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The Paradox of Context

Wyrd, God and Progression Presented through *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*

The aim of this paper is to resolve the paradoxical nature of the juxtaposition of Germanic pagan with Christian teachings and ideas in Old English elegies. First, the most relevant notions of religious encounter are discussed. Then, the notion of 'Wyrd,' the Germanic fate motif, shall be introduced. Subsequently, after giving a concise summary of the history and story of *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, the paper deals with the narrative structure of each, then analysing their relevant parts in depth. The paper also elaborates on the phenomenon of 'progression.' The word is here used to refer to the shift in tone (from earthly to transcendent) which occurs to emphasise the importance of the new religion and is achieved by presenting Christian teachings as consolation for the exiled protagonists. In *The Wanderer*, the pagan retrospective view is exchanged for the eschatological, while in *The Seafarer* the development from a lament to sermon is what will be the means of this consolation.

Introduction

Religion is a meaning-making enterprise that imposes a certain order on the chaos of the universe.[1] When two of these meet this coherence becomes questioned, therefore, to relieve this tension, the cultural codes need be altered to form one consistent system of meaning.[2] This phenomenon is unique for every instance of religious encoun-

1. Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, ed. Clifford Geertz (London: Fontana Press, 1993 [1973]), pp. 87–125.

2. Lilla Kopár, *The Iconography of Viking-Age Stone Sculptures: Visual Evidence of Religious Accommodation in the Anglo-Scandinavian Communities of Northern England*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (Szeged: University of Szeged, 2003), p. 142.

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ter.[3] During the course of this essay I shall present this merging of religions in the case of the Anglo-Saxon community.[4] My main topic will be the position of "*Wyrd*" and the 'God Almighty' in the minds of the Anglo-Saxons, through two of the most well-known elegies of the *Exeter Book*: *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*. The sheer fact that the teachings of the Christian Church and of Germanic paganism existed side-by-side is rather odd. This is the reason why the title of my paper includes the word "paradox," for as the definition of paradox states it is "a statement which, though it appears self-contradictory, contains a basis of truth that reconciles the seeming opposites."[5] In the course of this paper I will make an attempt to reveal that "basis of truth" and thus show how the two beliefs could coexist.

First, we must mention that the two supreme powers of these fundamentally different religions existed side-by-side in Old English poetry. They, however, were not mentioned on the same level (i.e. they were not equals), which we shall see most clearly through what I term 'progression' in the elegies. 'Progression' in this case will mean a shift from one world-view to another, to achieve reconciliation.

To understand why this shift was necessary, we must note that the adaptation or accommodation of religious elements into a religion is always motivated by some sort of discontent with the present religion.[6] In poetry this need for a change is depicted as being triggered by the futility of the world that is dying around the speakers.[7] As Germanic paganism was a dominantly worldly, community-centred world-view, as opposed to the world-rejecting, individualistic world-view of Christianity[8] it is not hard to imagine why the latter was more appealing to the lonely outcast of the elegies.

However, since the religion of one (not to mention a whole community) does not change overnight, the change needs to be gradual. Luckily – as W. A. Chaney has

3. Kopár, p. 143.

4. Although we must bear in mind that the old form of paganism that merges into Christianity was a non-codified, non-centralised, and non-institutionalised religion (Kopár, p. 145). I shall only use the term 'religion' for this mass of beliefs and codes to make the discussion simpler.

5. Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz, *Literary Terms: A Dictionary* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1975), p. 173.

6. Kopár, p. 145.

7. Even though we suspect that in the case of the settled Scandinavian invaders the process was motivated by political and social pressure (Kopár, p. 145).

8. James C. Russel, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 176.

pointed out – the old religion provided so many parallelisms that the tribal culture could absorb the conquering God without disrupting many of its basic preconceptions;[9] therefore a violent conversion to the new religion was even unnecessary.

Baffling as it may seem, Chaney was right to say so. There are numerous parallels that can be drawn between Germanic and Christian mythology, which helped the Anglo-Saxons accommodate to Christianity. Lilla Kopár lists these and points out the overlap between biblical and Germanic myths.[10] These notions include the idea of the evil serpent in *Genesis* compared to the story of the Midgard Serpent, or Odin's death compared to the crucifixion of Christ. In these myths the emphasis simply shifts to a certain detail of the story (like Odin being hanged on a tree).

The integration of the native elements into the new religion was crucial, for this was the only way the natives could understand the new religion.[11] As Kopár also states certain forms of representation (she speaks mostly of visual forms) do not easily "go out of fashion," rather they gain a new layer of interpretation to fit the new cultural context. In such a way they provide a sense of continuity.[12]

The notion that makes this possible is 'indigenisation,' which means that the universal Christian faith may be translated into the forms and symbols of any particular culture.[13] This process may take the form of 'contextualization' that is the integration of values, ideas, and teachings of the Church in the recipient culture, by the people of that culture[14] This is what we witness for instance in *The Dream of the Rood*, where Christ is depicted as the heroic warrior, who mounts the cross bravely, ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of others.[15]

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9. W. A. Chaney, "Paganism to Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England," *Harvard Theological review* LIII (1960), p. 209.

10. Kopár, pp. 164–65.

11. Helmer Ringgren, "The Problems of Syncretism," in *Syncretism: Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Cultural Contact, Meeting of Religions, Syncretism: Held at Åbo on the 8th–10th of September, 1966*, ed. Sven S. Hartman (Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1969), 7–14, p. 12.

12. Kopár, p. 142.

13. Harvie M. Conn, "Indigenization," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, gen. ed. A. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland and Charles van Engen, ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 481–82, p. 481.

14. Scott Moreau, "Inculturation," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* gen. ed. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland and Charles van Engen, ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 475-76, p. 476.

15. We must note here that the term that is generally used to describe the process and result of the encounter of the two cultures is 'syncretism.' This word is now understood to mean

So, as we may suspect, this is why *Wyrd* was mentioned several times through the period. Before we may engage in the analysis, we must clarify what "*Wyrd*" (might have) meant for the Old English historical audience.[16]

In Old English mythology the word refers to 'Fate,' which is not merely the string of predestined events. *Wyrd* is rather a personification of a deity-like entity, something which is above the power of old Germanic gods. This was pointed out by G. V. Smithers,[17] who also claims here a parallel between *Wyrd and* the Old Norse Norns, who were the so-called weavers of Fate, the trio of goddesses, who controlled all the fates in the world, even that of gods, as mentioned above. *Wyrd* is often referred to in plural (*Wyrda*, *Wyrde*), which may support his argument.

What we surely know, however, is that *Wyrd* is a destructive force that carries away and sweeps away men in battle;[18] it is something stubborn (*The Wanderer*, l. 5b). *Wyrd* in Old English poetry is usually associated with death and disaster, as we can see in the first line of *Ruin*, where the poet exclaims: "Splendid is this masonry – *Wyrd*(s) destroyed it!"[19] ("*Wrætlic is þes wealstan – Wyrde gebræcon*," l. 1). We also find another instance of it being displayed as a destructive force, such as in line 24, where we read "until *Wyrd* the mighty changed it"[20] ("*oþþæt þæt onwende Wyrd seo swiþe*").

During my analysis I will treat *Wyrd* as an entity, which has no modern correspondent, thus cannot (and will not) be translated. In the process of analysing the poems I will only highlight instances, where the poet clearly refers to *Wyrd* (i.e. not merely to a course of events), and under that name.

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the mixture of two or more religions, where elements of one religious system are adapted into the other, and the systems merge and influence each other mutually (Ringgren, p. 7). However, we cannot talk of classical syncretism in the Anglo-Saxon culture, as the Christian thought remained largely unaltered, merely enriched by pagan elements to promote the understanding of the new religion (Kopár, p. 147).

16. By "historical audience" I mean the community familiar with the notions present in a text and how to interpret them. This notion was taken from Martin Irvine's "Anglo-Saxon Literary Theory Exemplified in Old English Poems: Interpreting the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood* and *Elene*," *Style* 20 (1986), pp. 157–81. He speaks of a "textual community" and takes the notion from Brian Stock. In the essay I refer to these people, when I use the word 'audience.'

17. G. V. Smithers, "Destiny and the Heroic Warrior in *Beowulf*," in *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in honour of H. D. Meritt*, ed. J. L. Rosier (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 65–81, pp. 67–9.

18. Like "war" (l. 81) and "spear" (l. 99), also cf. *Beowulf* (l. 477 and l. 2814).

19. Translations, when not otherwise marked, are mine.

20. The line may also be translated as '*Wyrd* changed it exceedingly,' however, this emendation is irrelevant for this paper.

The Wanderer

Overview

The manuscript of *The Wanderer* can be found in the second half of the *Exeter Book* (76B–78A), which is considered to be the section containing the so-called "wisdom literature," named as such for the genre 'elegy' was not invented yet.[21] The book itself is considered to have been written by one scribe.[22] As one can guess, it got its name from the location of its discovery. The book is thought to be the "big English book" ("*micel englisc boc*") that Leofric, the Bishop of Exeter named amongst the donations to the cathedral, between 1050 and 1072; therefore we can date the text no later than 1072, and generally it is surmised to have been written a hundred years earlier (Klinck, p. 13). Robin Flower, who tried to date it more precisely, also giving the location of its composition, said that it must have been written "in the West Country early in the period 970–990."[23] The dialect of the poem is Late West Saxon.

My main reason for choosing the poem was that – at least in my perception – it illustrates the merger of the faiths wonderfully, moreover its narrative structure (often compared to that of *The Seafarer*) illustrates the progression from earthly to transcendent, which is made explicit by the speaker, should we examine it properly.

As I perceive it *The Wanderer* begins with talk of a "lone-dweller" ("*anhaga*," l. 1), which in Old English poetry is a reference to an exile. We know that he is an exile, because his lord has died (ll. 22–3). He talks of suffering terrible hardships at sea and laments the lonely state that he must endure and mentions how he has been striving to find another home where he might experience the same kind of joys he had had before his retainer had passed away.

His agonies grow worse after he awakens from a dream about the past joys to the harsh reality of the sea. This experience makes the pain of loss so intense that he begins to hallucinate, seeing his kinsmen floating around him.

There is a sudden shift here from description to contemplation, as a voice starts to describe how sad the present state of the world is, and how much worse it shall be, when all of this realm will be destroyed. This is the point where what I call progression is triggered, and he begins to leave one viewpoint behind, to present the other.

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21. Anne L. Klinck, *The Old English Elegies – A critical edition and genre study* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), p. 30.

22. Klinck, p. 21)

23. *"The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry"* (Facsimile with introductory chapters) ed. R. W. Chambers, Max Förster and Robin Flower (London, 1933), p. 90.

Finally, after a classical 'ubi sunt' motif (ll. 92–110), we are told that we should seek solace with God, for there rests all our security (ll. 114–5).

Before we may proceed with an in-depth analysis of the poem, we must clarify who the speaker is (or the speakers are).

Narrative Structure

The narrative structure of the poem has been discussed by many critics, and various ideas have emerged about the position and even existence of the narrator. Here, after presenting what the most important critics said about the poem, I shall present a new narrative structure that I find more legitimate than the ones I encountered during my research. In my theory the narrator is the one who introduces the poem (ll. 1–7, except 5b), and interrupts twice afterwards (ll. 88–91, l. 111).

The Wanderer begins with someone speaking of the protagonist in third person. Therefore we may regard him as a narrator, which seems rather factual. The narrator, however, will only reflect on the Wanderer's state (therefore they do not communicate), therefore the poem may still be a monologue, as many modern critics have suggested (e.g. Leslie, Richman, Klinck etc.).

As we can derive from Richman's theory of an interior monologue,[24] in accordance with Leslie[25] – claiming that the "*swa cwæð*" (l. 6 and l. 111) formula can refer both backwards and forward – we may interpret lines 1–5 as either the narrator's or the Wanderer's. Richman is in favour of the latter, however, I am inclined to assign it to the narrator[26] (except for l. 5b) along with the line introducing the final speech of the Wanderer (l. 111), deeming them a sort of introduction and conclusion. In doing so, I am to rely on Greenfield and Erzgräber (whose views I came across in Pope's essay [27]), who took lines 1–7 as prologue and lines 111–5 as epilogue. I will be using their terminology of the mentioned parts. However, in my analysis I shall take the first exclamation (l. 5b) and the final lines (ll. 112–5), as spoken by the Wanderer, being convinced of the superiority of that reading after seeing Richman's points on

24. Gerald Richman, "Speaker and Speech boundaries in *The Wanderer*," *JEGP* 81 (1982), pp. 469–79.

25. Roy F. Leslie, *The Wanderer* (Manchester: University of Exeter Press, 1985), pp. 2–3.

26. "Most earlier editors were in the favour of this view" (Klinck, p. 107).

27. John C. Pope, "Second Thoughts on the Interpretation of *The Seafarer*" in *Old English Elegies: Basic Readings*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1994), 213–229, p. 224.

the use of '*swa cwæð*,' but only for the exclamation and the concluding part, as the prologue is spoken in third person.

According to this reading the '*swa*' clause both in the introductory and the concluding part can refer both backward and forward, exactly as Richman suggested. However, unlike Richman, in the case of the prologue, I take it to refer back to one clause only.

The speech, which follows after the dream sequence, and sharply contrasts the two parts of the poem (58ff.), is considered to be the continuation of the Wanderer's monologue.[28] Most early critics regarded these lines as either later additions (Sieper) or as mistakes of the scribe who copied the poem (Craigie).[29]

It was my previous view that this is the same kind of outburst (of the narrator) as the "*Wyrd* is full resolute" ("*Wyrd bið ful aræd*," l. 5). According to this reading what we are facing is a deliberate transition from one viewpoint of the poem to the other.[30] This is most probably an addition that strengthens the didactic nature of the poem (i.e. a transition needs to be explicit between the Wanderer's suffering (up to l. 58), the decline of the world (ll. 58–110), and looking forward to heavenly security (l. 111). According to that reading the interruption lasts until he introduces another speech ("and speaks these words" / "*ond þas word acwið*," l. 91). However, I was compelled to change this opinion in favour of the reading which only allows the narrator to interrupt the speech at ll. 88–91.[31] I was inclined to take this stance, because thus the Wanderer's shift from one aspect of life to the other would not be so swift and this way we may further weaken the importance of the narrator, while we may more clearly follow the Wanderer's progress from pagan to Christian. Additionally, now I see the mentioned part of the poem as being triggered by the dream, awakening the Wanderer to the transitory nature of life.[32]

Moreover, I found an interesting parallel, which assured me of the validity of that structure. In every instance the two critics would denote to be the narrator's lines, the Wanderer is named in the first line of the narrative speech. This shows that

28. At least by modern critics like Leslie (p. 10) and Richman, and even by J. C. Pope, who retracted his previous opinion of introducing a second major speaker here (pp. 75–6).

29. Examples taken from Klinck, p. 118.

30. Before this part we saw the Wanderer's horrible experiences at sea, while after this we proceed to a more general view of the world (as stated in Leslie, *The Wanderer*)

31. This is in accordance with a Dunning and Bliss's (1969) interpretation, see Pope, p. 224.

32. This recognition was emphasised by Stanley Greenfield; cf. his "*Sylf*, Seasons, Structure and Genre in *The Seafarer*" in *Old English Elegies: Basic Readings*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 231–249, p. 248.

the clause is spoken by someone other than the Wanderer, (simply because the protagonist has to be named), additionally that person will talk about the Wanderer in third person.

First he calls him "lone-dweller" ("*anhaga*," l.1), then a clause is skipped (l. 5b) and he is called "earthwalker" i.e. "wanderer" ("*eardstapa*," l. 6) in the second clause of his prologue, then he is referred to as one, who "thinks wisely" ("*wise geþohte*," l. 88), and finally as "wise" ("*snottor*," l. 111). By using these instances as milestones – signalling the narrator's interruption, which lasts until the end of the clause – we may assume the narrative structure of the poem, put forth by Greenfield and Erzgräber, along with Dunning and Bliss would be at least partially correct, had they regarded that in every case of the narrator's interruptions, he names the Wanderer.[33]

While I dedicate these lines (prologue, transition, and introduction to the epilogue) to the narrator I would not go as far as to violating the reading of the poem as a monologue. In my analysis I treat the narrator as a person,[34] who – as I have mentioned in the beginning of my discussion – is an omniscient spirit monitoring the Wanderer and commenting on his situation. Therefore, the narrator only speaks from the beginning to line 7 (except l. 5b), then from lines 88–91, and lastly in line 111.

Analysis

In the course of the analysis, I shall prove the inherent pagan notions, merging with the Christian teachings. I shall also present the protagonist's 'auto-didactic conversion;' which – according to my hypothesis – is presented exactly through the juxtaposition of the Germanic values, with the Christian ones. At the beginning the Germanic notions will dominate, in the end the emphasis will shift towards the Christian ones, however the synthesis will be visible in both. Basically, we can claim that the Wanderer, in his exile, will face several hardships, which eventually will lead him to realise that he must yield to his fate, quit any search for a new lord and look towards the security in God.

In the first part of the poem, which we term the prologue (1–5a, 6–7), we encounter the Wanderer, who often "wishes for mercy" ("*are gebideð*," l.1), because he is alone and seeks grace as he travels through the rime-cold sea. Although Klinck (p. 31) proposes 'receives,' it is not hard to realise the faultiness of that translation here, as it seems the composer of *The Wanderer* used the word in the sense 'wait,' as we

33. Therefore, l. 5b and 112ff. are not spoken by the narrator, because they constitute different clauses.

34. Most probably the poet himself, as suggested by Leslie (*The Wanderer*, p. 21)

can see in the line "A man must wait, then utter a boast" ("*Beorn sceal gebidan, þonne he beot spriceð*," l. 70), where the verb 'endure' would make no sense at all.[35] Moreover, if we consider that he is on the ice-cold sea, with haunting images in his mind, it would be hard to imagine Klinck's proposal.

I offer a chronological order of events, where at the beginning, the protagonist received no mercy, he merely wished he had, as he "long traversed the watery ways" ("*geond lagulade longe sceolde*," l. 3), "sick at heart" ("*modcearig*," l. 2); while in the end, after he is already "thinking wisely" ("*wise geþohte*," l. 88), he will become "wise" ("*snottor*," l. 111).

This change will be explicitly put forward by the Wanderer,[36] who will first claim that "*Wyrd* is resolute" ("*Wyrd bið ful aræd!*," l. 5b), but will, in the end, speak of "solace in the Father in Heavens" ("*frofre to Fæder on heofonum*," l. 115).

By the sentence "*Wyrd* is resolute" the poet has shown us that he still holds these beliefs, although – as we shall observe – he is definitely Christian. This then will prove to be a fine example of the merging of the old and the new religion.

When the Wanderer begins his speech (l. 8), he immediately starts to lament, which is what we may expect, after the previous line, when the storyteller says that he spoke thus of hostile slaughters and dear kinsmen's fall ("*wraþra wælsleahta winemæga hryre*," l. 7)[37]. He speaks of a battle (or perhaps a sequence of battles), which resulted in the death of all his friends. The consequence of the attack he presents as the day when the "earth's darkness covered his bounteous friend" ("*gold-wine minne / hrusan heolster biwrah*," ll. 22b–23a). These lines are to be taken in the literal sense, as the cause of his wandering. We can also see that he is alone, because everyone died whom he called a true friend, and to whom he could speak his mind ("*Nis nu cwicra nan / þe ic him modsefan minne durre / sweotule asecgan.*," ll. 9b–11a). Although he perhaps tries to express that this in a sense is good, for it is noble in a warrior to keep his thoughts to himself ("*þæt he his ferðlocan fæste binde*," l. 13), still after the previous exclamations this seems rather as if he was trying to convince himself that his wretchedness has its advantages as well. Although

35. Nevertheless, we must note that the Old English word *"gebiddan"* has different shades of meaning. In l. 1 we see it as 'wait,' as in the sense 'wait for something passively,' i.e. 'long for,' while in l. 70 it is used in the sense 'stop.'

36. Following the view on the narration of *The Wanderer*, which I proposed in the previous section.

37. Actually 'hostile slaughter-slaughter,' and 'friend-friend's fall,' as suggested by the compounds in this line. This I regard as extra emphasis on the way he perceived the gore, and the extent to which he loved his comrades.

Leslie mentions that fortitude is one thing that would be expected of him in these times, so it may be taken as a sort of heroic value.[38]

What comes after these lines is baffling at first, for he declares here that "a weary mind cannot resist *Wyrd*" ("*Ne mæg werigmod Wyrd wiðstondan*," l. 15). This opens a new perspective on *Wyrd*. Should we say that a weary mind cannot resist it, then we imply that some sort can do just that, as suggested by the word "*mæg*." The answer we shall find in *Beowulf*,[39] when after the swimming contest with Breca he says that "*Wyrd* often spares a warrior, who is not ripe for death, if his courage is strong"[40] ("*Wyrd oft nereð / unfægne eorl, þonne his ellen deah*," l. 572–3). Also, as we can observe in *Laxdæla Saga*, where the protagonist is running from men seeking revenge on him, and when he and his helper come to the bank of a river half frozen, they either fight the men against the odds or swim. In the end they decide to take the risk of swimming, and so the author says: "And because the men were brave and Fate ordained they should live longer, they got across the river."[41] Therefore we may know that *Wyrd* can be averted, should the person live accordingly to Germanic heroic values. It is interesting to mention that in this aspect *Wyrd* is more flexible than the Greek *Αναγκη* (the 'Inexorable Fate'), who is assumed to represent roughly the same kind of deity-like entity for the Greeks that *Wyrd* did for the Anglo-Saxons.

This notion supports the reading that, at this point in time, the Wanderer is thinking (and trying to act) according to the heroic values that were of prime importance in the society which he lived in before his exile began. This will be contrasted by the 'ubi sunt' motif of the wise man (which refers to the Wanderer in a later stage of conversion, in l. 88), which is "widely current in medieval Christian homilies."[42]

Then comes the dream sequence, and after awakening from that he begins to hallucinate from the severe grief. From what we can see here we can decipher that

38. Leslie, p. 5.

39. Noted by Smithers, "Destiny and the Heroic," p. 73.

40. Smithers translated *"unfægne"* as 'ripe for death,' thus he had to face a paradox of why someone is spared from death, when he is not fated to die anyway. This is due to his inconsistency of the use of the word, which he translated on p. 67 of the essay as 'ripe for death.' Yet, we must note that they held the belief that every man has his time to die, and should live no longer than that (*Battle of Maldon*, ll. 104b–105), still what we are facing here is dying *before* one's time (which was, of course, possible) prevented by acting accordingly to a sort of heroic code.

41. Smithers, "Destiny and the Heroic," p. 73.

42. Leslie, pp. 18–9

this occurs often, while the Wanderer is at sea. This is obvious from the word "*eft*" (l. 45 & l. 53). Probably recalling these instances the protagonist begins to contemplate on how he considers the world to be declining. Although this interpretation is not accepted by all critics, we must note that the word "*gesweorcan*" (l. 59) means darkened, and it can only be interpreted in a metaphorical sense, since minds cannot darken literally.[43] Also we know that this verb modifies "*geþencan*" ("think," l. 58).[44]

So what he says is that he cannot imagine why his mind should not be saddened, as he surveys this world, where I would like to emphasise the word "this" ("*þas*," l. 58). Thereby we can assume that it is only this world that saddens him, which foreshadows a shift in tone which will occur explicitly first a few lines later, in an obvious reference to the material world, calling it "middle-earth" ("*middangeard*," l. 62).[45]

Moreover, the Christian reference is reinforced on the Wanderer's side when he commences a tutorage, which not only sounds like a Christian homily or tutorage, but was proved by Roy F. Leslie (*The Wanderer*, pp. 13–15) to be one. Furthermore, since this is the first instance of such a notion, we may be reassured that this is the point, where the shift in tone commences, and thus 'progression' begins.

