinguishes between "story" (*histoire*) and "text" (*recit*).

11. Mary Paniccia Carden, "Models of Memory and Romance: the Dual Endings of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," Twentieth Century Literature, Winter (1999), www.findarticles.com (Accessed on 1st March 2004).

12. An extremely lucid analysis of the concept is to be found in Dianne Elam's book *Feminism and Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 1994).

13. Paul De Man, "Dialogue and Dialogism" in *Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 107.

belief is both a defence against the anxiety of difference, and itself *productive* of differentiations.[14]

This observation is very much to the point in the case of *Beloved*, since the author is dealing with such splitting and "speeches" under threat. Such splitting is to be found in the speech and story of Sethe at the cross-road of slavery and "emancipation"; in Denver's speech of living in a haunted present and coming to terms with history that she has never witnessed; in Baby Suggs' "chromatic" speech of psychological healing; in Paul D's speech of keeping the rusted "tin with his red heart" deeply buried in his soul and learning how to live again in freedom; in Beloved's all-consuming speech in relation to the rest of the characters of the novel, demanding love and to be "named again." In any case, as Elaine Scarry writes, "the introduction of the voice reintroduces multiplicity" in the narrative[15] and Morrison makes ultimate use of such multiplicity in her novel. To juxtapose the two competing discourses of the past and the present, she introduces the voices of schoolteacher, Garner, Amy Denver, Mr. Bodwin, besides the voices of Sethe, Baby Suggs, Denver, Beloved, Paul D, and Stamp Paid. If the dominant Western civilization discourse is one of visibility and/or lack of visibility,[16] the multiple voices – especially in the Afro-American narrative oral tradition – bring in the possibility for disruption of the dominant power discourse through questioning of the imposed singular authoritative position.

Such a dialogic framework also seeks to explore the persistence of the past into the present of the protagonists, since Terdiman defines memory as "the modality of our relation to the past."[17] In this sense, I think that *Beloved* provides a very strong example of a novel in which the dialogic mode creates the necessary conditions for the enactment, or performance, of the traumatic memories of the past. As a kind of a "hybrid" model compared to the well-defined chronological linearity of a traditional narrative,[18] the dialogic mode defies the concept of time to voice what has been stifled for years but erupts in the present. Morrison uses both ulterior and anterior

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14. Bhabha, p. 132.

15. Elaine Scarry, ed., *Literature and the Body* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), p. vii.

16. For a review of the concept of vision, see the introduction in Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-century French Thought* (Berkley: The University of California Press, 1993).

17. Terdiman, p. 7.

18. By "chronologically linearity" here I mean a narrative without even foreshadowing or flashback as techniques that break the sequencing of events. In contrast, the dialogic mode plays with the notions of time, sequence, and narrative point of view.

types of narration,[19] which means that in the first instance the narration follows the events, while, in the second instance, it precedes the events narrated in order to produce a double impact upon the reader. This impact brings together two equally emphatic aspects of the reader's involvement with the text itself: first, of being present and partaking of what happens in the present tense of the narration, and second, of obtaining an insider's knowledge about what has already happened to the protagonists. In this way the protagonists in *Beloved* come to life also in a special double mode: in relation to each other, and in relation to the reader *cum* interlocutor. In fact, this "double performativity" is what Bakhtin calls the existence in the novel of "I-for-the-other" and "I-for-myself" because, as he points out,

> Being is always 'co-being'. . . To the extent that it always implies self-other interaction, being is always an 'event,' an act, since myself needs the other, to become an I-for-the-other, to assimilate temporarily the other's point of view, so that to be an I-for-myself (and vice versa).[20]

In terms of the characters' interactions and relations in *Beloved*, I-for-the-other, or being-with/being-in-the-world,[21] is congruent with the relation between reader and protagonists as well. Of course, there is no denial that such a relation is ethically and ideologically charged by means of the author's investment in the next and the reader's expectations from it. What is interesting, though, is the well-known fact that actually in this interaction, beyond, or maybe in, the realm of the communicative and the aesthetic, we can find also the workings of the political.[22] Through this double mode of representation, i.e. aesthetic but also political, Morrison is painstakingly investing her novel with a historical evaluation of slavery. Such an evaluation is a psychological analysis of the degrading deformations in the human psyche when even life in freedom cannot delete the scars caused by bondage. By telling the story of slavery, and especially the stories of black women like Sethe, deprived of their bodies, yet still not deprived of their power to voice the horrors of the past, Morrison creates a powerful portrait of what she considers the shameful roots of "modern" America or, in other

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19. See Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. (London: Routledge, 1983), pp. 89–90.

20. Bakhtin, p. 246.

21. Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Identity," in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 191.

22. There is a palpable difference between "the ideological" and "the political" in my opinion: the former is a didactic, mind-impregnating philosophy, while the latter seeks more active engagement with topical problematics.

words, she writes a novel that "challenges America's faith in the past-ness of the past by undercutting assurance in the resolution of historical trauma."[23]

Each in its turn, and together in their overall effect, the stories in *Beloved* historicize slavery by means of representationally innovative re-staging of the panopticon of the slaves' suffering. By using such "re-staging" Morrison aims exactly at estranging the descriptions of physical torture and suffering from an immediate representation in the text, and working instead with a narrative perspective which derives from the memories of her characters. Thus the substitution of direct graphic scenes of human degradation in bondage with the depiction of the much more horrible psychic deformation in the human soul has an even stronger, eerier effect because the ghosts of the past incur more dangerous, long-standing damage upon the individual's psyche. I would conclude with the fact that Morrison does not decipher the trauma of slavery caused from without by putting a pictorial emphasis upon the brutality of human bondage. Although *Beloved* is rich in references to such brutality, these references are always seen through the memories of the victims, since the writer is interested in the variety of intersubjective traumatic experiences and the ways they are held in abeyance in the memory of the survivors – sometimes against their will, sometimes in accord with their innermost, unspoken needs to remain sane. For her, as an Afro-American writer, the problem of remembering the "unspeakable" and the test of "rememory-ing"[24] the pain are important, decisive steps in solving the problem of "healing from within."

Sethe: her story

It is a truism in psychoanalysis, but also very simple life wisdom, that one has to pass on the story of suffering to somebody. It does not matter how bitter this story is or how many conflicting and subversive stories are actually hidden within. One has to pass the story on as a significant step in the mourning process, in order to ensure the recogni-

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23. Carden.

24. "Rememory-ing" as term is used frequently by Sethe, and it is worthwhile to use it here instead of "remembering," because "rememory-ing," in my view, denotes exactly that significant, repetitive recollection of memories, and their even deeper embedding into the human mind. Maybe in a somewhat indiscreet narratological veer, I would suggest that "rememory-ing" includes exactly the concentric narratological and figural embedding characteristic of the *myse en abyme* effect. Thus, memories, and especially the traumatic ones, are always narrated (although not necessarily voiced) in a highly expressionistic language which plays around a recurrent theme/motif; on the other hand, the figural "rememory-ing" can be activated by a line of seemingly unrelated objects (figures).

tion of her/his human existence after the breakdown caused by the trauma. The individual story, it seems, is the *différance* which can produce a "ripple" in an otherwise endless, somehow *atemporal* social discourse, or "show how historical agency is transformed through the signifying process; how the historical event is represented in a discourse that is *somehow beyond control*."[25] And yet in the last chapter of *Beloved* Morrison emphatically uses the statement "It was not a story to pass on" as if to remind us that the ghosts of the past, imprinted in the memories of suffering, could hardly be contained in a single unified story. The psychic history of slavery, or any traumatic event for that matter, is hardly conceivable as a linear story which builds upon what scholars call "ordinary or narrative memory."[26] In narrative memory the individual uses mental constructs to make sense of experiences, but in trauma such straightforward sequencing is hardly possible. In trauma, the pain, which is inextricable from the experience, finds vent only in the repetitive, symptomatic return of the repressed:

> Suffering is voiceless in the metaphorical sense that silence becomes a sign of something ultimately unknowable. It implies an experience not just disturbing or repugnant but inaccessible to understanding. In this sense, suffering encompasses an irreducible nonverbal dimension that we cannot know – not at least in any normal mode of knowing – because it happens in a realm beyond language.[27]

The articulation of memories of suffering through breaking of linguistic boundaries or in the silence of the traumatically arrested speech is an expedient instance of a form of self-articulation typical of modernity. As Freeman writes, for example, the self no longer relates to modernity in terms of being a focal point of discourse, but in terms of being a radiation, or "destination."[28] In her novel *Beloved*, Morrison explores the loss of the unified self in the specific context of slavery, which deprives equally men and women of their humanity. However, the striving after narrating stories of what has happened to the individual, thus "rememory-ing" the past in its grandiose abnormality, is already an attempt to match and "glue" together the bits and pieces of the split self in the present that the novel depicts.

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25. Bhabha, p. 12.

26. B. A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, "The Intrusive Past: the Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma," *American Imago* 4 (1991) 425–454, p. 427

27. David Morris, "About Suffering: Voice, Genre, and Moral Community," *Daedalus* 1 (1996) 25–45, p. 27.

28. Mark Freeman, *Rewriting the Self* (London: Routledge, 1993).

The story of Sethe and the infanticide she commits is only one aspect of the appalling power of the dark and amorphous slave past to make a nightmare of the present as well. It is one subtext in the array of subtexts present in *Beloved*, yet it rightfully dominates the narrative space of the novel with its accumulated referential power. Besides the haunting ghost of the infanticide which literally inhabits the house at 124 in the shape of Beloved, for Sethe there is a much more serious job to be done, the job of "beating back the past" as a whole.[29] If the dark past is fought off as a battle, the future hardly holds any promise either. Thus what remains of the present for Sethe is a continuous struggle to come to terms with her own life and tragic destiny. In other words, the present, as Bhabha points out,

> can no longer be simply envisaged as a break or a bonding with the past and the future, no longer a synchronic presence: our proximate self-presence, our public image, comes to be revealed for its discontinuities, its inequalities.[30]

The history of Sethe is revealed through gradation, fragmentation, and symbolic transference, until it finally stands in a synecdochal correlation to the intresubjective histories of the invisible millions of African Americans. Thus, as do all of the characters in *Beloved*, Sethe tells at once a private and communal story, a story of slavery and escape into freedom that is still a form of slavery, which continues to be such for a long time in post-Civil War America. As paradoxical as it might sound, the escape into freedom turns into an escape into a new form of slavery in the post-Civil War present. Thus the 1860s present in Cincinnati, Ohio, is just as tormenting as the slavery of the not-so-remote past, for in the present, physical bondage is simply substituted by an even more rigid social one, in which the haunting ghost of slavery still precludes the healing of the ex-slave's psyche.

Morrison's choice is to get deep into the psychologically coercive forces that make Sethe "fall down from the clouds" of the desired present and to explore the haunting memories of the past, rather than to narrate a story merely enumerating already too well-known atrocities. While pain and suffering surely linger on the pages of *Beloved* as talked about or remembered by Sethe, Paul D, Baby Suggs, or Stamp Paid, the writer focuses on the intersubjective transferences of the "impossible" legacy of the slave past into the present, and the dual human need to remember and to forget the memories of that past. As Morrison makes clear, this is an extremely problematic, even threatening

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29. Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: A Plume Book, 1988), p. 73. All parenthesised references are to this edition.
30. Bhabha, p. 4.

need, because it estranges Sethe and the rest of the characters from the traditional "moral community"[31] of African Americans in post-Civil War America, who are, naturally, most willing to forget the past, or rather, to turn their backs (literally, maimed backs) on it. Thus, the group of African American good women, who come to prevent "past errors from taking possession of the present" (256) at 124 Bluestone Road by exorcising Beloved, make a step towards rejecting the past, while Sethe gladly lives with the ghosts from that past. Put in a more poetic language, this particular need to live with the ghosts brings forth for Sethe and her kin that "second" kind of loneliness about which Morrison writes in *Beloved*:

> There is a loneliness that can be rocked. Arms crossed, knees drawn up; holding, holding on, this motion, unlike a ship's, smoothes and contains the rocker. It's an inside kind – wrapped tight like skin. Then there is a loneliness that roams. No rocking can hold it down. It is alive, on its own. A dry and spreading thing that makes the sound of one's own feet going seem to come from a far-off place (274).

Sethe's ability to face and live through these two kinds of loneliness is undoubtedly the kernel of the novel. As a philosophic focus, this ability bespeaks the ultimate power of the individual to pass master the trial of social exclusion, and, more importantly, to survive the endless trial of "rememory-ing" one's past. Hence, in *Beloved* we find the recurrent use and play upon the themes of memory, remembrance, forgetting, and already the chronic "disability" to forget. An impressive instance of the latter "disease" is the conversation between Baby Suggs and Sethe:

> Baby Suggs rubbed her eye-brows. "My first-born. All I can remember of her is how she loved the burned bottom of bread. Can you beat that? Eight children and that's all I remember."
> "That's all you let yourself remember," Sethe has told her, but she was down to one herself – one alive, that is. . . As for the rest, she worked hard to remember as close to nothing as was safe. Unfortunately her brain was devious (6).

The hidden aspect of this exchange is the question of the scope of human memory, and whether and how one can re-adjust it, in order to remedy one's psyche. In other words, how do we achieve forgetfulness? This problem is poignantly developed throughout the

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31. The term is coined by the philosopher Tom Regan in *The Thee Generation: Reflections on the Coming Revolution* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).

novel in terms of the impossible suppression of traumatic memories, and the problematic existence they entail for the individual's future. According to Derrida, for example,

> Memory is the name of what is no longer only a mental "capacity" oriented toward one of the three modes of the present, the past present, which could be dissociated from the present and the future present. Memory projects itself toward the future, and it constitutes the presence of the present.[32]

Morrison, then, demonstrates that there is no placebo effect of forgetting, and, equally, no remembrance can effectively silence a sore memory which sometimes outcries the deed itself. Thus, the rememory-ing of the past is the breaking up of the present, and, equally, breaking up with the utopic future of forgetting. In other words, by breaking up with temporality as a linear, bounded inevitability, Sethe enters a kind of intertemporal space, where sharing of the past *is* possible.

I would like to suggest that the voices of the protagonists in *Beloved* are engaged in intricate, intersubjective dialogues with each other, while constantly "remembering it all," and trying to communicate their past experiences to the others, and/or trying to forget the phantoms of the past. Thus Paul D's appearance in the house on Bluestone Road, "as if to punish her further for her terrible memory" (6), is a key moment for the decoding of Sethe's hectic existence at 124. She is desperately trying to put up with the trauma of the infanticide, a trauma in which she is both a subject and an object. Like any liminal experience, it both suffocates with its presence and, equally, stifles when not "there." In an effort to forget, yet giving in to remembering the act of murder, Sethe contemplates her life while

> . . . resigned to her rebellious brain. Why was there nothing it refused? No misery, no regret, no hateful picture too rotten to accept? Like a greedy child it snatched up everything. Just once, could it say, No thank you? I just ate and can't hold another bite? But my greedy brain says, Oh thanks, I'd love more – so I add more. And no sooner than I do, there is no stopping. . . I have other things to do: worry, for example, about tomorrow, about Denver, about Beloved, about age and sickness, not to speak of love (70).

It becomes obvious from the extended quotation above that Sethe's memory undergoes allegorical somatic transformation: it has a life of its own, feeding on Sethe's life, drinking the energy which enables her to live in the present. For memory is always

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32. Jacques Derrida, "The Art of Memories" in *Memories for Paul de Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

a memory of the past which is energized by the clash with the present, and the site of this clash in the case of *Beloved* is the maternal body. Hence, for Sethe as a mother what is at stake is the ability to overcome memory but, paradoxically, without losing this memory, and, simultaneously, to survive in, and against, the rememory-ing of the past. The resolution of all this bounds her to yet another marginal status of an outsider in a community that wants to learn to forget. In temporal terms her marginalization appears at the intersection of past and present, thus Sethe is naturally "immune" to the future, to her "the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay" (42). I am tempted to connect her "immunity" again to her slave past which negates any conception of a life beyond the limitation of the very palpable physical present:

> But her brain was not interested in the future. Loaded with the past and hungry for more. It left her no room to imagine, let alone plan for, the next day... Other people went crazy, why couldn't she? Other people's brains stopped, turned around and went on to something new... What a relief to stop it right there. Close. Shut... (70)

At this point I would consider defining Sethe's state of mind as a state of hyperamnesia, which in medical terms means, "unexpected amplifications or recrudescences of memory, experiences in which mnemonic contents that had seemed annihilated are 'resuscitated' and 'regain their intensity.' "[33] In this sense the critical proliferation of traumatic memories in Sethe is an outstanding case of hyperamnesia, since it also directly entails Sethe's problematic relation to the present, in which, after eighteen years, she is still the isolato, stained with her baby's blood. Is it strange that, as Terdiman suggests, "if life is painful, its integral reproduction in hyperamnesic recollection can hardly transform it into triumph"?[34]

One is tempted, then, to interpret Sethe's "downpour" of memories in terms of the Freudian storage model, which "sees repression as an unconscious psychic defence mechanism shielding victims from knowledge of traumatic events."[35] However, I would argue that this is not the case with Sethe, since, instead of repressing it, she is constantly, although unconsciously, recalling the traumatic experience in the literal sense of the phrase, i.e. she embodies it in the language of memory, which helps her out in telling the story of suffering. For example, such re-living of the past is her

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33. Theodule Ribot, *Diseases of Memory* (Washington, DC: University Publications of America, 1977), quoted in Terdiman, p. 198.
34. Terdiman, p. 198.
35. Pamela Ballinger, "The Culture of Survivors," *History and Memory* 1 (1998), p. 102.

repetitive returns to the haunting memories of the white boys who have "stolen her milk," raping her literally as a woman, and metaphorically as a life-provider for her baby. Or Sethe's recurrent memories of Sweet Home, at the same time blood-chilling and cunningly misleading as the name of the place, which only *then and there*, in the farm itself, could produce the delusive effect of family and belonging upon the needy slave's mind. And most of all the memories of Beloved, her enchanted free floating in time and space as the baby's ghost and its harsh roaming through Sethe's life as the African girl of the Middle Passage. In this sense, as Kristeva argues,

> Naming suffering, exalting it, dissecting it into its smallest components – that is doubtless a way to curb mourning. To revel in it at times, but also to go beyond it, moving on to another form, not so scorching, more and more perfunctory. . .[36]

I would rather agree and discuss Sethe's memory excess and the saturation of the present with the past in terms of a necessary "naming" in mourning, since Luckhurst states that "mourning requires a proper name . . . a set of reiterable social rituals and a structure of familial memorialisation."[37]For Sethe, the set of reiterable social rituals can be transcribed in the on-going struggle with the ghost of Beloved, and later with its incarnation, the African girl, while the structure of familial memoralisation can be traced to Denver's spiritual crush on Beloved, and successful overcoming of it. In an extended "familial" version, the latter structure can be related also to Paul D's and Stamp Paid's coming to terms with Beloved. Thus, in an act of symbolic baptism, Sethe literally names her dead baby "Beloved," so that she can later relate to the ghost and call it its own name:

> Ten minutes for seven letters. With another ten could she have gotten "Dearly" too? She had not thought to ask him and it bothered her still that it might have been possible – that for twenty minutes, a half hour, say, she could have had the whole thing, every word she heard the preacher say at the funeral (and all there was to say, surely) engraved on her baby's head-stone: Dearly Beloved. But what she got, settled for, was the one word that mattered. . . (5)

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36. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, tr. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 97.

37. Roger Luckhurst, " 'Impossible Mourning' in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," *Critique* 4 (1996), p. 244.

In the act of prostituting her body – already her *own* body – Sethe finds also the symbolic voice to name her child: giving away its dead body, yet never "giving away" its name either to the engraver, or to the appalled community. While to a certain extent the other two elements of the mourning, the set of reiterable social rituals and the structure of familial memoralisation, are still available to Sethe, it is very much the coming to linguistic terms with the "unnameable" ghost that appeases her mind in an exceptionally odd way. On the one hand, this symbolic act of baptism for Sethe means partial reconciliation with the terrorizing past, while on the other hand, from that point on, the ghost of Beloved will be easily called forth in the present, having once undergone the rite of baptism, which has transformed "it" into the *Beloved* one.