An oddity appears in line 73, which is the word "*gæstlic*," when he says that "a wise one must grasp how ghastly it will be, when all the wealth of this world stands waste" ("*Ongietan sceal gleaw hæle hu gæstlic bið / þonne ealle þisse worulde wela weste stondeð*," ll. 73–4). Now the word is only peculiar, since it is usually used in a sense meaning 'ghastly,' but here it might be in the sense 'spiritual,' just like in *Juliana*.[46] Although, should we consider the original meaning, we may think the poet was trying to imply a 'spiritual time,' like Judgement Day with the use of the word. What eventually will support this thesis is that a multiplicity of horrible events always seems to predict the apocalypse to people, as pointed out by Martin Green.[47]

When talking about how the world is crumbling, as it approaches its demise, the speaker mentions a few ways how men can fall. The imagery he uses clearly repre-

43. Cf. Ida L. Gordon, "Traditional themes in *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*," *RES* n.s. 5, (1954), p. 6.

44. Leslie, *The Wanderer*, p. 83.

45. Then in l. 85 ("*þisne eardgeard*," meaning 'this world') and later in l. 107 ("*weorld under heofonum*," meaning 'world under heavens').

46. G. V. Smithers, "The Meaning of *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*," *MÆ* 26 (1957), p. 141.

47. Martin Green, "Man, Time and Apocalypse in *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and *Beowulf*," in *Old English Elegies: Basic Readings*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (New York & London: Garland, 1994), 281–302, p. 282.

sents the ways men in those times thought about passing away;[48] therefore it seems quite pagan. Perhaps we could draw a parallel with another poem from the era, which is *The Fates (or Fortunes) of Men*. In that poem a great number of these items also occur.[49] *Wyrd* also appears in the poem as something that has to be endured (l. 41). This elegy is nevertheless a religious poem, for at the end the poet notes that either you die in one of the ways mentioned above, or live long (ll. 58–63), which will be due to God's might. By inserting such a list in *The Wanderer* the author may have been trying to imply to the same kind of teaching.

What follows here is the transition – spoken by the narrator – where the Wanderer is referred to as someone who "contemplates wisely" ("*wise geþohte*," l. 88), which signals his shift, from a lamenting soul to a Christian philosopher; which in my opinion occurs because the Wanderer is finally beginning to think the Christian way.

Then comes the 'ubi sunt' motif, which is not only relevant for our analysis because of its Christian reference, but it also contains two interesting notions. The first is when he mentions a "wondrous high wall decorated with worm-shapes" ("*Weal wundrum heah wyrmlicum fah*," l. 98), which according to Green's analysis is a representative of the world the Wanderer lost.[50] I would go further in seeing the wall as an extended metonymy and claim that it is actually a link between the mead-hall, representing the past and the present decline, as sort of answer for the questions raised in the beginning of the 'ubi sunt' motif.[51] This then would be supported by Eliade's notion, which says that the hall is a literal and symbolic recapitulation of the divine order of the cosmos,[52] which Green supports by comparing the construction of Heorot in *Beowulf*, and the song of *Genesis*. All in all, the wall may as well represent the oncoming destruction of Judgement for the Wanderer (as Green says), from which only God can save him.

The other interesting notion in this section is in ll. 99–100, where the Wanderer makes mention of nobles, whom "slaughter-loving weapons have swept away,"[53] which is obviously a metonymy for battle. The problem arises in the next half line,

48. For instance being born off by a bird.

49. For example the wolf, the battle, and the bird.

50. Green, "Man, Time," p. 288

51. We could also claim that it forces him to realise that the old days are irredeemable, and so he must give up the search for a new hall that he mentions earlier (ll. 25–29a)

52. Mircae Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. Philip Mairet (1961, reprinted in New York, 1969), pp. 37–57.

53. Translation taken from Martin Lehnert, *Poetry and Prose of the Anglo-Saxons*, Vol. I., 2nd edition (Halle: Kreuz-Verlag, 1960), p. 94.

where the poet states that "theirs was glorious *Wyrd*"[54] ("*Wyrd seo mære*," l. 100b). We may suggest that *Wyrd* here is not a personification, but a mere reference to fate, however, there need be a personification here too, because of the inverted word order, which would further our analysis.[55] In any case the predicament remains: we still cannot comprehend how a destructive force could be 'glorious.'

To grasp exactly what we are facing we must bear in mind that in the Old English society it was better to die in battle than to face defeat, which was exceedingly widespread in Old Norse and Old Germanic societies. So the poet may be suggesting that the fate of those who died in battle was better than the Wanderer's, who has to roam the world without friends; in which case we have discovered another instance of the blending of the paganism of old times and the new religion.[56]

Some may argue that there is also an aspect of *Wyrd* we have not considered here. This notion was presented by Smithers, who took all the mentions of *Wyrd* in *Beowulf* and arrived at the conclusion that *Wyrd* is not only the destructive force that causes death, but also the power which bestows glory in battle there.[57] Yet, this is irrelevant for this paper, as in the line we are analysing the nobles died, thus they could not possibly have won. Still we must note that the notions are somewhat parallel for dying during battle was similar to winning – it made the warriors heroes in the other world.[58]

Another interesting line may be found a little later in the poem, which claims that "*Wyrd*'s decree changes the world under the Heavens" ("*onwendeð Wyrda gesceaft weoruld under heofonum*," l. 107). This is not only another instance of the personification of *Wyrd*, but also arouses the sense that we have encountered yet another instance of the blending of beliefs. We may think this since in the preceding line the Wanderer refers to "the realm of earth" ("*eorþan rice*," l. 106) and now the place of the action is "the world under the Heavens." So not only is he restricting the place where *Wyrd* may be dominant, he additionally reiterates that it is only under

54. The translation is taken from Lehnert (*Poetry and Prose*, p. 94), and we must note that "*mære*" may be translated as 'mighty,' thus the meaning changes to 'their *Wyrd* was mighty,' which may roughly cover the same notion. However, it may also mean 'mighty was *Wyrd*,' which would mean that none protected them against the force of *Wyrd*.

55. Leslie, *The Wanderer*, p. 91.

56. However, let us not forget that the Anglo-Saxon type of Christianity thought that death in battle was better, than outliving the leader.

57. Smithers, "Destiny and the Heroic," p. 68

58. In the same way as Old Norse mythology shows the warrior's path to Valhalla through death in battle.

the Heavens, thus alluding to the other world, where only God is mighty, and *Wyrd* cannot even intrude. Although one may suggest that these are simple metaphors for the Earth, we must bear in mind that it expounds how they imagined their place in space (i.e. they are under the Heavens, where *Wyrd* is a significant power).

Not only are these lines a fascinating example of the paradox,[59] where he juxtaposes *Wyrd* with God's realm, but we can also note that by this time the Wanderer himself was bound to have arrived at a stage (assuming the theory on chronological order is correct), where he is no longer mourning the past, but anticipates a better world beyond the veil. Of course he will still be sad about the present decline, but it will no longer seem a hopeless state to him.

The speaker continues to lament the passing of this realm, however, if we take a careful look at what he is elaborating, we may find another influence. In the following lines (108–9) we hear of what is "passing away" ("*læne*") in the world, which he refers to as "here" ("*Her*").[60] There is an allusion to the Biblical teaching that in this world everything is to die, therefore nothing is permanent. Now, if we also bear in mind that the word he uses as the verb of the clauses ("*læne*") may also mean 'loaned,'[61] then we can definitely declare that there must be such a notion in the underlying meaning.[62]

After this section the narrator – commencing the epilogue – will interrupt the Wanderer's speech only to introduce the final section, which is the conclusion the Wanderer has arrived at, after all the contemplation. Here he refers to him as "wise" ("*snottor*," l. 111) once more,[63] and by this time we add that he is wise not only because he seeks solace in God, but also because he does not lament out loud, but keeps

59. It may only be treated as a paradox if we disregard that in Old English mythology the two 'religions' existed side-by-side.

60. We may decipher that "here" is a reference to this world, for he concludes with the line "all this earth's structure becomes empty" ("*eal þis eorþan gesteal idel weorþeð!*," l. 110).

61. In the sense loaned from God to the period of time one spends on Earth (in accordance with the Christian philosophy).

62. I would also suggest that we translate the word as 'loaned,' using the evidence from the dictionaries I have consulted. The three dictionaries I used to assure myself of the meaning of certain problematic words were J. Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford, 1898) supplemented by T. N. Toller (London, 1921) with addenda by Alaistair Campbell (Oxford, 1972) (hereafter referred to as Bosworth–Toller); Martin Lehnert, *Poetry and Prose of the Anglo-Saxons: Dictionary* (Berlin: VEB, 1956); Jane Roberts and Christian Kay, *A Thesaurus of Old English*, Vol. II (Index and Impression), ed. C. C. Barfoot, Theo D'haen, and Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: GA, 2000).

63. The previous occurrence is in lines 88–91, while introducing the 'ubi sunt' motif.

his thoughts to himself.[64] The latter notion is what he claimed as a noble virtue (ll. 11–4), by which we may examine another merger of Christian and heroic values, since he seems to achieve to abide by both.[65]

Here the Wanderer concludes his story (or teaching) by claiming that we must keep the faith, and he, who seeks grace from the Father in the Heavens, does so well, for there rests our security (ll. 114–5).[66] This quite clearly is a Christian tutoring, the most explicit instance of those that we may observe in the poem. This is truly the ultimate state he achieves – seeking earthly things no more (like the new hall he had sought earlier; see l. 25) but awaiting his own death with new hopes. Thus he has become wise and is an example which was most probably set for the contemporaries.

Conclusion

Now, should we carefully consider the beginning of the poem and the very end ('prologue' and 'epilogue,' as I have called them during the analysis), we will observe the shift from worldly to transcendental, and additionally will face a progression: the prologue contained the Wanderer's desperateness, with the exclamation that "*Wyrd* is resolute," from which – after the Wanderer's hardships and seeing his development – we come to the phrase "Well is with him, who seeks grace, Solace of the Father in Heaven." Thus, the Wanderer's hardships have led him to the only security that he may surely trust (as opposed to that of the earthly lord, who passes away just like all else), and that is the security of the Heavens. Although the speaker still believes in *Wyrd*, he also knows that there is someone who can subdue it.

The idea that God is stronger than *Wyrd* is not uncommon. For instance in *Beowulf* God does not replace *Wyrd*, but can overrule *Wyrd*'s decisions,[67] which is stunning for Old Norse gods were subject to the workings of the Norns. So we ob-

64. To see this we must realise that modern critics (Richman, based on Leslie) proved that "*on mode*" (meaning 'internally,' according to Bosworth-Toller, and 'in heart,' according to Lehnert) is linked with "*cwæð*" and not with "*snottor*," thus the meaning of the half-line is "So said the wise to himself (i.e. internally, not out loud)" (l. 111a)

65. Although as Leslie pointed out, this notion may be parallel with the teaching St. John Chrysostom and St. Ambrose (*The Wanderer*, p. 6). Still, we know this notion is heroic (and Leslie mentions this as well).

66. Word by word the translation would be as follows: "Well is with him, who seeks grace, Solace of the Father in Heaven, where rests all our security" ("*Wel bið þam þe him are seceð / frofre to fæder on heofonum, þær us eal seo fæstung stondeð*").

67. As pointed out by Smithers pointed out instances of this in *Beowulf* in general (Smithers, p. 69).

serve a God superior to a force which was considered the supreme force. This has been observed by many scholars, including Erzgräber,[68] who scrutinized the Boethian notion of 'fatum' in the same manner. The book he was analysing has also been mentioned by F. Anne Payne.[69] She, however, represents *Wyrd* as God's agent, or his other face. In her reading *Wyrd* is merely a force that helps preserve universal order that the free will of men may cause to disrupt. In the case mentioned above it comes to play a role in maintaining order by means of disaster, as far as we can decipher.

While this seems legitimate through her analysis of King Alfred's version of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*,[70] I cannot but disagree with her when she tries to draw a parallel with the same notion in *Beowulf*, when after the fight with Grendel, Hrothgar claims that Grendel would have eaten more men had not Beowulf stopped him. In this case Beowulf is God's agent, however *Wyrd* is something that had to be averted: "had not wisest God *Wyrd* averted" ("*nefne him witig god / Wyrd forstode*," l. 1056). According to the passage, we may assume that Beowulf would have died, were it *Wyrd*'s decision. Here – since the Christian God can overrule *Wyrd* – when the heroic warrior Beowulf is about to be prevented from doing justice to Grendel by *Wyrd* itself, we can propose that *Wyrd* is a destructive force (therefore not God's other face) simply by claiming that the meaning of the lines quoted above makes any other interpretation invalid (since in any other case God would have to avert himself).

However, the Boethian notion of 'fatum' is somewhat similar to what we are expounding here. That perception depicts fate as something that is only blind to us, therefore God can oversee it as a whole.[71] What we have to add in light of the situation discussed is that God can even manipulate it.

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68. Willi Erzgräber, "*Der Wanderer*: Eine Interpretation von Aufbau und Gehalt," in *Festschrift zum 75. Geburtstag von Theodor Spira*, ed. Vietrock and Erzgräber (Heidelberg, 1961), 57–85.

69. F. Anne Payne, "Three aspects of *Wyrd* in *Beowulf*," in *Old English Studies in honour of J. C. Pope*, ed. B. Burlin & Edward B. Irving Jr. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 15–34, p. 17.

70. All her quotations from that book are taken from W. J. Sedgefield's *King Alfred's Old English version of Boethius* (Oxford, 1899).

71. Jill Mann, "Chance and destiny in *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Knight's Tale*," in *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion* ed. Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 75–92, pp. 78–80.

Lastly, in *Elene* (when the angel addresses Constantinus) God is referred to as "*Wyrda wealdend*" (l. 80), which may be translated merely as 'controller of events,' but after all the instances we have seen of God being thought of as someone who is beyond *Wyrd*'s limits, it would not be far-fetched to assume that the same notion is presented here as well (consequently God is then presented as 'controller of *Wyrd*').

Thus, in conclusion, we may assume that the poet who composed *The Wanderer* (and we may suppose that his audience as well) did not eradicate one faith completely for the sake of the other, rather attempted to merge one into the other. In that path however they subordinated the supreme power of the old faith for that of the new one, thereby creating the hierarchy of the powers of the old and the new 'religion.' This is quite logical, for – as Kopár puts it – the radical monotheism of Christianity demanded undivided devotion towards the only God,[72] therefore the Christian God was not (and could not have been) simply integrated amongst the other gods in their pantheon.

We must also add that while at the beginning he was only waiting for mercy, in the end he is seeking it actively.[73] Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in the first half of the poem (before progression is triggered) he is looking back to the past, which is considered to be a pagan view-point, for the temporal orientation of Germanic paganism concentrated mostly on the past, unlike the eschatology-oriented Christian religion.[74]

The Seafarer

Overview

The only exemplar of *The Seafarer* is also in the *Exeter Book* (81B–83A). My reason for choosing the poem is that it contains, although in a subtler form, the same intermingling of cultures. Many critics compared the poem to *The Wanderer*, while not being aware just how much they are alike. Not only is the same kind of progression present in both elegies, but the attitude of the speaker – although *The Seafarer* is professed to be more religious – is Christian to the same degree in both cases. The thought that has aroused my interest in the poem is that these pagan heroic values appear almost accidentally (i.e. subconsciously, unwillingly; unlike in *The Wanderer*).

72. Kopár, p. 147.

73. Leslie (*The Wanderer*, p. 24) pointed out the contrast between the phrases representing passivity towards mercy ("*gebideð*," l. 1) and the active counterpart ("*seceð*," l. 114).

74. Kopár, p. 148.

According to my perception, in *The Seafarer* the speaker is made explicit from the beginning (unlike in *The Wanderer*), as he begins by saying that he will tell a true story about himself ("*Mæg ic be me sylfum soðgied wrecan*," l. 1).[75] His story is of numerous hardships that he had to experience while at sea. During the description of his agonies he refers many times to the people with whom everything goes well ("*fægrost limpeð*," l. 13) and are thus incapable of comprehending his sorrows.

Surprisingly, after this he commences to talk of a new journey he is longing for, still with mentions of the people on land. He now elaborates on the past he left behind, and how it is no longer redeemable. He decries how the world is declining, but not in the depressed mood, which we saw in *The Wanderer*. He finishes his speech with the same kind of conclusion we saw in the previous elegy, but he adds more emphasis to the Christian teachings, and ends the poem with a formal "Amen."

Narrative Structure

The discussions of the identity of the speaker in *The Seafarer* have been similar to those of *The Wanderer*. In this poem too, many critics suggested a second speaker, who is perhaps an eager young seafarer, talking to a worn-out old one.[76] This notion, however, has been withdrawn in favour of a monologue theory. This progress is most clearly visible, when the process takes place within the same mind, as was the case with J. C. Pope.

Pope first regarded it as a poem with two imaginary speakers,[77] then – first triggered by Dorothy Whitelock's disagreement during a lecture – retracted this in favour of a monologue theory, with the *peregrinatio pro amore Dei* motif.[78] Pope claims that the previous reading had been based on the word "sylf" occurring at line 35, which they usually interpreted as 'I myself' rather than 'by myself.' With this minor correction in the translation, the Seafarer is saying that he will go alone. However, this was not accepted by Greenfield, who proposed 'of my own accord,'[79] and so,

75. Although both Lehnert (p. 90) and Bosworth-Toller use "can" or "may" for "*mæg*" it has been revealed that the word has an undertone suggesting futurity rather than probability, and has a more possible outcome, than "may"; as presented by Anne Klinck, pp. 160–61.

76. First proposed in Max Rieger, "Über Cynewulf," *ZfdP* 1 (1869): 330–339.

77. John C. Pope, "Dramatic Voices in *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*," in *Franciplegius: Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honour of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr.*, ed. Jess B. Bessinger, Jr. and Robert P. Creed (New York: New York UP, 1965), pp. 164–93.

78. Pope, "Second Thoughts," p. 224.

79. Stanley B. Greenfield, "*Min*, *Sylf*, and 'Dramatic Voices in *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*,' " *JEGP* 68 (1969): 212–20; pp. 217–9 on the discussion of '*sylf*'.

in his reply to Pope, he presented numerous occasions in which the authority of such a translation was defended.

Greenfield's translation is too logical not to be accepted, as the Seafarer had been travelling alone all along (cf. ll. 15–6 and ll. 25–6), thus 'alone' would make no sense at all. The only plausible solution here is that the speaker is stressing that this is a voluntary journey, unlike the previous one.[80]

So we can claim that in this poem there is no narrator, as it is the Seafarer himself, who is telling his own story (most probably for some didactic purpose[81]) from his present point of view.

Analysis

In the course of the analysis I shall attempt to demonstrate the shift from literal to transcendental, which (most probably) occurs, because the poet is seeking to call the audience's attention to their mortality, and the importance of Christianity.

The poem begins with the speaker announcing that he will tell us a true story, how he suffered.[82] We do not have any convincing evidence that he is speaking in the past tense, and the present perfect was not used in Old English.[83] He claims that he has "got to know many abodes of suffering in his boat" ("*gecunnad in ceole cearselda fela*," l. 5).[84] This image is also interesting if we bear in mind that the Church is often represented as a ship upon raging waves.[85]

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80. Dorothy Whitelock has also noticed that the overwhelming emphasis on the journey must mean a voluntary journey (Dorothy Whitelock, "The Interpretation of *The Seafarer*," in *The Early Cultures of Northwest Europe*, ed. Sir Cyril Fox and Bruce Dickens (Cambridge, 1950).), spiritual exile, a so-called *peregrinatio pro amore Dei*. However, let me add that in this case the journey would be a continuation of the previous (therefore not a new trip). Still, whether the journey is an actual journey, or a mere allegory does not affect my analysis in the least; what matters is that he is thinking of God by this time.

81. Roscoe E. Parker argued that "*giedd*" was a message, maxim or tale told for a purpose; see Roscoe E. Parker, "*Gyd*, *Leoð*, and *Sang* in Old English poetry," *Texas Studies in Literature* 1 (1956), p. 63.

82. "Endured hardships often" ("*earfoðhwile oft þrowade*," l. 3)

83. Nevertheless, by the end of the poem the images of suffering will subside, so we could postulate that his torments are either over, or he simply does not care.

84. Some argue that the compound "*cearselda*" contains the word 'care' as opposed to 'sorrow.' However, as presented by Fr. Klaeber ("Review of Sedgefield's 'Anglo-Saxon verse book,' " *JEGP* 23 [1924], pp. 121–4), the word rather means 'sorrow.' As I perceive it, 'care' would never even fit the context, due to the fact that the Seafarer is suffering in the boat,

He then proceeds to tell us of how he had lamented the sorrows of life, deprived of kinsmen, hearing the screams of seabirds, instead of men's laughter, then he introduces the man with whom everything goes well (12bff.). This is an important and recurrent motif in the poem, therefore it needs further discussion.

First he says "The man with whom everything goes well does not realise how miserably I plied the ice-cold sea in the winter" ("*Þæt se mon new wat / þe him on foldan fægrost limpeð, / hu ic earmcearig iscealdne sæ / winter wunade*," ll. 12b–15a), then in the second instance he claims that "he who has delight in life, lives in a castle, experiences few hardships, delighted and wanton of wine can little believe how I often had to experience weariness in the sea-path" ("*him gelyfeð lyt, se þe at lifes wyn / gebiden in burgum, bealosiþa hwon, / wlonc ond wingal, hu ic werig oft / in brimlade bidan sceolde*," ll. 27–30). These references are surely intended to mean the people who have not yet suffered, thus are not in the possession of the knowledge he may have.

However, before we could dissect the phrase to discover its true meaning, we must clarify a problematic word, which is the sentence initial "*Forþon*" (l. 27). This word normally means 'hence' or 'therefore,' but here it would not fit the context perfectly, moreover there will be lines where the sentence's initial word may make even less sense.[86] In the cases where the original meaning cannot be applied we should consider the idea Gordon suggests in her book and accept that the word means "For this,"[87] in the sense 'For this reason this comes to my mind.' This solution seems adequate in providing the problematic lines with sense.[88]

So the Seafarer is implying that remembering his hardships brought the carefree men to his mind. When speaking about these people, the Seafarer uses the word "wanton of wine" ("*wingal*," l. 29), which may mean that he is speaking of ignorant city-dwellers, who do nothing but drink in peacetime. What may be an-

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which is obvious from the context. Thus the compound means 'sorrow-hall,' which is simple to interpret, if we consider Brian K. Green's lines "the sea is a hall, where *Wyrd* is lord" (Brian K. Green, "The Twilight Kingdom: Structure and Meaning in *The Wanderer*," *Neophilologus* 60 [1976]: 442–51).

85. Noted by Klinck, who base her argument on Old English Homilies, where the same image appears.

86. It appears again in lines 33, 39, 58, 64, 72, 103, and 108. Some of these, of course, do mean 'therefore.'

87. Ida L. Gordon, *The Seafarer* (London: Methuen, 1960).

88. For instance the lines 27–30 could make sense, for they would mean – adapting Gordon's view – 'For this the man comes to my mind, who has the delight of life . . .'

other reference to them is where the protagonist mentions anxiety about the last voyage ("*a his sæfore sorge næbbe*," l. 42), which are lines 39 to 43.[89] Leslie has drawn a parallel between the above-mentioned characters and the "wanton of wine."[90] This seems to be rather logical: the Seafarer is using the image of the oblivious of care to call our attention to the importance of preparing for the journey to the other realm.

The fact that he is preparing to leave the world is not obvious at first. The concept is introduced with the seemingly baffling line, where – after the terrifyingly vivid description of winter (ll. 31–33b) – he is telling us that (exactly because of this picture of winter[91]) he is ready to try the "high streams" ("*hean streamas*," l. 34). The problem we are facing is evident: who in his right mind would be desirous to attempt a voyage to the high seas, after so much suffering at sea, when winter has come.

The complexity of the sentence requires several images and words to be clarified, before the paradoxical nature of the lines can be dissolved. First we must note that the journey may be a metaphor for leaving the world, as Schücking has suggested.[92] This way the "high streams" do not refer to the deep seas, but to a different level of faring (i.e. seeing his life as a journey to God).

Accepting this idea, we can further relieve ambiguity by assuming that the sentence initial "*Forþon*" is used in the sense that Gordon has suggested, meaning 'For thinking of winter the idea of the high streams comes to his mind.' Still, the predicament remains: why does the coming winter urge him to try the high streams (even if they are metaphoric). The answer is simple: although the coming winter is to be taken literally, the "*forþon*" shows us that he is reminded of something by it, and this

89. It is interesting to note that – as Smithers has pointed out – the speakers in *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* compare the old generation, with the younger one for eschatological purposes; where the former represents sorrow, and the latter carelessness (Smithers, 1957: 141).

90. Roy F. Leslie, "Meaning and Structure of *The Seafarer*," in *The Old English Elegies: New Essays in Criticism and Research,* ed. Martin Green (Rutherford, Madison, and Teaneck, 1983), pp. 103–4.

91. Suggested by the phrase-initial "*Forþon*."

92. Levin Schücking, "Die altenglische Elegie" (review of Sieper's edition) in *"Englische Studien"* (1917), p. 109. Schücking was influenced by Gustav Ehrismann "Religionsgeschichtliche Beiträge zum germanischen Frühchristentum," *BGdSL* 35 (1909): 209–39. Although Schücking's is not a recent study, I referred to it for the simple reason that since the theory emerged, most critics happily embraced the notion that *The Seafarer* includes the figurative level of interpretation.

– as Greenfield proposes[93] – is his sinfulness, and going a bit further I would assume, his own mortality.

Greenfield also adds that not only is the winter's image to be taken literally but the next mentioned season, spring (ll. 48–52), should also be interpreted as such.[94] This may not seem evident at first, but becomes convincing as soon as we remember that "the revival of nature at spring may be seen as men's resurrection before Doomsday."[95] Moreover, he uses the expression "*woruld onetteð*" in l. 49, which may simply be interpreted as 'the world is moved,' but as Cross has suggested it may mean 'the world hastens to its end.'[96]

Now, as we are able to grasp just what the poet was trying to imply here, we begin to understand that the "land of foreigners" ("*elþeodigra eard*," l. 38) may be an allusion to the afterworld. This is the same kind of allegory that is present in *Genesis* 12.1, where Abraham is presented as ready to leave his kindred and his father's home for a land the Lord would show him.[97]

After this motif we see a sort of spiritual travel, where the soul of the speaker is presented as flying over the "whale's domain" ("*hwæles eþel*," l. 60) and the "earth's surface" ("*eorþan sceatas*," l. 61).[98] What is interesting for our analysis in this passage is that the soul is described with ferocious adjectives. The expression used for the state of the returned soul is "ravenous and greedy" ("*gifre ond grædig*," l. 62). This is especially stunning, since this particular formula was used to describe the rapacity of devils in *Christ and Satan* (l. 32 and 191), the all-consuming voracity of fire in *Phoenix* (l. 507), and the gluttonous maw of Hell in *Genesis B* (l. 793), as pointed out by Greenfield.[99] Still, as Pope has revealed, this could be an appetite for spiritual good, as according to the beatitude "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."[100]

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93. Greenfield, "Sylf, Seasons," p. 240.

94. Greenfield, "Sylf, Seasons," p. 240.

95. As pointed our in Norman F. Blake, "*The Seafarer*, Lines 48–49," *NQ* 207 (1962), pp. 163–4.

96. James E. Cross, "On the allegory in *The Seafarer* – Illustrative Notes," *MÆ* 28 (1959), pp. 104–6.

97. This notion was taken from Pope ("Second Thoughts," p. 218).

98. It is Vivian Salmon who talks about the popular superstition about the soul's power to leave the body in the form of an animal, especially a bird; cf. "*The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, and the Old English Conception of the Soul," *Modern Language Review* 55 (1960).

99. I read the examples quoted above in Pope ("Second Thoughts," pp. 221–2).

100. Pope, "Second Thoughts," p. 222.

Immediately after this the Seafarer talks about how he is desirous to go on the "*(h)wælweg*" (l. 63). The manuscript has "*wælweg*" here, which was amended to "*hwælweg*" thus meaning 'road of the whale.' However, I am certain that this was not a mistake and it should be "*wælweg*," thus meaning 'road of the dead.'[101] This option seems valid pursuing our current reading.

In the next clause we learn that the joys of God are now dearer to him than this life on earth. It is interesting that he describes life as dead ("*deade lif*," l. 65), which is "loaned on earth" ("*læne on londe*," l. 66).[102] The fact that after the joys of God are mentioned, the life on land is beginning to look less attractive is stunning.

He then commences to tell us that we should try to earn the "glory of eternal life" ("*ecan lifes blæd*," l. 79) so our praise will live amongst the angels. This could be perceived as an average Christian thought, yet, as Pope has pointed out, he wants not only the praise of angels but of his successors on earth as well.[103] Even, if we claim that "man's child" ("*ælda bearn*," l. 77) is not in direct correspondence with "praise" ("*lof*," l. 78), and so he only wishes for glory in Heaven, we are still facing the predicament that he craves for glory,[104] so he somehow retains heroic values. Even though the protagonist uses them to elaborate on Christian disciplines, the underlying heroic notion informs his form of speech.

An even more explicit example of the 'heroic' thinking he retains comes in the next paragraph, as he expounds that the world is declining, because the new generation of rulers is not as good as the previous. Now, following Pope's assertion on the lines,[105] we see that the speaker does not consider the new generation worse, because

101. However, I would also suggest a sort of word-punning here. For we know the Seafarer is using the voyage metaphor for the spiritual journey, and he has also mentioned the 'whale's domain' ("*hwæles eþel," l.* 60) a few lines earlier; and if we bear in mind that the poem was most probably presented orally, then we see how the poet may be trying to pun on the compound (merely because "*hwælweg*" and "*wælweg*" in pronunciation are similar enough).

102. The translation I encountered saw this line as meaning "dead and transient life on earth" (Lehnert), but I persevere in thinking that "*læne*" here (as well as in *The Wanderer* ll. 108–9) means (or is at least suggesting an undertone of) 'loaned' (all three dictionaries I used supported this meaning). The line would make more sense, as this way it would read "Therefore the joys of the Lord are dearer to me than this dead life, loaned on earth."

103. Pope, "Second Thoughts," p. 220.

104. Moreover, as Pope suggests here, he must feel some sort of pride about how he is able to endure affliction ("Second Thoughts," pp. 220–222).

105. Pope, "Second Thoughts," p. 220.

they follow old ideals, but because they are not equals of old kings, who were most probably pagan.[106]

After this he proceeds to elaborate on the futility of earthly goods (ll. 94–101), then tells us about the greatness of God, and how we should keep measure ("*wisum clæne*," l. 110), however, these lines are not relevant to our analysis, yet what comes after them is. We find an interesting juxtaposition of *Wyrd* and God (ll. 115b–116a). Although this is the only reference to *Wyrd* in the poem, it is a truly striking one. He says that "*Wyrd* is stronger" ("*Wyrd biþ swiþre*," l. 115b) and "God is mightier" ("*Meotud meahtigra*," l. 116a), "than any man thinks" ("*þonne ænges monnes gehygd*," l. 116b). By this line we can see that he still believes in *Wyrd* (as there is surely personalization here), and still claims it is stronger than any man can comprehend.

While this may be a fascinating example of the coexistence of the old faith and the new religion, I would like to emphasize that we have subordination here as well. While this may not be explicitly put, we see that immediately after he mentions *Wyrd*'s strength, he inserts God's might, which may be higher on the scale for him. An even more convincing attestation for this hypothesis is that this is the only mention of *Wyrd* in the poem, and never before[107] has he mentioned it, nor afterwards will he allude to it. Therefore, we may postulate that he completely disregards it, as God is greater.[108]

After these lines we encounter a strange formula, as the sentence begins with "Let us" ("*Uton*," l. 117). While this may not mean much to the modern reader, when we note that it has been shown to be the introduction of the Homilies in Bethurum,[109] the word gains importance. In the light of this evidence we may suggest that the Seafarer might have wanted to construct a verse with a structure similar to a religious speech. The final "Amen" (l. 124) makes this probable as well, as it does not take part in alliteration, so is not a poetic device, probably rather an element intended to make the poem end as a sermon.

106. We need also note that there is a sort of "praising of the past" that I have mentioned in the conclusion to the analysis of *The Wanderer*, which is essentially Germanic pagan.

107. If we disregard 'fated for death' or 'ripe for death,' which translation Smithers suggested for the word "*fægne*" (appears in l. 71 as "*fægum*"), as a reference to *Wyrd* (Smithers, "Destiny and Heroic"). Yet, this is irrelevant for us, as I only look at cases, where the word "*Wyrd*" is used as a reference to 'Fate.'

108. Another notion we may assert here is that this "*Wyrd*" may actually mean 'God.' However, we cannot prove either; and since my analysis is based on the occurrences of the word "*Wyrd*," this interpretation seems adequate.

109. For instance in Dorothy Bethurum "*The Homilies of Wulfstan*". Oxford, 1957: pp. 275, 260, 266.

These two words (i.e. "*Uton*," l. 117 and "Amen," l. 126) are not the only evidence we may quote to support the theory that the poem intended to make his work sound like a sermon. After reading Andy Orchard's essay on oral tradition[110] I was convinced that the repetitive formula he portrays King Alfred to be using to impose a pattern on his discourse[111] is strikingly similar to the "*Forþon*" clauses the Seafarer uses to organise his speech, and to develop a certain train of thought.

In these lines (ll. 117–9) we also find a parallel for the foreigner's land, which he sought ("*elþeodigra eard*," l. 38).[112] Here he says we must consider where we have our home ("*hwær we ham agen*," l. 117b), and then think how we can get there ("*hu we þider cumen*," l. 118b). Therefore, in his conclusion, he clarifies the aim of our spiritual journey.[113]

Conclusion

From what we have seen there was a slow shift from the earthly level to the transcendent, which began roughly in the picture of winter, and the urge to try the high streams (ll. 31–6). From this point forward the speaker's thoughts turned towards the Heavenly home, and his elegy slowly turned itself into a sermon. He not only used homiletic devices to perform this task, but he also made it clear at the very end.

The hierarchy of beliefs was present in the poem as well, although it was not quite as explicit as in *The Wanderer*; which may also be obvious if we contrast the sort of land they seek. The Wanderer sought another hall, which is clearly literal (l. 25), whereas the Seafarer seeks the land of foreigners (ll. 27–8), which – as we have seen – is allegorical. *The Seafarer* is considered a religious poem by most critics, nevertheless it is the Old English type of Christian religion, which as we have seen still retains a number of heroic values (praising the rulers of the past), even if in a radically new form (aiming at Heavenly glory, rather than earthly).

In my analysis I have treated the poem as a whole, although many critics used to regard the second half of the poem as a homiletic addition. However – even if we do not see the inherent integrity of the poem through the analysis I have presented –

110. Andy Orchard, "Oral Tradition" in *Reading Old English Texts* ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 101–23.

111. "When I remember all this I remember" ("*Ða ic ða ðis eall gemunde ða wundrade ic*") (Andy Orchard's translation).

112. Notion presented by G. V. Smithers ("Meaning," p. 151), alluded to in Pope ("Second Thoughts," p. 229).

113. The "eternal bliss" ("*ecan eadignesse*," l. 120).

Anne Klinck offers a convincing piece of evidence by claiming that there is a connection between the lines that contain reference to seafaring, and those which don't. This is the hypermetria occurring at line 23,[114] where he is talking about suffering, and later the same kind of hypermetria occurs, in a l. 103,[115] which is about "God's might" ("*Meotudes egsa*").[116]

Furthermore, the loss of (literal) seafaring lines is only too logical from the shift the protagonist is making from earthly to transcendent, and his claim that the joys of the Lord are greater to him than the dead life loaned to him on earth.[117]

Ultimate Conclusion

To sum up what we have discovered in the course of the essay in the light of what we have encountered in these two elegies (with the help of some other works) we can assume that the transition from one belief to the other did not occur in the Anglo-Saxon community in the terms of syncretism. In that culture the basics of Christianity altered little and the pagan elements were only added to the basic Christian teachings so that the people could assimilate the new notions more efficiently, and thus understand the essential message of the Gospels.

In this process they – as it is thus logical – subordinated the supreme power of the old pagan faith, *Wyrd*, to the supreme power of the Christian religion, God Almighty, who demanded undivided devotion. Using this hierarchy, they often, shifting from one end (past, tribal society, *Wyrd* etc.) to the other (new religion, consolation, God etc.), presented the importance of conversion through what I called 'progression' in the paper.

However, no matter how much they wanted to present the benefits of the new religion, the remnants of the old pagan beliefs lingered on (which is quite logical, since the conversion of a society is not an overnight change), sometimes explicitly, maybe for a purpose (as in *The Wanderer*), sometimes subtly, or even subconsciously (as in *The Seafarer*).

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114. "Storms beat the cliffs there the (icy-feathered) tern gave them answer" ("*Stormas þær stanclifu beotan þær him stearn oncwæð*").

115. "Great is the fear of God, from which the earth turns away" ("*Micel biþ se Meotudes egsa, forþon hi seo molde oncyrreð,*" l. 103)

116. This was suggested by Anne Klinck amongst her textual notes (Klinck, p. 129).

117."*Forþon me hatran sind / Dryhtnes dreamas þonne þis deade lif,/ læne on londe,*" ll. 64b–66a.

Marcell Gellért

Room for Doubts in a Nutshell

(In)finite Spaces *vs*. Spatial (In)definition in *Hamlet*

The present paper attempts to map up the spatial world of *Hamlet* through the comparative analysis of both the emblematic and idiosyncratic features of *Hamlet* space. The play's unique position in the Shakespeare canon, its central place in Shakespace, is largely due to the phenomenological as well as hermeneutical complexity of its spatial structure. *Hamlet* in this respect is the most controversial representative of the established Shakespearean practice of charging space and its constituents (place, location) – both in the physical, metaphorical and conceptual sense – up with distinguished dramaturgical agency. The spatial design of the play takes shape and gain "habitation" through all the major compositional elements of tragedy in manifold local correspondences of plot, character, language, thought and scenery. In the play of all-pervading duplicities the double agency of tragic space is in full accord with all the other constituents of the tragic experience. It is the primary and primordial signifier and signified, agent and instrument of order, stability, constancy and continuity – the repository of tradition as much as the most authentic and expressive instrument of voicing the characteristically interrogative mood and profoundly sceptical mind of the times, the age of its making.

In the time-ridden, space-bound world of drama much depends upon taking sides. Viewed from outside: "All the world's a stage," indeed, seen from inside: all the stage is a world. A world of "cloud-capped towers" and "bottomless" pits, "gorgeous palaces" and humbling hovels, "beteeming winds" and "direful thunders," speaking stones and walking woods, "foul" fiends and "sweet sprites": "the great globe itself" in a nutshell of redeeming dreams and hellish nightmares – heaven and earth coupled with hell. The three primary and ultimate domains of the tragic experience bodied forth through richly varied local habitations and names in the individual plays. Othello's "affrighted globe" yawning at the huge eclipse of sun and moon, Hamlet's revenge-ridden, distracted globe where "conscience does make cowards of us all" and "great enterprises lose the name of action" under the barren, chilling, "pale cast of

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thought," Lear's deceased dominions and prison-paradise – "this great stage of fools" and Macbeth's darkness entombed earth of deep damnation – the stage of furiously sounded idiotic tales signifying nothing. The thought-tormented, tempest-tossed world of decay, disintegration, demolition and destruction where the centre cannot hold any longer, where the ground – the "firm and sure-set earth" – "has bubbles as the water has," where "airy" nothings gain "local habitation" while "what seemed corporal" melts into the wind, where the "goodly frames" of the "casing air" turn into prisons, cribs and confines – into a global nutshell of wards, pits and dungeons both of the body, the soul and the mind.

Mostly of the latter, at least in the Danish play where "sickli'd" thoughts and mere words constitute the plot and substitute the native world of action. The favourite metaphor of modern criticism – Knight's, Mack's, McElroy's *world* of the particular plays in this case is not so much the world of the senses – like that of Othello, Lear, Macbeth, or Anthony – as that of the sense verging on nonsense.[1] The boundless Renaissance universe squeezed into a ball – Hamlet's Yoricky globe – the distracted brain, in whose "book and volume" of reformed religion only the worshipped father's ultimate commandment of revenge can hold a steady seat.

Hamlet – in this respect, too – is the emblematic representative and the challenger at the same time of the established Shakespearean practice of charging space up with distinguished dramaturgical agency. From above, Shakespeare's dramatic space in the tragedies is the primary and primordial signifier and signified, agent and instrument of order, stability, constancy and continuity – the guardian of both the Dionysian and the Apollonian i.e. the mythical-ritual and the historico-cultural origins, the roots of the dramatic way and vision, sense and consciousness – the repository of tradition. At the same time, it is also the most authentic and expressive instrument of voicing the characteristically interrogative mood and profoundly sceptical mind of the times, the age of its making.

This equivocating orchestration, this polyphonic charge of space and the creative-destructive tension generated by it, is one of the most unique and effective dramaturgical means of Shakespeare, supplying the plays – even the ones lacking in

1. Inspired by Mack's concise clarification of the enigmatic term in "The World of *Hamlet*," in *Tragic Themes in Western Literature,* ed. Cleanth Brooks (New Haven: Yale UP, 1955), p. 30, Bernard McElroy rounds down the idea: "Through selectivity and emphasis, a playwright sets forth a self-contained definition of reality within his play, a world which proposes for itself the principles by which life operates within its matrix" (Bernard McElroy, *Shakespeare's Mature Tragedies* [New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1973], p. 4).

dynamic plotting, vivid characterisation or intensified poetic charge – with an elemental, inexhaustible source of energy and vitality.

The definitive nature of dramatic space, however, is only a localized variation on the more general and universal notion and experience of space – the primary and ultimate domain of being – a key-category of existentialist thought. In Heidegger's commanding definition "The finite and limited character of human existence is more primordial than man himself." [2]

Beside or within the ontological reference, this definition highlights the essential existentialism of tragedy as well – the underlying and overwhelming sense of primordial determination, which is a cosmic law in the spatial context of existence and a particular experience in the locative text of life.

Hamlet, again, is simultaneously emblematic and idiosyncratic in this respect as well. Nowhere in the Shakespearean world of tragedy is the spatial sense of being – through time out of joint – more palpably confined, the Fryean "claustrophobia of consciousness" [3] more keenly felt, still nowhere else is the very same space more vague, blurred, disoriented, incomprehensible and uninhabitable. Overcharged by knowledge and devoid of meaning, it perfectly exemplifies Camus's doctrine about the absurdity of the human condition set in the dystopical nowhereland of eternal exile "deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land." [4] It does so as persuasively as Bakhtin's definitive statement about composition: "Only on the given person, the dramatic hero, can architecture be built." [5]

If Hamlet is lost amazed in the labyrinth of lies, in terms of both thought, passion and action in the Protean world of pretence, he is also lost in space in between the finite and the infinite, the physical and the spiritual (in the literary sense too), the this-worldly and the other-worldly, the no more and the not yet to come, the unknown and the familiar: the multi- layered, doubled space of body and mind, action and passion, outside and inside, below and above, within and without. The never-ceasing nightmarish awareness of space, place and location – or the troubling lack of them – is due to both formal and substantial components in creative correspon-

2. Albert Camus quoting Heidegger in chapter 1 ("An Absurd Reasoning") of *The Myth of Sisyphus* (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 18.

3. The term is one of the key-words in Northrop Frye's rich contextual definition of the Hamlet-world in his essay on *Hamlet*: *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986), p. 99.

4. Camus, p. 5.

5. Mihail Bahtyin, *A szerző és a hős*, trans. Éva Patkós (Budapest: Gond-Cura Alapítvány, 2004), p. 11 (my translation).

dence. The solely authoritative direct spatial stage instructions: the "enters" and "exits" as regularly recurring reminders of spatial relations keep alive the inherently spatial sense of the dramatic experience on the stage, mapping up the spaces and carving out the distinguished places of the play's world carefully adjusted to the larger locations – the major spheres of action and reflection whose interrelations constitute the compound architecture of the *Hamlet*-world.

Hamlet, the play is unusually rich in geography having its story planted in a complex world of wide-ranging directions, fully fledged with contextual and referential spheres, regions and dimensions, both in terms of action and characters in organic interdependence.

The play – built of, on, and around Hamlet as observed and observer, centre and periphery – has, as McElroy suggests, a concentric composition of three clearly distinguishable, still interactive spheres: that of the outside world of those who come from somewhere else to Elsinore, the royal court – mostly the castle's interior – and the intruding metaphysical world.[6] The latter, transcending the given interpretative confinements, seemingly extends the spatial composition of the play, though in effect, it rather undermines it, blurring its boundaries and calling the reliability of all sense and the senses – physical and mental organs of orientation, perception and conception – to doubt:

> Before my God, I might not this believe
> Without the sensible and true avouch
> Of mine own eyes. (I.i.59–61)[7]

and:

> What may this mean,
> That thou, dead course, again in complete steel
> Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
> Making night hideous and we fools of nature
> So horridly to shake our disposition
> With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls? (I.iv.51–6)

Approaching the play along this track of Marlowean exploration, drawn toward Shakespeare's heart of darkness – the hollow centre of the *Hamlet*-universe – do we

6. McElroy, p. 29.

7. All parenthesised and textual references are to the Arden edition of *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins (London and New York: Methuen, 1982).

find the inner sanctuary, the equivocating polyphonic mind of Hamlet, whose "large discourse" looking before and after, divided from itself like poor Ophelia and her fair judgement, remodels the pattern and turns the world inside out, eliminating all given spatial definition.

The mental metamorphosis, however, works both ways: from the centre toward the peripheries, from the particular to the general and back. Hamlet's body-minded world of thought by the intense awareness of the carnal and the charnel[8], of physicality and mortality reduces his mental universe by the mind-forged manacles of his conscience into a dead-locked prison – a short circuit of vain self-definitions. Hamlet is imprisoned both compositionally – by the spherical exteriors of his world – the analogous stories of his generation mates: Laertes and Fortinbras, and conceptually from inside through constant self-comparisons in the hope of gaining a firmer foothold on the shattered ground of his identity measured against the actors: "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I. . ." (II.ii.544), Horatio: "A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards / Hast ta'en with equal thanks. . ." (III.ii.66–7), Fortinbras: "How all occasions do inform against me" (IV.iv.32) and Laertes: "For by the image of my cause I see / The portraiture of his" (V.ii.77).

Hamlet, like all the major tragic heroes upon whose character and conscience the play's worlds are founded, is agent and victim, projective and absorptive at the same time. His character is composed of the elements of his local dramatic macrocosm and gets gradually dissolved in it only to recharge, remake, remodel it through sacrificial decomposition planting the seeds of the next cycle – the "brave new world" of Fortinbras and Horatio. This complex dramaturgical pattern – the destructive-creative interaction of exterior and interior spheres, through imitating larger spatial-contextual designs like the cycles of nature and probably those of the universe – give organic life to the fictional world of the play. With, within and without the broader homophonic composition, whose leading voice is that of Hamlet, the thematic leitmotif of the play – the story of the murdered father, the murderer and the avenger – through imitative repetition create a fugue-like organism, a closed system of unique aural, visual and spiritual qualities and climatic, atmospheric conditions.[9]

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8. Normand Berlin, borrowing and adapting Harry Levin's "apt phrase" to his pointed interpretative purposes, builds his reading of *Hamlet* & *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* on and around the intertwined themes of death and sex ("Death and sex in knot intrinsicate, prod the mystery, touch the secret cause," p. 65) in chapter 4 of *The Secret Cause* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981).