This point ties to my interpretation above of Sethe's hyperamnesic state of mind. What finally appears on the surface is, namely, the recurrent clash of two questions: one is, "What is 'me' now?" and the second one, "What happened to the 'me' in the past?" Both of these questions inject Sethe's life with an existential uncertainty of a more complicated nature than the uncertainty of mere physical existence in slavery. In my view, what makes her memory so uncompromising and unforgiving is the lack of secure self-anchoring into a meaningful present that can effectively fight back the more dangerous ghosts from the past. Such a lack of self-anchoring, on the other hand, is what makes Sethe's haunting memories shared, intersubjective communal memories:

> Ghosts are the signals of atrocities, marking sites of an untold violence, a traumatic past whose traces remain to attest to the fact of a lack of testimony. A haunting does not initiate a story; it is sign of blockage of story, a hurt that has not been honored by a memorializing narrative. The geography of *Beloved* is punctured by traumas that have not been bound into a story. . .[38]

Thus we can explain Sethe's "circling around" the story of her infanticide, and the inability to communicate it to Paul D, or to Denver. As Sethe realizes, for example in connection to Paul D, there are "things neither knew about the other – the things neither had word-shapes for" (99). Even when she speaks up, assuming the role of narrator in the structure of the novel, Sethe is speaking in a stream-of-consciousness mode, defying narrative schemes of temporal causality. In other words, as Wyatt argues, "There are no gaps in Sethe's world, no absences to be filled in with

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38. Luckhurst, p. 247.

signifiers; everything is there, an oppressive plenitude."[39] It is not a mere game of chance that Sethe constantly reminds herself and the rest of the protagonists that there is no way out of rememory-ing "things" from the past, the things that could spiritually kill oneself with the immediacy of their phantasmic presence or, equally, with the absence from one's memory. Therefore, she says,

> What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw, is still out there. Right in the place where it happened. . . (36)

Obviously, Sethe is more of a mediator of memories than a proper storyteller in this case: being a woman still haunted by the past, she is symbolically "pregnant" with stories of that unspeakable past. But then again, Sethe is preoccupied with the resurrection of a significant loss into the present, and, therefore, she neglects the trivia of what can be deemed "normal existence" by her community. For example, speaking to Denver about the past in Sweet Home, Sethe makes the following point:

> Even if the whole farm – every tree and grass blade of it dies… if you go there – you who never was there… and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again… Because even though it's all over – all over and done with – it's going to always be there waiting for you (36).

The process of rememory-ing and the obverse process of forgetting are securely interwoven into Sethe's mind, and, I would suggest, also inscribed on her body. In the literal sense of the word, she bears on her back the stigma of the slave past, yet what is fascinating in this case is the different interpretations of the monstrous blot on her back by the various characters in *Beloved*. What the others actually see and interpret is lived experience for Sethe: the runaway white girl, Amy Denver, compares the intricate "design" on Sethe's back to a chokecherry tree; Paul D sees a sculpture, "the decorative work of an ironsmith"; Baby Suggs compares the scar to a "pattern of roses" (17). An interesting common denominator in these three comparisons, or rather poetic simile for the ultimately debilitating slave experience, is their reference to something exquisite and beautiful, void of the opaqueness of human suffering. Although naturally Sethe cannot see the tree, or the roses, or the sculpture on her back, she carries the imprint of it through life, and it invests every single experience with the shapeless, shadowy presence of painful memories.

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39. Jean Wyatt, "Giving Body to the Word: The Maternal Symbolic in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," *PMLA*, Vol. 108, Nr. 3 (1993), p. 477.

What *Beloved* makes clear is that there is no stasis, no temporal permanence for any of the characters. It seems to me that Sethe is the one who defies most conspicuously any hypothetical possibility of "being the same," for she is in the process of making herself visible and heard, if not through active social performance, then through the gaze of the people closest to her.[40] If Sethe exists on the margins of the margin itself, i.e. living on the divide between slavery and freedom, she needs to master a language that can speak about the liminal experiences of the haunting past. Speaking about the past is an act towards recuperation, an act that Luckhurst calls "possible mourning" which means "remembering to forget to work through, interiorize, and then pass over. Impossible mourning is forgetting to remember. . ."[41] For Sethe, to achieve in language such "possible mourning" is to embrace the idea of herself as a maternal body with access to the realm of the semiotic, the domain of the fluid maternal language that defies the rules and regulations of the symbolic order.[42] Without claiming that Sethe's relationship to the semiotic domain is an absolutely liberating, "positive" one,[43] for her the appropriation of the semiotic is the only way out of the vicious circle of the past which inhibits life in the present. Thus, being marginalized by the symbolic, Sethe is at least the sole proprietor of the semiotic language, which not only voices the maternal cry of pain and loss, but also functions as a viable transmitter of private history into the public realm. She is, therefore, involved in a complex psychic process of transformation already suggested by her specific way of speaking about the past, or, rather, of entertaining silence about it. Such a silence, though, is impregnated with a bizarre energy:

> Discrete quantities of energy move through the body of the subject who is not yet constituted as such and, in the course of his development, they are arranged according to the various constraints imposed upon this body – always already involved in a semiotic process. . .[44]

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40. For various reasons in the different stages of her life, Sethe is seldom among "other" people from the community, and her very close kin are the ones to exercise that formative gaze on her. Although Denver also makes a significant step to get out of 124 Bluestone Road and find a job in Cincinnati, she has no first-hand experience of bondage.

41. Luckhurst, p. 250.

42. For a detailed analysis of the semiotic and the symbolic see Kristeva.

43. As Kristeva also argues, for adults to inhabit permanently the realm of the semiotic means to live in a psychotic state.

44. Kristeva, p. 25.

This energy, then, opens the door to that important re-structuring of the self, or, in the case of the former slave Sethe, the creation of a concept of self. The structure of this new self has a double origin: first, it is physical, because it originates in her position as a woman and mother, abused, raped, and persecuted; second, the social origin is connected to her position as an individual in a slave society which *a priori* denigrates women, and black women especially. As Morrison acutely points out in an interview, "The trauma of racism is, for the racist and the victim, the severe fragmentation of the self, and has always seemed to me a cause (not a symptom) of psychosis. . ."[45] In this way the specific language of Sethe, as a racial mother coming to terms with traumas, is an escape from psychosis and fragmentation; it is a subversive act of keeping at bay the violence of a symbolic order that has eliminated any possibility of self-constitution in the past, and still infiltrates the present in the 1860s. That is how Sethe, still doubting her own selfhood, responds with a question to Paul D's words:

> ". . . me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow… You your best thing, Sethe. You are."
> "Me? Me?" (273)

If we believe in Morrison's words that modern life begins with slavery, *Beloved* is an extended metaphor for the known and unknown atrocities hidden in the cradle of American modernity. In terms of history, I think that Morrison as a novelist works towards an ultimate defamiliarization of historical temporalities through hybridization of the narrative, in order to produce a discourse of cultural difference that speaks of the comparatively recent unspeakable past, and its imprint in the still problematic present.[46] Breaking up temporal linearity, then, is a viable way towards articulation of the sense of self in the testing present of post-Civil War America, through "rememory-ing" and narration of the scattered liminal experiences from the past. Far from being a complete dissolution of the traumatic past for her character, Sethe, such a state of "in-between-ness" – living between the past and the present – for the writer means a continuous heterochronous process which makes "possible mourning" and healing from within work. This process has to cure in personal and social terms through finding words to voice the trauma, as much as to stay forever in the memory of her characters, and especially in the memory of Sethe.

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45. Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature" in *Toni Morrison*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea, 1990), p. 214.

46. By "problematic present" I mean the existing racial and ethnic tension still to be found in American society.

Lan Dong

Turning Japanese, Turning Japanese American

David Mura's *Memoirs of a Sansei*

This article examines the identity of the Sansei (third-generation Japanese Americans) as connected to their place of heritage – Japan. Focusing on David Mura's *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* (1991), we shall explore how a Sansei writer gains further understanding and realization of his ethnic identity as a Japanese American in multi-ethnic America through the re-established connection between him and his place of cultural origin. Mura, born and raised in Midwest, recollects his experience in Japan supported by a US/Japan Creative Artist Exchange Fellowship in 1984. Mura's book ends with his realization that Japan allows him to see himself, America, and the world "from a perspective that was not white American." My argument considers his procedure of "turning Japanese" as simultaneously a process of turning Japanese American. Along the thesis of the Sansei's identity construction, the following questions will be addressed: (1) starting his trip as a self-identified American, how is Mura challenged and therefore forced to reconsider his identity during his one-year residence in Japan; (2) how does he pursue his connection with Japan that has been absent in his childhood; and (3) how does such reconnection profoundly influence his understanding of identity; namely to change his self-identification from an American to a Japanese American?

The Sansei, third-generation Japanese Americans, came of age during the 1960s, a decade of cultural and political turmoil as well as the emergence of the Asian American movement in the United States. According to Takahashi (1997), scholars' "efforts to explain the changes in political orientation and ethnic consciousness have largely focused on identity and culture."[1] What they have overlooked are the negotiations with which third generation Japanese Americans continually wrestle in forming their

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1. Jere Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), p. 156.

identities by means of the diverse input they have received from their Japanese ancestry along with American culture.

Jere Takahashi and Yasuko Takezawa's studies and discussions have addressed the identity of the Sansei, as it is particularly related to the redress movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Takahashi notes a different political orientation for the Sansei, compared to the Issei and Nisei (first- and second-generation Japanese Americans). "[P]ersonal problems became the focus of collective discussion and political interaction" as the Sansei's life paths "intersected with a variety of social movements."[2] Meanwhile, Takezawa's sociological fieldwork indicates that in relation to the internment, the majority of the Sansei "felt more anger than embarrassment, anger at the injustice of the government and the racism in American society."[3] In order to reach a deeper understanding of the Sansei's involvement in the redress movement, one therefore should consider this group's pursuit for ethnic American identity as a process of negotiation between the "double messages" received from their Japanese heritage and from their American life. More recent research on identity of the Sansei highlights a tendency that "[t]he retention of 'Japaneseness' has been selective and new forms of ethnicity have emerged."[4] Reconnection with Japan, their place of ancestry, appears to be one among several means in the Sansei's preserving or recovering Japaneseness during the course of constructing their multi-cultural, multi-ethnic identity in contemporary United States.

In order to explore in depth the Sansei's formation of their ethnic American identity as a balancing act between diverse Japanese and American cultures, we shall focus on a case in point – the writer David Mura and his book entitled *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* (1991). To be more specific, this article will examine this Japanese American writer's struggle over identity construction when his relation to his place of cultural origin, Japan, is re-established. David Mura – a poet, creative nonfiction writer, essayist, critic, and screenwriter – is a Sansei, whose grandparents migrated from Japan to the United States in the early twentieth century and whose American-born parents were interned during World War II. Mura has made

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2. Takahashi, p. 161.

3. Yasuko Takezawa, *Breaking the Silence: Redress and Japanese American Ethnicity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 159.

4. David J. O'Brien and Stephen S. Fugita, *The Japanese American Experience* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 134. On this, also see: Sylvia Yanagisako, *Transforming the Past: Tradition and Kinship among Japanese Americans* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985) and S. Frank Miyamoto, "Problems of Interpersonal Style among the Nisei," *Amerasia Journal* 13 (1986-1987) 29-45.

significant contributions to the growing field of Asian American poetry and has actively participated in representing issues concerning identity, ethnicity, and cultural relations in multi-ethnic American society in literature. In his memoir, winner of the 1991 Josephine Miles Book Award from the Oakland PEN and one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the year, Mura chronicles his experiences and consequent reflections during his one-year residence in Japan, funded by a U.S./Japan Creative Artist Exchange Fellowship in 1984. In the process, Mura recollects his childhood removed from Japanese culture, his avoidance of any association with Japan, and his uneasiness about being an American of color.

Arriving in Japan as a self-identified American, Mura is compelled to recover his connection with his family's homeland that had been missing during his midwestern childhood. The year in Tokyo thus challenges and forces him to reconsider his identity. As Mura himself admits, "Japan had forced me to confront certain questions of identity I'd long avoided."[5] Such rethinking and re-understanding profoundly influence his perception of being American and lead to the change of his self-identification from an American to his embrace of the classification of Japanese American. The memoir ends with the author moving back to the United States with the awareness that Japan allowed him to see himself, America, and the world "from a perspective that was not white American" (368).[6]

We might argue that the development of "turning Japanese," the title of the memoir as well as its focus, is essentially a process of Mura's turning Japanese American with full consciousness. Such a critical journey deserves further examination so that one can uncover the intricate routes underlying Mura's coming to realize and contemplate his Japanese American identity, in which he tries "to open a certain space in American poetry, to increase in complexity the ways we consider our art form, and to make connections between poetry and the world around it that others might not see or want to admit."[7] Through scrutinizing Mura's life story in Japan, we shall explore: (a) how Mura gains further understanding of himself as a third generation Japanese American writer in multi-cultural America through the insightful reconsideration of his Japaneseness; and (b) how his trip to Japan influences the

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5. David Mura, *Where the Body Meets Memory: An Odyssey of Race, Sexuality, and Identity* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), p. 7.

6. All parenthesized references are to this edition: David Mura, *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1991).

7. David Mura, *Song for Uncle Tom, Tonto, and Mr. Moto: Poetry and Identity* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), p. 2.

poet's development from trying to shed his skin color in order to be an equal to white poets to promoting a multi-ethnic field of American poetry.

Darrel Montero draws the conclusion from his sociology research on the changing patterns of ethnic affiliation over three Japanese American generations that:

> [F]or almost every indicator of the maintenance of the Japanese American community, we have seen that the Sansei have moved further away from the ethnic community than the Nisei. Furthermore, this process is particularly accelerated among the exogamous Sansei. It seems likely that the Sansei have one foot in both cultures and may be fully accepted by neither. In this sense they would indeed be marginal members of either group.[8]

Thus, before Mura's one-year stay in Japan, his life had taken the common route for a Sansei. Long before his marriage to a Caucasian woman, he had become estranged from the "root" culture, from which his grandparents had emigrated. His Issei grandmothers had passed away; his grandfathers had moved back to Japan and disconnected from the younger generations. Moreover, his Nisei parents' generation had already become "all American." Outwardly for the convenience of pronunciation, Mura's father had changed his name from "Katsuji Uyemura" first to "Tom Katsuji Mura" and then to "Tom K. Mura"; his mother's name had also been altered from "Teruko" to a more American-sounding form: "Terry." According to Mura's recollection, his parents' life had been an exemplified American dream story: over the years the Muras had moved "from the lower-class neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago to the working-class area near Wrigley Field to the middle-class suburb of Morton Grove and then to the upper-middle-class suburbs of Northbrook and Vernon Hills" (311). No connection with Japanese culture seemed to be attributed to this rising path of a family's success, as far as the author remembers.

Certain Japanese food, served together with American cuisine at family gatherings on holidays, is probably the only indicator left that marks the Mura family's history and difference. Yet young Mura never associated such food with the actual locale where his forebears dwelled decades ago. His younger self did not consciously have a place for the country of Japan to be related to his present life in America. Nor did he enjoy Japanese pickles, *mochi* (rice cake), *futomaki* (vegetable sushi), *mazegohan* (vegetables with rice), and *teriyaki*. As a boy, Mura usually loaded his plate with fried chicken before he sat in front of the television and watched baseball games

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8. Darrel Montero, *Japanese Americans: Changing Patterns of Ethnic Affiliation over Three Generations* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), p. 75.

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with his cousins. From the vantage point of adulthood, Mura realizes all he had noticed back then is that these foods were different from what he liked best – McDonald's, pizza, hot dogs, tuna-fish salad (8). Interestingly, the visual distinction between Mura's relatives and (white) people in school and neighborhood never entered his mind. In the end, it was the Fourth of July, Labor Day, and Christmas that his family celebrated (8). Given such experiences of Mura's insistence on his Americanness while growing up, it is not surprising to note that at the time of winning the Artist Exchange Fellowship he does not feel the ecstasy of "an ardent pilgrim, longing to return to the land of his grandparents, but more like a contestant on a quiz show who finds himself winning a trip to Bali or the Bahamas" (9). With compelling frankness, Mura even confesses that he wished at that moment that the prize were for Paris instead of Tokyo.

Paul Spickard, in his study on the formation and transformation of Japanese Americans as an ethnic group, addresses the estrangement of younger generations from Japanese culture. "Just as Nisei were more likely than Issei to live in non-Japanese neighborhoods and to interact socially with non-Japanese Americans, so Sansei were more likely than their parents to operate outside a Japanese American sphere."[9] Mura is part of this trend. Consciously or unconsciously, ever since childhood he has shunned cultural connections with Japan. In school, young Mura's yearning was not to be singled out because of his skin color. He was proud that he did not speak Japanese, a language even his Nisei parents, aunts, and uncles had not used in their American life and had quite limited knowledge of as well. As Mura self-identifies in his memoirs, being raised in a primarily Jewish upper-middle-class suburb in Midwest, he knew more about Jewish than Japanese culture. When Mura was a teenager, Philip Roth was his favorite author.

Nonetheless Mura always found it difficult to fit into his surroundings. He, at the end, was not a Jew and probably more important not a Caucasian, which caused young Mura to feel awkward and socially backward. He never acquired confidence beyond the classroom, where he could present a top academic performance along with most Asian American youngsters. This growing otherness pushed him toward a desperate edge during adolescence. He could not get a date with girls in his Jewish high school. Most of these girls were not allowed to go out with "goyim," and Mura's appearance made it impossible for him to pass as a Jew. Frustrated at this time of puberty, Mura rebuked his Japanese American identity that, he felt, relegated him to

9. Paul R. Spickard, *Japanese Americans: The Formation and Transformations of An Ethnic Group* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), p. 145.

secondary status, hindered his equality with other boys, and therefore ruined his attractiveness to girls (75). Being caught in the dilemma of being American but marked as less American by his skin color, Mura suffered anxiety throughout his adolescence and young adulthood. Such restlessness later developed into an obsession with and poetic imaginings over the obscure past of his ancestors, a past about which his grandparents migrated and about which his parents refused to talk.

The moment when Mura stepped into the terminal at Narita airport in Tokyo, he was exhausted by the fourteen-hour flight yet suddenly exhilarated, frightened, and astonished by all the faces at customs that looked like his; for the first time in his life his appearance comprised the visual majority (11, 148). Despite an intense language program as a preparation for his trip, Mura struggled to survive in Tokyo with his broken Japanese and in the process started to see his situation as a Japanese American in a different way. He came to realize that the Japanese viewed him differently from the way they saw his Caucasian wife, even though they were both American by nationality. To them he was not and would never be considered a *Hakujin* (white person) and hence not wholly American according to the common conception. At the same time, however, for Mrs. Hayashi, his Japanese tutor in Tokyo, Mura was "an odd version of a Japanese" (49), who had an Americanized Japanese family name and barely spoke Japanese except for some phrases and words he had rushed to learn before his trip. Mura's discovery of his Japaneseness that had been absent for years along with his newly established connection with the surrounding Japanese culture turned into ways for Mura to see a new direction for his identity pursuit. For him, identity was not a given nor a fixed concept, but something he had to piece together from the past and the present, from both Japaneseness and Americanness.

Learning to enjoy Japanese food was perhaps the first thing Mura found that he needed to accomplish, simply for survival. At first, there was nostalgia for hot dogs and pizza. Nevertheless, after a while the varied and healthy diet of Japanese cuisine became his way of consuming Japanese culture with pleasure. If digging into the culinary culture was possible to accomplish via cumulative visits to various restaurants and through improving his knowledge of the Japanese language, then the search for a deeper understanding of Japanese social life and customs proved to be a much harder mission. Befriended by Japanese artists, writers, and union activists, Mura obtained certain insights into Japanese culture, both the traditional and the avant-garde. Fascinated by Japanese performing arts, Mura became a fan of Noh, the traditional performing arts, coming to love "its steady ritual slowness, its otherworldly chants, the way it took you into another consciousness" (135). He also turned into a disciple of Butoh, a frontier art form full of abstract gestures. He commuted

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for hours and ran the risk of being lost in Tokyo's complicated train system in order to attend classes to learn Butoh and Noh under the instruction of the masters. In a way, this learning process became a ritual practice through which he internalized Japanese culture, as he later realizes.