9. Northrop Frye, elaborating his concept on archetypal roles in Shakespeare's "tragedies of order," distinguishes three "concentric tragic spheres" in the action of *Hamlet*, "each with a

If there is numerical figuration in the architecture of the *Hamlet*-world in accord with its spatial composition, that must be built on the number 3 – the proper amount of generating space in dimensional terms: 3 analogous stories of 3 families – those of Fortinbras, Hamlet and Laertes, 3 key-figures related outwardly to 3 exterior locations as topical qualifiers – Norway, Wittenberg and Paris, 3 scenes of spatial and conceptual transcendence by the 3 appearances of the ghost, 3 recollections of the King's death by murder – the ghostly tragic offence to which the play is only the dramatically delayed aftermath – one narrative, one dumb show and one live performance, 3 public confrontations of the deadly adversaries, Hamlet and Claudius, 3 meetings of Hamlet and Ophelia, Hamlet's 3 encounters with death and the 3 Aristotelian structural stages of action – the manifold according beginning, middle and ending.

This now canonical, now fugue-like, densely textured polyphony of symmetrically arranged parts, players, plots and places accompanies in rich orchestration the free verse-like thought-rhythm of the play – the overwhelming questions of Hamlet's inquisitive mind. This ordering device – like a spatial-structural network of analogies and correspondences – gives solidity and integrity to the play's body and mind threatened by temporal, spatial and conceptional decomposition and dissolution.

The overall sense of spatial indefinition is largely due to the lack of reliable local habitations. The *Hamlet*-world is devoid of spatial signification of characters, who – lacking locational bonds – are merely related to the places of action as itinerant, movable figures of temporary presence, coming and going, leaving and returning – always on the move. Hamlet senior and junior, Horatio, Laertes, Ros and Guil, Fortinbras and the players, by spatial definition, come from and belong to the outer spheres – the merely referential exterior of the play's world, thus lack locational weight, authority and jurisdiction further increasing the sense of temporality and liminality.

Just like the permanent residents, the habitant signifiers of Elsinore: Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, Laertes and Ophelia – the authorized space-makers – who, morally disqualified, also work against the indispensable spatial definition that would make the *Hamlet*-world truly inhabitable. They all gain proper local habitation only in death – the ultimate state of spatial and temporal definition, beyond the confines of space and time.

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murdered father and a nemesis." See Chapter 1 ("My Father as He Slept: The Tragedy of Order") in *Fools of Time* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1967).

Tragic space, like that of the genre's fathering myths, is always personal, localized by habitations, names and deeds, characters and actions to ensure the required accessibility, familiarity and intimacy for the spectator, to make the world of the play inhabitable for the audience. The actor and his setting – as Camus emphasized – must be in full accord, since "Within three hours he must experience and express a whole exceptional life. That is called losing oneself to find oneself. In those three hours he travels the whole course of the dead-end path that the man in the audience takes a lifetime to cover."[10] Only in this way will the play and what it represents be whole, unique and alive. The organic sensual-conceptual or formal-substantial metaphoricality of tragic space rests on the dialogue – the interactive relationship of the interior and the exterior – the mental and the physical domains of the play's composite world. The accord, agreement, separation and confrontation of the two spheres is, in itself, a reliable medium of the tragic experience. In the complex spatial design of the play the outside – the dramatic, narrative and lyrical environment of the protagonist, from the spectator's point of view, is also what modern architectural space-theory would call a communicational "transitory space" that provides the audience with guided access to the interior of the tragic mind and creates an authentic sensual-conceptual context for the hero to state himself, to gather a live local habitation.

This bipolarity, the spatial dialogue of the two cardinal spheres is predominant in all the major tragedies of Shakespeare. Macbeth's alternating castles *vs*. his opponents' seats, enclosed interiors and vague exteriors, Scotland and England in the Scottish play, Venice and Cyprus, the dramatic action and the narrated fiction of the moor's story in *Othello,* Britain and France, the domesticated households of Goneril, Regan and Gloster *vs*. the Hodological[11] (interlocational) spaces of the homeless in *King Lear*, Rome *vs*. Egypt, land and sea, domestic and foreign in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Denmark *vs*. Norway, Wittenberg, Poland and England, this world and the netherworld in *Hamlet*.

Hamlet's humanistic, conceptualized Renaissance microcosm is devoid of the richly figurative, organic, domesticated space of myths, whose familiar world was a

10. Camus, p. 59.

11. The term "Hodological space" – quasi-synonymous with kinetic space or space of movement – signifies an aspect or dimension of "real" or "lived" space beside "actional," "coexistential" or "communicational" spaces also of distinguished importance in dramatic context, and was introduced to the scholarly discourse of architectural space concepts by the Heidegger-disciple, Otto Friedrich Bollnow in his seminal book *Mensch und Raum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963).

natural habitat of analogous locations and names with adaptable and adjustable temporal and spatial confines. Their remote secular successors – the quasi-ritual, pseudo-sacred, heroic-romantic tragedies of passion: *Titus, Othello, Lear, Macbeth, Anthony and Cleopatra* recall a more primitive, archaic, openly brutal and violent world of earlier stages of civilization which are set in a more organic, living space of increased vitality – a primary quality, which, being correspondent with both action and character, is indispensable for architecture and composition alike. These plays possess unique spatial character traits – qualities in full accord with other key-constituents of their world. *King Lear* is set in an open dramatic universe of marked vertical and horizontal axes and boundless perspectives localized and made inhabitable by constant movement of search and escape. *Macbeth*'s predominantly vertical spaces of sub-stanced, suffocatingly enclosed, claustrophobic interiors are bound mostly to the subsurface layers of its world. *Othello* – using and abusing stereotypical comic patterns in terms of plotting, intrigue, humours, moods and manners – is planted in a predominantly horizontal, social-hierarchical space. In *Anthony and Cleopatra* the protagonists' greatness (in terms of position, reputation, self-esteem and sacrifice) and distance dramatizes the space of multiplied bipolarity (Rome *vs*. Egypt, Octavius *vs*. Cleopatra, masculine *vs*. feminine principles etc.).

At the same time, *Hamlet*'s seemingly more homogeneous space gathers shape in a world of elusion, escapism, evasion, avoiding definition and devoid of dramatically habitable locations.

The predominant qualities of the *Hamlet*-world also contribute to the decomposition of traditional dramatic space, dissolving in an equivalent atmosphere, a substituting climate – the authentic spatial correlative of a state of mind replacing dramatic action. This all-inclusive and enclosed state of mind, however, is far from being merely the barren bounds of separation and secession exiling Hamlet to the outskirts of the world of action and experience. In the confounding world of seeming, whose dramaturgical substance is substitution, the Apollonian thinking and talking about the Dionysian constituents of life and vitality in the dramatic sense may prove equivalent to the primary experience itself. Hamlet's world of thought – through the heightened awareness of the flesh and its common fate, of physicality and mortality – reduces his boundless mind to a death-ridden confinement of interior and exterior entrapment where the body is the prison of the ambitious mind no more than the mind for the ever rebellious body, the mortal coil shrinking from annihilation. Thus gains Hamlet's apt and pointing pun on conception equivocal generic and local significance of all-pervading conceptual productivity.

HAM Have you a daughter?
POL I have, my lord.
HAM Let her not walk i'th' sun. Conception is a blessing,
but as your daughter may conceive – friend, look
to't. (II.ii.182–6)

What could be a more proper subject for Hamlet, the humanist scholar, when reading on a book than a "satirical rogue's" indecent remarks on ageing and its inevitable physical signifiers in terms of conceptual (i.e. sensual and intellectual) incompetence and impotence "potently" believed by the ready reader? Even the butt for the joke, the blindfolded fool realizes the "method" in Hamlet's answer, and to fatten the ironic effect, he joins the game finding perverted delight in the fertile discourse on mortality: "How pregnant / sometimes his replies are. . ." (II.ii.208–9).

The deliberate compositional confusion of the particular and the general, the subjective and the objective, the local and the universal, the corpuscular and the conceptional is also apparent in another sphere of the *Hamlet*-world – in the imported *Hamlet*-university substituting the neglected Wittenberg-world of lectures, seminars, courses and discourses on diverse subjects given voluntarily by self-appointed experts of all the fields that come to view within the "gross and scope" of their opinions in the "book and volume" of Hamlet's world.

Knowledge, like the fat king's and the lean beggar's bodies is but a "variable service" – different dishes, "but to one table" set down in Hamlet's tables wiped "clean of all trivial fond records."

Upon closer inspection, however, even this last refuge – the only chance of liberation by the infinite faculties of the mind's univers(al)ity – proves to be a prison: a thematic, subjective, self-imposed confinement, a Beckettian–Pinteresque room with the sole view of the flesh, the body or the thing challenging the mind and the spirit of the king.

Horatio's recollections of Roman history matched with demonology set in apocalyptic imagery of rich spatial connotation, Claudius' lecture on heaven, nature and reason, on natural bonds, proper family ties, cardinal virtues and sins related to rules of death and mourning, Laertes' brotherly sermon to Ophelia on youth, temptation and the dangers of desire confirmed by Polonius' paternal admonition concerning tenders of love and the blazes of blood, Hamlet's illuminating account of the evils of habitual drinking, his equivocating, deprecating appreciation of man, the angelic beast, of language, pronunciation, playing and the art of the theatre, proper wifely and womanly conduct and the true path of virtue as well as the progression of the great chain of beings along the ladder of alimentation in the worm's-eye view, con-

cluded by the grave-diggers' – the professional death-dealers' discourse on decay and decomposition – i.e. all the aggregated knowledge of the play boils down to the ultimate mystery of mortality confining Hamlet's "noble" reason of "infinite" faculties to the limited playground of a nauseating conceptual dance macabre. This is the dramatic agent that gradually gathering weight charges up the barren realm of allegorical conceptions with organic ritual metaphoricality through calling death to life in body and spirit alike. In the death-locked world of Hamlet – cracking "the wind of the poor phrase" in genuine Poloniusian manner – the timeless topos of doubled topicality is that of Atropos.

Death is not only the sole substantial vision of the *Hamlet*-world vocalized and reflected upon in all tones, voices and registers but a structural-spatial agent of division as well. It provides the play with an authentic Aristotelian composition having a beginning, a middle and an ending in full accord through ritual and conceptual correspondence. The three cardinal turns – the delayed protasis of the ghost's repetitive appearance, the crisis, brought about by the mousetrap scene and the catastrophe – the proportionately stretched-to-the-limits closure – provide both the play (compositionally) and the *Hamlet*-world (conceptually) with a geometry generating the illusion of inverted spatial definition. Through the provocative intrusion of the outside all the three are scenes of liminality, exteriority, spatial transcendence and corresponding meta-theatricality. The framing ones are set in markedly positioned locations that simultaneously generate and dissolve space pointing beyond the world of the play and transcending both its physical and mental confines. The "removed ground" of the battlements is a passage between the physical and the metaphysical spheres by the threefold now narrated, now live appearance of the roaming spirit "doomed to walk the night" restlessly, without a local habitation and a proper name as signifier: "thing," "fantasy," "dreaded sight," "apparition," "portentious figure," "illusion," "spirit of health or goblin damned," "poor ghost," "truepenny," "old mole," "worthy pioneer," "perturbed spirit" – a sequence of confused attempts at naming the unnameable.

The other "removed ground" – the graveyard scene – driving home death near the end, bodies forth the forms of things (both beggars, fools and kings) and paves the way for the catastrophe brought about by "proud death's" final feast. The spatial gap between the beginning and the ending – covering the whole play as an intermezzo – is bridged by the striking analogies of the battlement scene and the butchery. Both are scenes of intrusion: those of old Hamlet and young Fortinbras; of possession: those of the mind in the mental and of the body – of Denmark – in the physical sense of the word; and of termination through timing and extermination

through murder and revenge. Both are set in a martial mood stressing the aggressive military spirit of the disjointed times in sharp contrast with Hamlet's helpless humanism. The sentinels' constant guard, the "strict and most observant watch," the enlisted "implements of war," as well as the "warlike form" of the late king is in perfect unison with victorious Fortinbras' martial drive and enthusiasm and the military manners he employs to pay proper tribute to Hamlet: "Let four captains / Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage. . . / The soldier's music and the rite of war / Speak loudly for him" (V.ii.400–5).

The parallels of the two scenes' fictional perspectives further increase the according correspondence in another key of spatial transcendence. The ghost's narrative account of Old Hamlet's life and death retrospectively opens up the play to the past, while Horatio's promised report of young Hamlet's life and death points toward the future to ensure Hamlet a worthy afterlife of honour and respect – the post-mortem justice he should've done to his father. Father and son fallen by treachery, poisoned to death, yearning for purification and seeking ultimate peace thus unite in a sequential cycle, joining the beginning and the ending, dissolving both narrative and dramatic spatial confinements of the doubled yet one Hamlet-story.

The illusory geometry of the plot, however, rests not so much on the two framing pillars as on the structural centre, the deeply planted and precisely pointed meta-theatrical mousetrap scene. This is the peripeteia-like core and axis of the Hamlet-world through double reflection pointing backward and forward in the plot, embedded organically in the body of the primary play. By Hamlet's active, multifunctional agency and involvement (he is author, manager, actor, instructor, audience and critic in one) it turns the play upside down and inside out further increasing spatial confusion. Its keenly calculated central position (the beginning of the live performance following the dumb show is almost by the line the exact structural middle of the play) suggests the illusion of symmetry, balance and order through the form and what it covers: the shadowy substance of hidden truth revealed by mere pretence, and this way generates only further confusion. Facts can be verified only by fiction, truth can be revealed solely by pretence, reality can be confirmed exclusively by illusion. The seemingly sound concord of discord is apparent in the dramaturgically arranged sequential strategy in the spatial "trigonometric" structure of the play built upon a silence-sound, silence-sound-silence, sound-silence pattern. The silent ghost's double dumb show – the two "rehearsals" – are followed by the voiced live performance. The ghost's scene – having the desired audience – is no less theatrical than the performance of the professional actors who also start their play with the appetizing dumb show only to get authoritatively silenced when they re-act out the vocalized

version of *The Murder of Gonzago-Hamlet*. And it is no less meta-theatrical either than the concluding performance – the pre-plotted death-show by the collaborative authorship and agency of Claudius and Laertes. Or the dénouement itself – the fourfold murder followed by Hamlet's meta- and melodramatically extended and overplayed agony before the concluding silence and the noisy rest: Fortinbras' phoney afterplay.

Uniting most of the major compositional elements of tragedy (plot, character, thought, diction and spectacle) Hamlet's overall existential crisis gets manifest in gradually growing spatial indefinition loosening all natural bonds, confusing orientation and distorting all relations: natural and man-made, emotional and mental, sensual and conceptual alike.

With time out of joint even the chronotopical complementariness of the two axes of existence gets disjointed. Time, slowed down, almost suspended, works both for and against space. It freezes into the expected fourth dimension further increasing the sense of interior and exterior confinement, at the same time it dissolves the boundaries between now and then, here and there, inside and outside, high and low, holy and profane, extending the frontier of the unknown and increasing the liminality of the dramatic experience. Taking side with Hamlet, we simultaneously get confronted with the threatening spatial fixities of the royal palace's prison-like interior: the cryptic labyrinth of halls, corridors, rooms and chambers on one hand and the blood-freezing abyss yawning behind the presence and the words of the ghost and the opened graves of beggars, fools, kings and emperors.

The grand-tour of the flesh, the profane pilgrimage of the "thing" disguised as a "king" and disfigured into "nothing," in its grotesquely ironic temporal and spatial circularity, gravely adds to the horror of being lost in the world of contrary states and stances.

> HAM The body is with the king, but the king is not with
> the body. The king is a thing –
> GUILD A thing, my lord?
> HAM Of nothing. Bring me to him. (IV.ii.26–9)

The threefold locative as well as locational reference and the universal implication of Hamlet's enigmatic answer to Rosencrantz's inquiry even further widens the gap between seeming and being, fact and fiction, illusion and delusion, the ideal and the real. Since both king, thing and nothing can equally be related to the Ghost, Claudius and Hamlet, the one time potent, now impotent and potentially competent future ruler-figures – the most authoritative, overruling concept of the past, Frye's favourite

"royal metaphor" – the emblem of unity, order, concord, safety, stability and meaning – the referential centre of the world, gets disfigured, displaced and dissolved through contrasting division on one hand and sheer physicality on the other, depriving both bodies of the king of everything that could make it more than just a thing of nothing.

Undoubtedly the most potent physical and conceptual promoter of spatial disintegration is revenge itself: the ritual genre-forging force of mythological origin, the fully-fledged supreme metaphor of the play and its kind – act and idea in one – the semi-sacred, semi-secular act of justifying murder and verifying life as much as the supreme idea substituting religious faith. Revenge – this demonic, pagan deity reborn in the Renaissance into a haunting conceptual body – is the avenger's deed of self-redemption, the only available way in the "brave new world" of pursuing truth, doing justice, restoring order and fulfilling the law. A ritual act of worship and the locational centre of the *Hamlet*-world, multiplied in the minds of Fortinbras, Laertes, Hamlet and the ghost. A counteract of creation, disintegrating the microcosmic personality, undermining the existential sense of space, belonging, identity and community.

For Fortinbras it is an enterprise of recovery to regain what is lost in terms of both habitation and name, state and status. For Laertes it is an act of passionate self-statement of rebellion daring damnation. For the grotesquely perturbed ghost, gathering an almost sensual body of passion through his fiery sermon, it is the only way to find his final peace of mind and soul. For Hamlet: a calling, a private, personal and public mission, a deed of redeeming the state of Denmark damned with the "horrible crimes" of fratricide, treachery, lust and incest recalling the second fall. For the prince it is the supreme commandment of the worshipped father restating the biblical declaration of rights slightly modified, localized: "Vengeance is thine" – it says, and Hamlet without hesitation, in fact with doubtful readiness condescends to it. It is not by chance that its power to set things right is called to dramatic doubt in Claudius' prayer-scene when the seeming act of worship reveals the real nature of revenge by the straight directional contrast of heaven and hell. In the threefold spatial structure of Renaissance cosmology, its carved out passage is a dead end that can lead only downward, to "the other place" – to damnation. Of subject and object, agent and victim alike.

"And thy commandment all alone shall live / Within the book and volume of my brain" (I.v.102–3) – the terminology speaks for itself – and against Hamlet. At least the Hamlet we have known. Memory, table, records, books, copying, volume – the whole paraphernalia of the student and learned humanist scholar of Wittenberg with

all the forms and pressures of the past that provided him with a joint sense and state of identity is wiped away in an instant as "baser matter" compared to the holy task and the great chance of gaining a genuine local habitation and a name through substantial involvement in life by death.

Hamlet, at last fulfilling his fatal mission, is finally driven home by death to the nowhere-land beyond space and time he has always belonged to by unbounded filial affection to his father's spirit and boundless spiritual disaffiliation from the world.

Thus unite the local trinity of Hamlet's anti-world: the Father, the Son and the Death. And thus gains the *Hamlet*-world ultimate spatial definition reuniting the local spirit (the father) and the universal mastermind (the son) – or spatially speaking: the spiritus loci and the genius loci – in the netherworld.

Géza Maráczi

"A Peculiar Fusion of Soul"

Narration, Characterisation, and the Self in *Sons and Lovers*

In an attempt to integrate the study of characterisation with that of narration in D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, this paper traces the psychological themes whose realisation structures the narrative techniques of character presentation and the types of discourse applied for establishing and presenting the psychologies of characters. It examines the narrative techniques the novel employs for characterisation and describes, in terms of narrative situations, focalization and the technique of free indirect discourse, its methods for presenting the mental activities of the characters. It finds that by means of constant shifts of focalization within two specific types of discourse ("psycho-narration" and "narrated monologue"), the narrative accomplishes the linguistic representation of the psychological themes that can be defined as 'the dislocation of sensibility' and 'the loss of the self,' and explains them accordingly.

Following the dominant line in its criticism and reception, *Sons and Lovers* may be considered a variety of the autobiographical novel regarding its plot and characters as based on events and people in the life of the novelist. This aligns it with James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, with which it has been frequently compared, and raises a few considerations about the degree of fictionality involved in character presentation. I attribute only a limited validity to interpretational strategies influenced by the autobiographical element but assume that modes of narrating are not only the means of establishing characters' psychologies here, but the creation of a linguistic realisation for the author's psychology takes place, which is performed by way of transposing it into the consciousness of a third-person fictional character, as well as by the employment of narrative modes for presenting consciousness and narrative perspective ("focalization") – formal elements of narrative situation.

Therefore, further to discussing the narrative techniques the novel employs for characterisation, I will rely on concepts of the theories of narrative form – or, more precisely, the poetics of narrative fiction that have been developed by theorists fol-

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lowing the lead of Structuralist narratology – and concentrate on presenting how the novel's narrative, also by the employment of technical features of narration, constructs the representation of a particular psychological theme: the sense of a loss of the self in close emotional relationships.

Characters in life vs. characters in fiction

I assume that the creation of a novel basically involves giving linguistic expression to some psychological subject matter determined by a background of authorial concerns and intentions, a consciousness. Setting apart the issues of narrative situation for the moment, in the case of an autobiographical novel, or, specifically, a family 'saga,' it may often be prior among the novelist's motives and aims to gain an understanding of deeds, fates, emotions, relationships and inner selves of the characters one is writing about: characters who are for some measure derived from the actual characters of one's life. The technique here is the transferring of authorial concepts about the psychologies of those who served as models for the characters, into a fictional world, and embellishing them with qualities distinctive of the fictional from the actual or 'real.'

One may achieve suppressing one's knowledge of 'real-life' parallels of issues raised by their reading only with difficulty in the case of *Sons and Lovers*. Acquaintance with Lawrence studies[1] undoubtedly shows that biographical literature on Lawrence and criticism of his work is more often than not overwhelmed by the interwoven nature of the principles of life and art. Indeed, when reading an account on the social and domestic background or the life story of the novelist,[2] it is disturbing to become aware that one is reading at once about the setting, chief characters and central situations of this novel. One may have a sense that all the features and attributes of the work should not be so fully accounted for by, as it were, 'reality.'

The same may pertain to such complementary sources as extracts from letters by the author. In these Lawrence provides ready-made interpretations, startling explanations of his relationship with his mother and its effects on his emotional life, as well as complex expositions of his ideas on the plot and conflicts. He wrote to Edward Garnett, his editor: "I have written a great book. It's the tragedy of thousands of

1. Such as might be gained from the excellent up-to-date survey by Fiona Becket: *The Complete Critical Guide to D. H. Lawrence* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

2. Such as the one provided in: Allan Ingram, *The Language of D. H. Lawrence* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 19–44 and Becket, pp. 5–31.

young men in England. . . Now tell me if I haven't worked out my theme, like life but always my theme."[3]

Giving shape by language, style, imagery, structure, rhythm and other features of form to material of personal experience is an undertaking that I consider a much more demanding one than the creation of an exclusively fictional narrative. Jessie Chambers in her memoirs remarked her admiration of the "spontaneous flow, the seemingly effortless translation of life" in the vivid rendering of family scenes, and noted what I regard as the most important observation: "It was his power to transmute the common experiences into significance that I always felt to be Lawrence's greatest gift."[4]

As Frieda Lawrence put it, writing about Lawrence's treatment of Miriam (modelled on Jessie Chambers): "In writing about her, he had to find out impersonally what was wrong in their relationship."[5] The point is that it is precisely this *impersonal* approach to his own life and the personalities known from it, through the dislocation of his consciousness along with the literary imaginative shaping process mentioned above, that yields such vividness and intimacy of character-presentation, and is so peculiar to *Sons and Lovers*. Then in the fictional world that has been provided with its own distinctive qualities, this is rendered highly personal, only, the personalities involved are those of the fictional characters, not those of the author's life any more. I have already alluded to the concept of autobiographically based novel-writing as a result of a quest for understanding one's life and self; in the case of Lawrence at least it does appear as a creative means of self-purification: "One sheds one's sicknesses in books – repeats and presents again one's emotions, to be master of them,"[6] and helps others to achieve similar catharsis.