Shortly after he settled down in Tokyo, Mura was overwhelmed by unfamiliarity, the sharp contrast between cultures, and by the uproar of his feelings. In reaction to these factors, he turned fervently to taking notes and making diary entries. These acts of documentation reassured him that his earlier impressions and emotions would not be covered nor erased by later ones when he was confronted with diverse aspects of Japanese society or when he reflected and responded to things differently as time passed by. Mura's journals turned out to be the source material upon which his memoirs were built and crystallized. Although these pieces seem to be disparate bits and pieces from Mura's Japanese life, they do, however, share common themes: the author's predicament of being both Japanese and American but paradoxically not fitting into either group along with his personal literary exploration for a resolution to this quandary.

If before 1984 the author could at least enjoy the coziness of being home in America (though with his anxiety and confusion), the accumulated exposure to Japanese culture dispelled Mura's notion of an American home and hence aggravated his homelessness. At the time of his stay in Japan, Mura had not fully realized how much Japan was pulling him back into his past, and how far he was drifting from the certainties of his American life (115). Nearly half way through the exchange program, Mura became aware, however, that America seemed distant, distasteful, no longer his home (180). His landlocked Midwest could not console his homeless feeling any longer. The nostalgic longing for a home no longer had a physical location upon which to cast his yearning. Instead, he apprehended "a sense of severing," as if he could hear the ties to his old life breaking and something was coming apart in the process (180). At this point, this Sansei of letters experienced more and more a strong loss of balance, "a floating, as if I were adrift at sea, out of sight of land for so long that the sight of land, once thought to be so reassuring, so absorbing, seems frightening and strange, an impossibility" (180).

On the other hand, Mura could not find any niche in Japan into which he would truly fit and feel comfortable (225). Ultimately, he had to confess; "[e]ither I was American or I was one of the homeless, one of the searchers for what John Berger calls a world culture. But I was not Japanese" (370). The reconnection with Japan did not designate a replacement or an abandonment of Mura's American consciousness. After all, Japaneseness and Americanness was not a choice of "either or." For a Sansei writer like Mura, he wanted to have both. Gaining the recognition that for people with a dual cultural heritage "identity is a political and economic matter, not just a personal mat-

ter," he contends, "I do not feel as bound now by my national identity, do not feel that being an American somehow separates me from the rest of the world" (370, 368). He needed to continue his literary journey in search of a multi-ethnic identity for himself, for the Sansei, and for contemporary American poetry through uncovering complexities concerning race in a multi-cultural United States.

Parental silence about experiences in the internment camps is by no means isolated to the Nisei. David O'Brien and Stephen Fugita's sociological study shows that the majority of the Sansei interviewees "had to piece together bits of stories and fragmented behaviors to get a picture of their parents' experience. Usually, it was spoken about only among family and Japanese friends."[10] Likewise, on the account of the internment, David Mura's "mother says she was too young to remember the camps," while his father tells him nothing but "he had to work in his father's nursery in L.A. before the war, when they got to he camps, he could go out and play baseball after school."[11] Due to his second-generation Japanese American parents' silence about the past, Mura was haunted by feelings of being disconnected from history.

It is through poetry that Mura explores the obscure past and reconstructs the migratory experience of his grandparents and the internment of his parents. Driven by his yearning for the truth, the truth of the past, he seeks a link connecting different generations in his poem "Grandfather and Grandmother in Love":

> Now I will ask for one true word beyond
> Betrayal, that creaks and buoys like the bedsprings
> Used by the bodies that begot the bodies that begot me.[12]

In another poem, titled "Issei: Song of the First Years in America," Mura envisions his grandmother's voyage across the Pacific – a point of departure for the Mura family's long journey as immigrants:

> Our hair in chignons, we crowd down the planks,
> Our legs still wobbly from weeks at sea.
> I do not expect him to be
> handsome as the photo
> but this is not even the same man.[13]

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10. O'Brien and Fugita, p. 77.
11. Mura, *Where Body Meets Memory*, p. 6.
12. David Mura, *After We Lost Our Way* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989), p. 3.
13. David Mura, *The Colors of Desire* (New York and London: Anchor Books, 1995), p. 15.

An attempt to challenge his parents' silence, Mura imagines his mother's voice talking to her son in his poem, titled "An Argument: On 1942":

> – No, no, no, she tells me. Why bring it back?
> The camps are over. (Also overly dramatic.)
> Forget *shoyu*-stained *furoshiki*, *mochi* on a stick:
> You're like a terrier, David, gnawing a bone, an old, old trick. . .
>
> David, it was so long ago – how useless it seems. . .[14]

The mother's constant denial and evasion of the past intensifies the son's uneasiness about the erased history and his strong urge to recover it. Writing about his Issei grandparents and Nisei parents in poetry is Mura's means of filling in the gaps through research and imagination. Driven to anxiety, his first collection of poetry – *After We Lost Our Way* (1989) – pieces together odds and bits of what he heard from his relatives to create a landscape for his ancestors and to pursue a balance between the past and the present, belonging and not belonging. Nevertheless, his ancestry seems to exist only in his poetry. The grandfather in his early poems is "a dashing, invented character who probably had more to do with the gamblers, with Westerns and [his] yearning for a romantic past than anything Japanese" (50).

It is thus Mura's trip to Japan that helped to illuminate the journey of his identity construction within his newly gained awareness and contemplation. "Japan helped me balance a conversation which had been taking place before I was born, a conversation in my grandparents' heads, in my parents' heads, which, by my generation, had become very one-sided, so that the Japanese side was virtually silenced" (370). In one of his articles that is particularly concerned with identity, Mura contends:

> In our postmodern, multicultural, global world, our identities are multiple, are conditioned by our historical circumstances, are something we have been given and something we choose, are always changing, are subject to political and cultural forces beyond our control, are a continuous creation. As a Japanese-American, as an Asian American, as a person of color, as an American, as a member of the middle class, as a heterosexual, as a male – all these define me and, at the same time, do not limit me, do not define me.[15]

<div align="center">* * *</div>

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14. Mura, *After We Lost Our Way*, p. 10.
15. David Mura, "No-No Boys: Re-X-Amining Japanese Americans," *New England Review* 15.3 (Summer 1993) 143-65, p. 157.

David Mura's definition of the complex Japanese American identity and his search for it in his poetry as well as in his prose writing thus illustrate a modification of the concepts of a singular ethnic identity. In his second collection of poetry, *The Colors of Desire* (1995), Mura addresses the complications of rage and reconciliation in a world marked by racial and cultural differences. The multiple voices of his poems investigate the connection between ethnicity and sexuality, history and identity. The inseparability between collective history and personal desire indicated in his poems calls for further thinking. The tendency towards a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic identity pursuit does not only appear in his poetry, but also in his prose and critical essays.

In conclusion, Mura's accomplishments and potential as a poet prior to 1984 earned him his one-year visit to Japan, and the resulting journey into his Japanese heritage. Xiaojing Zhou has summarized the significance of Mura's poetry as "its capacity for revealing the processes and effects of racial and sexual identity formation in connection to power relations" as well as "his experiment with new modes of signification in seeking to portray the complexity and ambivalence in the experiences of the Japanese-Americans and those who are discriminated against."[16] The discussion above has shown the necessity, however, to go beyond the critical paradigm that reads Mura's works through the lens of Asian American literature. One needs to go further and examine his reconnection with Japan as well as its influence on his identity formation and his writing, both of which illuminate this particular Sansei poet's growth: from shunning his Japanese ancestry to embracing the multi-cultural elements to form his ethnic identity; from striving to assimilate into the mainstream to enriching the American literary field with multiple voices.

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16. Xiaojing Zhou, "David Mura's Poetics of Identity," *MELUS* 23.3 (Autumn 1998) 145-166, p. 148.

Márta Minier

Beyond Foreignisation and Domestication

Harry Potter in Hungarian Translation

This article looks at the *Harry Potter* series in Hungarian translation, with some reference to translation in a broader sense, including parody. All the five translations of J. K. Rowling's series were prepared by Boldizsár Tamás Tóth, who had previously specialised in film translation. This present article intends to demonstrate that the translator neither unquestionably domesticates, nor foreignises the texts. Tóth respects the otherness of the 'original,' and, in the main, does not relocate the wizard world in Hungary. His translations intend to reconceive the foreignness the translator may have encountered in his reading of the 'originals.' On the understanding that creative and academic work are not so clearly distinguishable under the aegis of the postmodern, the article will also point out in what respects the translation strategies could be more daring or subversive. The analysis includes comparisons of names of persons, places, magicians' objects, school subjects, and so on, in the 'original' and the Hungarian translation.

I

The translation of children's literature in Hungary has had a distinguished tradition with reputed writers and translators trying their hands at creative translations – or rather rewrites – of children's classics. There are at least three British children's books that have become cult books in Hungary: *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Jungle Book*, all addressing a 'kiddult' readership. The great comic Modernist, Frigyes Karinthy provided a wittily reimagined, Magyarised (Hungarianised) version of *Winnie-the-Pooh*. *The Jungle Book* was even turned into a successful musical (not only for children and young adults) with a script abundant in wordplay by the versatile popular culture figure Péter Geszti.

This paper will look at the *Harry Potter* series in Hungarian translation,[1] with some reference to translation in a broader sense, including parody. The series has been published by a rather unknown publishing house called Animus Kiadó, which, emboldened by the success of the *Potter* books, went on to publish a few more translations of children's bestsellers by Louis Sachar.[2] The series has also been a breakthrough for the translator, who is now an exception to the general tendency of the invisibility of the translator.[3] All the five translations of J.K. Rowling's series were prepared by Boldizsár Tamás Tóth, who previously specialised in film translation, predominantly American blockbusters. He is the Hungarian translator of *Hannibal*, for instance, and a wide range of Disney productions for children. His experience in translating films has left a trace on his *Harry Potter* idiom. Small wonder that Tóth is also the translator of the films based on the first three tomes. The article will engage in an in-depth analysis of the culturally marked elements in the translations of the five novels. However, it will not devote separate attention to the language of the films based on the books, since the style and the translation strategies characterising the films are very close to those on the page. This present article intends to demonstrate that the translator neither unquestionably domesticates, nor foreignises the texts. The analysis will include comparisons of names of persons, places, magicians' objects, school subjects, and so on, in the 'original' and the Hungarian translation.[4]

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1. The following editions were consulted: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997); J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter és a bölcsek köve*, trans.*Tamás Boldizsár Tóth* (Budapest: Animus, 1999); J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998); J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter és a titkok kamrája*, trans. Tamás Boldizsár Tóth (Budapest: Animus, 2000); J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999); J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter és az azkabani fogoly*, trans.Tamás Boldizsár Tóth (Budapest: Animus, 2000); J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000); J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter és a tűz serlege*, trans. Tamás Boldizsár Tóth (Budapest: Animus, 2000); J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003); J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter és a főnix rendje*, trans. Tamás Boldizsár Tóth (Budapest: Animus, 2003).

2. *Stanley, a szerencse fia*, trans. Katalin Lacza (Budapest: Animus, 2000); *Laura titkos társasága*, trans. Tamás Boldizsár Tóth (Budapest: Animus, 2001); *Bradley, az osztály réme*, trans. Tamás Boldizsár Tóth (Budapest: Animus, 2002).

3. The attribute 'invisible' has become a contentious term in Translation Studies after Lawrence Venuti's work, *The Translator's Invisibility*: *A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

4. I will refer to the terms *source text* and *original* in inverted commas only, since the intertextual notion of translation problematises the feasibility of these concepts. The terms *rendi-*

On the understanding that creative and academic work are not so clearly distinguishable under the aegis of the postmodern, the paper will also point out in what respects Tóth's translation strategies could be more daring or subversive. This is not at all to express any personal preferences but to shed more light on the theoretical concepts to be discussed.[5]

Before discussing individual cases of 'rendition' a theoretical context needs to be outlined for the study of translations with respect to appropriation as well as the circulation and relocation of cultural knowledge.[6] "Regarding the manner of the translation, the conflict seems to be between making the outcome of the translation process a visibly borrowed text, or rather a familiar sounding one which could have been originally conceived in the receiving language."[7] Friedrich Schleiermacher states, "Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader."[8] Under Schleiermacher's influence, Lawrence

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tion and *equivalent* will be handled similarly, since full equivalence is an illusory concept. According to an interpretation of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, every language shapes or forges 'reality' differently; cf. *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction*, eds. O'Grady *et al. (*New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 242–4 and p. 595. On a more practical note, my approximate translations of Hungarian terms and quotations will be indicated in square brackets.

5. A recent encouraging critical reading in this respect was Carol Chillington Rutter's *Enter the Body* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), where the author dwells on how a – hypothetical – revisionist filming of Ophelia's funeral would address issues so far untouched by filmmakers (pp. 52–56.).

6. Chantal Zabus in her *Tempests after Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) talks of rewrites' reorienting the circulation of knowledge, cf. p. 2.; this also applies to translation 'proper.' Other semi-technical terms such as *foreign material* and *cultural content* are also in use. For the former cf. Riitta Oittinen, *Translating for Children* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), p. 90, and for the latter cf. Susan Stan quoted in Oittinen, ibid, p. 150. For a different aspect of knowledge in the Potter series see Lisa Hopkins, "Harry Potter and the Acquisition of Knowledge," in *Reading Harry Potter*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger), pp. 25–34.

7. Márta Minier, "*Krapp's Last Tape*: The Problematics of Investigating Translation as Acculturation," in *New Voices in Irish Criticism 3*, ed. Karen Vandevelde (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), p. 102.

8. Friedrich Schleiermacher, "From 'On the Different Methods of Translating,' " trans. Waltraud Bartscht, in *Theories of Translation*, eds. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 42.

Venuti divides translation strategies into foreignising and domesticating ones.[9] A domesticating translation adjusts the text to the taste of the receiving community. In this approach, local expectations are taken into account to a greater extent. Foreignising practices are supposed to retain the otherness experienced in the original. Wilhelm von Humboldt argues that the reader of a translation should be facilitated to feel the foreign but not foreignness itself.[10] In my view foreignisation and domestication are the two ends of a continuum. It is rarely the case that one can consider a translation either exclusively foreignising or domesticating.[11] As Venuti himself later attests, "the very function of translating is assimilation, the inscription of a foreign text with domestic intelligibilities and interests."[12] Paloposki and Oittinen even go so far as to say that "Maybe foreignizing is an illusion which does not really exist. Perhaps we should only speak of different levels and dimensions of domestication."[13]

Lawrence Venuti suggests foreignisation as the politically correct tendency of our day. However, one needs to be aware that foreignness is reconceived, and thus, constructed rather than retained. A translation as a metatext will speak about how an individual culture (and translator) perceives and constructs within its own boundaries the foreignness of another culture, hence, it is determined to reveal a great deal about contemporaneous discourses in a receiving community.

II

Moving on to the actual examples: names that are overtly telling names in the series (some of the teachers,' officials,' the journalist's name, and so on) and terms containing some kind of wordplay are usually very innovatively transplanted into Hungarian. For instance, the Hungarian counterpart of Professor Snape is called *Piton* (the

9. Venuti, pp. 17–27. Similar issues were also discussed by Goethe, and more recently, by Antoine Berman.

10. Wilhelm von Humboldt, "From 'Introduction to His Translation of *Agamemnon*,'" trans. Sharon Sloan, in *Theories of Translation*, eds. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 58.

11. For thoroughgoing criticism of Venuti's polarisation of translation strategies cf. Oittinen, pp. 73–74., and Outi Paloposki and Riitta Oittinen, "The Domesticated Foreign," in *Translation in Context*, ed. Andrew Chesterman, Natividad Gallardo San Salvador and Yves Gambier (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, n.d.), pp. 373–390.

12. Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*: *Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 11.

13. Paloposki and Oittinen, p. 386.

Hungarian for 'python'). The herbology tutor, Professor Sprout reincarnates as *Bimba professzor* (cf. adjective *bamba*, meaning 'oafish' and 'absent-minded'). The humour here addresses a personal characteristic, while in the English name it is linked with the character's profession (comprising a reference to Brussels sprouts). *Mógus professzor* is the Hungarian counterpart for Professor Quirrel. *Mógus* is a free association with *mókus* (by way of changing a single consonant), which is the Hungarian for 'squirrel' – a word that the name Quirrel resembles. It is also a distorted version of the Hungarian word *mágus* [magician, magus], suggesting that the professor does not always live up to the expectations as a magician. The name of the uninhibited journalist, Rita Skeeter, is put across as *Rita Vitrol*. The Hungarian noun *vitriol* [sharp, cutting wit], of which the surname is a distortion, is most often used when describing the style of a daring and provocative journalist, much like its English counterpart, although it may be slightly milder in tone than that. Bartemius Crouch's (or rather: Crouches') surname is turned into *Kupor*, which is not an existing word as such, yet it comes across as a stem related to the verbs both *kuporog* [crouch, squat] and *kuporgat* [put away in a very sparing manner]. Thus, another semantic field, that of thrift and meanness, is also at play in Tóth's version. When the textbooks are listed, *Bircsók, Bathilda* is used for Bagshot, Bathilda. Apart from being a similarly alliterating name, Bircsók recalls the word *bibircsók*, a noun for 'wart (particularly on the nose),' associated with wicked witches in Hungarian fairytales. On the same list of required readings *Dabrak* stands for Goshawk, invoking the well-known spell *abrakadabra* [abracadabra], which is difficult to link to any particular tale, children's fiction or television programme, yet it is a phrase strongly rooted in Hungarian cultural memory – probably the first magic spell Hungarian children come across. This is an instance of foregrounding the domestic cultural knowledge in the appropriation. (The children will recognize it as something familiar, probably unaware that the term exists in other languages too.) In like vein, a witty solution for Flourish and Blotts is offered in the form of *Czikornyai és Pacza*, imitating the spelling of traditional and prestigious Hungarian family names (the obsolete letter combination *cz* instead of the common and codified *c*). This naming is jocose enough because *cikornya* means 'bombast' or 'flourish,' and *paca* stands for 'an undesirable blot of ink on the paper.' Pocket sneakoscope is innovatively turned into *zsebgyanuszkóp* [pocket + suspicion + 'scope']. The ending *szkóp* is associated with (semi-)scientific language in Hungarian, thus a connotation similar to that of the original is carried by the Hungarian word.

Another characteristic treatment of foreignness is when the alien expression is foreignised in the translation not via retaining the foreign phrases in Rowling's text

but by way of finding terms that are foreign-sounding enough for the Hungarian ear. Expressions from the Latin (such as Dumbledore's first name, Albus) or those imitating Latin terms qualify for such purposes very well, since the educated Hungarian reader is used to coming across Latin expressions in his/her reading. (Ildikó Boldizsár emphasises in her review how easily the translator handles Latin.[14]) Again, it is the foreign-as-familiar that one encounters as opposed to the purely foreign or purely domestic. Some of the spells serve as elucidating examples here; for instance, the summoning charm "Accio!" becomes "*Invito!*" The translator is respectful towards the 'original' as he identifies an intention in it and tries to follow the same principle (here: invoking a foreign/highbrow atmosphere) in his translation. He cleverly keeps in mind that it is not necessarily the same term that conjures up notions of otherness for readers in the receiving language as in the 'source' language. It is another gesture of foreignising the familiar when Tóth translates Cornelius Fudge's surname as *Caramel*, giving a Latinate spelling of *karamell*, the Hungarian for 'fudge.' This strategy is further clarified by the translation of the Mirror of Erised, which is transformed into the more Latin-sounding and pronounceable *Edevis tükre* [the mirror of Edevis]. The inscription on the frame of the mirror is "Edevis amen ahze erkyt docr amen"[15]; while the original foreign text reads "Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi."[16] Thus, the title of Chapter Twelve of the first volume needed to be changed accordingly. This became "Edevis tükre" [The Mirror of Edevis]. (This solution has a rhetorical 'loss' when compared to the original. As opposed to the word Erised, the word *Edevis* does not read as the Hungarian for 'desire' when it is read backwards, or, for that matter, it does not read as a meaningful word at all.)

A peculiar and related case in point is Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The Hungarian version for this is *Roxfort*, which, sounding so similar to Oxford, has a whiff of humorous criticism about it, especially for the adult readers. Consistently, Hogsmeade, the name of the village adjacent to Hogwarts, is translated as *Roxmorts*. This is to do with listing or 'storing' Oxford as a custodian of quintessential Britishness in a(n imaginary) Hungarian cultural lexicon. The result is a 'more (typically) British' name than Hogwarts, the original. This is not a unique occurrence of emulation in the translations; there are a few more scattered examples of the phenomenon, if not so outstanding. Professor McGonagall's name becomes

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14. Ildikó Boldizsár, "A gyerekirodalom első akciókönyve. (J. K. Rowling négy Harry Potter-könyve)" [The First 'Action Book' in Children's Literature (J. K. Rowling's Four Harry Potter Books)], *Holmi* (2001/4) 546.

15. Rowling, *Harry Potter és a bölcsek köve*, p. 195.

16. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, p. 225.

McGalagony; this, besides being easier to utter and more euphonious,[17] also sounds potentially even more 'English' to the Hungarian ear than the original name. As Elizabeth D. Schafer notes, "Her Scottish last name hints that she is both bold and bitter."[18] An average Hungarian reader, however, would not notice that McGonagall is a Scottish-sounding rather than an English-sounding surname; it would most probably fall into the category of 'English' name. At the same time, the name *McGalagony* loosely conjures up the sound of the word *galagonya*, the Hungarian for 'hawthorn,' which appears in a most famous poem for children by the acclaimed Modernist poet Sándor Weöres (a text also turned into a song). As a result, in this name familiarity and foreignness are both at play. The professor's first name, Minerva, is an allusion to the wise goddess, Athena, and, – as part of the European cultural heritage – it works for Hungarian readers. The 'rendition' for Gryffindor is *Griffendél*; the name rhymes with Chip and Dale, for instance (from a children's animated series), and with other words ending in *-ale*, familiar to young Hungarian spectators of American cartoons. This is again closer to the stereotypical Hungarian notion of an 'English' name than Gryffindor is. (As noted before, Tóth is also a translator of Disney movies.)

There are cases where the whole idiom of a character sounds foreign or ethnically marked to the British reader. The head of the visiting French school, Madame Maxime and her student, Fleur speak a Frenchified English in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Their 'Hungarian' is similarly French-sounding. Oddly enough, the other visiting professor, the Eastern European Karkaroff speaks fluent English (and Hungarian). Small wonder that nothing comes across in the Hungarian translations from Hagrid's Scottish accent or Seamus Finnigan's Irish brogue, either.

In some cases the onomatopoeic sound of the terms provided guidance for the translator. Hufflepuff is 'rendered' as *Hugrabug* (a playful take on the slightly onomatopoeic verb for 'jump': *ugrabugrál*). Slytherin is inventively translated as *Mardekár* [Bites-what-a-pity]; apart from the reference to snakes, the dark-sounding word (with a few low vowels in it) has strong associative power. Snitch is Hungarianised with the slightly onomatopoeic *cikesz* (a word made up by the translator, inspired by the verb *cikázik*, meaning 'flash' or 'zigzag').

A word puzzling and innovative in the original, such as undursleyish is translated as *legdursleyszerűtlenebb* [most undursleyish]. The Hungarian language allows for even more freedom in bending the word endings: playing with suffixes,

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17. Cf. Boldizsár, p. 546.
18. Elizabeth D. Schafer, *Exploring Harry Potter* (London: Ebury Press, 2000), p. 58.

conjugation and declination. The Sorting Hat becomes *Teszlek süveg*, which would translate back into English as ''I-place-you'-stovepipe-hat.' As an agglutinating language, Hungarian is capable of expressing a phrase such as 'I place you' in one single word. Diagon Alley is turned into *Abszol út*, a pun on the word *abszolút*, the Hungarian 'equivalent' of absolute (just like the English term can be read as the deviation of the word 'diagonally'). *Út* is the Hungarian for road, thus the translation is somewhat of a structural *calque* of the original phrase, which contains the word *alley*. In such cases the translator engages in a quasi-etymological game, trying to make up words from existing lexical items, replenishing them with new potential connotations. This is akin to how the author herself was working. As Jack Zipes admits, "Rowling likes to play with names using foreign associations and phonetics to induce associations. Volde evokes some German or Scandinavian names."[19] It can also be read as a name referring to death (cf. the French mort, meaning 'death'). French translations in other languages abound in similar "ludic" solutions.[20] The following anecdotal example recounted by Rowling herself illustrates the case:

> In the Italian translation, professor Dumbledore has been translated into Professore Silencio. The translator has taken the "dumb" from the name and based the translation on that. In fact 'dumbledore' is the old English word for bumblebee. I chose it because my image is of this benign wizard, always on the move, humming to himself, and I loved the sound of the word too. For me 'Silencio' is a complete contradiction.[21]

There are, however, a number of cases with hardly any visible change. Ravenclaw is analogically translated as alliterating *Hollóhát* [Ravenback]. Madam Pomfrey's and Ollivander's name stay the same, so does that of Mrs Norris, the cat. The telling name of the librarian, Madam Pince, is turned into *Madam Cvikker* [Madam Pince-nez]. *Kövér Dáma* [Fat Dame] is introduced instead of Fat Lady. This is clever because it recalls the name of one of the front images of the (French) playing cards, which is called *dáma* [dame] in Hungarian. *Disznóorr* [Pig's Nose] is used for Snout, rather accurately. Norbert the Norwegian ridgeback becomes *Norbert, a tarajos norvég* [Norbert, the combed Norwegian]. The Daily Prophet is replaced by *Reggeli*

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19. Jack Zipes, "The Phenomenon of Harry Potter, or Why All the Talk?" in *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), p. 181.

20. The term *ludic* is borrowed from Matei Calinescu's *Rereading* (Yale University Press, 1993).

21. Lindsey Fraser, "An Interview with J.K. Rowling" (Mammoth, 2000), p. 33.

Próféta [Morning Prophet], and Chocolate Frogs by *csokibéka* [chock frogs]. Prefect is literally translated as *Prefektus*, even the nickname *prefi* is used (the ending *i* is indicative of a nickname). Bertie Bott's Every-Flavour Beans are distributed as *Bagoly Berti-féle Mindenízű Drazsé* (the Hungarian for 'owl' is used for Bott).[22] He Who Must Not Be Named is introduced as *Ő, Akit Nem Nevezünk Nevén* [He Whom We Don't Call By The Name]. The term for Invisibility Cloak – *láthatatlanná tevő/tévő köpönyeg* [a cloak making you invisible] – is less compact than the English term, although it expresses the notion appropriately, and it alludes to the name of a similar 'magic gadget' in Hungarian folk tales.

There are phrases that are merely transliterated in a more crudely foreignising fashion. The special terms describing different aspects of the wizard world (such as currency) are put across via the adoption of these terms: *mugli* is introduced for Muggle, *kviddics* for Quidditch, *knút* for Knut.[23] The term *dementor* is left as it is, foreign-sounding, and in a sense, still familiar-sounding due to the Latinate ending well-known from loanwords such as *mentor*. It is also notable that most of the central child characters have relatively realistic names, which helps children believe that Harry and his friends are like normal school children . In her review the poet and critic Eszter Babarczy praises this balancing attitude of the translator:

> The book is good, witty, and well crafted; it carries away the reader, and this applies to the Hungarian edition too, which has found the feasible compromise between over-Hungarianising and a purposeless, direct borrowing of inventions that are already part of an international cult (Muggle: the goofy everyday world; Quidditsch [sic!]: the great international wizard sport). Let's just imagine that our child starts chatting with another young holidaymaker on the beach without knowing what Quidditsch [sic!] is or

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22. "Rowling's pleasure in inventing food both delicious and disgusting is reminiscent of Roald Dahl's children's fiction" (Karen Manners Smith, "Harry Potter's Schooldays: J. K. Rowling and the British Boarding School Novel," in *Reading Harry Potter*, p. 82). This creative take on food is followed rather imaginatively by the translator.

23. Interestingly, the Italian and Dutch translations domesticate the word Muggle. The Italian *babboni* derives from the word *babbioni* [idiots], and the Dutch *dreutzel* is made up from *dreutle* [clumsy]. See Andrew Blake, *The Irresistable Rise of Harry Potter* (London and New York: Verso, 2002), p. 106. These terms thus go against the tradition of an international 'uniform' Potter language. However, the readers can probably relate to the terms very easily, and may link them to their own society. As Blake notes, these have become terms of abuse, just as much as their English counterpart has.

who Voldemart [sic!] is, because instead of Quidditsch [sic!] and Voldemart [sic!] something "very Hungarian" is translated into the book.[24]

What happens to culture-specific notions is of crucial importance from the perspective of translation studies. Some of these are replaced by Hungarian notions of similar connotative value in the text. Some of these are, rather unsurprisingly, food names. According to Karen Manners Smith, "Besides game and sport, food might be the most important – almost obsessive – part of boarding school life and stories."[25] As she remarks, food at Hogwarts "tastes exquisite, though it is, for the most part, recognizably British fare. English food is not a notable world cuisine, but it is cosy and familiar to Rowling's readers. . ."[26] Sherbet lemon (a concept unknown in Hungary) is domesticated as *citromos italpor* [lemon juice powder], which can indeed be purchased in Hungarian supermarkets, even though it has not been very common in the last few years. Baked beans as such do not exist in Hungary either. They are replaced by a rather rustic dish called *babfőzelék* [bean sauce], which is not exactly students' first pick from school canteen menus. Jacket potatoes, a culinary term for a dish which is clearly not part of Hungarian cuisine is translated as *töltött krumpli* [stuffed potatoes], sounding much more exotic than its less distinguished British counterpart.

A reference to an interview with Tóth, the translator, will highlight the practical difficulty in translating instances of otherness. When the interviewer, Tímea Hungler, asks him about rendering culture specific terms, he asserts the importance of measuring up whether the respective foreign notion is familiar enough in Hungary. If it is, it can be left in its original version. He comes up with an example from his experience of translating film. When translating *Almost Famous*, he 'rendered' groupie as *cápa* (the Hungarian for 'shark' as well as a slang term synonymous with the sev-

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24. "[A] könyv jó, szellemes, technikás, sodorja az olvasót, és ez elmondható a magyar kiadásról is, amely eltalálta a helyes középutat a máris nemzetközi kultusz tárgyát alkotó invenciók (Muggle: a tökfej normális világ, Quidditsch: a nagy nemzeti varázsló sport) túlzott magyarítása és elvtelen átvétele között. Képzeljük csak el, hogy gyermekünk szóba elegyedik a családi nyaralás során a szomszéd strandolóval, de nem tudja, mi a Quidditsch vagy ki Voldemart, mert kviddics és Voldemart helyett valami nagyon magyarosat fordítottak neki bele a könyvbe" (Eszter Babarczy, "Millenniumi bűbáj: J.K. Rowling: *Harry Potter és a bölcsek köve* [Millenial Charm: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*]," *Mancs* http://www.mancs.hu/legfrissebb.tdp-azon=0002kritika7.htm [visited 16 September 2003; my translation).

25. Manners Smith, p. 81.

26. Manners Smith, p. 82.

enties' slang word groupie). Some friends of his, who have seen the film in Tóth's translation, insisted that the term *groupie* should have been retained, because 'everybody knows it.' This illustrates that the translator does not necessarily judge 'accurately,' that is, he is not necessarily able to please all strata of the audience. Tóth's general comment relates well to his take on the *Harry Potter* series:

> If a reference is very internal, such as an in-joke referring to a certain country or individual, I don't use the name of this person but look for a concise term to circumscribe the situation. In fact, I explain the name, I provide the text with a footnote.[27]

The above passage underlines the translator's activity as a critic, a commentator on the text s/he translates.

III

The next section will further focus on cultural translation *within* the *Potter* series (how the novels translate, i.e. mediate, summarise, footnote, distil Western, mainly European culture) and *of* the *Potter* series (how this mediation may work in foreign-language translations), also drawing on the notion of reading as translation. Karl Vossler views translation as "the most intensive form of reading, namely of a reading which becomes itself creative and productive again, via understanding, explanation, and criticism. . ."[28] As demonstrated above, there are numerous elements of Rowling's novels that allude to an allegedly shared European cultural heritage, and these terms or references, such as the Cinderella prototype, translate smoothly into Hungarian, even though some of these allusions may only be identifiable by young adults or grown-ups.[29] However, several issues specific to the UK are not problematised by the Hungarian translations, due to a lack of shared knowledge between the implied reader of Rowling's text and the implied reader of Tóth's translation. Thus, certain

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27. "Ha túlzottan belterjes, az adott országra utaló egy poén, például egy bizonyos emberre vonatkozik, nem a nevet írom le, hanem egy frappáns, a helyzetet körülíró kifejezést keresek, gyakorlatilag megmagyarázom a nevet, lábjegyzetet készítek a szöveghez," Tímea Hungler, "Tóth Tamás Boldizsár: 'Bűn rossz szinkronok készülnek,'" [Some dreadful dubbings are being done], www.magyar.film.hu (visited 5 May 2003), my translation.

28. Quoted by Oittinen, p. 37; for the metaphoric use of *translation* as reading also see Oittinen, p. 17.

29. For the Cinderella prototype see Blake, p. 17.

references remain mute for the readers of the Hungarian (and probably most other) translations.

How intertexts come across in the translation may also be viewed as an issue of cultural relocation. Intertexts that may be easily recognizable for readers of 'the original' are not determined to be so obvious connections for readers of translations in different languages. For instance, the playful allusion to Shakespeare, latent in Hermione's name (so convincingly identified by Miranda Johnston-Haddad) may not ring the bell for some foreign readers, even if the name is not domesticated but left as it is in the 'original.'[30] *The Winter's Tale* may not be so frequently read and staged outside of English-speaking cultures. References to *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard III* may be bypassed for the same reason: they do not necessarily rank among the most popular Shakespearean plays outside the UK.[31] Nevertheless, I tend to think that the reader's response in this respect is also informed by the stratification of the audience along with age and education, not only by ethnic origin or national identity. Zipes also makes mention of several erudite intertexts (without using the term *intertext* itself), such as David, Tom Thumb, Jack the Giant Killer, Aladdin, and Horatio Alger.[32] Andrew Blake emphasises that the *Potter* books also revisit the Arthurian legends.[33] Such allusions are not easy to mediate, and much depends on the readers' knowledge and the translator-as-reader's reading experience and gen-

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30. Cf. Miranda Johnston-Haddad, "Harry Potter and the Shakespearean Allusion," in *Reimagining Shakespeare for Children and Young Adults*, ed. Naomi J. Miller (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 162–170.

31. A thematic intertext Johnston-Haddad identifies with *Titus* is the instance when Wormstail sacrifices his right hand in order for Voldemort to reappear in human form. This is reminiscent of emperor Saturninus requesting Titus's hand for saving his sons' lives in Act III, Scene 1 (cf. Johnston-Haddad, p. 165). Another shared element is the importance of family and parentage. Titus Andronicus stands up for his children, and Harry's intention is to avenge the wrongs done to his family (cf. Johnston-Haddad, p. 169). The scene revisited from *Richard III* is Act 5, Scene 3, where Henry Richmond (later Henry VII) and Richard go to bed the night before the battle of Bosworth, and the ghosts of Richard's victims appear (in the order they were killed), cursing Richard and encouraging Richmond. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, during the battle between Voldemort and Harry's wands, Voldemort's wand produces Voldemort's victims (starting with the most recent one) in connection with the spells the wand was used to perform. They support Harry and he cannot hear what they hiss to Voldemort (cf. Johnston-Haddad, p. 167). The author of the article also emphasises "similar themes of kinship and vengeance" (p. 163).

32. Zipes, p. 175.

33. Blake, p. 17.

eral erudition. Again, it should be emphasised that the *Harry Potter* books and the translations are meant for a very diverse, indeed kiddult, readership in terms of age and education.

The popular culture intertextual web, which is mapped out rather wryly by Jack Zipes, may be more in tune with children's cultural memory and reading taste than, for instance, the figure of Horatio Alger is. This is a more 'international' referential network of globalised culture in which the Potter books (and the film versions) can be read:

> Harry must play the role of a modern-day TV sleuth in each novel. . . . He is the ultimate detective, and Ron, as in all buddy/cop films, is always at his side. . . . [H]e is a perfect model for boys because he excels in almost everything he undertakes. But this is also his difficulty as a literary character: he is too flawless and almost a caricature of various protagonists from pop culture. Like young heroes today, Harry appeals to young readers (and adults) because Rowling has endowed him with supernatural powers of the sort we can see in *The Power Rangers*, *X-Men*, *Star Wars*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and numerous other TV shows and films. . . . The scheme of things is very similar to the Disney Corporation's *The Lion King*, which celebrates male dominance and blood rule.[34]

Elizabeth D. Schafer also enlists the *James Bond* films and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* as possible parallels, and, like Zipes, she also mentions *Star Wars*.[35] Regarding the stratification of the *Potter* readership according to language and national identity, Schafer does not consider the cultural relocation to be too problematic. She trusts that a universal wizard kid, such as Harry, is supposed to find his way to everybody's heart:

> Although the Muggle and wizard cultures in which Harry lives are quite different from other cultures, readers nonetheless recognize universal concepts. The exotic details to readers outside Britain enhance the series' fantastical nature. While British readers acknowledge aspects of their own culture and even feel nostalgic or sentimental about boarding schools, foreigners perceive the story as a glimpse through a magical window into another world. They may identify with the humanity of the characters and the

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34. Zipes, pp. 179–183.
35. Schafer, p. 217. and pp. 422–423.

universality of the themes, but the specifics of the story are reminiscent of watching a documentary with explanatory subtitles.[36]

In this semi-scholarly text we may witness the emergence of a literary cult. As she further argues,

Harry has enchanted people worldwide, and his magic connects people from different cultures with a common bond. Imagination, humor, and empathy are not confined by geographical borders, skin color, or language. Even though Harry is a British schoolboy, his fears and joys are familiar to most humans regardless of where they live. People understand the universal feelings of shyness and insecurity as well as the concepts of respect and justice. The name Harry Potter is recognizable to native speakers of languages ranging from Arabic to Chinese.[37]

As we have seen from the examples discussed, it is valid that the translations communicate and recontextualise cultural knowledge for children (and adults). However, regarding *Harry Potter* as a fountain of knowledge of British culture would be a deception. This is not to say that the series does not contain a great deal about British culture and British perceptions of otherness (especially when it comes to the Triwizard Tournament, dragons in Romania, Bertha Jorkins disappearing in Albania, Professor Quirrell also travelling there, the East European headmaster, Karkaroff, presented as a former supporter of Voldemort, and so on). Nevertheless, the reading or critical activity (including the translator's task) will not be a sheer unpacking of meaning, since the cultural knowledge is not ossified in the book but open to continuous (ideological) critique. What Elizabeth D. Schafer perceives as the strength of the series (universal values) is exactly what Jack Zipes dismisses about what he calls "cute and ordinary" books.[38] Zipes styles Harry a "postmodern whiz kid" as well as a Christian knight.[39] Zipes, however, is far from pleased by this amalgamation:

He is white, Anglo-Saxon, bright, athletic, and honest. . . . [H]e is the classic Boy Scout, a little mischievous like Tom Sawyer or one of the Hardy boys.

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36. Schafer, p. 17.
37. Schafer, pp. 16–17.
38. Zipes, p. 175.
39. Zipes, p. 174.

He does not curse; he speaks standard English grammatically, as do all his friends; he is respectful to his elders; and he has perfect manners.[40]

These are aspects a translation negotiates instead of channeling exotic information about Britishness into foreign schoolchildren's heads. In Giselle Lisa Anatol's view, the *Potter* books do not break away decisively from British imperialism: "Rowling seems to project a more traditional, nostalgic view of imperial Center and less-civilized Periphery in her Harry Potter series":[41]

Magical Britain, and Hogwarts in particular, thus become the magical metropole, despite their initial resemblance to a foreign landscape of otherness. Everywhere else subsequently falls into the category of "periphery."[42]

A radical translator may as well go against the assertion of the Ruritania myth, a mystification of Eastern Europe and the Balkans (rather as a unified mass, yet Romania, Bulgaria and Albania are mentioned in particular), which is executed mainly by affirming the Gothic stereotypes about Transylvania and Albania.[43] An experimental translator or adaptor may talk back to this tradition, and have some of the Transylvanian dragons and Voldemort-related characters that are situated in the Balkans re-placed somewhere in 'the Occident.' This would be a *hyperbole*, a corrective translation or adaptation, but Tóth clearly does not intend to practice such politicised impertinence.[44]Another radical translation or adaptation strategy would be to substitute these elements for references to cultures that Hungarian culture (which, as such, is of course, ungraspable) may patronize, may feel superior to; cultures that may be Hungary's 'others.'