My approach to the novel is in accord with Gamini Salgado's opinion, who counsels that the "truth" of the novel "has to be judged in terms of the vividness, internal consistency and inclusiveness of its vision rather than by its accuracy as a chronicle." The answer to questions of the author's "fairness" to his characters "involves an account of them in their relation to each other and the fictional world they inhabit, and

3. "Extracts from Letters," in *D. H. Lawrence: 'Sons and Lovers,'* ed. Gamini Salgado (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1969), 21–41, p. 25.

4. Cited in Ingram, p. 35.

5. Salgado, p. 29.

6. Salgado, p. 26.

of the author's attitude to them *as it appears in the details of the novel*, not a measuring-off of the fictional characters against their real-life counterparts."[7]

Characterisation in a 'Naturalist Bildungsroman'

In order to achieve such an account, having contemplated on how the fact that Lawrence used his own parents, siblings and female acquaintances as models for the characters in the novel influences the readers' and critics' approaches to the book; I may now examine its narrative features in the light of considering the novel a biography: that of Paul Morel. This may suggest a certain inclination towards the insights of criticism that relates *Sons and Lovers* to the *Bildungsroman*.

The central characteristic of its narrative structure is that it rests on the presentation of a sequence of relationships (or rather: on a sequential presentation of relationships), with only the necessary implications of chronology, rather than on narrating sequences of events. The presentation of the story does proceed in a straightforward manner, but it is realised by a constant shifting of the focus from one relationship to another, thus establishing a rhythm in its narration. A structuring principle of both story and narration[8] is the similar shifting involvement of characters, which is responsible for the repetitions and occasional tenuousness in the presentation of characters by an omniscient narrator.[9]

Frederick R. Karl and M. Magalaner reckon that Lawrence's efforts in "forcing an 'internal life' upon a recalcitrant character whose tendencies are almost entirely external" results in the lack of "differentiation and identifiable individuality" in his characters, "for all of them on occasion are Lawrence rather than themselves."[10] By contrast, it is precisely that effort and aim in which the narration of *Sons and Lovers* has accomplished the most. Applying the variation of an omniscient or external perspective with a plurality of internal perspectives, it reveals characters' internal lives by either indirectly describing their emotions or more directly reporting them (the focus of the second half of my paper). This is at the same time a technique of charac-

7. Gamini Salgado, "Introduction," in *D. H. Lawrence: 'Sons and Lovers,'* ed. Gamini Salgado (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1969), 11–17, p. 13.

8. Both in the sense of narratological levels, put simply: story as what is narrated, narration is how it is narrated.

9. Later to be defined as "authorial narrative situation" and "narrator-focalizer."

10. Frederick R. Karl, M. Magalaner, *A Reader's Guide to Great Twentieth Century English Novels* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1961), 156–171, p. 156.

terisation: implicating characters' emotions by showing and commenting on what may be *perceived* of them by other characters or the reader, whether this be the character's action, dialogue, tone or gesture.[11] The point is that the vehicles of characterisation are action, *inter*action or even *re*action. For indicating their reactions is also a means of revealing characters' inner lives, practised here by a narrator chiefly interested in the relationship between inner states of feeling and the outward expression of them.

This interest is in accord with the technique of emphasis "on cataloguing stimuli and responses" which is a demand of the Naturalist novel, according to Karl and Magalaner.[12] The other would be "emphasis on cause and effect," which is in accord with the element of plot implied in the concept of *Bildung*, and as it is the case in *Sons and Lovers*: "plot may be downplayed in favour of the representation of a character's interiority . . . but whenever events are presented in an order that implies relatedness, a minimal plot exists."[13]

The long exposition

The comparatively simple theme of family tensions rooted in Mrs. Morel's disillusionment and lack of fulfilment in her socially and culturally unbalanced marriage is worked up into an extensive exposition in Part One; providing an exhaustive presentation of the marriage of Paul's parents, his childhood spent among his siblings, and his first experiences at work; with emphasis on the 'history' of Mrs. Morel's emotions for her husband and two of her four children, two of her three sons. At this stage, the *Bildungsroman* is rather a domestic novel, rather a case history of the mother of the hero than of himself, already including three relationships by shifting focus (Morel ↔ Mrs. Morel, Mrs. Morel → William, Mrs. Morel → Paul, with the latter to be expanded to involve conflicts only in Part Two).

The pace of narration varies between panoramic, i.e., summarising, and scenical narration. Narratology regards these as tools for variation of distance between the

11. As well as by abounding in various descriptions, often to minute details mostly concerning appearances (items of clothing, objects in parlour, views of the country from window, doorway, entry, roadside, train, etc.) and financial issues (curiously all wages, prices and costs are recorded!) in a thorough fashion; but mainly exercising such a full power only when required to assert the symbolism of certain scenes.

12. Karl and Magalaner, p. 156.

13. Susan Keen, *Narrative Form* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2003), p. 75.

narrated situations and events, and their narration;[14] which is, along with perspective, one of two major factors that regulate narrative information. To clarify using Gérard Genette's terms: the technique of "acceleration" corresponds to summary pace, while "deceleration" to scene pace.[15] In the presentation of relationships, the narration of scenes of characterising function and force is what dominates, which are scenes of no more than a few pages or even paragraphs of length and mostly without transition. Examples are Morel's cutting William's hair, Mrs. Morel's marketing, the parents' battles, William's visits home, Paul's destroying Annie's doll, Paul's collecting his father's wages, scenes of his life among the girls employed at the factory. Utterly similar to scenes and cuts in a film, each has some reference beyond themselves to psychological themes. Ranging beyond the narration of sequences of events drawn together by 'forces' of teleology or chronology, beyond common purposes of chronicling the life of the hero and his close associates, the emphasis seems to be on *how* they lived, not on what happened to them. This holds fairly true for the whole span of time narrated in the novel.

The impression is as if the narration's aim and objective were constantly being altered, as if to give the reader a broad vista, but this with the sense of prolonged occurrence in time or even floating in timelessness. The majority of narrating phrases that present or report actions or exchanges of conversation that are crucial in characterisation, is introduced by *would*; and the pace suddenly decelerates to that of the scenical mode, while the reader only gets a vague impression whether what is being presented is told in the singulative (it happened once and is told once) or in the iterative mode (it happened an indefinite number of time but is told only once – a common technique also in Lawrence's later prose).[16] This technique, which corresponds to the regulation of narrative information as well as to narrative perspective, is a tool for creating an all-embracing atmosphere and for comprehensive presentation of how certain patterns are established that will define the characters' lives, in accord with the concept of *Bildung*. Besides it is also a tool for attaining the reader's sympathy for the characters.

Contents of the scenes: dialogue and comments on exchanges of it, descriptive and expository prose, imagery, are tools of a characterisation that always derives

14. Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 22.

15. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 53–56.

16. Rimmon-Kenan, pp. 57–58.

from factors external to the characters – e.g., situations, objects of environment, emotional reaction to sensual experience –, as well as from action.

The example of the parents may be taken. Walter Morel receives the least inner description and is disproportionately revealed mainly from his wife's point of view (varying her internal and the narrator's external perspectives), which is a sign of evident bias on the "implied author's" part (who may be held responsible for ideological and emotional stances within the external perspective). Yet he is also presented in action: we get vivid scenes of him making his breakfast preferring his clasp knife to a fork, preparing and setting off for the mine, full accounts of his habits, his satisfied absorption at work and, despite the alienation of his domain, the ability to relate to his children by his practical skills. (They enjoy singing with, and attending to, him when mending things or making fuses for the mine.) What is not represented but easily deduced from even the weak scene of Morel among his "butties" (fellow miners), is that "the working-class man may come like Morel to exert a despotic authority in the household partly to compensate for his lack of power at work," and the "oppressive toil of the mine is likely to make for . . . outright violence at home."[17]

What is presented, as a result of the external perspective, is only what is perceived of Morel by the family and his wife (here his alienation and sensuous nature, with objects, movements, etc., always seeming to have special significance), yet there are shifts into an internal perspective:[18]

> Morel made the meal alone, brutally. He ate and drank more noisily than he had need. No one spoke to him. The family life withdrew, shrank away, and became hushed as he entered. But he cared no longer about his alienation. Immediately he had finished tea he rose with alacrity to go out. It was this alacrity, this haste to be gone, which so sickened Mrs. Morel. *[Internal p.:]* As she heard him sousing heartily in cold water, heard the eager scratch of the steel comb on the side of the bowl, as he wetted his hair, she closed her eyes in disgust. As he bent over, lacing his boots, there was a certain vulgar gusto in his movement that divided him from the reserved, watchful rest of the family. (56–57)[19]

17. Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 256–281, p. 269.

18. This I will later discuss within the theoretical framework of "focalization."

19. All parenthesised references are to this edition: D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977).

And, likewise, his own history is narrated only by commenting on his wife's attitudes to him and on the manifestations of them, with the occasional adoption of her internal perspective:

> Mrs. Morel was more tolerant of him, and he, depending on her almost like a child, was rather happy. Neither knew that she was more tolerant because she loved him less. *[Internal p.:]* Up till this time, in spite of all, he had been her husband and her man. She had felt that, more or less, what he did to himself he did to her. Her living depended on him. *[External p.:]* There were many, many stages in the ebbing of her love for him, but it was always ebbing. (62)

There are also many instances presenting Mrs. Morel in action. Such as when ironing: "Her movements were light and quick. It was always a pleasure to watch her. Nothing she ever did, no movement she ever made, could have been found fault with by her children. The room was warm and full of the scent of hot linen. Later on the clergyman came and talked softly with her" (86). As in this quotation, her characterisation is often merged with the presentation of Paul's impressions of, and emotions for, her, even if these seem improbable or too abstract: "When she was quiet, so, she looked brave and rich with life, but as if she had been done out of her rights. It hurt the boy keenly, this feeling about her that she had never had her life's fulfilment: and his own incapability to make up to her hurt him with a sense of impotence, yet made him patiently dogged inside. It was his childish aim" (85).

The result of the increasing concentration on the relationship between them is that Paul's characterisation, apart from slight physical description and scenes of him among playmates and workmates, partly anticipates the later focusing on his internal life, as in: "Then she pushed up her veil. Paul hated her for not being prouder with this common little man, and he loved her face clear of the veil," (p. 120) and many other comments inserted in dialogues. It is in there that depiction of how "the two shared lives," sensitivities and consciousnesses, is rooted, rather than in action. See for example their almost coquetting dialogue in the scene of their first journey to Willey Farm (pp. 152–155).[20] These are all prefiguring how his emotional life would

20. Journeys are exclusively associated with the two of them: together to Nottingham for Paul's job-interview, to Willey Farm for the first time, than to Lincoln in Chapter IX, and Mrs. Morel's trip to London where William is dying, then her last one home from Sheffield to die in Chapter XIII.

be dominated by his mother, which is illustrated by modes of presenting emotional life in Part Two.

Expressive functions and symbolic power of imagery are relevant as well. Lawrence "seems not to distinguish between the reality and the metaphor or symbol which makes it plain to us."[21] But, as Dorothy Van Ghent says, "the most valid symbols are the most concrete realities," which is a feature of poetic language. All family scenes are perceivably suggestive of the core psychological themes, e.g., Mrs. Morel's hostility against her husband's means of wage-earning and social habits, emotional interdependence between mother and sons; or, later on, that Paul and his father have been marginalized and their emotional wholeness destroyed in more or less the same way by the domination of Mrs. Morel.

In Part Two, the comparatively longer and in every respect more verbose portion of the novel, the narration's concern is less with particularising the general, that is, establishing an overall atmosphere about the passage of time and characters' ways of life, constructed by illustrative individual scenes full of indications to be deciphered; but rather with generalising the particular, that is, constituting a parabolic case history out of underlying psychological themes: creating the impression that the individuals' actions and interactions which the narration represents, are manifestations of motives rooted in the general themes.

These themes may either be the impossibility of fulfilment in love when its physical and spiritual components are split apart (the relationship with Clara, but partly with Miriam as well) or the causes of this split in the possessive deviations of maternal and youthful love (relationships with Mrs. Morel and Miriam, their antagonism and parallelisms: both demanding Paul's full self in their loves for him). Paul's situation with respect to them would always appear as indicative of something generally human. Technically, this entails that what was implicit concerning the emotional setting of William's being torn apart between Miss Western and his mother, and his consequent death (in some respects a prefiguration of Paul's fate, yet there was no reporting of William's mental suffering); will become fully explicit in Paul's case history.

The technique of presentation is still rooted in the succession of scenes, yet by the turn of Part One and Two the focus is somewhat abruptly transferred from the documentation of the external to that of the internal. The former (life among the working class of the Midlands) will henceforward constitute only a symbolic back-

21. Fergusson, quoted in Dorothy Van Ghent, "On 'Sons and Lovers,' " in *D. H. Lawrence: 'Sons and Lovers,'* ed. Gamini Salgado (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1969), 112–129, p. 115.

ground to the latter, family scenes being incorporated in the context of Paul's intellectual, artistic development and emotional conflicts. While in Part One the chief concern was character presentation, here the reader may more easily witness narration's achievements in revealing characters' internal lives.

Narrative situations and focalization

The concept of characterisation has to be broadened at this point so as to include the techniques for presenting the psychologies of characters: the depiction of phases of emotional development and states of mind, the representation of emotions and consciousnesses. The second half of my paper will be concerned with these techniques in *Sons and Lovers*, and I take them to point further than those I have analysed in connection with characterisation, and to be operations that are performed not exclusively on the "text" level (which Genette labelled "narrative") but on that of "narration" (Genette's "narrating"), that of "the 'how' of a narrative as opposed to its 'what,' the *narrating* as opposed to the *narrated*."[22]

The fundamental distinction of narrative levels in narratology originates from Russian Formalism's distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzet*, further distinguished by Structuralists: Tzvetan Todorov's "story" vs. "discourse" and Genette's influential system of "story" (*histoire* in the French original), "narrative" (*récit*) and "narrating" (*narration*),[23] that has been transposed into Poststructuralist narratology as levels labelled either as "fable," "story" and "narrative text" (in Mieke Bal's influential system), or simply as "story," "text" and "narration." Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan introduces them as follows:

> 'Story designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the 'text' and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events. . . . 'Text' is a spoken or written discourse which undertakes their telling. . . . In it, the events do not necessarily appear in chronological order, the characteristics of the participants are dispersed throughout, and all the items of the narrative content are filtered through some prism or perspective ('focalizer'). Since the text is a spoken or

22. Prince, p. 21.

23. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 25–32.

> written discourse, it implies someone who speaks or writes it. The act or process of production is the third aspect – 'narration.'[24]

Conversely, in my view, it is the third category or level that accounts for the perspectives of narrative presentation,[25] since they are determined by the narrative situation, which is created on this level.[26] "In the empirical world, the author is the agent responsible for the production of the narrative and for its communication,"[27] while narrative situation is the communication situation in the fictional world. It is the framework in which the narrative performs its communication, effects or functions of which derive from all three levels just mentioned. Characterisation is such an effect, being the achievement of narrative techniques that are themselves determined by the narrative situation chosen. So are the modes for presenting characters' thoughts and emotions.

Franz K. Stanzel describes narrative situations considering narration as mediating activity according to three "axes," those of person, mode and perspective. The category of person refers to first-person narrative situation, where the level of existence of the narrator is identical with that of the characters. In "authorial" narrative situation,[28] "the narrator's world exists on a different level of being from that of the characters. Here the process of transmission originates from an external *perspective*."[29] Whereas "figural" narrative situation is the *mode* when narration illusorily appears as non-mediated, "the narrative conveys the illusion of unmediated access to

24. Rimmon-Kenan, p. 3.

25. This is a controversial issue in post-Genettean theory, see for instance: Rimmon-Kenan, p. 86.

26. It is also this level that includes the "narrating instance" (by Bal, Prince and others), that has frequently been the subject of inquiries, because this is the level that hosts the "implied author" together with the roles of the reader, ranging from "narratee" to "implied reader."

27. Rimmon-Kenan, p. 4.

28. I consider this an unfortunate choice of terminology, for apart from implying the concept of authority in the mode of presentation, it may suggest reading strategies that involve relying to an overwhelming extent on information about the author's personality and on identifying impressions of it on the elements of the fictional world of the novel. This is of course a valid aspect, but its predominance should be avoided.

29. Franz K. Stanzel, *A Theory of Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 5.

the main protagonist's mind and there is no foregrounded narrator persona,"[30] but a character in the novel "who thinks, feels and perceives, but does not speak to the reader like a narrator."[31] The most important is that "the reader looks at the other characters of the narrative through the eyes of this reflector-character"[32] – this is the character, or rather an agent of narrative just like the narrator itself, that Genette defined (see Rimmon-Kenan above), and I will refer to, as "focalizer."

The nature of interrelationship in a particular text between the dominance or predominance of the narratorial ("authorial") or figural perspectives is what determines the nature of the narrative situation, and it is in this sense (also with a view on offering a useful synthesis of theoretical approaches) that I apply the concept of "focalization":[33] "the *perspective* in terms of which the narrated situations and events are presented; the perceptual or conceptual position in terms of which they are rendered."[34] It has been devised in narratology by Genette in order to enable discussion to distinguish between the two related but different questions of 'who speaks' and 'who sees' what is told. "Speaking and seeing, narration and focalization, may, but need not, be attributed to the same agent. The distinction between the two activities is a theoretical necessity, and only on its basis can the interrelations between them be studied with precision."[35]

As regards its position relative to the level of the story, "focalization can be either external or internal to the story. External focalization is felt to be close to the narrating agent, and its vehicle is therefore called 'narrator-focalizer.' "[36] Conversely, "the locus of internal focalization is inside the represented events. This type generally takes the form of a character-focalizer" (but this is not the case as a rule, so I will designate it in my examples as IF).

30. Monika Fludernik, "Histories of Narrative Theory (II): From Structuralism to the Present," in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 36–59, p. 40.

31. Stanzel, p. 5.

32. Stanzel, p. 5.

33. It has emerged in narratology from the concept of point of view, established by earlier theoretical discussion but recently re-examined by text linguistics and critical linguistics in various contexts (e.g., those of ideology and speech act theory).

34. Prince, pp. 31–32.

35. Rimmon-Kenan, p. 73.

36. Rimmon-Kenan, p. 75. In Genette's original system, the term for this was "zero-focalization" ("external focalization" is confusingly used in a different sense); I refer to it as external or narratorial focalization and designate it in my examples as NF.

Focalization has an object as well, what the narrative is focalized on, in terms of Mieke Bal's system: the focalizer "is the agent whose perception orients the presentation, whereas the object (the 'focalized') is what the focalizer perceives."[37]

Then the last one of the important theoretical issues is that "the focalized can be perceived either from without or from within." The first type does not, while "the second type reveals the 'inner life' of the focalized,[38] either by making him his own focalizer (interior monologues are the best example) or by granting an external focalizer (a narrator-focalizer) the privilege of penetrating the consciousness of the focalized."[39] The concern of the next section of my paper is the varieties of this in *Sons and Lovers*.

It is not to be forgotten that the narrative situations that I described are prototypes, or better, extremities on the mentioned "axes" of possibilities that Stanzel introduces by indicating continuity on a "typological circle," and texts combine characteristics of these narrative situations. Stanzel labels as "authorial-figural continuum" the "frequent move of the narrative between external and internal perspectives in a given section of the narrative."[40] Narration in *Sons and Lovers* does this, by occasionally almost paragraph-by-paragraph shifts between the two third-person narrative situations, further varied by almost sentence-by-sentence shifts in focalization.

Generally speaking, the figural mode is dominant in the scenically oriented presentation of the emotional relationships in which Paul is involved, and basically in Part II; with mostly him, Miriam and, less frequently than in Part I, Mrs. Morel as focalizers (while Clara is often felt to be 'left behind'), yet the balance between internal and narratorial focalization is fairly maintained. The relevant qualities are the constant shifting in the focalizer-focalized relation and the narrative situation, as well as the effects of these that I will describe below. This novel would not be termed by narratologists to be primarily figural, since the 'authorial' narrative situation is

37. Rimmon-Kenan, p. 75. Genette's and Bal's models of focalization gave rise to extensive theoretical disputes, a full grasp of which could by no means inform my present discussion, but the formulations that orient it, are: W. Bronzwaer, "Mieke Bal's Concept of Focalization: A Critical Note," *Poetics Today* 2 (1981) 193–201. Monika Fludernik, "New Wine in Old Bottles? Voice, Focalization, and New Writing," *New Literary History* 32 (2001) 619–638. Göran Nieragden, "Focalization and Narration: Theoretical and Terminological Refinements," *Poetics Today* 23 (2002) 685–697.

38. In my view, in such cases a character is only the source of what is focalized.

39. Rimmon-Kenan, p. 82.

40. Fludernik, *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, p. 41.

still favoured in the frequent summaries of development in Paul's mental life and the previously discussed panoramic presentations of all sorts of events and background details, together with the narrative techniques of characterisation. The novel abounds in narratorial summaries more than it is customary with Modernist texts.

Focalization and modes of presenting consciousness

In identifying the techniques of presenting characters' thoughts and emotions in the novel,[41] I rely on Dorrit Cohn's description of three basic categories for third-person narration: "psycho-narration," "quoted interior monologue" and "narrated monologue." Her system is the result of an efficient synthesis of earlier typological approaches to modes of representing speech and thought.

The most indirect type of discourse is psycho-narration (PN in examples): "the narrator's discourse about a character's consciousness."[42] It is associated with the authorial narrative situation, that "combines an omni-communicative narratorial presence up and above the world of fiction . . . with a panoramic view of the fictional world and easy access to characters' thoughts and emotions":[43]

> *[NF:]* She saw the dark yews and the golden crocuses, then she looked gratefully. *[IF, PN:]* He had not seemed to belong to her among all these others; he was different then – not her Paul, who understood the slightest quiver of her innermost soul, but something else, speaking another language than hers. How it hurt her, and deadened her very perceptions. Only when he came right back to her, leaving his other, his lesser self, as she thought, would she feel alive again. And now he asked her to look at this garden, wanting the contact with her again. *[NF, PN:]* Impatient of the set in the field, she turned to the quiet lawn, surrounded by sheaves of shut-up crocuses. A feeling of stillness, almost of ecstasy, came over her. It felt almost as if she were alone with him in this garden. (204–205)

41. I am aware that the following part would ideally need much more textual illustration than what could be provided here.

42. Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds*: *Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 14.

43. Fludernik, *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, p. 40.

Scenical presentation seems to alternate with summarising psycho-narration: "mental descriptions in a large time frame . . . surveys of a temporal span,"[44] presented in the form of omniscient short accounts (as it were, occasionally inserted pieces of information) of inner states and processes of feelings and *attitudes*, both drawn as results of represented interactions – with constant particular care driven to account for the emotional origins and many other reasons of them. As the narration proceeds, one may notice in these accounts a tendency of becoming increasingly abstract (e.g., working with concepts rather than providing the expressive imagery as well), and this later on would occasionally shake their impression of unquestionable acceptability, pointing to their lack of self-evidence as 'natural' insights.