Certain references 'closer to home' will read very different to the Hungarian readers than to the English-speaking ones (and readers of other translations). A case in point is the 'beast' named Hungarian Horntail in Rowling's fourth book, and re-named as *Magyar Mennydörgős* [Hungarian Thunderbolt/Thundery Hungarian] by

40. Zipes, pp. 178–79.

41. Giselle Liza Anatol, "The Fallen Empire: Exploring Ethnic Otherness in the World of Harry Potter," in *Reading Harry Potter*, p. 165.

42. Anatol, p. 164.

43. For the discussion of the myth of Ruritania see Vesma Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

44. Douglas Robinson applies the term *hyperbole* for corrective translations where a chief concern is the improvement of the original (cf. Oittinen, p. 79).

Tóth. While Hungarian Horntail carries the potential of something exotic and dangerous to the British readers, the much more prestigious-sounding Magyar Mennydörgős certainly comes across as a domestic element of the Potter world (such a name can crop up in Hungarian tales or children's books), and it may even appeal to national pride; after all the Hungarian Horntail is the most crafty, clever beast in the tournament, and thus, the most difficult one to defeat.

As opposed to the value system of culturally conservative Middle England, persuasively represented in the novels by the Dursleys, for example, Hogwarts is characterized by ethnic diversity.[45] Again, some of the cultural negotiation that is apparent for readers of the 'original' (not only for British readers, and probably not for every individual British reader) may be mute for the foreign language reader and translator. For instance, the presence of a certain Parvati Patil at Hogwarts exemplifies political correctness on the part of the author. A character with a Pakistani-sounding name almost ought to be included in a children's book that has at least some reference to the British educational system of the day, given the significant presence of Asian minority groups in the ethnic composition of the country.[46] (The surname of the Patil sisters sounds like a twisted version of the common Pakistani name, *Patel*, which would ring the bell for most British readers.[47]) Schafer contends that characters such as (the presumably Chinese) Cho Chang, the Patil twins, Dean Thomas and Angelina Johnson, both supposedly black, and the Irish-sounding Seamus Finnigan "provide ethnic diversity at Hogwarts."[48] The dreadlocked Lee Jordan, who can be identified as African-Caribbean, could be added to the list.[49] For the sake of topicality, an overtly domesticating translation would perhaps translate one of these characters into a Romany student in Hungary (and would probably address other ethnic minorities too). However, as we have seen, Tóth's translations avoid too much domestication and politicisation. Thus, it comes as no surprise that Parvati Patil *et al.*

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45. For the notion of Middle England (what New Labour may see as a traditional, mainstream stratum of the society in England) see Blake, p. 25.

46. On the other hand, Elaine Ostry argues that all these characters are minor characters, "all the major players are Anglo-Saxon." Ostry, "Accepting Mudbloods: The Ambivalent Social Vision of J.K. Rowling's Fairy Tales," in *Reading Harry Potter*, p. 93.

47. So much so that in a telling *lapsus calami* the name is indicated as *Patel* rather than *Patil* (Ostry, p. 94.).

48. Schafer, p. 63. A similar phenomenon is noticeable in the film versions directed by Christopher Columbus, especially with respect to Afro-American characters.

49. Blake, p. 108.

have the same names in the Hungarian edition; however, it is doubtful that the name offers similar connotations to most Hungarian readers.[50]

Even though I find the previous example a sign of engagement with political correctness on Rowling's behalf, there have been readings of its opposite too. For Julia Park Rodrigues, who reviews the *Potter* books for a women writers' magazine, the Weasleys invoke the stereotypical poor Irish Catholic family. Commenting on the character of Ron and his family, the reviewer notes,

> [h]e's red-haired and freckled, from a large family of wizards, and he's one of Harry's best friends. But he's also dirt-poor, stuck with hand-me-downs and too many siblings. The Weasley's home is called 'The Burrow,' suggesting rabbits and their prolific breeding. In other words, the Weasleys are the perfect caricature of the poor Irish-Catholic family, as seen from Rowling's middle-class-Protestant-British view. Although most other Rowling characters have Dickensian names, comic-descriptive or onomatopoeic, the Weasleys' name seems like a slam; its associations are hardly charming.[51]

In another article Julia Park also mentions Mrs Weasley's first name, Molly as a typical Irish name and corned beef, disliked by Ron, as typical Irish food.[52] Is Harry then an 'Everychild,' or a 'magical' version of a British child? [53] As the ideological judgements of different readers attest, the texts do not prove to be ideologically as innocent as Shafer's cultic paradigm seems to suggest.

Referring back to Schafer's comment, it is also rather unwise, perhaps even ignorant to disregard the fact that other cultures also have boarding school education, even if it is not Eton, or Ampleforth (the latter Benedictine school in North Yorkshire has been regarded as a source of inspiration for Rowling's invention, Hogwarts).[54]

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50. It would be worthwhile seeing how the Welsh translation handles this matter.

51. Julia Park Rodrigues, "There's Something about Harry (Potter): A Second Look at the International Children's Book Phenomenon," http://www.womenwriters.net/bookreviews/harrypotter.htm (visited 17 September 2003).

52. Julia Park, "Class and Socioeconomic Identity in Harry Potter's England," in *Reading Harry Potter*, p. 186.

53. Roni Natov mentions the phrase 'Everychild' when she describes the typical trials and struggles Harry Potter as a questing hero goes through. See Roni Natov, "Harry Potter and the Extraordinariness of the Ordinary," in *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter*, ed. Lana A. Whited (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2002).

54. Cf. *Ampleforth: My Teacher's a Monk*, broadcast on Yorkshire Television, UK, at 22:30 on 29 April 2003.

Some Hungarian students can relate to their own boarding school memories or experiences when reading the books. However, the division of the school population into 'houses' or smaller communities will be unusual. Foreign readers may also be very familiar with the British public school system from their studies, and other reading or viewing experiences, and may be able to read the book as a parody of this system.

IV

There are numerous cases in cultural history when a translation is 'retranslated' in the form of a parody or pastiche. As Peter Hunt argues, "The low literary status of children's books, and their *intimate integration into popular culture* means that stories are commonly reworked to suit the ideologies of an age, or its image of childhood. . ."[55] One should keep in mind, however, that neither popular culture nor children's literature is a clearly defined term, and children's literature as such or in its individual texts, despite having been often marginalised and mentioned under the rubric of low culture, does not necessarily belong there. *Heri Kókler és a Bűz Serlege* [Heri the Juggler and the Stinking Goblet] is a somewhat sarcastic parody for adults of Rowling's book – obviously in its Hungarian translation.[56] The book indeed intends to integrate the *Harry Potter* phenomenon into Hungarian popular culture. *Tűz*, the Hungarian word for fire, rhymes with *bűz*, meaning 'stink.' Thus, the title is a pun on the Hungarian title of the book, which comprises the word *tűz*. (Moreover, the original title for this parody was meant to be 'Heri the Juggler and the Goblet of the Virgin' – the Hungarian for virgin, *szűz* also rhymes with *tűz*.) This book is the first of a series of spoofs (one loosely based on each *Potter* novel), published under the jocular pseudonym K. B. Rottring. The name of the well-known propelling-pencil brand rhymes with Rowling's name. The abbreviation *kb*. stands for 'about' or 'approximately' in Hungarian, so the pseudonym questions authorship in a jocose, rather postmodern manner: the book was written approximately by Rottring. The abbreviation also recalls the marker HB, which signifies a certain tone of the colour for pencils. The rest of the titles are similarly ridiculous and nonsensical: *Heri Kókler és az epeköve* [Heri the Juggler and his Bilestone], *Heri Kókler és a mormon kannája* [Heri the Juggler and the Churn of the Mormon], and *Heri Kókler és az*

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55. Peter Hunt, "Children's Literature," in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. Peter France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 107, my emphasis.

56. K. B. Rottring, *Heri Kókler és a Bűz Serlege* (Szeged: Excalibur Könyvkiadó, 2002).

Alkatrazi fogoly [Heri the Juggler and the Prisoner of Alcatraz]. The venture is further 'validated' by a fictitious publishing house and its unrealistic address: Kambodzsa, Pol-Pot Strassze 13: Első Magyar Könyvkiadó Kft. [The First Hungarian Publishing Ltd.].

Having parodies of a text usually confirms its readability even if it is a critical take on the text. In Barthesian terminology, this proves the writerly character of a text.[57] In the context of the *Potter* books the case is illustrated by the existence of a number of parodies or rewrites, such as the *Barry Trotter* texts, a Chinese text entitled *Harry Potter and Leopard-Walk-Up-to-Dragon*, the Russian novel about Tanya Grotter, a Hungarian online comic (also playing on *The Lord of the Rings*) entitled *Henry Porter és a Gyűrött szövetsége* [Henry Porter and the Alliance of the Creased], as well as writing by the American Nancy Stouffer that is said to be plagiarising Rowling's work.[58] The *Heri Kókler* series turns *Harry Potter* inside out, trivialising, domesticating and topicalising it. First of all, Harry's new counterpart is *Heri* (not an existing Hungarian name, just the transliteration of the English name, thus, it is marked by domestication and foreignisation at the same time). In *Kókler* world *Rokfort* (transliteration of the Hungarian pronunciation of Roquefort) is the parodic counterpart of Tóth's invention, *Roxfort*; *kavics* [pebble] stands for kviddics; and *kugli* [bowling] for mugli (on the basis of a similarity in sounding). The Dumbledore figure is called *Dupladurr professzor* [Professor Double-boom], and Tóth's McGalagony inspired *Meggenya professzor*; *genya* being a slang term with a wide-ranging negative meaning ['mean, inflexible,' etc.]. The Hagrid character is called *Hibrid* [Hybrid]. The Weasley family is renamed as *Ribizly* here. *Ribizli* is the Hungarian for '(red/black) currants,' and the final *y* mocks traditional spelling apparent in some family names. The twins (not really twins, because there are nine of them here) are called *Winworld* twins, while Ginny fares much worse: she reincarnates as a character called *Genny* [Pus]. The *Dundy* family replaces the Dudleys (*dundi* means 'plump/chubby,' the spelling with a *y* at the end again mocks traditional family names). Voldemort becomes *Voltmárvolt* [Already-Have-Been]. It is apparent that paronomasia is the main principle constituting the mock Potter language. *Hermelin* [ermine/stoat] is a pop culture counterpart of Hermione. In order to add a

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57. Cf. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. R. Miller (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 4.

58. For the first one see Michael Gerber, *Barry Trotter and the Shameless Parody* (London, Gollanz, 2002) and www.barrytrotter.com, for the Hungarian one www.geocities.com/akaromakarom/401.html (visited 14 April 2004), and for the other three texts see J. F. O. McAllister with reporting by Jeff Chu/London, "The Shy Sorceress," in *Time* (23 June, 2003) 67.

post-Soviet touch to Heri Kókler's world, Rottring's books feature *Szputnyik* [Sputnik] *2000s* instead of the Nimbus Two Thousand brand. *Heri Kókler és a Bűz Serlege* is a spin-off on all the *Harry Potter* novels rather than drawing on only the first of Rowling's series in Tóth's translation. The Triwizard Tournament, which appears in Rowling's fourth book only, is reimagined here as *Pupák Kupa* [Kiddies' Cup/Pup Cup],[59] featuring *Hektor Rum* (a black African from Vulgaria) as a counterpart to Viktor Krum, and *Flúg Blecourt* instead of Fleur Delacour.

V

André Lefevere introduced the term *refraction* for texts "processed for a certain audience (children, for example), or adapted to a certain poetics or a certain ideology."[60] In order to exemplify the term, he offers an amusing example from the history of translating and adapting for children:

> Translators of *Gulliver's Travels* tend to translate in a different way for an audience of children, than for an audience of adults. There are, for instance, very few translations made for children that allow Gulliver to extinguish the fire raging in the Lilliput imperial palace the way he does in the original: by urinating on it.[61]

The leading scholar in the field of the study of translating for children, Riitta Oittinen, argues that children's stories often address issues that are taboos for the children of the day (some of them are quite universal taboos, such as sex, death, violence, excretion, bad manners, adult imperfections, and so on), and protectionism on the part of adults frequently censors these in translation. Many of these themes are connected to what Bakhtin describes as the *carnivalesque*.[62] She mentions examples like deleting the topic of death from Andersen's *The Little Match Girl* by changing the ending (in an American translation); and replacing Grimm's phrase "red as blood" by "red as an apple" in a version of *Snow White*.[63] Tóth's translations, how-

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59. My first translation is rather literal, the second one is an attempt at domestication.

60. Lefevere cited Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 140.

61. André Lefevere, *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1992), p. 20.

62. Oittinen, pp. 91–92.

63. Oittinen, p. 91. and p. 87.

ever, do not censor deaths in Rowling's series; and carnivalistic elements, such as troll bogeys (in Hungarian it is rather straightforwardly called *trolltakony* [troll snot]) are generally not omitted or substituted for. The Rottring parodies, like the Barry Trotter stories, take this further and deeply indulge in the carnivalesque, as we have seen in the name *Genny*, for instance.

If at all, Tóth's translations are refractions from the perspective of the cultural relocation of British children's magic world. As Nancy K. Jentsch asserts, "the translator of the Harry Potter series has a unique challenge in the genre [translation], that is, to portray a setting and its people that are a world apart from ours, and at the same time located due north of London."[64] Many of Rowling's European references do come across in the Hungarian translations, which also map out a 'wizard Europe,' like the *Potter* books do, yet the polarisation and occasional stereotyping may be more apparent when you read the Hungarian translations, due to the difference in audiences, including the translator-as-reader. Tóth respects the otherness of the 'original,' and, in the main, does not relocate the wizard world to Hungary. On the contrary, his translations intend to reconceive the foreignness the translator may have encountered in his reading of the 'originals' (most of this would ring familiar to the British audience). This activity is hampered when it comes to the *Potter* books mapping out a 'wizard Britain (or UK?),' for instance, by regional dialects, accents and numerous other markers of ethnic belonging, including non-English ethnicity (such as the Patil sisters). As Blake asserts, "[H]owever you localise the translation, Harry is very English, and goes to a very English-style school."[65] The above mentioned referential system would be largely unnoticeable to the Hungarian reader (and indeed, impossible to mediate, unless via domesticating localisation), and Tóth's translations compensate for that by mapping out an alternative 'wizard Britain,' which, in certain aspects, comes across as more British or, at times, (for Hungarians) more exotic or mysterious than Rowling's. Roxfort, for example, gives the impression of Oxford's counterpart in the British 'wizard establishment.' Stuffed potatoes do come across as something unfamiliar and exotic, in contrast with jacket potatoes. Due to the semantic fluidity of the process of translation as such, and the traits of these particular translations, Harry Potter in Hungarian, and the fictitious world around him carry British, Hungarian and European (or rather Western) con-

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64. Nancy K. Jentsch, "Harry Potter and the Tower of Babel," in *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*, ed. Lana A. Whited (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2002), p. 285.

65. Blake, p. 89.

notations almost coterminously.[66] Tóth's translations appeal both to children and adults. Being *kiddult* texts, they address the cultural memories of both children and adult groups, including potential references and intertexts for both. The translations play with what is familiar and what is foreign, disguising these in one another, and thus opening up avenues for cultural critique. Their immediate readability and trans-latability are proved by the existence of spoofs in the form of the *Heri Kókler* series. This case study has hoped to facilitate moving beyond the clever but somewhat straitjacket-like binary opposition of foreignisation and domestication, highlighting that it is rather the foreign-as-familiar and the familiar-as-foreign that feature in these reworkings.[67]

66. Andrew Blake enlists Harry Potter amongst the three "non-religious global cultural icons" that Britain has produced. Following in the footsteps of Sherlock Holmes and James Bond, Harry Potter is the latest distinctly British hero who has a universal appeal. See Blake, p. 91.

67. My special thanks go to Penny Brown, who encouraged me to write up this material for publication. The article is dedicated to my aunt Kati, who first presented me with the *Harry Potter* books in Hungarian.

Interview with Alan Sinfield

Alan Sinfield has been making significant contributions to different fields of literary studies since the early 1980s. As one of the major representatives of cultural materialism, he has been influential in the study of the Renaissance and Shakespeare, modern and early modern theatre, and post-war literature and culture, just to name the most important of his interests. It is also vital to emphasize that his activities reach beyond the strictly academic; his work associated with sexual minorities, sexual and left-wing politics proved to be instructive both for professional and the general public. Accordingly, his writings try to reach a wider audience by expressing his subtle and often complicated observations in a simple manner. The interview published here was made in March, when Mr Sinfield, on his second visit to Hungary, presented a paper at the conference *Shakespeare and Philosophy in a Multicultural World* (Eötvös Loránd University, 17th to 20th March 2004), supported by the British Council.

> *You wrote two books on Tennyson, the first one published in 1971, the second in 1986. They are completely different, however, the first one being on a formalist track, the second utterly political. What changed your perspective so radically in that fifteen-year interval?*

In 1971 I was trying to work out questions of poetry, using linguistics as well as literary critical methods, and I think around that time there was considerable excitement about the prospect of understanding literary language in those terms. But by 1986 literary criticism ran out of steam and what had seemed an exciting project from the 1950s on became repetitive and routine. Anybody could do it by 1972. And I thought I had either to give up literary criticism as a frivolous activity or to find a way to make it more significant and valuable than just a formalist enterprise. The horrors and atrocities of the time culminated, and the difficulty in talking about those things in relation to literature seemed to diminish the literature. As we entered the 1970s and into the Thatcher years, years of great social and political division in England, the attempt to try and find a language which would talk about the politics as well as about literature seemed an imperative. To some extent, the same applies in the US as well, where it is often pointed out that British cultural materialism is very similar to new historicism, but not identical to it. The difference and incompatibility there proved a point of energy, a

place to try and change things. For the most part, it was enabling that people were doing things differently on the two sides of the Atlantic. It was rather helpful and gave us food for thought.

> *So you think it was primarily the political context that made literary studies radically political by the 1980s?*

The discourse of literature that was dominant at the time just made it very difficult to talk about *Henry V* and the My Lai massacre at the same time. It would have sounded like a gross intrusion: two language registers coming together in a way that was socially, as it were, unacceptable. That is what we were trying to change, really. Hinging this around Shakespeare was valuable because the Bard was taken to be the ultimate cultural token, full of beauty and truth. To state that Shakespeare plays were political was provocative and much disputed in magazines and journals. Shakespeare made it all the more exciting, and worth attempting. Also, there were theatrical productions of Shakespeare which recognized the extent to which the plays might relate to political circumstances in the twentieth century as well as how they may have allowed audiences to see the disruptive or counterproductive aspects of the state and of the ruling elite in Shakespeare's time.

> *You mentioned new historicism and cultural materialism as being two adjacent trends in literary studies, the one institutionalised in the US, the other in the UK. You repeatedly return to the question of their differences in your writing, partly for political reasons.*

I think that to differentiate is always a good idea. There were different strands within cultural materialism as well as in new historicism. This was partly because these practices were new and scarcely theorized. Let me just mention that many cultural materialists presented the argument that the system of rule in Shakespeare's time was more violent than productive. But if you look at Jonathan Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy*, he is arguing to the contrary. He says that these plays, like other plays by Shakespeare's contemporaries, are actually pointing at, and working with, disruptive elements in society, rather than with some kind of dominant ideology or Elizabethan world picture. So for Jonathan, these Shakespeare plays themselves had been radical in the first place, and this fact will have been obscured by twentieth century criticism. He is discovering a radical Shakespeare while others, like new historicists, are finding a Shakespeare more complicit with his time. Greenblatt, for example, would say that there remained no subversion in these plays for us because we no longer share the conditions they were in.

Are you also talking about methodological differences here?

To some extent I am. There are different practices, different kinds of use you are going to make of documents from Shakespeare's time, the kind of comparison between Shakespeare's play and those by other people. Some of them are more scholarly, some more respectful for the attempt to disclose historical conditions as opposed to more casual and impertinent uses of history. For example, when one takes a good essay by somebody like Christopher Hill or Natalie Zemon Davis, and use it as a leeway with a Shakespearean or some other text. These would be two different ways of thinking about methodological concerns.

Cultural materialism in the 1980s is often defined as some kind of political interference with literary studies, and not only by those who thought it to be scandalous, but you and other practitioners made the same claims. At that time you were dealing with key authors like Shakespeare, Wilde or Tennyson, because they seemed to be the sites of political struggle. This strategy changes radically with your book Gay and After (1998), *where you emphasise subcultural work. Why did you turn away from the mainstream?*

Perhaps it was the mainstream which turned away from us. This issue is better approached from the angle of the general political situation in Europe. It has to do with the difficulty we experience in sustaining a continuously radical and effective New Left proposition. The left in Europe (I mean Western Europe, Hungary may be different, it's too difficult for me to say) have traditionally been a broad left, based on a general consensus about the main issues, about the procedures that might be followed in connection with the familiar concepts and categories of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Even though the New Left was full of misogynists, racist, homophobes, etc., generally there was a basis upon which people could meet, dispute and find ways forward. Now this proposition of the New Left becomes so difficult to sustain that some people stop being in the left at all, while for others it becomes difficult to see how the general project can be taken further forward. Take my example. Until I was in my late forties I had imagined that some kind of transformation of society was going to occur. I did not have a sense of the possible new economic structure, or even of a new social structure, but I believed in a sustained dealing with poverty, injustice, prejudice, etc. As these became less plausible, I was simply suggesting that perhaps we needed to retreat for the time being to single-issue politics. With this strategy adopted, the intellectual or the literary critic will be looking for some kind of ground where s/he could stand. And from that point of view, if you had come from another country, or experienced yourself as racially different, or if you were gay or

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lesbian, at least you had a constituency, a place to speak from, which was not obviously impertinent. Certain people might have failed to speak for the working class, but ethnic, racial and sexual minorities can still be in need of organic intellectuals of some kind.

> *Did you feel these political changes taking their toll inside academia? Do you see a general inertia of the political engagement of the 1980s? What I have in mind as an example is the efforts to restore the original meaning of cultural studies, to practice it as an engaged critique of contemporary culture.*

Cultural studies proved difficult because it meant something different in the US and in Britain. Cultural studies was done most intensely at Birmingham University, at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. The people there experienced a profound division among the requirements of the education system, their working class and the lower middle class backgrounds, youth culture and student culture. In the US there was no starting point for that class-based analysis. Cultural studies there tended to be the study of races and ethnicities, which is, of course, not unreasonable, but lead to the general blurring of certain issues. As you more or less indicated, with its international acknowledgement, cultural studies became a field of study, rather than a disciplinary notion or a way of studying.

> *How does your work relate to these changes? So far your research has been concentrated on certain strategic fields: Shakespeare, Wilde, gay and lesbian theatre, gay subculture, etc. Where are you moving these days?*

I am going to have a book out at the end of the year with Columbia. It is about gay subcultures, in fact, about issues of power and sexuality, the ways in which these are supposed to be negotiated, and the ways in which, when you look more closely at them, they are actually taking place. In the book I write mostly about novels, popular fiction, and also about cinema. So that is one thing I am doing. But I have always intended to get back to Shakespeare. I wrote an essay on *The Merchant of Venice* in 1986, and I thought it had further opportunities of development, together with a recent essay about *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Two Noble Kinsmen.* Both of these pieces are re-visiting questions of dissident reading with particular reference to genders and sexualities. I am into keeping that work going. The narrowing sense that people are expected to have a field is a recent notion, and quite unsatisfactory and undesirable, I think. Although difficult to manage, I see no reason why people should not work on several topics at the same time. It is also vital to keep your possible audience in mind. When working on lesbian and gay

issues it matters not only what you think and want to say, but also who you want to address, who you want to talk to, what kind of constituency you envisage. The fact is that if you announce a talk on gay studies, on the whole only gay people will come. This is unfortunate not only for queer theory. The proposition that gayness is the margin of heterosexuality, therefore you are not going to understand the one without the other, seems to be clearly demonstrated. Accordingly, heterosexuals ought to be more interested in gay studies than they usually are. However, there might be no way to persuade people. In short, I am trying to envisage two kinds of work now. One for particularly gay constituencies and one for wider conferences such as the one I am at in Hungary at the present time, for instance.

> *Your book at Columbia seems to be on the track of* Gay and After. *In that book you try and evaluate the potentials for gay, and to a certain extent, lesbian politics. What kind of changes have you observed in the last five or six years with respect to individual cases as well as the general situation of gay and lesbian rights, and also in connection with the possibility for developing efficient political strategies?*

Since I was working on *Gay and After*, which is seven or eight years ago now, we've seen in Britain the accomplishment of a good part of the lesbian and gay progressive agenda. This includes Section 28 (the Conservative legislation restricting funding for the arts), and partnership rights (affecting immigration for gay partners, and pension and inheritance). There remains a vulnerability in employment rights. At the same time, right wing political groupings have become better organized and more vocal; in many places you still can't walk the streets with entire safety. The new book, *On Sexuality and Power*, is more about how we behave among ourselves. It is widely supposed that the most suitable partner will be someone very much like yourself (many heterosexuals think this too, it's often called 'companionate marriage'). Nonetheless, power differentials are remarkably persistent and they are sexy. What are the personal and political implications of this insight, I am asking? I argue that hierarchies in interpersonal relations are continuous with the main power differentials of our social and political life (gender, class, age, and race); therefore it is not surprising that they govern our psychic lives. Recent writing in fiction and film displays an exploration of the positive potential of hierarchy, especially in fantasy, as well as the dangers.

> *You also insist on your work with Shakespeare and emphasise the importance of dissident reading. You return repeatedly to the crucial difference between cultural materialist and new historicist arguments, to highlight the*

significance of dissidence. What potentials do you see in pressing the dissident reading of Shakespeare plays these days?

The scope for dissident presentations of Shakespeare, on stage and in criticism, hasn't really changed since the onset of new historicism and cultural materialism. The alternatives are: to declare that Shakespeare is actually promoting a progressive position; and to declare that Shakespeare was a child of his time and hence unlikely to anticipate a modern progressive position. In the latter case, the text may be adjusted to produce a more suitable meaning. In the theatre this may involve unorthodox kinds of performance, or rewriting parts of the play. In criticism it is most likely to involve reading a play, self-consciously, against the grain, perhaps in a 'ludic' mode deriving from Roland Barthes. While new historicism was concerned to demonstrate the constructedness of history, in the same movement it was likely to claim a superior understanding of history as a fortunate by-product of dissident awareness.

Cultural materialism, aware of the constructedness of history but staying closer to Marxism, was inclined to assert from the start that its conception of history was better (more attentive to women, the class hierarchy, race). I intend to continue my work with Shakespeare because he still constitutes a major site where ideas and strategies are explored. This 2004 invitation to visit to Hungary was to speak on Shakespeare. Compared with twenty years ago, there is much more Shakespeare, in every medium all the time. This makes it more difficult to make an impact with any particular intervention. But it is still worth trying. Also, there was in the 1990s a sudden flurry of attention to Shakespeare and sexualities. This was very exciting work, but there are some more things I would like to say on this topic.

Although you name and list the major authors influencing your own work in your introduction to the Hungarian edition of your book,* I would like you to talk about the history of cultural materialism and your idea of it. Does your awareness of different audiences have anything to do with the way you imagine the developments in connection with cultural materialism?

Cultural materialism, the term itself, never belonged to me. It was invented by Raymond Williams, whom I met a few times. But I never worked with him and I was never studying at Cambridge at any time. Other people were also very important in

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*Alan Sinfield's collection of essays (*Literary Studies and the Materiality of Culture*) has recently appeared in Hungarian. Cf. Alan Sinfield, *Irodalomkutatás és a kultúra materialitása*, ed. Antal Bókay & László Sári, trans. László Sári & Gábor Zoltán Kiss (Pécs & Budapest: Janus & Gondolat, 2004).

the history of cultural materialism, like Stuart Hall, although I do not think he had ever used the term. Before very long I realized that there was very important work done in feminist studies as well, which is called feminist socialism or feminist materialism, and it had quite a lot of sophistication already, having anticipated notions worked out by men in cultural materialism later. So cultural materialism has always been a kind of wandering concept, and you really do not get hold of it long enough to define its development. Rather, there are various kinds of things going on at the same time, and you work on one of them at one time and on another at another time. Cultural materialism can also appear a rather macho affair especially in comparison with the traditional, middle-class literary appreciation, which it opposed. It's generally taken for granted in Western Europe today that a broad left agenda includes rights for women and for ethnic and sexual minorities (however clumsy men, white people and straight people may be in practice). But I don't think there was immediately (say in the 1970s) much appreciation of this shared potential. I don't think the work has been done on this aspect of the history of left-wing thought, but what I believe actually happened was that male cultural materialists, drawing, as I've said, on Hall and Williams, found that socialist women had arrived at many of the same arguments, out of their own appraisal of cultural politics. My experience was that friends, colleagues and collaborators were immensely patient with the halting efforts of gay men, and especially gay socialists, to appreciate that we were fighting the same fight. In my view it is not just a strategic alliance that draws feminists and gay men together, but that, because of our histories, one issue cannot be comprehended properly without the other. In particular, Western societies will never cope adequately with sexual dissidence until they have coped with gender.

László B. Sári
Budapest, 18th March 2004*

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From Orestes to Hamlet

Iván Nyusztay, *Myth, Telos, Identity: The Tragic Schema in Greek and Shakespearean Drama* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002)

In the large body of scholarship devoted to the study of Shakespeare's classical sources, a relatively small but distinguished segment deals with the direct or indirect influence of Attic tragedy on Shakespeare's dramatic art. In spite of or even in accordance with the firmly established and widely accepted tenet of Senecan influence, scholars never cease to surprise us with new theories and findings about possible parallels between the tragedies of Shakespeare and those of Aeschylus, Sophocles or Euripides. The scope of such research may range from a philologically oriented critical revaluation of Shakespeare's reading to theoretical surveys of structural similarities, often within one and the same study as even a brief look into Emrys Jones's magisterial *The Origins of Shakespeare* will demonstrate. Given the curious neglect of Attic drama in Elizabethan (and, in general, early modern English) literature (e.g. no English translation of Aeschylus was published before 1777), the prevalence of this critical trend might at first seem strange. Yet there are several reasons why the questions and doubts raised by such studies should

persist, and one of these – if not the chief one – may be found in the discrepancy between the evaluation of tragedy in general, and that of Shakespearean tragedy in particular, in the early modern critical treatises. Puttenham, Sidney, and others all assign high status and significant moral value to the genre in the traditional hierarchy of kinds only to point out that the contemporary, i.e. the English practice of tragedy is far from satisfactory – a dual tendency that will eventually reach its climax in Milton's preface to *Samson Agonistes* where the poet follows the "three tragic poets unequalled yet by any" and at the same time attempts to "vindicate tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day." Both the attribution of a moral end to tragedy, and the "small esteem" of contemporary tragic practice are age-old critical commonplaces dating from late antiquity, but while different variations of the former have continued to crop up in literary criticism even up to this day, with the obvious advantage of hindsight, today's critics would not readily subscribe to the wholesale condemnation of late 16th and 17th century tragedies. Already in Jonson's famous commendatory poem "thund'ring Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles" are called to life again together with the Roman tragedians "to hear thy [Shakespeare's] buskin tread / And shake a

stage." Vindicating Shakespearean tragedy from the small esteem that was originally allotted to common "Playmakers" (Sidney) is thus present in the reception history at a very early stage; moreover, in the quoted case it is precisely by reference to the great Attic tragedians that this vindication is performed. Jonson's poem is only one example of the relatively early elevation of the Bard to the rank of the ancient classics: such contemporary responses had certainly laid a solid foundation for later scholarly endeavours drawing parallels between, or comparing, Shakespearean and Greek tragedy; besides that, they may also have accelerated the rehabilitation of other Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights.

Iván Nyusztay's *Myth, Telos, Identity* is one of the most recent contributions to the tradition initiated by Jonson: the neatly designed paperback volume was published in 2002 in Rodopi's "Studies in comparative literature" series (No. 39). The coordination of the three (rather "marked") words in the title may at first seem enigmatic; however, one possible context for their interpretation is provided in the book's subtitle, *The Tragic Schema in Greek and Shakespearean Drama*. Indeed, it is Nyusztay's objective to expose with the help of these concepts the "metahistorical prevalence of the tragic" (13), that is, the fundamental similarity of the tragic experience in the two great ep-

ochs of drama. Lest the elaboration on the different tragic *schemata* should remind us of traditional genre theories (and structuralist enterprises), Nyusztay is careful to point out several times that he would like to avoid the fallacy of generalization (or totalization) so characteristic of these branches of literary criticism. The author's purpose is rather the refinement of the existing conception of tragedy, and with his adopted method, the so-called architectonic survey of Greek and Shakespearean texts he sets out to draw a significant distinction between "pure tragedy" and "melodrama." It is Nyusztay's contention, furthermore, that this distinction is substantiated by the revision of those traditional approaches to the genre that, from Aristotle to the present day, have promoted interpretations of tragedy inextricably linked to some system of ethics. The argument of *Myth, Telos, Identity*, therefore, is at least as much concerned with the interpretation of concrete instances of the tragic in the dramas of the Greek tragedians and Shakespeare as with a general critique of mainstream theories of tragedy. Both tasks are arduous: the Shakespearean corpus is large and diverse, while all that remained from the Greek dramatists is extremely difficult, not to mention the bewildering variety of moral philosophy and literary criticism (often muddled together in one and the same work as, e.g. in the case of

so many early modern critics) the conscientious researcher has to wade through. Such projects usually take long years, and, as Nyusztay hinted in the "Acknowledgements" section, this book, too, was in the making for quite some time. So much the better for the readers, one might add, since the choices the author had to make, the inevitable compromises he was compelled to effect on the available material are the result of a long gestation period: one is confronted, in short, with the close scrutiny of a careful selection of plays and theories.

The book contains seven chapters, preceded by an introduction explaining the author's purpose and outlining the theoretical background, and followed by an epilogue summarizing the main argument, and a short appendix on *Richard III*. Whereas in the initial two chapters ("Modes of the Tragic in Greek Drama," "Modes of the Tragic in Shakespearean Drama") Nyusztay deals with Greek and Shakespearean tragedy separately, from Chapter III ("Character and Identity") on he adopts a perspective that accommodates both variants of the genre. It is in these comparative discussions that some of the most important concepts of traditional drama criticism are investigated in the logical sequence of the argumentation. The concepts which, according to Nyusztay, underlie the structural similarity of Greek and Shakespearean

tragedies, i.e. myth, fate, *telos*, etc., are thus problematized on a higher level in the further sections making Nyusztay's line of reasoning more philosophical than literary-critical, and proceeding from a systematic critique of character criticism to more complex problems of dramatic action. The narrative is rather thickly woven, Nyusztay's style is strict, but his constant anticipations and frequent recapitulations of the argument facilitate the reading of this otherwise difficult book. *Myth, Telos, Identity* is not for the common reader. The sometimes painstakingly meticulous commentary of the actual plays and the often contentious reflections on the works of several thinkers from Aristotle to Derrida presuppose an audience at least moderately versed in Greek and English literature, and deeply interested in philosophy.

Within the confined scope of this review it is not possible to give a full account of all the aspects and possible applications of the book's wide-ranging argumentation; however, a concise summary of some of the main points may be attempted. Thus, already at the very beginning of the book Nyusztay insists that "[t]he rootedness of tragedy in myth renders attempts at the moralization of the analysed modes [of the tragic] questionable" (6). He then proceeds to amplify this claim in the first two chapters by a close reading of a handful of dramas inquiring into the

function of myth in the formation of the tragic experience. Whether it be the mythological system of the Greeks or Christian theology, myth, according to Nyusztay, is the backdrop against which tragic experience is formed; it is in the context of myth that a differentiated teleology, i.e. a distinction between the orientation of the hero, and the mechanistic workings of fate (which may or may not coincide with divine will), a subjective and an objective *telos*, may be conceived of. It is also myth that renders the hero's ethical course futile; in the author's own words: "[t]he schizophrenic state of the tragic hero is the consequence of being confronted with evil in myth and being endowed with the ability to reflect on it in the ethical schema" (22). Thus, the tragic schema is the "reflected schema of myth," and in a purely tragic schema the hero's reflection entails the acknowledgment of necessary failure, whereas in melodrama a premature reconciliation of subjective and objective *telos* renders such an acknowledgement unnecessary (23). Pure tragedy, therefore, is characterized by "reciprocated evil," or "indelible defilement," or "tragic error," or "unyielding pride" (42), concepts that are also present (in modified form) in Shakespearean tragedies, and generally defy moralized interpretation.

Having clarified the most important tragic schemata in Greek and Shake-spearean tragedies, and having pointed out that in both "the modes of the tragic are intrinsically bound to the representatives of fate" (62) Nyusztay proceeds in Chapter III ("Character and Identity") to a systematic critique of character. Arguing against theories binding character with fate (e.g. Hegel's or Schelling's views) the author introduces the notion of "dividedness" in character (65–67), and offers the categories of "nature" and "role" to account for it (70). These concepts help Nyusztay prove that "the identity of a character in a tragedy is not a given preformed, constant quality" (76); the acquisition of identity is "[t]he recognition of the hero's real nature through the intermediation of role-play" (74). Then in Chapter IV ("On the Threshold of the Tragic: The Teleological Foundations of Greek and Shakespearean Tragedy") follows a detailed reflection on the originally Aristotelian concept of *telos*, and the special differential teleology according to presence or absence of which the plots of pure tragedies or melodramas may be fashioned, respectively. The generic differentiation of pure tragedy and melodrama is continued from yet another perspective in Chapter V ("From Character to Self") where Nyusztay defines "tragic identity" through the reading of Ricoeur's and McIntyre's formulation of "narrative identity" and Tengelyi's concept of "spontaneous sense formations." The

account of the acquisition of tragic identity is here about the movement from character to self with the intermediate reflective stage of recognition. "Whenever the initial self is not discarded as in *Oedipus Tyrannus* or *King Lear*, but on the contrary, asserted in its 'uninterrupted continuity' . . . as in the case of Orestes in the *Eumenides* or of Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, we feel the generic irreconcilability of the two forms of recognition" (128) – in short, we are dealing with melodrama.

As it has probably become clear by now, Nyusztay's project of disentangling ethics from drama criticism is not simply a historical critique of poetics and philosophy, but is also based on the close observation of the dramatic texts themselves. Indeed, *Myth, Telos, Identity* does not shortsightedly discard moralized interpretations altogether, the ethical schema is always present as one possible – if sometimes ineffective – problem solving strategy. The futility of an ethical orientation (on the part of the dramatic characters as well as the readers) is further exemplified in the last two chapters where Nyusztay at first provides a catalogue of certain important forms and configurations of tragic (and, occasionally, comic) action, with special emphasis on how it is sometimes problematized by the lack or the counterfeit of action (Chapter VI, "Forms of Action and Passivity"), only to be followed by the reflection on a

peculiar mode of compensating for inaction, that of speech acts (Chapter VII, "Forms of Inaction: Speech Acts"). Unsurprisingly enough, it is Hamlet whose actions are thematized in this final chapter – whether they be "physical" or "speech" acts –, and the analysis of the tragedy's two important scenes shows that the key concepts of Nyusztay's analysis (fate, identity, ethos) are represented in probably the most complex form in this Shakespearean tragedy. The book, therefore, ends on a "homecoming" to Shakespeare, more precisely, to Hamlet, the hero whose "internal form of alterity" so characteristic of tragic selfhood, and so "inaccessible to ethics" (172) is possibly the most intriguing among all such representations.

The foregoing summary was but a short and partial outline of Nyusztay's main argument, but even from such a sketchy account it becomes apparent that *Myth, Telos, Identity* is the register of a serious attempt to occupy a critical position from which two radically different dramatic practices may be safely compared. It derives from the complexity of the author's approach that the book's conclusions are manifold, and address relevant issues in different disciplines from philology through literary criticism to philosophy. For the present reviewer the subtle investigations of the "ethical fallacy" were the most enjoyable parts, while Nyusztay's

handling of the received traditions seemed sometimes problematic. A little bit more "background" and "context" would certainly have proved useful (if only to indicate what will be disregarded) especially concerning the complex interaction of tragedies with other "nobler genres" both in 5th century B.C. Athens and the London of the early 1600s. It is of course perfectly possible to interpret the Greek tragedians without reference to Pindar, or to read Shakespeare without consideration of the Spenserians, but this should not discourage the scholar from trying to contextualize the sometimes highly traditional material. In a like manner, at certain points of the discussion reference to early-modern poetical treatises may have proved rewarding, as these works tend to raise issues that may easily be related to Nyusztay's concerns. On a different note, one could point out that in view of the meticulous, and often original interpretations of actual dramas, a separate chapter devoted to the famous heroines (Phaedra, Medea, Lady Macbeth, etc) would have been most welcome. It is only regrettable, furthermore, that there is much inconsistency in the Greek transliterations, and that this is also characteristic of the Greek references (i.e. all quotations are taken from the Loeb editions, except for Homer; in the definition of the Greek words the standard Liddel-Scott-Jones lexicon is not referred to;

in quoting Aristotle's *Poetics* traditional chapter numbers are initially used to be replaced later by the more handy Bekker numbers, etc). It should have been the work of a careful copy editor to prevent these minor, but sometimes disturbing errors from appearing in print.