Such obsessivity of indirect thought-presentation, as Allan Ingram suggests, draws attention to a self-conscious presence distancing and reducing the tension created through awakening sympathy for the characters.[45] Yet the dominance is of occasions when psycho-narration is combined with the more direct technique of the narrated monologue (NM in examples), which is basically a discourse constituted by the reporting of thoughts and other inner processes: "rendering a character's thought in his own idiom while maintaining the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration."[46]

> *[NF, PN:]* So to Miriam, Christ and God made one great figure, which she loved tremblingly and passionately when a tremendous sunset burned out the western sky, and Ediths, and Lucys, and Rowenas, Brian de Bois Guilberts, Rob Roys, and Guy Mannerings, rustled the sunny leaves in the morning, or sat in her bedroom aloft, alone, when it snowed. That was life to her. . . . On the whole, she scorned the male sex. *[IF, PN:]* But here was a new specimen, quick, light, graceful, who could be gentle and who could be sad, and who was clever, and who knew a lot, and who had a death in the family. . . . Then he was so ill, and she felt he would be weak. *[IF, NM:]* Then she would be stronger than he. Then she could love him. If she could be mistress of him in his weakness, take care of him, if he could depend on her, if she could, as it were, have him in her arms, how she would love him!
>
> (177–178)

"Narrated monologue" is Cohn's term for a technique of representing speech and thought, which is also customarily called "free indirect discourse" (so I will have

44. Cohn, p. 37.
45. Ingram, p. 40.
46. Cohn, p. 100.

to refer to it by both terms); yet the distinction that has to be made, whether speech or thought is reported, is not obvious enough. She defines it as "a character's mental discourse in the guise of the narrator's discourse."[47] Yet, when it comes to analysing types of discourse applied for reporting the mental activities of characters, it cannot be disputed, that – in third-person narration – in the case of these two of the three major techniques, the source of discourse is still the narrator,[48] who "continues to narrate, becoming the neutral but indispensable accessory to figure-oriented narration";[49] even if the source of perception is transferred into a character (internal focalizer). The narrative of *Sons and Lovers* most frequently inserts passages of narrated monologue between turns of dialogues, creating the impression of representing 'live' process of mental activity:

> *[IF, PN:]* Miriam pondered this. She saw what he was seeking – a sort of baptism of fire in passion, it seemed to her. She realised that he would never be satisfied till he had it. *[IF, NM:]* Perhaps it was essential to him, as to some men, to sow wild oats; and afterwards, when he was satisfied, he would not rage with restlessness any more, but could settle down and give her his life into her hands. Well, then, if he must go, let him go and have his fill – something big and intense, he called it. At any rate, when he had got it, he would not want it – that he said himself; he would want the other thing that she could give him. He would want to be owned, so that he could work. *[IF, PN:]* It seemed to her a bitter thing that he must go, but she could let him go into an inn for a glass of whisky, so she could let him go to Clara, so long as it was something that would satisfy a need in him, and leave him free for herself to possess. (387)

Allan Ingram and Randall Stevenson identify what I regard as the most important aspects of the function of narrated monologue or free indirect discourse in Lawrence's novels, when they observe the narrator's tendency to "take for himself the freedom to shift between authorial assertion and thoughts that are unquestionably the character's own, or even the thoughts of more than one character";[50] and that "Lawrence's writing destabilises the ego, dissolving any easy, secure sense of identity

47. Cohn, p. 14.

48. While in the case of the third type, the quoted interior monologue, the character may be considered to be the source of discourse, it is "the character's mental discourse," (Cohn, p. 14) and there may or may not be a narrator who quotes it.

49. Cohn, p. 26.

50. Ingram, p. 101.

in the voice of author or character, increasingly fused together in various shades and tones of intermingling."[51]

Let me only take as examples two different passages that employ free indirect discourse (customarily referred to as FID) to illustrate emotions of (either) Miriam and (or) Paul, where the prominence and significant deictic roles of personal and possessive pronouns, which is characteristic of free indirect discourse (and has been extensively studied in connection with it), may also be witnessed:

> *[NF:]* "But what has happened?" she said.
>
> "Nothing – it's all in myself – it only comes out just now. We're always like this towards Easter-time."
>
> *[IF, Miriam focalizer, Paul focalized, PN:]* He grovelled so helplessly, she pitied him. *[NM:]* At least she never floundered in such a pitiable way. After all, it was he who was chiefly humiliated.
>
> *[NF:]* "What do you want?" she asked him.
>
> "Why – I mustn't come often – that's all. Why should I monopolise you when I'm not – You see, I'm deficient in something with regard to you – "
>
> *[IF, Miriam focalizer, NM:]* He was telling her he did not love her, and so ought to leave her a chance with another man. How foolish and blind and shamefully clumsy he was! What were other men to her! What were men to her at all! But he, ah! she loved his soul. Was he deficient in something? Perhaps he was.
>
> *[NF:]* "But I don't understand," she said huskily. "Yesterday –"
>
> *[IF, Paul focalizer, PN:]* The night was turning jangled and hateful to him as the twilight faded. *[IF, Paul focalizer or NF, Miriam focalized, PN:]* And she bowed under her suffering.
>
> *[NF:]* "I know," he cried, "you never will! You'll never believe that I can't – can't physically, any more than I can fly up like a skylark –"
>
> "What?" she murmured. *[PN:]* Now she dreaded.
>
> "Love you."
>
> *[NF, Paul focalized, PN:]* He hated her bitterly at that moment because he made her suffer. *[IF, Miriam focalizer, Paul focalized (but the transition is uncertain, almost imperceptible even in deictics), NM:]* Love her! She knew he loved her. He really belonged to her. This about not loving her, physically, bodily, was a mere perversity on his part, because he knew she loved him. He was stupid like a child. He belonged to her. His soul wanted

51. Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: an Introduction* (New York, 1992), p. 33.

her. She guessed somebody had been influencing him. She felt upon him the hardness, the foreignness of another influence.

[NF:] "What have they been saying at home?" she asked.

"It's not that," he answered.

[IF, PN:] And then she knew it was. She despised them for their commonness, his people. *[NM:]* They did not know what things were really worth.

[NF:] He and she talked very little more that night. After all he left her to cycle with Edgar. (271–272)

They parted. *[NF, Paul focalized, PN:]* He felt guilty towards her. *[NF, Miriam focalized, PN;* or *IF: Paul focalizer, Miriam focalized, NM:]* She was bitter, and she scorned him. He still belonged to herself, she believed; *[IF, Miriam focalizer, Paul focalized, NM:]* yet he could have Clara, take her home, sit with her next his mother in chapel, give her *[all 3 for Clara]* the same hymn-book he had given herself [Miriam] years before. *[NF or IF, Miriam focalizer:]* She heard him running quickly indoors. . . .

[NF, PN:] His heart went hot, and he was angry with them [Mrs. Morel & Clara] for talking about the girl [Miriam]. *[NM:]* What right had they to say that? *[PN:]* Something in the speech itself stung him into a flame of hate against Miriam. Then his own heart rebelled furiously at Clara's taking the liberty of speaking so about Miriam. *[NM:]* After all, the girl was the better woman of the two, he thought, if it came to goodness. . . .

[NF, Miriam focalized; or *IF, Miriam focalizer, Paul focalized:]* In chapel Miriam saw him find the place in the hymn-book for Clara, in exactly the same way as he used for herself. *[Repetition of pattern] [IF, Paul focalizer, Miriam focalized:]* And during the sermon he could see the girl across the chapel, her hat throwing a dark shadow over her face. *[NM:]* What did she think, seeing Clara with him? *[NF, Paul focalized, PN:]* He did not stop to consider. He felt himself cruel towards Miriam *[final recursion of pattern].* (396–397)

As reading proceeds through a host of scenes narrated like these, one will ultimately be unavoidably concerned with questions such as: While the narrator is telling, who is perceiving a character's feelings, the narrator or the character? If the latter, which one, at a particular point? For it is the accumulated impression that counts, with effects like this; and they recurrently occur whenever a scene is pre-

sented that involves Miriam, Mrs. Morel or Clara (in the latter's case, it is less emphatic) together with Paul.

The instability and indefiniteness of the source of perception (focalizer) triggers the indefiniteness of the source of the focalized: the thoughts and emotions that are perceived by the focalizer and reported by the narrator. (This, the *character* who is the source of what is focalized, I designate in my examples simply as focalized, for brevity's sake.) On the one hand, the intriguing point is that not only the focalizer, but along with it the focalized is involved as well in constant temporary shifting: that of the source of perception from one focalizer character into the other; so the thoughts and emotions of the first character becomes focalized, and the other, who is the source of what was previously focalized, becomes focalizer – and this happens reciprocally and repeatedly, woven into strongly inter-related and coherent sentences. The effect is that the characters are presented as perceiving each other's thoughts and emotions, occasionally even on the cost of risking the apparent impossibility of this. But the situation is saved by the fact that while a character's position of perception is adopted (hence the apparent directness of presentation: *free* indirect discourse), the immediate source of the reporting discourse is the narrator (it is free *indirect* discourse).

On the other hand, the effect that the source of perception not only alternates between lying in the narrator and in a character (NF vs. IF), but also between lying in one character and the other, causes that discerning the locations of the two at a particular point requires additional effort on the part of the reader, which is a recurrent difficulty in a considerable number of passages. The indefiniteness of the focalizer and that of the source of what is focalized both have a puzzling effect, in repeatedly frustrating the inferences and attributions that are created as reading proceeds.

The basic approaches in research of FID assume that its intrinsic characteristics of uncertainty and indefiniteness should more be considered results of intermingling (I will mention the theory of a "dual perspective" later), rather than of alternation of "voices" or perspectives (in my approach, focalizations). Besides, intermingling or alternation of several possible internal focalizations (i.e., of different character-focalizers with shifts in the focalized as well, respectively, as in Virginia Woolf's or Lawrence's later novels as well) is also much less taken into account, than mingling and alternation of narratorial and internal focalizations. My opinion is that all these aspects of this type of discourse equally contribute to its effects.

A background to the technique

Free indirect discourse has long been the subject of excessive research in stylistics ever since the end of the 19th century. It was initiated by German and French linguists and this had inspired issues in the work of Franz K. Stanzel from the 1950s on, itself an inclusive embodiment of German narrative theory, but it was only by the 1970s that a comprehensive linguistic theory of it has been constructed (Banfield, McHale) and related to mietic (Ron, Hernadi) and speech act theory (Lanser), and beyond, to concerns of narratology, primarily to the concept of focalization (Bal, Fludernik). Awareness of the background is here necessary only in order to give orientation to my discussion, so I limit it to an indication of the typological and theoretical formulations that have inspired my understanding of the phenomena and prompt to further studies.[52]

The question with which research on free indirect discourse (FID) has been chiefly concerned is that of the number, and sources, of 'voices' that can be 'heard' simultaneously in speech and thought representation. One of the assumptions is that it is a discourse "in which the narrator *says in propria persona* what one of the characters *means*. In such discourse, the authorial and the figural perspective need not alternate; rather, their simultaneous presence results in a new, dual mode of vision."[53] As research has showed, this is characteristic of the narrator's discourse already in several 19th-century novels as well as in earlier ones.[54] Yet in the narration of Lawrence's work, as I attempted to demonstrate, the two perspectives may be perceived as alternating, rather than creating this dual mode, which would mean that the verbal and mental discourse of the character (this discourse itself as a fictional

52. Mike Bal, "Notes on Narrative Embedding," *Poetics Today* 2 (1981) 41–59. Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982). Monika Fludernik, *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction: The Linguistic Representation of Speech and Consciousness* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). Susan S. Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). Brian McHale, "Free Indirect Discourse: A Survey of Recent Accounts," *PTL* 3 (1978) 249–288. Stanzel cited, for Hernadi and Ron, see below.

53. Paul Hernadi, "Dual Perspective: Free Indirect Discourse and Related Techniques," *Comparative Literature* 24 (1972) 32–43, p. 36.

54. For detailed discussion in this vein of examples from Flaubert's, Dostoevsky's and, most characteristically, Jane Austen's works, see: Roy Pascal, *The Dual Voice: Free Indirect Speech and its Functioning in the Nineteenth-century European Novel* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977).

construct) stylistically influenced, "coloured" the discourse of the narrator, so one felt to read both at the same time. In cases of inner presentation of characters in *Sons and Lovers*, the alternation that is produced by the employment of FID, is perceptible incessantly within certain distinct passages, on the level of the perspectives of the characters.

Stanzel treats FID as an aspect of the narrative situation and, with a historical perspective in his analyses, considers it a tool for transition from authorial to figural narrative situation. He acknowledges the assumption of a dual perspective as "a special form of expression of the mediacy of narration,"[55] but regards the uncertainty created by FID about the sources of linguistic utterances and thoughts narrated, basically as a technique in establishing the "authorial-figural continuum." He does not take into consideration enough the possibilities for intermingling of not only the narrator's language and the characters' verbal and sub-verbal utterances, but also of those of the characters.[56]

The point of constructing a hypothesis of FID, undertaken by theorists indicated below, in the second half of the 20th century, was to "arrive at an . . . at best partial recuperation of the origin of utterances,"[57] which are to be taken as comprising of reports on non-verbalised psychological content as well. It is also relevant, as it has been argued, that this effort is fruitful and indeed necessary "when the text is grasped as in some sense analogous to (mimetic of) reality,"[58] in a mimetic concept, classifying representations of figural utterances in a framework derived from the classic dichotomy between mimesis and diegesis:

> The concept of FID "can be meaningful only within literary mimesis, and its limits may be taken to mark some of the limits of the mimetic powers of language. . . . The use of FID [hypothesis] is to seek to provide answers for questions concerning specific utterances in the mimetic text, such as: Whose words? Whose thoughts? Whose perceptions are these? Such answers are necessary in order to determine what is supposed to be happening in the story. Of course, they would not arise in the first place unless the

55. Stanzel, p. 191.
56. Stanzel, pp. 186–200.
57. Rimmon-Kenan, p. 116.
58. Rimmon-Kenan, p. 116.

> utterances in question had been felt to be moot in respect of their attribution to a particular fictional subject.[59]

My reading of *Sons and Lovers* is also attempting to attribute textual segments to factors that some FID-theorists call "speakers," but between which I differentiate as sources of perception and source of discourse (in the case of this novel, the latter invariably lies in the narrator). It probably only succeeds in emphasising the need to try this, nevertheless it owes the awareness of its theoretical background to articles by Moshe Ron and Paul Hernadi, though has to be limited here to a brief indication of this.

To gain fuller understanding, researchers compare FID, conceived of as modes of interrelation and alternation between perspectives or itself a dual perspective, a dual mode of signification, "to the function of verbal signs in exclusively authorial and exclusively figural discourse."[60] My attempt only aimed at showing how alternations between these two types of discourses and perspectives, and more importantly between two figural perspectives (which I considered as sources of perception or focalizers and did not confuse with the source of discourse), occur and function in *Sons and Lovers*.

'Psycho–narrative–analysis'

On the basis of the foregoing description of narrative strategies and discussion of theoretical background, I find that the frequently perceptible uncertainty and indefiniteness of the source of perception (i.e., of the position of the focalizer) is the linguistic realisation of the psychological theme I identify as the 'dislocation of sensibility;' and the resulting indefiniteness of the source of the thoughts and emotions that are focalized, is the realisation of theme I consider the most important and conspicuous: the 'loss of the self' in relationships.

In the previous examples the obscurities that I have described arise from the strength of the represented emotional tie between Paul and Miriam, and present the phase of a relationship when feelings seem to merge, and (re-)cognition of them as well. Besides, it is precisely the loss of self the novel is to some extent about. It is what the social and cultural domination of Mrs. Morel causes in her husband; and,

59. Moshe Ron, "Free Indirect Discourse, Mimetic Language Games and the Subject of Fiction," *Poetics Today* 2 (1981), 17–39, pp. 17–18.

60. Hernadi, p. 39.

principally, the loss of Paul's self as a result of his emotional absorption in his mother's and Miriam's possessive loves for him; and it is also what the relationship with Clara proves to be an inefficient outlet for.

As Fiona Becket points out, "a growing preoccupation with self-consciousness can also be seen as a tendency in this novel. Paul Morel strives for self-definition first as an artist, than as a man. In the closing lines of the book, he achieves a sense of individual self-hood, free at last from the women in his life who have, up to that point, defined him."[61] A *Bildungsroman*, then, will prove in a sense to be a venue where a healing of the loss of self is possible, by virtue of presenting self-examinations of the hero, concentrating on his diverse relationships through scenical presentation of a series of encounters.

I regard these psychological themes as concepts constructed by a reader in order to facilitate a full understanding of the whole of information that the narrative presents about the inner lives of its characters. The like concepts are shaped, suggested by the types of discourse that is employed in presentation. With the foregoing explanation and demonstration (though the former tended to dominate due to spatial confinement), my aim was to convey how my concepts of this kind have been built up by the narrative. It is evident enough that the discourse about a character's inner life structures the patterns the reader will attribute to the psychology of the character, but this is part of a recursive process: the reader's conceptualisation of such themes is at best an unavoidably imperfect reconstruction of the themes that have originally structured the discourse, the themes to which the "implied author"[62] wants to give linguistic realisation. These in turn may eventually more or less correspond to the psychological concepts of the author himself, to his "sicknesses" he wanted to "shed" in the book, the emotions he wanted to "repeat and present again, to be master of them."[63]

By my concept 'the loss of the self' I mean losing sense of, and ability to trace back, the origins of the states of feelings and emotions that one becomes conscious of in, and *by*, being involved in emotional intercourse with the other. As the case is here, this may be represented as a mutual exchange of a vision of each other's emotions between two characters; by expressing not only their emotions but their visions

61. Becket, p. 44.

62. A theoretical concept proposed by Wayne C. Booth, to be distinguished from the "flesh and blood person" and the narrator; together with the latter it is a fictional construct, "the implicit image of an author in the text, taken to be . . . responsible for its design and for the values and cultural norms it adheres to" (Prince, p. 42).

63. See above, fn. 6.

of the other's emotions, and not exclusively in moments that are given special significance. This is the 'dislocation of sensibility': becoming sensible of one's own emotions through, by means of, becoming sensible of those of the other. Being unconsciously brought to realise what the other feels, as temporarily indistinguishable for consciousness from one's own emotions, and alternating between the sense of the otherness of a particular feeling and the near conviction that the two persons really feel the same, or at least the conviction of precisely knowing what the other feels.

Representing this dislocation results in the realisation of the theme of 'the loss of the self': the obscurity and near impossibility of identifying which character is the one that feels an emotion that is represented or reported, which is produced by rapid shifts' obscuring which of them is the focalizer and which is the source of the thoughts and emotions that are focalized at a given point. As Ingram has perhaps more comprehensibly pointed out, this creates the impression of representing feelings that "do not necessarily belong to either one of two people, but rather exist between, are in the process of being played out between, both of them."[64]

I think that, in a more abstract sense, the working of the themes that produced the 'textual phenomena' that I indicated, is also analogous with the process of identifications explained by the psychoanalyst and thinker Jacques Lacan's concepts of the "mirror stage"[65] and "imaginary phase" in the child's construction of a centre of self:

> We arrive at a sense of an 'I' by finding that 'I' reflected back to ourselves by some object or person in the world. . . . This object is at once somehow part of ourselves – we *identify* with it – and yet not ourselves, something alien. . . . The imaginary for Lacan is precisely this realm of *images* in which we make identifications, but in the very act of doing so are led to misperceive and misrecognize ourselves.[66]

The ego is built up through making such imaginary identifications with objects as children will learn to perceive that "their identities as subjects are constituted by their relations of difference and similarity to the other subjects around them."[67]

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64. Ingram, p. 102.

65. Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits: A Selection* (London: Routledge, 1977), 1–7.

66. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 164–165.

67. Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, p. 167.

The workings of similar processes in the characters' consciousnesses are also expressed by the narrative strategies that I have described. The identifications are made between the characters whose personalities and senses of their own selves are undergoing development and formation. More precisely, it is their emotions that are entering into such connection and through these their whole personalities as well. So their sense of identification with each other's emotions, which in reality is also misrecognition, a mistaking of their own emotions for those of the other and vice versa, entails the sense of identification between their personalities and selves, as this usually happens in a love relationship in life. This is the condition that proves suffocating for Paul Morel's sense of selfhood in all the three of his relationships that are presented: with his mother, with Miriam and with Clara.

Nonetheless, the sense of fulfilment of the self may also, and probably only, be achieved through experiencing this sense of losing it in a well-balanced relationship, as this is realised as well for brief periods of narrated time in some scenes that present phases of Paul's relationships with Mrs. Morel and Miriam. The kinds of identification processes characteristic of love relationships (and, in my view, of these only, among many possible forms of human contact), are also able to provide a *real* understanding of one's own emotions, which will entail the same with respect to those of the other, in a well-balanced relationship; and to bring about self-recognition and a sense of self-realisation.

This is the result of precisely what Lawrence described in a letter as "a peculiar fusion of soul," that characterised his relationship with his mother: "When it comes it seems to distribute one's consciousness far abroad from oneself, and one understands! I think no one has got 'Understanding' except through love."[68]

68. Salgado, p. 22.

Attila Gergely Mráz

The City as a Vacuous Common Place / Space

in John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*[1]

This paper explores some possibilities of interpreting the motif of the city in John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* as a multiply vacuous common sphere. First, it is shown how the spatial aspect of the city can be characterized by its twofold rendition as a place endowed with intrinsic ambiguity on the one hand, and as a defective common space on the other. Second, a structurally similar duality is investigated in the temporal experience of Dos Passos's city dwellers by distinguishing between (vacuous) present time and historicity, each associated with attributes of the city as a place and a space. Finally, it is shown that the postulated spatiotemporal vacuity of the city correlates with the pervasively aesthetic character of the urban sphere, where interpersonal relations are inherently deficient. This leads to an ultimate, moral vacuity in the common urban space; the only aspect of the vacuity discussed which is not absorbed at the end of the novel.

> "How could we reach a landscape which is no longer what we see, but, on the contrary, is in which we are seen?"[2]

It seems to be a commonly accepted idea that in John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), a paradigmatic example of the Modernist city novel, "[i]t is not the

1. This is a revised version of my paper which received the Academic Award from the School of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest (Spring 2007).

2. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust*, trans. Éva John (Budapest: Atlantisz, 2002), p. 13. All uncredited translations from Hungarian to English are mine. These comprise quotations from the following works: Deleuze, *Proust*; Emmanuel Lévinas, *Teljesség és végtelen* [Totality and Infinity], trans. László Tarnay (Pécs: Jelenkor, 1999); and Jean-Paul Sartre, "A husserli fenomenológia egyik alapvető gondolata: az intencionalitás" [On Intentionality as a Fundamental Concept of Husserl's Phenomenology], trans. Péter Sándor, *Gond* 10 (1995) 155–157.

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nature of the protagonist or the relationships between characters that are the *faits primitifs* of literary fiction but the chronotopic constructions," i.e. the spatiotemporal aspects "that writers and readers associate with the text."[3] Bearing on this assumption, the present paper argues that Manhattan is represented as a *vacuous common sphere* in Dos Passos's novel, attempting to systematically unite by way of this interpretation many of the diverse chronotopic aspects of the 'city novel,' while also accounting for some of its peculiarities of characterization and plot-construction. In the first section, the spatial aspects of the motif of the city will be investigated. It will be argued that the spatiality of this fictional urban scene can be characterized by an inherent duality: it is more or less explicitly conceptualized at once as an unattainable place and an inescapable common space by the characters, both of these facets having their own ontological equivocalities which lead to the spatial aspects of the hypothesized vacuity in the novel. In the second part, a structurally similar ambiguity will be analyzed in the representation of temporal experience so as to demonstrate the vacuity of the fictional present time, associated with the city as a vacuous place, and the vacuity of historicity in the novel, associated with Manhattan as a vacuous space. Finally, in the last section, it will be shown that following from the unusual metaphysical characteristics of the city discussed in the previous sections, the urban scene of the novel may be regarded as an aestheticized sphere where ethics is excluded from the characters' possible attitudes to one another. This will be the ultimate aspect of the vacuity attributed to this *common* space, and arguably the only one that will not be voided concurrently with Jimmy's secession from the city, either.

1 The City as a Place / Space

> "This is a funny place. . . ."
> "Where?"
> "Oh, I dunno, I guess everywhere. . . ." (196)[4]

As the first focus of the present study, this section aims to investigate the characteristics of Dos Passos's representation of New York in terms of its spatiality, assuming that the peculiarities inherent in such a conceptualization are of primary significance

3. Bart Keunen, "The Plurality of Chronotopes in the Modernist City Novel: The Case of *Manhattan Transfer*," *English Studies* 82.5 (2001) 420–436, p. 420.

4. All parenthesized references are to this edition: John Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer* (London: Constable & Co, 1927 [1925]).

in establishing the city as a vacuous *common* sphere. This investigation, also anticipating the structure of the following section, will be basically twofold. First, the notion of the city as an abstract, yet substantial *place* will be analyzed with respect to its potential perceptions by the characters and the concomitant roles it plays in characterization and narration. It will be argued that this place manifests itself, again, in a peculiar duality which is crucial to the subversive metaphysics of the city, and contributes to the narration in a way which in turn is necessitated by the vacuity of community in the urban *space*. This space will be the second aspect of spatiality discussed herein, with the aim of showing that the concept of the common, intersubjectively constituted space is vacuous in the novel, but precisely in its vacuity, holds the inhabitants of the fictional Manhattan captive in the city as a deficiently human, yet unquestionably existent, socially constructed sphere.

The conceptualization of the city as a *place*, one of the two complementary spatial aspects of the city to be tackled in this paper, is the vantage point of the outsider, which is relevant inasmuch as most of the characters are, though in various ways, outsiders or downright strangers in Dos Passos's New York, as it will be shown. Thus, for the stranger, Manhattan is conveyed in the novel as a potentially well-determinable position, an origin and a point of reference in an almost geometrical sense: it is conceived of as an entity without extension.

Apparently, it is in part due to the relative extremity of this concept (or rather percept on the part of the characters) of the city that the narration does not slow down and cease to move (at the end, either), failing to bring the novel through a more or less clear-cut itinerary. The major characters, as well as the minor ones, as it were, strive "for more than life can give," as Clark puts it,[5] and in an attempt to seek for this "more," or "more real," they return to or flee from the city as a point of reference against which the "more" can be measured. The motivating effect of this approach to the city could, in the first place, be illustrated with the trajectory of Bud, a character who appears to be of paramount importance, not so much despite as because of the fact that his presence in the novel extends only to the first section (i.e. the first five chapters) of the book. During this relatively brief career, however, he is emphatically present, and he is so in a most peculiar way: he has practically no connection whatsoever to any other character, which would be largely inconceivable in a narrative structure based primarily on the characters' interactions and the events unfolding from them.[6]

5. Michael Clark, *Dos Passos's Early Fiction, 1912–1938* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1987), p. 111.

6. Lisa Nanney, *John Dos Passos* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), pp. 157, 168.

Bud's aspiration is well summarized by his recurring phrase: "If I could git more *into the center of things*" (24, my italics). This center, as it were, appears to him (as much as to the other immigrant characters, e.g. Émile) a place in the city that is in some sense more "real" than anywhere else. The quest for such an (external embodiment of the) quality of reality, so typical of all the major characters,[7] manifests itself in the search for a job as well as a hiding place in Bud's case. One of the very few dialogs he participates in reveals, in a most ironic manner, the radicalism of this concept of "reality" as it is *collated* with that of centrality in spatial terms:

> [Bud:] "Say. . . er. . . kin you tell me about *where's a good place* to find out about gettin' a job?" The butcher boy threw back his head and laughed.
> ". . . I guess *you ain't a Newyorker*. . . . I'll tell you what to do. You *keep right on down Broadway* till you get to City Hall." . . .
> "Is that kinder *the centre of things*?"
> "Sure it is. . . . An' then you go upstairs and ask the Mayor. . . ."
>
> (24, my italics)

The absurdity of this seek, of course, partly consists in the fact that the "center" is only virtually existent. Broadway, arguably the most central entity in the city, meanders through the heart of Manhattan without offering one single point of reference – or, for that matter, one single job: the quest, thus, at least ideally, becomes an incessant process. (Even if in non-ideal terms, it comes to an abrupt end in Bud's case.) It seems one either is eternally involved in the course of searching for *the* city as a place, or simply *is* there, in the sense that one can identify oneself with the place as an abstract center.

Consequently, Dos Passos's city as a radically reduced place appears to be physically unattainable, and this peculiarity contributes to the narration as it guarantees that the paradox situation of constructing a novel out of the lives of people who live in the same place but have no real connection with one another, or no "social nexus",[8] does not result in the breakdown of the narrative.[9] The fictional Manhattan

7. Blanche Housman Gelfant, "The Search for Identity in the Novels of John Dos Passos," in *Dos Passos, the Critics, and the Writer's Intention*, ed. Allen Belkind (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), 156–196, p. 177.

8. Joseph Warren Beach, "Manhattan Transfer. Collectivism and Abstract Composition," in *Dos Passos, the Critics, and the Writer's Intention*, ed. Allen Belkind (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), 54–69, p. 61.

9. John Wrenn also ventures as far as to claim that "the apparent chaos of the whirlwind itself provides the form and the action" (quoted in Clark, p. 98) in *Manhattan Transfer*, meaning the drift of the city by this "whirlwind" which is analyzed here in spatial terms.

may thus be regarded as transphenomenal – it is not a place in the strict physical or geometrical sense, as it is represented in the novel, but at the same time its transphenomenal character does not at all compel one to draw the conclusion that it is not "real" or has a non-substantial existence.[10] Thus the quest for the city manifests itself as the pursuit of something more "real" or substantial and at once that of something *exterior* to the characters. From this perspective, it is not only the abstractness of the concept of the city which is so striking, but also its abstract *exteriority*: the fact that it cannot simply be reduced to a 'mental place,' an individual's private construct. Its mythic power can in part be traced back to the fact that this external existence is experienced by all of the city dwellers individually, thus transforming them into a virtual, ideal community, and yet this exteriority remains elusive to each of them, precisely because it has this tinge of interpersonality which renders it inaccessible to the otherwise unrelated characters.

Such a rendition of the characters' experience of the city as a place in *Manhattan Transfer* can be further enlightened by having recourse to the notion of intentionality as it is used in continental philosophy, particularly in Sartre's existentialist re-reading of the concept, which is aptly summarized in one of his earliest writings as follows:

> To be is to explode into the world, to depart from the Nothingness of the world and that of the consciousness, and *to explode as a consciousness-in-the-world*. When the consciousness . . . imprisoned in itself, attempts to grasp itself again, to eventually coincide with itself, it is annihilated. The necessity of the consciousness to be the *consciousness of something external to it* is called intentionality.[11]

Sartre's explosion of the consciousness (a *pro-jection* in a most direct sense) is not aimed at the sudden attainment and incorporation of the external. On the contrary, the consciousness (the self, as it were, which is primordially vacuous in his conceptualization) is constituted in the process of its continuous outward *motion*,[12] toward something "real," irreducibly substantial and *different*: in short, toward the Other whose power is rooted in its substantial exteriority and unattainability. In this light, the city as a place is also of particular significance in Dos Passos's novel since it

10. The expression "transphenomenal" is not to be equated with the epistemically isolated substance of the "thing-in-itself [Ding an Sich] of Kantean critical philosophy. A transphenomenal entity can enter into various relations with the consciousness of the subject and vice versa (e.g. such is Lévinas's concept of the transphenomenal 'face').

11. Sartre, "On Intentionality," p. 157; my italics.

12. Sartre, "On Intentionality," p. 156.

serves as the principal self-constituting Other for most of the characters, instead of the characters themselves serving as such for one another. In other words, it is the city as a motivating Other that prevents (most of the) characters' lives from "closing in on themselves," [13] by relating to each of them while none of them is fundamentally related to another. – This is one of the ways in which the city can be considered common, but vacuously so.

At the same time, the active motion of the characters with reference to the city as a static, passive point is only one relevant conceptualization of the city as a place in *Manhattan Transfer*, while it is also crucial to emphasize the potentially active role of the city itself in the narrative and character-constitutive processes described above. Thus it is also possible to conceive of this active (ideal) motion of the city itself as its intrusion into the characters' lives and identities, perceived as a kind of *implosion* or impression (in a very direct sense) on the part of Dos Passos's city dwellers. This approach is particularly important as it complements the postulated transphenomenal character adherent to the city which is thus also experienced by the characters in an almost disconcertingly direct, sensual manner throughout the novel. It is the inability to cope with the paradoxical, irreducible duality of abstractness and sensual reality in Bud's perception of Manhattan that may also contribute, from a certain viewpoint, to his death, since the city as a place with its irresistible lure of being invariably far away and at the same time, with its threat of being seemingly always too close does not allow him to settle before the fatal end of his journey. (It is to be recalled that he is also seeking for a hiding place.)[14]

From this perspective, not only does the city as a place function as the Other for Bud and the other characters, but they also exist as the Other of this transphenomenal Other (the abstract, yet substantial Manhattan itself). The abstract and at once sensual impression (implosion) created by the city thus becomes constitutive of the characters as much as their explosion or outward movement toward or from the city as described above.[15] It is this actively constitutive, intrusive aspect attributed to the city which may

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, "John Dos Passos and *1919*," in *Dos Passos, the Critics, and the Writer's Intention*, ed. Allen Belkind (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), 70–80, p. 74.

14. As Clark puts it, "if the vortex suggests feverish activity, it also suggests the quiet center, the attainment of which *seems* to offer satisfaction, relief from anxiety" (p. 104, emphasis mine [A. M.]).

15. The example of Bud has already demonstrated a character's active motion *toward* the city, but Manhattan as a place also serves as a point of reference *from* which it is possible to flee – this is going to be Jimmy Herf's route.

well be captured in a Lévinasian conceptualization of the city as a self-constitutive Other for Dos Passos's characters. Even more so as the *idea of infinity* seems to be unalienable from the concept of the city as a place. On the one hand, it may account for its strangeness and alterity which curiously does *not* coincide with a full-fledged objectivity (i.e. a phenomenal submission to or incorporation into the consciousness of its inhabitants). On the other hand, the *desire* which pervades those who are incessantly seeking for the emphatically substantial, yet unfathomable reality of the city may also be interpreted as stemming from its infinity in a Lévinasian sense:

> Infinity is *not the object* of contemplation, that is, is not proportionate to the thought that thinks it. The idea of infinity is a thought which at every moment thinks more than it thinks. A thought that thinks more than it thinks is a *desire*. Desire "measures" the infinity of the infinite.[16]

Nonetheless, in approaching Dos Passos's city with this notion of infinity, it is indispensable to take into consideration that in Lévinas's framework,

> [t]he true *desire* is that which the desired does not satisfy, but hollows out. It is goodness. [!] It *does not refer to a lost fatherland* or plenitude; *it is not homesickness*, is not nostalgia. It is the lack in a being which ***is*** completely, and lacks nothing.[17]

The prima facie incompatibility of Lévinas's desire of the infinite (herein applied as the desire of the city) with homesickness (a notion that could be accommodated in Sartre's system) seems to be in need of some resolution if the apparently plausible supposition that "homelessness shapes the pattern of [the generic hero's] life" in Dos Passos's novel is to be sustained.[18] The profound terminological and conceptual difference between the Sartrean and Lévinasian frameworks is more clearly reflected in Lévinas's following statement:

> The thinker who has the idea of infinity is *more than himself*, and this inflating, this surplus, does not come from within, as in the celebrated *project* of modern philosophers, in which the subject surpasses himself by creating.[19]

16. Emmanuel Lévinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, ed. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht–Boston–Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 47–59, p. 56, emphases added.
17. Lévinas, "Philosophy," p. 56; my italics, Lévinas's bold italics.
18. Gelfant, "The Search," p. 159.
19. Lévinas, "Philosophy," p. 54; italics in original.

The "celebrated project" here refers either to the Sartrean concept of *projection* [pro-jet, pro-jeter] mentioned above, or to the Heideggerian notion of man as a project [Entwurf].[20] Both entail a principle of subjectivity *extending itself* toward alterity, as opposed to Lévinas's subjectivity which is constituted and extended *by alterity*. However, it has been shown that, crucially, the city as a place may well be conceived in *both terms*: as Gelfant significantly observes, for instance, Jimmy Herf's attitude to Manhattan is characterized by a peculiar duality, namely that Jimmy approaches New York as a stranger, a holiday tourist, and remains an outsider throughout, but at the very same time, he also demonstrates high emotional involvement in the city. In other words, Jimmy extends himself toward the city (it is in this, Sartrean concept of desire for the city as something external that homesickness is possible at all), while the city also attempts to extend him by extending itself *into* him (creating in him a desire that cannot be homesickness, as it is not directed toward something external): this accounts for the duality of his behavior as well as in part for the fundamentally problematic nature of his subjectivity itself.

Thus, with regard to the conceptualization of the city as a place in Dos Passos's work, the compossibility and actual co-appearance of the Sartrean approach underscoring the constitutive significance of the characters' movement toward the city on the one hand, and the Lévinasian approach emphasizing the city's intrusion into the characters' lives on the other is intrinsically paradoxical – and this paradox does not appear to be reducible. On the contrary, the outlines of these thinkers' opposing views on subjectivity prove fruitful in so far as they cast light upon the fact that this very duality is partly responsible for the singularity of New York and its inhabitants as represented in *Manhattan Transfer*. It seems therefore that Sartre's description of Dos Passos's *1919* (1932) equally holds for this novel: "Dos Passos' world . . . is impossible because it is contradictory. But therein lies its beauty,"[21] or at least in part the peculiarity of its narrative structure and that of the characterization from which this structure is inseparable.

* * *

After having scrutinized the concept of the city as a place, an abstract point of reference, the representation of the city as (a) *space* in Dos Passos's work is to be discussed with a view to mapping the irreducible *duality* of place vs. space in the fictional Manhattan, which is held to give further insight into the instabilities of the

20. See Lingis's note in Lévinas, "Philosophy," p. 54.
21. Sartre, "Dos Passos," p. 80.

postulated urban sphere of the novel. As one of the minor characters in the novel, George Baldwin formulates this duality in a rather succinct manner, "[t]he terrible thing about having New York go stale on you is that there's nowhere else. It's the top of the world. All we can do is go round and round in a squirrel cage" (207). That is, whereas Manhattan is the "top," a mere position, it is also a space – more precisely, *the* space: the phrase "there's nowhere else" does not only imply that there is no other (higher, more "real," substantial) place to go in a social sense. It also entails that New York is like physical space in a most abstract and, at the very same time, most concrete sense: one cannot escape it, or happen to be (get) outside of it, since it is the coordinate-system itself wherein things may happen at all.

This seems to be especially remarkable, if not definitely problematic, in *Manhattan Transfer*, since the actual scene of the novel hardly seems to play a significant role in determining or at least giving rise to the characters' interactions. The city as space, i.e. a potential sphere of social interaction, is often considered in Dos Passos's work to have no "reference to interests shared, sentiments reciprocated, ideals held in common. It is an atomistic world, a moral chaos, set in a frame of cosmic order."[22] As Nanney puts it, the novel is primarily concerned with "the individual's relationship to the system,"[23] meaning the city itself by this "system," rather than the individuals' relationship with one another. (Similarly to the characters' separate relations to the city as a place. However, the crucial difference is that [the notion of] the city as a space is by definition created interpersonally, by a hypothetical community.) Again, to quote Lévinas, "The intimacy assumed by feeling at home is intimacy *with somebody*. The interior of withdrawal is already a solitude in a human world" – and it is precisely this intimacy that is missing in Dos Passos's Manhattan as a space,[24] which thus provides its inhabitants with no home proper but with a curiously empty concept of a common sphere that is constituted intersubjectively, yet leaves no opportunity for positive interpersonal relations.

Consequently, the curiosity of this space consists in the realization that whoever enters it may neither reach the state of solitude in a profoundly intersubjective sense nor establish deep relationships with other city dwellers – nor feel capable of leaving, for that matter. This is one of the senses in which Nanney's statement that the characters of *Manhattan Transfer* are "stripped of community or individuality by the city" can be particularly enlightening, as well as Vanderwerken's simile that "[t]he

22. Beach, p. 62.
23. Nanney, p. 155.
24. Lévinas, *Totality*, p. 126; italics in original.

inhabitants of Dos Passos' New York are scattered about the city much as the ancient Babelites are scattered about the world."[25] In other words, characters seem to achieve a very peculiar state in which, instead of the full-fledged evolution of their human interiority *and* exteriority, i.e. the development of their means of relating to the modes of existence which may be summarized in broad terms as subjectivity and alterity, they are eventually mutilated *both* in their (human) interiority and exteriority. City dwellers thus become reduced to "abstract urban states of mind,"[26] they are "individuals [but] they are not quite *persons*."[27] Sartre, in discussing one of the author's later novels, draws a remarkably similar conclusion, although from different premises, as he observes that "Dos Passos' man is a hybrid creature, an interior-exterior being."[28]

Paradoxically enough, then, the idea of infinity which, in Lévinas's framework, constitutes alterity (or exteriority) and "hollows out" subjectivity (or interiority) does not seem to operate in Dos Passos's representation of the city on the level of *space*, while, on the other hand, it does operate, as it has been shown, on the level of *place*. (Although it is crucial to recall that even the emerging alterity and subjectivity of the characters with regard to the city as a *place* is ambiguous *per se*, with the city embodying both a passive, external, Sartrean alterity and an active; intrusive, Lévinasian one, as it has already been referred to.) This state of affairs, taken together with some of the aspects of temporality to be dealt with in detail in the next section, results in the complete subversion of the 'metaphysics' of the urban space-time of Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* in comparison with the expectations of the meta-/physical 'lifeworld,' exerting an intriguing impact on the system of the city's 'degrees of freedom.' In the 'regular' (meta)physics of the 'lifeworld,' the three spatial dimensions of space-time are considered as one's degrees of freedom, with the additional dimension of time usually excluded due to its strict directionality. Thus, it is customarily impossible to speak about degrees of freedom with regard to a 'place.' However, as it has been shown, Dos Passos's New York operates in an exactly converse way in its duality. On the one hand, since subjectivity and alterity are not developed in their full sense in Manhattan as a *space*, and as it has been shown, there is

25. David L. Vanderwerken, "*Manhattan Transfer*: Dos Passos' Babel Story," *American Literature* 49.2 (1977) 253–267, p. 254.

26. Blanche Housman Gelfant, "John Dos Passos: The Synoptic Novel," in *Dos Passos. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Andrew Hook (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 36–52, p. 44.

27. Beach, p. 57.

28. Sartre, "Dos Passos," p. 79.

no possibility of positive, meaningful movement in it, it is not univocally consequential to attribute any degrees of freedom to it. On the other hand, however, together with the partially existent subjectivity and alterity, an other degree of freedom is constituted precisely in the characters' relations to Manhattan as a *place*, namely, as it has already been emphasized, a potentiality of primarily linear movement in an abstract sense toward or away from the city as a point of reference.

In conclusion, it is exactly this fundamental place-space duality that, while upholding the curious substantiality of the city in its various aspects, leads to a certain vacuity in the concept of the city as a common space / place in *Manhattan Transfer* by allowing for the (problematic) subjectivity and alterity of the characters being dependent on the city (as a place) instead of other human beings, as well as by metaphysically precluding any kind of substantial interaction between the inhabitants of the freedomless urban space. In consequence, although Manhattan exists in Dos Passos's novel as a common property / construct of its inhabitants, it is never a place / space truly *shared* by them. This, in addition to the spatial facets of metaphysical vacuity, also has profound consequences for the city as a potentially ethical sphere, an aspect of the novel which will be discussed after exploring the temporal facet of the metaphysical vacuity characterizing the urban sphere.

2 Unlived Present and Unshared History

> "Look, when are we going to see each other again, really see each other, really. . . ." (131)

The present section aims to show how temporality in the fictional space-time of *Manhattan Transfer* is subject to metaphysical subversions as much as spatiality, and how these peculiarities tend to be profoundly intertwined with the somewhat 'irregular' spatial characteristics of the urban sphere both in terms of their structure and their consequences. Thus, a certain intrinsic vacuity will be traced in the way characters perceive *present time*, on the one hand, and in the manner *history* as a temporal perspective is represented in the novel, on the other. This duality will then be shown to amount to a fundamentally vacuous (a)temporal experience extending throughout the whole novel, but finally ending in the emergence of a non-vacuous, inherently positive temporality together with substantial alterations in the spatial structure of the city.

First of all, the peculiar vacuity of *present* time, the temporal aspect which can be associated with the city as a *place*, partly stems from the experience of the charac-

ters that Manhattan as an abstract place in the novel always appears to lie either entirely in the *future* or entirely in the *past* of the individuals' lives. A dialog between Mr. Harpsicourt and Ellen Thatcher in the 4th chapter of Section 3, where the former tries to persuade the latter to direct the organization of a new periodical on the latest fads and fashions of city life, exemplifies this attitude with remarkable explicitness: as it seems, the notion of "being in the center" of the city is inseparably associated with this center lying in the *future* for the majority of city dwellers:

> [Harpsicourt:] "What we need on such a perioditcal [*sic*], that I'm sure you could explain it to me far better."
>
> "Of course what you want to do is make every reader feel Johnny on the spot in the centre of things."
>
> "As if she were having lunch right here at the Algonquin."
>
> "Not to-day but to-morrow," added Ellen. (345)

In a similar fashion, Bud's failure can also be grasped by his inability to live in present time, being at once haunted by the appearances of the *past* and those of the *future*. It might as well be due to this marked 'impresence' that some critics do not even find convincing the idea that he committed suicide: Clark, for instance, argues that it is next to impossible to decide whether he jumped or fell from Brooklyn Bridge[29] – most probably because in order to make plausible such a determination, even if the decision was made on the spur of the *moment*, it is necessary to live in earnest in *that* very moment, not the previous or the next one, nor in a sort of abyss in between. Furthermore, Jimmy's secession may similarly instantiate the split temporal nature of the urban sphere conceived as a place: since he declines the city as his future, given the lack of an ontologically positive present time, he has no other choice left in the end but to treat it as his *past* and eventually forget it as such: "He can't seem to remember anything, there is no future but the foggy river and the ferry looming big with its lights in a row" (377). In his ultimate amnesia, Jimmy breaks with the infinity of the city as the atemporal, non-present place, and this climactic *moment*, in addition to changing his temporal experience, will also have an impact on his approach to the spatial characteristics of the city. Not only does he feel abruptly that the city is no longer the *space* for him, with its principle of "nowhere else," but he also senses that the city as a *place* does not possess him any more with its own intrinsic Sartrean-Lévinasian dichotomy, either. The concept of the urban sphere as a place eventually becomes unambiguous, a fatherland ultimately lost: a

29. Clark, p. 115.

passive, external, Sartrean Other, as Jimmy grows to reject the city constituting him from *within*, i.e. the second, Lévinasian, internal aspect, the infinity that cannot "refer to a lost fatherland." He therefore seems to flee from the city which, to paraphrase Sartre, "closes in on itself."

What is thus conspicuously missing in Dos Passos's novel until the very end is the Bergsonian "lived time," or the "true time of the novel," time as the "dense continuity of living tissue," as Magny articulates it.[30] He underscores that the novel uses a technique of recounting "characters' lives in that terrible preterit that *deadens* events as soon as they are described to us,"[31] i.e. what is so uncanny about this preterit is that it is related to the *present* instead of the past. There is no moment in which things, events are presented as "living" – deadening takes place without delay, in the moment of presentation. Events are not deadened, but *are* dead: they happen in a vacuous present time – they are deprived of positive temporality and consequently are only endowed with spatiality.[32] Sartre ventures as far as to claim that in Dos Passos's fiction, "[t]here is no narrative, rather a jerky unreeling of a rough and uneven memory. . . like our real memory, it is a fumble of miniatures and frescoes."[33] Thus, "characters move within a 'dead time' – or rather 'deadened time' – with neither spurts nor continuity, where each instant comes to the fore only to be immediately replunged into nothingness."[34] A kind of concomitant discontinuity in the "psychological awareness of the characters" is also often remarked.[35] In Beach's view, this may be the underlying reason for the remarkable lack of intervals or transitions between the scenes of the narrative: since personalities are "not bound together by a consistency of aim or objective," something that would "fill" time, i.e. render the present a real and formable matter, there is no need for continuity in the narration, either. He also articulates the same idea in an even more radical way, stressing that the novel is "made up of separate and unrelated moments – at best, a succession of stimuli followed by responses," again reinforcing the vacuous nature of the fictional present.[36]

30. Claude-Edmonde Magny, "Time in Dos Passos," in *Dos Passos. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Andrew Hook (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 128–144, pp. 132–133.