With these minor reservations *Myth, Telos, Identity* is a highly recommendable book for those who wish to look beyond traditional literary-critical narratives of "classical origins." It is especially welcome that Nyusztay's interpretations are based on direct knowledge of the Greek sources, and that his critical and philosophical remarks are based on a historical interpretation of his sources. While such an approach cannot be said to attract wide audiences, the relevant questions and problems raised in *Myth, Telos, Identity* remind us that it should not be dismissed all too easily.

Miklós Péti

The Pleasures of the "Vulgar" Look

Peter de Bolla, *The Education of the Eye: Painting, Landscape, and Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003)

In the past few years there has been an emerging interest in the questions of visuality from the aspect of Cultural Studies. The new impulse of this interest partly resulted from the challenge which the abundance and the ubiquity of visual impulses mean to the humanities. It is not only that Art History sought to renew itself by taking into account this new challenge, but there is a growing tendency to rediscover lost knowledge or to put old information into a new light in the entire field of the humanities. The first schools of this tendency are usually based in departments of Art History, renamed as departments of Visual Studies. The interdisciplinary approach to works of art is characteristic of these schools since a number of theorists in this field come from a literary background (one can mention such prominent names form the Chicago school as W. J. T. Mitchell or Mieke Bal). These theorists do not only try to get away from the traditional comparative examination of texts and images, namely from seeking either to prove or to refute the similarity or the continuity of the sister arts, the verbal and the visual, but in concert with recent literary and art theoretical interest, they look into matters which concern the formation of subjectivity, that is, what subject position is designated by a work of art; the modalities of framing meaning – or, to use Bal's phrase, meaning making – and the formation or transmission of culture. These queries cannot be restricted purely to the realm of the visual, partly because they are rooted in discoursivity, and also because the intertwining of the verbal and the visual (in one way or another) proves to be prevalent in the history of art. Moreover these questions are not independent of historical or sociocultural changes, therefore a true interdisciplinary approach involves the historical, the philosophical, and the social background for the reexamination of any cultural phenomena. Visual Studies call attention to the fact that the images or visual instances surrounding us do have a part in the formation of culture, thus today it is impossible to evade the question of visuality or to restrict it only to the field of Art History. A further novelty of these studies is that they are not restricted to the examination of high, elitist cultural products either, on the contrary, they take into account works which are usually conceived as marginal, low, popular, thus unworthy of

academic attention. These studies both challenge the elitist approach to art and question the borders of the high and the low.

Peter de Bolla's salient work is a continuation of this trend: he theorises the visual with the help of eighteenth century visual phenomena, by basing the main thrust of his investigation on the modalities of seeing as well as on the subject positions that certain ways of seeing or viewing entail. His work can be fitted into the corpus of such recent publications as D'Arcy Wood's *The Shock of the Real*, Chloe Chard's *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour* or William Galperin's *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism*, etc. From the aspect of English Studies this work and the recent interdisciplinary trend in the humanities can be of great importance, on the one hand because visuality, or visual culture, usually plays an unjustifiably marginal part in the curricula or in the research field of English Studies. On the other hand because the findings of these approaches can considerably enrich or broaden the horizon of any cultural investigation (be it literary, sociological, art historical, or other).

In *The Education of the Eye* de Bolla employs a network of interrelated topics and assumptions as his point of departure. In a way this work continues the argument he started in *The Discourse of the Sublime*, namely, how the subject can be constructed discoursively. In *The Education of the Eye*, however, the question of subject-formation is put in a different light: here it is the activity of looking that has a definitive function in such a process. He focuses on "how looking gives shape to a human agent and to a specific mode of behaviour and how such agency is embedded in the visual" (2). The visual, in his interpretation, is an intricate phenomenon, an umbrella term which incorporates optics, the techniques of seeing and decoding optical information, the modes of visual address to human agents, the technologies of image/art production, and the significance attached to them (3). De Bolla assumes that the examination of the visual is indispensable since it is instrumental in the formation of culture and of certain subject positions (that is, subjectivity). In his theory of the visual the greatest importance is attached to the activity of looking – to be precise, to a mode of looking, namely to the "sentimental look."

Looking is a cultural form: de Bolla claims that there is a difference between optics that is the physical aspect of seeing and the activity of seeing (or looking) itself. This activity has more to do with the psyche and with culture than with physics. Corollary looking is a technique, a technology of producing subjectivity: it defines how to participate in culture, through displaying one-

self or making oneself visible as well as how to look (and look like); how to give coherence to oneself; how to be a "citizen in the demos of taste" and who is allowed to identify him- or herself as a subject within culture. The look therefore, or as de Bolla terms his invention, the "sentimental look" is also influenced by historical changes. Unlike most theoretical approaches, he, more or less in concert with the recent development of Cultural Studies or New Historicism,[1] attempts the theoretical elaboration of the subject through the lens of historical inquiry.

One of the impulses of de Bolla's work was his dissatisfaction with the lack of historical sensitivity of the theoretical framework of visual studies. He detects this lack in the concept of the gaze and the glance. Despite the revolutionary influence on visual and literary studies (and specifically on narratology) this theoretical approach is devoid of historical dimension, the two terms are seen as historical invariables that underlie or direct the organisation of works. In this respect de Bolla's criticism of the gaze and the glance is justified. In his taxonomy of viewing, however, the idea of the gaze and the glance is not neglected, the sentimental look is defined through its relationship to the two terms. Originally in Bryson's theory[2] the gaze coincides with the Cartesian perspective: the viewing body is reduced to one point only, namely to

the retina of a single eye, a single point of view (binocular disparity was technically not taken into account in terms of visuality before the eighteenth century).[3] The moment of the gaze is "placed outside duration" (96), outside the spatial and the temporal due to which it arrests the flux of phenomena. In this mode of seeing the subject is united with the "Founding Perception": he or she takes a disembodied, God-like, coherent subject position. It seeks to bracket out the temporal process of viewing in order to create a synchronic instant of viewing, which means that the image is reduced to an ideal, but frozen moment. The glance in contrast is a distinct technique, which follows the staccato-movement of the eye, the to and fro activity of real-time looking. It requires the insertion of time and of the body into vision, therefore, "the path of its movement is irregular, unpredictable, intermittent" (121). The glance is a kind of trickster on the gaze, which undermines the rational singular and identifiable subject position in vision and entails a fragmentary, changeable subjecthood.

In de Bolla's interpretation the logic of the glance slightly diverges from the Brysonian concept, probably in order to give his invention – the sentimental look – a more striking and progressive framework. For him the gaze is static, studious, attentive, penetrative (211); it organizes the entire visual field: "the

objectifying gaze structures both the field of vision and the spectator's position within that field." The gaze through its penetration to the visual field attempts to achieve coherence or meaning (73), and this is done through recognition. Thus the gaze renders depth and inner meaning to the object and corollary subjecthood, which on the analogy of the object is based on the "surface appearance" - "inner self" binarism. The glance, in contrast, is a mode in which the eye "moves hurriedly across surfaces," or around the visual field, and as such "it feels itself to be located, positioned by the space within which it moves" (73). Whereas the gaze imposes its logic on the visual field, in the glance the "viewing eye is subjected to the rules of formation governing visuality," it does not have its own structure, but it is "ordered through its encounter with the visual field" (74). The glancing eye "skids and slides off surfaces in a restless tracking" (211). Hence it renders a different subject position, one which finds itself in identification before recognition happens, and for which any reflecting surface in which the seeing eye glimpses itself would suffice. In his tercial system it is only the sentimental look that requires the somatic insertion of the viewer into the scopic activity; this means that the body is present to sight. With this claim de Bolla ignores the fact that the aspect of corporeality is already

a constituent part of the notion of the Brysonian glance. Yet, the emphasis on the corporeal factuality of the viewing activity is crucial, since it provides the ground for the historical dimension of his study. The three-way circuit of the gaze, the glance and the look bears its importance in his elaboration of the cultural-historical construction of subjectivity, that is how one can enter into the scopic regime,[4] how one can become a viewer. In this process the body of the observer, its look in a portrait or in the exhibition room, just like its bodily movement through gardens or buildings, plays an indispensable role.

The sentimental look, according to de Bolla, is a new style of looking that emerges in the middle of the eighteenth century; he provides a precise date to this new way of visuality, the year of the first public exhibition in England in 1760. This is the reason why he devotes himself to scrutinizing the cultural phenomena of the eighteenth century. The sentimental look is a "way of looking *with* the artwork, which creates an affective response in the viewer (hence the sentimental tag)" (11). This kind of look renders possible a new viewing public for visual culture (a prospect consumer) and thus creates a new demand of the visual, which allows for a more democratic and publicly available way of participating in art, therefore different forms of art than that of the elitist sphere's. It makes available the

right to offer visuality to a broader public since looking at art becomes a social activity and as such coincides with being seen as a viewer.

In de Bolla's theory the sentimental look is created in the oscillatory movement between the objectifying gaze and the superficial glance. It utilizes both, but it is not constrained by either of them. In order to explicate this oscillatory movement between the two realms, de Bolla introduces two other terms, "the regime of the picture" and "the regime of the eye." In his taxonomy the former coincides with the gaze whereas the latter with the glance. The regime of the picture entails the elitist, learned, classifying gaze: one sees what one already knows since the actual scopic regime determines the production and the consumption of the artwork. The regime of the picture "requires a special way of recognition (that is a Matisse!), that leads to the pleasurable identification of the looker" (17). This way he or she can claim to be a cultured viewer, even though the position of the cultured viewer is that of the connoisseur (an unpopular label even in the eighteenth century). In this regime the "correct ways of looking are legitimized by the institutions of cultural evolution." This is the position that the Royal Academy, which could very effectively police the values so as to treasure art from any popular mode of artefact, held.

The regime of the eye, as de Bolla claims, terminates into a different subject position: it privileges identification over recognition. Encountering works which are created according to the logic of the regime of the eye one learns how to look by looking itself, that is to say one is compelled by the optical, haptic function of the seen without the need of any previously received knowledge or familiarity with art. The regime of the eye requires an affective response on the part of the viewer. The sentimental look by oscillating between the two positions using both techniques diverges from them at one crucial point: it is a fully somatic insertion of the eye or of the subject into the visual field, whereby it allows the viewer to recognize itself in the place of the seen and to identify with the process of seeing. This offers an alternative visual activity to the elitist learned way of seeing things through previously set standards, therefore it is a more democratic, a publicly more available way of encountering cultural products. Another important feature of the sentimental look is that it temporizes the viewing activity, gives it a temporal, narrative folding out in time, in which the seeing eye becomes the seeing I.

De Bolla's terminology seems slightly hazy at this tercial differentiation, and in places he seems to be arguing more along the logic of the glance than setting up his own approach to the tech-

nology of the look. Nevertheless, his central claim concerning the emergence of a new order of viewing practices, and a new order of society, which is grounded in the theory of spectatorial subjectivity, is important in many respects. Firstly, because it allows for the historical-material examination of the culture of Romanticism. The emergence of the modern society, as he points out, is deeply rooted in visuality. Since in this scopic technique one has to give up the sovereign subjectivity of optics in order to see, it engenders the *sensus communis* of art, a form in which one has to be with others (as well as with the work of art). Secondly, because it provides an occasion to revaluate such phenomena that usually do not fall within academic interest, yet they are or were fully influential cultural products in their time. Finally, the novelty of de Bolla's book is that through the analysis of the sentimental look he shows how it challenges the concept of the Cartesian subjectivity by a more complex notion of the subject, which is formed in the activity of looking without the traditional separation of the observer from the observed.[5] The sentimental look thus shows a new way of seeing at its birth; this look by the insertion of the body into the work, that is, by a way of being with art, allows for a certain mode of identification: to learn how to participate in culture. As opposed to the elitist and closed view-

ing practice which privileges recognition (a way of self-definition based on pre-set knowledge), this means a more democratic learning process through the activity of viewing, one that teaches the viewer on the spot (even though this also has its privileged class that tries to lay its foundation in this process, that of the bourgeois). The sentimental look therefore is a new viewing practice which is rendered possible by the new visual phenomena that emerge from the eighteenth century. In de Bolla's opinion traditional, elitist views denigrated this mode of looking after the eighteenth century until very recently when he sees a new possibility for the return of a new democratic order in the arts. De Bolla's choice of cultural phenomena reflects precisely his theoretical presumptions: he gives account of portraits, gardens and a building because they were created and made available for the broader public and also because the bodily pleasure of the viewing public was a constituent part of these works.

In the first chapter of his book he looks at the genre of the portrait painting, the miniature and the conversational piece. He claims that it is through the portrait that the newly rich class records itself as entering into the domain of culture. This is a genre in which one can point out how the private self is turned into a public one: by displaying oneself one learns how to

appear in public, that is how to participate in *polite* culture and acquire the sense of *taste*. The poses of the conversational pieces or family portraits provide a sample of behaving in the exhibition room (while sometimes being exhibited); seeing and being seen were crucial indices to one's social standing, to one's self-depiction. In the genre of the conversational piece de Bolla provides special interest for the paintings of Joseph Wright of Derby (*An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* and *Academy by Lamplight*). According to de Bolla, these paintings are eye-catchers, in which one can identify a taxonomy of looks ranging from the studious gaze to the flirting sideways glance. The curiosity of these paintings is that they provide space for the spectator within the canvas, while his or her eye is captivated so much that the image performs an educative task: it teaches the viewer how to look. The painting addresses the viewer and leads him or her "through the modes of identification toward recognition, thereby enabling the sensation of being a spectator within culture" (66). These eye-catchers allow for the emergence of the new type of look, one that differs from the voyeuristic look of desire.

Secondly, de Bolla examines the genre of landscape or garden building, landscape gardening. He chooses the Vauxhall gardens for the site of his examination. Firstly, because in this pleasure garden paintings were displayed. Secondly, because here the activity of looking became visible in the experience of exhibiting the garden (80). By entering the garden the visitor is to take part in the civilizing process the garden imposes on him or her. As de Bolla notes there is a special look of satisfaction and pleasure on the face of each visitor, which is also reflected in Frances Hayman's paintings. The look of satisfaction on the faces of these paintings signals their recognition of being members of the culture of the visual (87). Hayman's paintings, which were hung in the painting room of the garden, perform the task of educating the eye by using both the regime of the picture and the regime of the eye. The spectator had a sense of being in the picture while standing in front of it as a viewer as he or she entered the picture room at the end of the rotunda. The aim of the Vauxhall project as de Bolla terms it was to "embrace as large an audience as possible for its time and to argue for a socioscopics built on the regime of the eye that was not antagonistic with the regime of the picture" and also to construct the "sentimental look, an aesthetics responsive to the drives and pleasures of the eye" (103).

The third chapter also deals with the landscape, namely with the Leasowes and Hagley Park. As is well known, there is a difference between the English and the French garden; though

both are artificial objects, the former pretends to be naturalistic, as if it was exactly how nature would have created the landscape, whereas the latter was neatly designed, structured and artificial. In de Bolla's opinion the English landscape is counternaturalistic. He differentiates between two different attitudes to landscape gardening that manifest themselves in manuals. One is the elitist, cultured way, represented in Horace Walpole's *History of Modern Gardening*, the other is Heely's *Letters on the Beauties of Hagley, Envil, and the Leasowes*. In Walpole's account the garden was created so as to correct creation, to polish nature. The world or the open country becomes a vast canvas on which a landscape might be designed. The designer takes a painterly look at everything, the landscape is seen through the painter's eye, and the visitor to these gardens can take the God-like, singular position of the designer in order to identify with him. Neither is it devoid of political interest, it takes part in the constitution of "real" Englishness. In Heely's account the point of designing a garden is to construct a vision of the "real," a group fantasy through the specific politics of visuality. Fantasy was the part of the landscape experience, a prompt for a garden, a sublime introspection of self-regard (149). In de Bolla's view this is a bourgeois reaction to place the elitist cultural form into a mobile bourgeois

tourist industry. Whereas the elitist model claimed an analogical relation to the real landscape, the popular demanded an affective bodily experience. In this model the eye/I is inserted into the landscape and the visual activity is stretched in time and space. This allows for a more democratic antipictorialist mode of looking based on the inner vision of a new class.

Lastly de Bolla turns to a building to detect the workings of the sentimental look. His site of examination is Kedleston Hall, which also marks the emergence of a new architectural style, the Adam style. The building was designed by Robert Adam, an architect who accomplished the compulsory Grand Tour in order to polish his architectural skills, and by its owner Nathaniel Curzon. De Bolla calls this monument of artifice a cultural imaginary, an edifice of the collective imagination. It allows for a particular form of historical consciousness: "an attitude for addressing the past in a form of fantasy that erases the materiality of history." Just like the gardens of the previous chapter, in the construction of the building fantasy projection plays a great role: its design is an eclectic borrowing to fabricate an "image in its fantasized version of the antique." Adam with this building makes the antique Roman culture come alive in the fantasy life of an eighteenth century British gentlemen. Kendelston Hall embodies absolute good taste and

its conceptual space determines how and what we experience while we are within. But it is not only that space tells the viewer how to look that bears importance, but also that the viewer catches himself in the activity of viewing. Adam with this building created a taste out of a fantasized projection of backward forward movement in his contemporary polite culture. It rendered a publicly available private ethos of civic virtue. By moving in the building one took part in an educative process: in buildings one can take the somatic insertion of the viewer in a literal sense which otherwise is not possible apart from the recent development of installations in the plastic arts. The insertion of the visitor into the artwork raises a new problem of his or her relation to it: this undermines the Cartesian subject position and requires the redefinition of the subject as there is no privileged station the viewer can occupy.

The greatest achievement of the visual culture of the eighteenth century is that it provided "a terrain within which one might be and become someone else, a space in which one's fantasies might be realised" (223). De Bolla's account of the cultural products of the eighteenth century is highly interesting and entertaining, despite the heavy theoretical background of the book. One can learn curious and entertaining details about the period under scrutiny.

This is a work of great interest and hopefully provides a link to the interdisciplinary approach of English Studies that can connect the theoretical queries of literary theory to culture understood in a broader and more democratic (that is not exclusively elitist) sense.

Tünde Varga

Notes

1. Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagne, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

2. Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 87–131.

3. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer* (London: MIT Press, An October Book, 1991).

4. The term "scopic regime" is coined by Martin Jay in his essay "The Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Forster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988).

5. J. Crary also deals with the problems of separating the object from the observing subject, a topic that was extremely popular during Romanticism. Crary, nevertheless, takes a slightly different approach in his historical investigation and examines the technological and physiological inventions of the 18th and 19th century, see Crary, *The Techniques of the Observer.*

Irish Writing in Context

Mária Kurdi (ed.), *Critical Anthology for the Study of Modern Irish Literature* (Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 2003)

The editor of the present volume has prepared an impressive selection from some of the most significant writings on Irish literature and culture. The up-to-dateness of the critical material was made a priority in Mária Kurdi's choice: the extracts from articles and books by Irish, American, and English scholars have been published, without exception, in the last few years. The anthology, including nearly forty texts, was originally conceived to compensate students for the painful lack of critical material in the teaching and studying of Irish Literature and Culture at university Departments of English in Hungary. The editor's ambition with the volume is twofold: besides offering an introduction to the postcolonial, feminist and postmodern readings of Irish literature, by presenting critical texts on issues that concern Irish culture and literature, she also offers, although in a necessarily truncated form, a guide to the history of Modern Irish Literature. The majority of the sources from which the selection was made represents recent Irish scholarship: we can find several extracts from well known and refereed journals such as the *Irish University Review* or *The Irish Journal of Psychology* and some of the chapters were taken from the volumes of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, perhaps the most grandiose Irish literary project started in the late twentieth century. The difficulties of contacting the most established publishing houses to ask permission to reproduce copyright materials sometimes, unfortunately, created an insurmountable problem in the targeted choice of texts, an external factor which is responsible for the absence of a number of other representative writings which the editor would also have wished to include. The kindness of the publishers and writers of the selected texts, however, enabled Mária Kurdi to come up with an inspiring and useful volume on Irish literary and cultural studies.

After a philosophical-cultural grounding in the first, the studies singled out in the second and third parts of the anthology provide a historical development of the main genres in the colonial period, the Irish Literary Revival, the Postcolonial period and, finally, the contemporary Irish scene. This arrangement also allowed some of the writers to be analyzed from diverse perspectives: by two essays written on his poetry, and two on his plays, the work of William Butler Yeats, for example, features in as many as four articles in the volume. There is a delicate balance between the

purely theoretical and the highly informative essays.

Most articles in Part One try to define Irish national identity, "the Irish psyche," and the colonial and postcolonial experience of Ireland. The initial extracts are all taken from the most influential texts on Irish postcolonial studies. Grounding their work in the theories of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Irish postcolonial writers such as Richard Kearney or David Lloyd, the selected authors, Declan Kiberd, Seamus Deane and Gerry Smyth, survey the Irish literary canon in the wider social context hoping that, through postcolonial criticism, they can 'reassess' the most revered masterpieces by 're-inventing' Irish literature while escorting it from imperial ideological domination. In "A New England Called Ireland?", excerpted from the introductory section of *Inventing Ireland* (1995), Kiberd explains the dialogic, mutually generative nature of the construction of national identity when remarking that, "If Ireland had never existed, the English would have invented it" (17). In his view Ireland, throughout the centuries, has been seen as England's 'unconscious' and Irish writing always a response to the country's colonized position, identifying it with "a secret England called Ireland" (19). Similarly to Kiberd, Deane also perceives Irish nationalism as a "derivative of its British counterpart" (23).

His essay was extracted from the preface to a collection of three pamphlets written by Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward Said, originally published individually by the Field Day Theatre Company, and re-published together under the title *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* (1990) by Field Day. Deane finds that the first attempt to liberate Irish national identity from its supplementary position was made in the period of the Irish Literary Revival: "The revival, like the rebellion and the War of Independence, the Treaty of 1922 (which partitioned Ireland into its present form), and the subsequent civil war, were simultaneously causes and consequences of the concerted effort to renovate the idea of the national character and of the national destiny. It was only when the Celt was seen by the English as a necessary supplement to their national character that the Irish were able to extend the idea of supplementarity to that of radical difference" (24). In the chapter "The Modes of Decolonisation" excerpted from *Decolonisation and Criticism: The Construction of Irish Literature* (1998) Smyth, borrowing Richard Kearney's philosophical model of the 'Irish mind', David Lloyd's critique of the 'narrative of representation' as well as his concept of 'adulteration,' and Luke Gibbon's use of allegory as a "figure of resistance" (29n.) for his own argument about the concept of decolo-

nisation applied to the Irish context, offers yet another example in the volume of the role of Irish postcolonial literary criticism which tries to liberate and decolonise the national narrative.

Independence, however long ago it was established, will not be achieved, the writers of the last few articles in Part One claim, until it is also carried out at a social and psychological level. Three articles in part one, two of them being selected from a special issue of *The Irish Journal of Psychology* (1994) devoted to the definition of 'the Irish psyche,' approach the postcolonial experience from a psychological point of view. Geraldine Moane's essay, "A Psychological Analysis of Colonialism in an Irish Context," describes the oppressed status of the Irish mind by likening the operation of the system of colonial domination to a 'feminist view of patriarchy' (40). "Building on strengths," she suggests, can be a common element in feminist thought and decolonisation: "women have gained strengths through subordination" (44). The process of decolonisation, however, must be twofold: "Thus decolonisation involves not merely overcoming the negative psychological patterns associated with colonialism, but also developing new values and ideas" (45). Liberation from the patterns of 'lack of pride,' 'mistrust,' 'divisiveness,' and 'narrow identity' (43) must be followed by the 'cultivation of creativity,' 'education,' 'openness to

exploration,' a 'sense of solidarity,' and 'collective action' (45). These largely theoretical articles in the first part of the book also serve to function as background materials, "Contexts," as the title of the section indicates, to the better understanding of the postcolonial, feminist and postmodern discourses which inform most of the essays in the following sections.

Part Two, "Irish Literature in the Colonial Period and during the Irish Literary Revival" contains extracts which introduce the colonial histories of Irish fiction, drama, and poetry in the form of thematic essays, historical summaries, biographical overviews and analyses of individual dramatic pieces and poems. Many of the articles in this section refer to postcolonial discourse as a background source. Unknowingly picking up the subject of Ireland as a "female country" in C. L. Innes's concluding essay of Part One, Rosalind Clark's writing traces the history of the sovereignty theme, first in the shape of the Morrígan, goddess of war, in early pagan times then in "aisling" or vision poetry throughout the seventeenth century and its translations in the Anglo-Irish tradition in the following two centuries, and, in the later sovereignty tradition, as in Yeats's *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, in the shape of a poor old woman who dispenses death. The theme of Ireland sometimes as a beautiful young maiden, other times as an

ugly old woman dominates many of the most influential works of Irish literature in the colonial period, which can explain why the article is placed to the front in this section. The comprehensive overviews of Christopher Murray on "Irish Drama Since the Seventeenth Century" and "The Foundation of the Modern Irish Theatre: A Centenary Assessment," as well as Julian Moynahan's on Irish Gothic fiction are very informative, providing an all-encompassing picture of the histories of drama and fiction in Ireland. Selected from the first volume of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing,* Andrew Carpenter's essay on Jonathan Swift exemplifies how Irish scholars try to reevaluate and appropriate the careers of early modern Anglo-Irish writers by placing and examining them in a new cultural context. Carpenter recalls the short periods of time which Swift spent in England and concludes that since he lived over half a century in Ireland, it is no wonder that the un-English tone of his works, his fantastic and grotesque imagination, which finds its source in Irish comic tradition (69), is very noticeable: "Anarchy of mind and technique mark Swift and the other Irish writers of the eighteenth century and their unsettled vision of the world brings forth writings absolutely different from those of eighteenth-century England" (71). Although each of the other articles in the volume testifies to

the great care with which Mária Kurdi reshaped the referencing apparatus of the selected pieces to always adjust it to the purposes of the volume, this extract seems to be an exception: we can find references accidentally left in the text which refer to another section, as the reference to Spenser in the sixth footnote (70), or selections referred to that can be found in *The Field Day Anthology* and not in the present volume, (71, 72). Perhaps because of the lack of space this article also appears to end somewhat abruptly, cut in the middle of an intriguing discussion of Swift's relationship with Stella. In each section of the volume feminist criticism is duly represented: here in the approaches of individual plays such as Maureen Waters's analysis of Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* or Maria Keaton's "The Mother's Tale: Maternal Agency in *Juno and the Paycock.*"

Part Three, the bulkiest in the book, dedicates itself to the period of "Postcolonial and Contemporary Irish Literature." While introducing the most representative of twentieth century Irish writers, the theoretically well-grounded approaches highlight the diversity of modern Irish literature by showing the richness of postcolonial and feminist issues. As in the previous part, this section also begins with historical surveys and ends in with feminist criticism. Terence Brown's brief summary of poetic careers covers the period beginning

with the early followers of Yeats in the 1930s, such as Austin Clarke, and reaches to the period in which the poetry of John Hewitt and W. R. Rodgers dominated the scene in the 1960s. This line of the history of poetry, in a later extract, is picked up by Rory Brennan's chapter, "Contemporary Irish Poetry: An Overview," in which he gives an account of the changes in Irish poetry after 1960, admittedly not touching upon the poetry of Seamus Heaney because, "his success has reached the point where a hundred times as much ink as he will ever use will be spilt to explain him" (216). The anthology compensates for this lack in the next inclusion by Alasdair D. F. Macrae, "Varieties of Commitment in Seamus Heaney." The remaining three essays on contemporary Irish poets, one on the poetry of Derek Mahon, another one on Eavan Boland's feminist line, together with Patricia Boyle Haberstroh's introductory chapter on contemporary Irish women poets duly justify Brennan's evaluation of contemporary poetry: "In thirty years we have moved from subsistence to subvention, from bohemia to bureaucracy, from appreciation to popularity. And poets – and I would strongly assert poetry too – have flourished. To propose it is a bad time for poetry, as actually has been done, is more than a little absurd" (219).

More chapters than in the previous parts deal with fiction, the novelistic tradition gaining a greater significance than before in the Irish literary canon with the appearance of Joyce. In his comparative analysis of Flann O'Brien's novels José Lanters finds the sources of the novelist's literary techniques in the formal elements of the Menippean satire (182), also employed by, for example, Swift in *Gulliver's Travels.* A brief historical survey of twentieth century Irish fiction writers follows Lanters's essay, mentioning the works of Samuel Beckett, Flann O'Brien, Sean O'Faolain, and Elizabeth Bowen and some Northern Irish novelists such as Glenn Patterson among others. Characteristically, Christina Mahony's text places some of the narratives, such as Beckett's *The Unnameable,* in typically Irish traditions, the forerunners of which, according to her, are Swift and Laurence Sterne, the latter of whom, however, lived his whole life in England and never admitted any personal connection with Ireland.

As in the previous sections, we can find an abundance of the selected texts dealing with drama and theatre, the editor's special fields of research. Fintan O'Toole offers a comprehensive survey of the history of drama in the past few decades when he calls the most recent dramatic production of playwrights the "third way": "A second revival, in my own view no less powerful, began in the late 1950s and continued well into the 1980s. It is marked, obviously, by the work of Tom Murphy,

Brian Friel, John B. Keane, Thomas Kilroy and Hugh Leonard. And we have now entered into some kind of third phase. . . In some important respects, this third phase has more in common with the first revival than with the second, yet it is important to stress that it includes the later work of two of the most important writers of the second revival, Murphy and Friel" (292). Gender and identity, play-acting, and myth-making are the main subjects in the analyses of the works of the above mentioned dramatists. Eamonn Jordan's text focuses on the themes of self-conscious performativity, mimicry, play-within-a-play, all of these being features of metatheatricality in three of the plays of Frank McGuiness. Perhaps symbolically, feminist criticism concludes the anthology: the role of women in Irish fiction writing is discussed in the extract from Anne Fogarty's chapter, "Uncanny Families: Neo-Gothic Motifs and the Theme of Social Change in Contemporary Irish Women's Fiction." Claudia W. Harris's overview of the Charabanc Theatre Company and Anna McMullan's article, "Unhomely Stages: Women Taking (a) Place in Irish Theatre" offer an intriguing insight into the status of feminist plays and female actors in contemporary theatrical life.

In sum, it may be said that, after a thorough reading of the extracts selected for this anthology, one can fairly admit that the multiplicity of both the subjects and the authors, and the diversity of the perspectives deployed in the inclusions covering the time span of over two centuries impose a perhaps too heavy burden on the reader: while all the papers are cut short, they are, at the same time, very informative and it remains the teacher's task to fill the gaps necessarily left in the extracts for lack of more space. Although the omissions are marked, it would be a help to know the original length and pagination of the selected materials. The preparing of such a compendium of the critical reception of Irish and sometimes modern literature in general will, however, certainly facilitate the teaching of modern Irish literature at Hungarian universities. The editor of the present anthology, Mária Kurdi, has successfully shown by her selection that mastering and managing such a vast amount of material on Irish literary criticism is possible.

Gabriella Hartvig

The Crisis of Identity

Floyd Collins, *Seamus Heaney: The Crisis of Identity* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003)

The present volume is a direct outcome of the increasing attention paid to the notion of identity which is, at best, difficult to define. Seamus Heaney noted the problematic issue of Irish identity in a 1974 review of P. V. Glob's *The Mound People*: "In Ireland our sense of the past, our sense of the land and even our sense of identity are inextricably interwoven."[1] For the poet, a number of elements of identity are inseparable. His literary identity is bound up with his family's heritage of agricultural labour, his Catholic upbringing, and his cultural ancestry, including centuries of conflict with England, as well as decades of strife between Protestant and Catholic citizens.

Floyd Collins argues that, for a modern writer, the crisis of identity involves a continual struggle to find his own place within the community of the world and within the literary canon. That is why the study is based on the matter of identity, which is especially troublesome for Irish citizens, who must confront a cultural and historical legacy that includes both their relationship with England and the reality of political and sectarian strife in their homeland.

In interpreting the cultural crisis in twentieth-century Ireland, Collins argues that "it was often experienced as a conflict between the claims of tradition and modernity. It is not surprising, then, that identity has traditionally been a concern for Irish writers. Heaney cast himself as "an inner émigré" (18) in "Singing School," and whose speaker in "The Tollund Man" paradoxically finds himself as "lost, / Unhappy and at home" in Denmark as in Ireland. Like all contemporary Irish writers, Heaney must resolve for himself the competing claims of tradition and modernity, but he must also face the spectre of self-imposed exile, a repudiation of his own identity and the community to which he belongs.

The author uses very interesting examples in his analysis of the works of contemporary Irish poets to show how they confront a difficult literary ancestry as they explore the extremes of Yeats's Romanticism and Joyce's Modernism, Yeats's myth-making and Joyce's exile and repatriation, while simultaneously questioning themselves about identity.

This is a brilliant and well-researched study of Seamus Heaney's identity, which may not have been as profoundly influenced by experience. His poetry and prose express what may at best be termed a "sense of dividedness" (19). Like many postcolonial writers, he notes the presence of conflicting influences or origins: "the voice of my education," he

explains, "pulls in two directions, back through the political and cultural traumas of Ireland, and out towards the urgencies and experience of the world beyond it."[2]

The author distinguishes Heaney's encounter with Kavanagh's work, which in one respect reinforced his identity, as the poet describes in an essay on Patrick Kavanagh, about the startling yet intimate experience of encountering his poems for the first time: "I was excited to find details of a life which I knew intimately – but which I had always considered to be below or beyond books – being presented in a book. . . . Potato-pits with rime on them, guttery gaps, iced-over puddles being crunched, cows being milked, a child nicking the doorpost with a pen-knife, and so on. What was being experienced was not some hygienic and self-aware pleasure of the text but a primitive delight in finding world become word."[3]

This experience marks the beginning of his own poetic identity: "I began as a poet when my roots were crossed with my reading."[4] The obvious delight with which Heaney culls, rehearses, and savours the rich sensory detail of his verse is a sure indication of how indelibly the penknife re-inscribes his own experience. He suddenly apprehends the emblems of life through an abrupt nick that cuts to the roots of consciousness.

Seamus Heaney's designation of Kavanagh as "an immediate literary forebear, one whose example would facilitate or resolve his own crisis of identity" (20), is especially significant. Heaney credits Kavanagh with discovering "a new vein of consciousness in Irish poetry" (25). Both put aside the spade for the pen, but in doing so he refused the bucolic affectations: "Kavanagh's proper idiom is free from intonations typical of the Revival poets. His imagination has not been tutored to 'sweeten Ireland's wrong,' his ear has not been programmed to retrieve in English the lost music of verse in Irish. The 'matter of Ireland,' mythic, historical or literary, forms no significant part of his material. . . . Kavanagh forged not so much a conscience as a consciousness for the great majority of his countrymen, crossing the pieties of a rural Catholic sensibility with the *non serviam* of his original personality, raising the inhibited energies of a subculture to the power of a cultural resource."[5]

In this way, the first three chapters focus on showing Heaney as the most famous Irish poet of his generation, with at least one volume, *North* (1975), selling well into the tens of thousands, his basic conception of the artist's role contrasting sharply with the stern equestrian profile Yeats loved to project. This essay examines how the differences run far deeper, since Heaney "reproves Yeats for deliberately forging a pantheon of Anglo-Irish writers in which he conveniently includes himself" (26). The connection is

both specious and self-aggrandising, the epitome of the equestrian posture struck in the epitaph that Yeats composed a few years before his death: "Cast a cold eye / On life, on death. / Horseman, pass by." But Heaney's most ardent censure is reserved for Yeats's occult vision of history: "Why do we listen to this gullible aesthete rehearsing the delusions of an illiterate peasantry, this snobbish hanger-on in country houses mystifying the feudal facts of the class system, this charlatan patterning history and predicting the future by a mumbo-jumbo of geometry and Ptolemaic astronomy?"[6]

According to Collins, Heaney's fundamental objection to Yeats stems from the latter's Neo-Platonism. Kavanagh's example validated Heaney's profound sense of connectedness to the soil. However, the essay aims at examining the Ulster poet's desire for an all-encompassing vision that went deeper than his agrarian roots.

In "Feeling into Words," Heaney extracts a passage from Wordsworth's *Prelude* to clarify his longing for a poetry "with the aura and authenticity of archaeological finds, where the buried shard has an importance that is not diminished by the importance of the buried city."[7] But here Heaney deceives himself when he draws on Wordsworth: his motive and cue for "poetry as a dig, a dig for finds that end up being plants" actually derives from James Joyce, according to Collins. As an extraordinarily talented writer of middle-class origins and Catholic background, Joyce "provided a strong alternative to Yeats for two generations of Irish poets" (28). Although Joyce led an expatriate's life in Trieste, Zurich, and Paris, he declared a year before the publication of *Ulysses* that he always wrote about Dublin, because if he could get to the heart of Dublin, he could get to the heart of all the cities of the world. Joyce believed that "he could achieve the requisite objectivity of the artist only by complete detachment from the life of the community: his "*non serviam*," like Stephen Dedalus's, included the ties of family, church, and state" (31). On the contrary, family life proves an integral part of Seamus Heaney's early writing: nor is he prone to reject Catholicism or nationality outright. Born and raised in Derry, one of the six Unionist and predominantly Protestant countries in Northern Ireland, Heaney was obliged from the beginning to face a more complex milieu than his Dublin predecessor.

The conflict of origins occurs early in Heaney's history, embodied in his family's farm, located between Castledawson and Toome: "Our farm was called Mossbawn. *Moss*, a Scots word probably carried to Ulster by the Planters, and *bawn*, the name the English colonists gave to their fortified farmhouses. Mossbawn, the planter's house on the bog. Yet in spite of his Ordnance Survey spelling, we pronounced it Moss bann, and *bán* is the

Gaelic word for white. . . . In the syllables of my home I see a metaphor of the split culture of Ulster."[8]

Heaney thus describes himself as "symbolically placed between the marks of English influence and the lure of the native experience, between 'the demesne' and 'the bog,' "[9] while he strives to assimilate his various influences – Kavanagh, Wordsworth, Hopkins, Hughes – even as he shapes an aesthetic identity uniquely his own. All this makes Collins come to the interesting conclusion that, indeed, more than most poets, Heaney's poems "reflect a search for a personal and cultural identity" (32), an attempt to come to terms with his spiritual, historical and literary heritage, since "to acquire a singular identity through an achieved voice is the ultimate goal of every serious poet" (34). The author also suggests by drawing mainly on the most accomplished poems in his first collection, *Death of a Naturalist,* that they "focus on the poet's quest for identity in terms of personal, familial, and cultural experience" (42). Then, he reflects on the different conceptions of Heaney's struggles in his early career to develop his own identity, seeking to understand and reconcile a number of conflicts both personal and cultural: "his own divergence from his family's tradition or rural labor, the sense of dividedness between English and native influences in his own environment, divisiveness between Irish Protestants and Catholics, and his reluctance to emulate without qualification the literary predecessors of his native land" (54).

In short, I found this book enriching, since it manages to unveil the complexity in Heaney's 'inability' on a personal level to follow in his ancestors' path as a rural labourer, which occasioned him certain feelings of guilt and discomfort about writing, as he acknowledged in 1981: "There is indeed some part of me that is entirely unimpressed by the activity, that doesn't dislike it, but it's the generations, I suppose, of rural ancestors – not illiterate, but not literary. They in me, or I through them, don't give a damn."[10]

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Notes

1. Seamus Heaney, "Land-Locked" (Review of *The Mound People* by P. V. Glob), *Irish Press* (1 June 1974), p. 6.

2. Seamus Heaney, *Preoccupations: Selected Prose, 1966–1978* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1980), p. 35.

3. Seamus Heaney, *The Government of the Tongue* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1989), pp. 7–8.

4. *Preoccupations*, p. 37.

5. *Preoccupations*, pp. 115–6.

6. *Preoccupations*, p. 101.

7. *Preoccupations*, p. 41.

8. *Preoccupations*, p. 35.

9. *Preoccupations*, p. 35.

10. Seamus Heaney, "Interview by John Haffenden," *Viewpoints* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), 63.