31. Magny, p. 131.

32. Beach also notes that the "cumulative" epigraphs heading the chapters of *Manhattan Transfer* rather concentrate on the "building up" of a "physical background" than convey temporal experience (Beach, p. 67). That is, they emphasize again spatiality as opposed to temporality.

33. Sartre, "Dos Passos," p. 72.

34. Magny, p. 133.

35. Magny, p. 133; Beach, p. 63.

36. Beach, p. 64.

Apart from the (vacuous) present time hitherto discussed, however, it is often pointed out that the dominant feature of temporality in *Manhattan Transfer* is its *historical* or social perspective,[37] i.e. the second element in the present time / history duality of the city, the one which can be attributed to Manhattan as an (ideally, but not actually) common *space*. This postulated primacy of history, in fact, seems to be partly in line with the observation put forward herein that characters throughout the novel live in/at/for the past or the future as their temporal reality, which in turn correlates with the lack of positive ontological determination in the fictional present time as analyzed above. Nevertheless, the characters' past previously referred to in this context is still markedly different from a historical past: historicity may be termed as a past *shared*, but the past (or the future, for that matter) of the novel's characters is no such time. It is only the vacuous present that seems to be shared, but this deficient present can never be transformed into a shared, positive past. That is the reason why Sartre's claim that "past things retain a flavor of the present," that of a vacuous present, as it has been shown, may hold for Dos Passos's novel, along with the observation that "[t]he novel . . . unfolds in the present. The perfect tense exists on the surface only."[38]

Consequently, when Dos Passos includes, for instance, clues to historical events in his novel (e.g. the violent death of the architect Stanford White), his aim seems to be the *factualization* of his fiction: he purports "to represent the city as a historically charged space"[39] exactly in an attempt to admit positive, "real," historical time into his fictional world. Therein lies the true relevance of speaking about *historical time* in his fiction. However, such a blurring of a work of art and the history in which it is embedded is an inevitably twofold process itself: the factualization of fiction necessarily implies the "fictionalization of historical events,"[40] which in turn equals to the loss of the quality of unquestionable positivity attributed to these events before they enter the vacuous shared present of the novel. Thus, in the end, when history enters the novel, it can do so only in a more or less petrified form, becoming merely an additional aspect of the vacuous fictional temporality: historical time paradoxically enters the novel as a spurious present, again with "[t]he perfect tense [existing] on the surface only."

In conclusion, with respect to both the present and the historical aspects of temporality in *Manhattan Transfer*, the often cited emphatic "synchronism" of the

37. See, for example, Gelfant, "The Search," p. 159; Magny, p. 133.
38. Sartre, "Dos Passos," p. 72.
39. Keunen, p. 426.
40. Clark, p. 120.

novel[41] seems to amount to its actually *vacuous temporality*, which is transformed into a positive one at the dénouement only when the city as a space is abandoned with its fictionalized history, and the vacuous present of Manhattan as a place, as it cannot be turned into a proper, shared past, is radically forgotten. Thus, it is in this rupture, this ultimate temporal abyss, in which positive time begins and Jimmy Herf is finally enabled to *move* and/or to make *decisions*. In consequence, if Jimmy is posited to be the main character of *Manhattan Transfer*, he is arguably born as a *protagonist* precisely at the very end of the novel, with the break from the vacuously (a)temporal fictional space-time. Similarly, Magny's observation that the "major character" of the book is Time itself may also hold from exactly the same moment.[42] Intriguingly, therefore, Time and protagonist are fully established with the *dénouement*, instead of the beginning,[43] which adds a distinctively Postmodern touch to the novel. Finally, the place-space duality of the novel is thus replaced by a place-time (and not space-time!) duality, which is concurrent with the rise of this new, positive temporality as well, while also leading to major consequences with regard to the conceptualization of the city as an aesthetic or a potentially ethical sphere.

3 Aesthetics and Ethics in Dos Passos's New York

> "I'm so sick of all that stuff. . . . Oh, just everything like that aesthetic dancing and literature . . . . Just an overdose I guess." (322)

> "The pressure exerted by a gas on the walls of its container does not depend upon the individual histories of the molecules composing it."[44]

Having examined the characteristic spatiotemporal relations of the representation of New York in Dos Passos's novel, it has become clear that the abstract, multiply vacu-

41. Nanney, p. 155.

42. Magny, p. 131.

43. Gelfant's comparison of *Manhattan Transfer* with *Chosen Country*, one of Dos Passos's later novels, is particularly interesting in view of these assumptions. She argues that the latter work "ends with a beginning," offering a prospective perspective in which "[t]he work of creating a civilization out of a wilderness still remains to be done" ("The Search," p. 192), much like the way the work in question is analyzed herein. In contrast, she opines that *Manhattan Transfer* is characterized by its unalterable retrospectivity, disregarding the final turn of the novel.

44. Sartre, "Dos Passos," p. 78.

ous, yet substantial reality of the city with its ahistorical space offering no degrees of freedom bears peculiar resemblance to the somewhat aloof Modernist conceptualizations of the *work of art*. Accordingly, the aim of the present section is to demonstrate how the city as a *space* is constituted as an *aesthetic sphere* in *Manhattan Transfer*, and how this affects the narration and characterization of the novel by transforming its city dwellers into works of art, or even artifacts on the one hand, and prospective artists, on the other, thereby creating a special urban space in which *ethics* as such is rendered virtually nonexistent. In Clark's opinion, Dos Passos "sees aesthetic response to life as a moral experience,"[45] but it will be shown how, on the contrary, such an aestheticization of the city, i.e. a space in which (fictional, though putatively) human beings live, poses an imminent danger to these characters exactly because it *amoralizes* (or "demoralizes,"[46] but not *im*moralizes) this sphere. This will evidently contribute to another sense of vacuity in Manhattan as a common space with regard to the impossibility of responsible action and intersubjective relations in the fictional city, and it is exclusively this aspect of the multifaceted vacuity herein discussed that will also be argued to be left with an at best dubitable resolution at the end of the novel.

Dos Passos's New York is a city in which inhabitants are thus frequently observed to undergo a kind of "dehumanization":[47] they are "petrified,"[48] become isolated *aesthetic objects* themselves, endowed only with a pseudo-solitude which has no intersubjective reference, since the relations constituting subjectivity and alterity are intrinsically deficient in the characters inhabiting this space, as it was shown above. Events for these beings become "things," "alien" and "solitary,"[49] resulting in a world that is fearfully close to the Benjaminian dystopia: "Fiat ars – pereat mundus."[50] The most prominent example (i.e. victim) of this process of dehumanizing aestheticization is Ellen Thatcher, who is held to represent "a beautiful illusion that lacks substance" (an individual with a "missing center"[51]), a human being reduced to something like an ornament.[52] Moreover, her seemingly "schizophrenic" self-

45. Clark, p. 110.
46. Gelfant, "Dos Passos," p. 52.
47. Gelfant, "The Search," p. 187.
48. Sartre, "Dos Passos," p. 74.
49. Sartre, "Dos Passos," p. 71.
50. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *The Berkeley Institute of Design* <http://bid.berkeley.edu/bidclass/ readings/benjamin.html>. Date of retrieval: March 10, 2007. "Epilogue."
51. Beach, p. 57.
52. Clark, p. 114.

consciousness[53] compels her to feel as if she were a photograph of herself instead of herself proper,[54] and "[l]ike *a sense of a mirror* behind her she felt the smart, probing glances of men and women at the tables round about" at Algonquin (345, my italics [A. M.]), as though regarding other people as *representations*, or, at other times, simply as objects.[55] As Vanderwerken puts it, "to remain in the city is to risk the loss of one's humanity, to risk metamorphosing, like Ellen Thatcher Herf, into a porcelain doll – hollow, rigid, artificial, and cold."[56] By the same token, the plans of the architect Specker to create a city that "does not divorce nature from the urban landscape," in which the most important aim may be the construction of truly "*communal* building[s]," with nature representing the morally judgeable world in a nature vs. (corrupt) culture dichotomy, are also ironically fulfilled in Ellen, who becomes the much-dreamed-of "vitreous" creature, repeatedly invested in flowers, much like the skyscraper whose entrance could not be found by Jimmy.[57]

At the heart of this dehumanization is again the curious city-space and time which allow for no degrees of freedom. As it was argued in the previous sections, the (otherwise unstable) subjectivity and alterity of the city dwellers is constituted with regard to the city as a place itself, i.e. not on an intersubjective basis, while the city as a space, although an intersubjective construct per se, has been shown to be a space definitely not *shared*, not even in the form of mature human solitude. Profound intersubjective relations are therefore metaphysically precluded in Dos Passos's city, although it were exactly these the presence of which would *per definitionem* result in a moral sphere, for instance in Lévinas's framework:

> [T]he situation in which one is not alone is not reducible to the fortunate meeting of fraternal souls that greet one another and converse. This situation is the *moral conscience*, the exposedness of freedom to the judgment of the other. It is a disalignment which has authorized us to catch sight of the dimension of height and the ideal in the gaze of him to whom justice is due.[58]

Furthermore, although the aesthetic nature of the city and its inhabitants has hitherto been demonstrated by means of analogies taken from the field of visual arts, it is crucial to remark that *language* and the city dwellers as its users also undergo an

53. Clark, p. 107.
54. Nanney, p. 159.
55. Gelfant, "Dos Passos," p. 48.
56. Vanderwerken, p. 256.
57. Clark, pp. 100, 114, 102.
58. Lévinas, "Philosophy," p. 59, emphasis added.

analogical process of aestheticization and dehumanization in the urban sphere of Dos Passos's Manhattan. Clark, implicitly assuming a simple, yet characteristically Modernist theory of semiotics on pragmatist grounds, argues that Jimmy "cannot have faith in words because people permit language to drift away from being a valid sign for reality," also quoting Craig Carver, who claims that for Dos Passos, newspapers, for instance, symbolized "corrupt language."[59] Nevertheless, it is not necessary to limit the construal of this "validity" to any specific criterion of adequation between language and "reality," even though Dos Passos most probably had something similar in mind in his "theory of identity," according to which language is supposed to "mirror" reality.[60] The "corruptedness" of language might be more generally interpreted in the novel's context as consisting in the utter lack of such external criteria, i.e. in the lack of any referentiality whatsoever. Thus, without external references, language becomes a mere stock of "single utterances," "cut off from the thought," "statements in the Press" drawing upon the inexhaustible "Platonic heaven of words and commonplaces [and] gestures" ("With every deep breath Herf breathed in rumble and grind and painted phrases until he began to swell," 330), at the very same time these inevitably becoming a bunch of "maxims,"[61] whose truth-value is at once self-justified and simply irrelevant for want of any criterion of adequation. – This is the point where the overwhelmingly "journalistic" language of Manhattan paradoxically assumes the characteristics of the Modernist work of art as a self-sufficient source of truth, which, in its extreme conceptualization, is independent of truth conditions 'external' to the work itself.

It is in this context that Jimmy Herf, of whom "[e]verybody says [he has] given up newspaper work and [is] going to write" (337), is expected to 'recuperate' language by means of creative writing, by switching into an artistic mode of existence. (As Clark puts it, the writer's trade is "the only honest living that can be imagined in the novel."[62]) However, this apparent opportunity of escape entails an immense paradox: it is a futile attempt to redeem language by aestheticizing it, since its problematicness has its roots exactly in its already well marked aesthetic quality.[63] The

59. Clark, p. 116.

60. Clark, p. 119.

61. Sartre, "Dos Passos," pp. 76–77.

62. Clark, p. 105.

63. Another aspect of the same paradox can be illustrated by the fact that city dwellers in Dos Passos's Manhattan usually do not feel at all that they inhabit an aesthetic sphere: "It's all right at night when you can't see it [the city]. There's no artistic sense, no beautiful buildin's . . . that's what's the matter with it" (246). On the contrary, part of the matter may be that

pitfall awaiting the creative writer in this environment of linguistic non-referentiality is the inevitable *superfluity* of language. Given a concept of "journalistic" language (in a most disapproving sense) as non-referential ('purely aesthetic'), non-individual, superfluous utterance, something that is not even thought of as a matter of responsibility, the writer's goal should thus be the 'restoration' of language as a vehicle of strictly referential, at once universally valid and fundamentally individual expression, something for which somebody is *responsible*. Strangely enough, however, the actual utterance of linguistic signs in this ideal, "cleansed" language, once attained, would not even be important, since the point is precisely that the signifier should not assume a particular significance of its own. In Lévinas's framework, if the city as a space could provide its inhabitants with a sense of "feeling at home," something that can never be achieved in an aestheticized sphere, the urban scene would, in like manner, be characterized as "a place to live [where] unuttered language remains a possibility."[64] – However, the project of redeeming language by its aestheticization, i.e. creative writing, is bound to fail since, as it has been underscored, exactly those of its peculiarities are in need of redemptive aestheticization which are to be associated with its already aesthetic character. Consequently, the 'aesthetic turn' could only aggravate the "corruptedness" of language. And although Jimmy Herf does have a restricted number of futile attempts to "cleanse" language, these, even more paradoxically, consist in its ironization,[65] a technique which is evidently unsuitable for stabilizing linguistic referentiality. Thus, Jimmy eventually seems to realize that there is no way of using the over-aestheticized language in a *satisfactorily human* (i.e. not amoral) way, hence his lost "faith in words."[66]

Throughout the narrative, therefore, the predominantly aesthetic character of the city results, again, in its vacuity as a *common* space, by excluding moral life as such: the "social nexus" with its common values is altogether absent, characters "continue to ignore and deny the moral bonds that [would!] unite them."[67] Still, there

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buildings etc. *are* beautiful, in the Kantean sense of the word: they exist without being *objectified*, and thus cannot function as a *home*, which, ideally rooted in intersubjective relations, is still much more a notion of ethics than that of aesthetics.

64. Lévinas, *Totality*, p. 127.

65. Vanderwerken, p. 263.

66. Nanney, p. 162.

67. Beach, pp. 61, 65. Yet it is noteworthy that there are a very limited number of vague, momentary examples. For instance, on the scene of Anna Cohen's accident, Ellen "wants to go away, but she can't, she's waiting for something. . . . She tries to puzzle out why she is so moved; it is as if some part of her were going to be wrapped in bandages, carried away on a

is arguably more to Jimmy's secession from this vacuous community than, as Cowley seems to suggest, the wistful Poet's resignation:[68] his abandonment of the city can be interpreted as an attempt of redemption, a genuinely *ethical* attempt, even if this enterprise will be shown to be as paradoxical as the idea of redemption by further aestheticization.[69] For Jimmy's task is no less than to disregard Manhattan as a common space, as it is to be recalled that as long as it exists for any given character in the novel, "there's nowhere else" for him or her, and thus the possibility of escape is restricted to Bud's 'solution.' Leaving this common space, nonetheless, however vacuous it may be, also entails the withdrawal from society, the only (though deficiently) common sphere as such, thereby precluding the emergence of a morally founded, non-vacuous community.

Clark, dismissing this point, argues for the existence of an "ideal order" in the novel: not that of an ideal society, but that of nature. Thus, in his view, the attainment of this ideal is represented by "Jimmy Herf turning his back on the city and fleeing to an indeterminate place."[70] On the one hand, this "natural" order could be regarded as prima facie ideal inasmuch as it breaks away from the over-aestheticized urban sphere, and might be hoped to lead to a moral, fully human world. On the

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stretcher. Too soon it comes out, between the routine faces, the dark uniforms of the attendants. . . . Why should I be so excited? she keeps asking herself. Just somebody's bad luck, the sort of thing that happens every day. . . . She's got to meet some one [*sic*] somewhere, she can't think where. There's a horrible tired blankness inside her. O, dear, what shall I do? she whimpers to herself" (373–374). It is remarkable how the feeling of sympathy is mixed with a peculiar vagueness, emptiness and the inability to move. This emptiness, however, might have been a positive sign: a sign of the human Other *hollowing out* one's full-fledged subjectivity in Lévinas's sense. The incapacity to move, on the other hand, is especially intriguing inasmuch as it hints for a single moment at an otherwise never attained, ideal working of the (here practically nonexistent) community, in which motionlessness is not only due to the lack of certain degrees of freedom, as it usually is in Manhattan as a space, but also to that of shared intimacy.

68. Malcolm Cowley, "John Dos Passos: The Poet and the World," in *Dos Passos, the Critics, and the Writer's Intention*, ed. Allen Belkind (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), 22–34, p. 26.

69. The questionability of Herf's endeavor is clearly reflected, for instance, in the sharp contrast between the picture of the thirty-something Christ-like Jimmy conveyed by Clark (p. 115) and D. H. Lawrence's view of him as "a failure of perhaps something under forty" at the end of the book ("[Review of Dos Passos's Manhattan Transfer]," in *Dos Passos: the Critical Heritage*, ed. Barry Maine [London and New York: Routledge, 1988], 74–77, p. 76).

70. Clark, p. 97.

other hand, this move is highly ironic again. First, because Jimmy's destination is 'specified' rather succinctly as "pretty far" in the last words of the novel (378), and the flee from Manhattan can therefore be termed as "another flight into nowhere, to land upon nothingness" instead of reaching any sort of ideal – an apt dénouement for a novel which itself may be considered a "great ravel of flights from nowhere to nowhere," as it was articulated in D. H. Lawrence's notorious review of the book.[71] Second, even if the yearned-after natural order is achieved, as in Vanderwerken's rendition of the ending as a "returning to the pastoral world,"[72] the idea still exhibits bitter (although most probably unintended) irony, since this pastoral scene would most probably also be a partly aestheticized sphere, as it is customarily represented in the Euro-American literary and artistic tradition. Finally, Jimmy's burst into the "natural" or "pastoral" world might as well be considered as the explicit failure of the writer's attempt to regain "the old words," the language of genuine expression. These things considered, the ending may imply nothing else but the astoundingly cynical, incessant, "unalienable pursuit" (342), in constant, hopeless search of a truly *common*, shared place / space where the relevance of ethics can be regained.

Nevertheless, even though Jimmy's departure does not appear to result in the emergence of an ethical sphere, his secession itself can be an ethically relevant attempt, a deed which is outstanding because it is irreconcilable with the aesthetic sphere of New York regardless of its success. This, strangely enough, may hold even if Jimmy does *not* set him*self* free by an act following (perhaps an ever so brief) conscious deliberation. His eventually disillusioned ideal seems to be a man who simply *is set* free – no matter whether of his own accord or by chance or under external compulsion, whether by action or by omission. "That's a real hero for you;" he comments on his straw-hatted "saint" who fell victim to the crowd because of wearing the wrong hat at a wrong place and occasion, "the golden legend of the man who would wear a straw hat out of season" (375) – and out of reason, one might add.[73] Jimmy's

71. Lawrence, pp. 77, 75.

72. Vanderwerken, p. 266.

73. Regarding the use of the term "saint" by Jimmy to refer to his (more or less ironic) ideal, it is interesting to take into account that Clark discusses Jimmy Herf's final turn in terms of William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, comparing the change in his attitude to the characteristics of saints' conversion as outlined in James's work. It is also relevant that Jimmy's choice of abandoning the city and its negatively posited, vacuous, but in a sense still human world may be interpreted alternatively as the ultimate, deliberate renouncement of *commun*ication, and its means, *language* as such. This, again, calls for Jimmy's placement in a non-ethical as much as in a non-aesthetic phase, for ethics is, at least

ideal, the "saint" may in some respect complement him: while Jimmy can be argued to commit a paradigmatic *action gratuite* by his secession, which is praised simply on the strength of escaping the moral vacuity of the city and thus implementing a (from a consequentialist perspective) pointless, yet still *ethical*, free act, the "saint" commits some sort of a '*passion gratuite,*' not so much of a deed but rather the effect of mere chance, which is also seemingly pointless but still has some ethical relevance. The "saint's" death, therefore, apparently differs from Bud's suicidal in merely one respect: the former is even more clearly unintentional. Still, paradoxically enough, it is the straw-hatted man and not Bud who (is compelled to) commit a deed which is in a sense exemplary, precisely because it does *no*t follow in any way from the metaphysical and moral vacuity of Dos Passos's Manhattan. He is the ideal of Jimmy because he is capable of *disregarding* (or, in fact, incapable of regarding) the city as a deficient intersubjective space, which grants him a sort of freedom other characters are deprived of, and which theoretically is a suitable basis for the abandonment of the irredeemably vacuous common space. It is this 'passive resistance' to the city that is also manifest in Jimmy's final amnesia, the prerequisite of his more or less active departure from Manhattan, in the course of which he thus appears to take a (semi-) conscious decision *and* to be simply drafted almost at the very same time.[74]

In conclusion, although Jimmy Herf fails to change the predominantly aesthetic quality adhering to Dos Passos's urban space, its inhabitants and the language they use, he eventually manages to release himself (or to be released) from the aestheticized world of he city, thereby committing an ethical act. By disregarding Manhattan as an amoral, deficiently intersubjective space which, until that very moment, held him, he is finally set free from the inherent contradictions and the concomitant multiple vacuity of urban metaphysics (including Manhattan as an intrinsically ambiguous, 'presentless' place and also as a partly ahistoricized, aestheticized space). It is

in the frameworks applied herein, necessarily *common* and thus communicable, even if through Lévinas's "unuttered language" (*Totality*, p. 127). Jimmy Herf, however, might thus be assumed to have reached *beyond* that stage of communicability. These considered, the male protagonist might (although hardly on the assumptions of the present paper) be regarded as having achieved a kind of post-ethical stage that nevertheless may be characterized as "goodness," that is, "true desire" in Lévinas's sense, which, as already quoted above, "does not refer to a lost fatherland . . . it is not homesickness, is not nostalgia" ("Philosophy," p. 57). (Note that Jimmy at the end "can't seem to remember anything," 377.) However, on the basis of the above, it still appears to be a better founded assumption to regard Herf as stuck in a *pre*-ethical phase, instead of having reached a *post*-ethical one.

74. Gelfant, "Dos Passos," p. 52.

only at the point when he is able to relate to the city exclusively as a place from which it is possible to move and which it is possible to forget that he establishes a new, "lived" present time. And in this new, positive temporality, Jimmy may, i.e. is enabled *and* is compelled to move at last, for in a positive present (which is also suitable for becoming one's positive past), one cannot choose but to move with and act in this 'real time.' Nonetheless, even though Jimmy's move is an act of considerable ethical significance, it cannot lead to the establishment of a non-vacuous moral sphere as it entails the ultimate abandonment of human bonds, thus retaining a central aspect of the vacuity of Manhattan as a common space.

4 Conclusion

The present paper aimed to link together some of the ways in which the motif of the city in John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* may be conceived as inherently vacuous, with a view to showing how these aspects can be considered central to the interpretation of a novel set in a deficient common sphere. Beginning with the analysis of a postulated spatial duality intrinsic to this urban scene, it has been argued that the city, whether it is approached as an abstract place or an ideal space, demonstrates some sort of metaphysical vacuity that leads to an unusual distribution of the degrees of freedom in the fictional Manhattan. The two facets of spatiality have also been shown to be closely connected to a similarly twofold conceptualization of temporal experience in the novel: the present time and historicity of the narrative have equally been found to be vacuous from a number of different perspectives. Finally, bearing on the irregularities of urban metaphysics, the city as a predominantly aesthetic, as opposed to ethical, sphere has been investigated, where intersubjective relations are markedly defective, which in turn renders Manhattan a morally vacuous space. Although Jimmy Herf eventually succeeds in absorbing the spatial and temporal vacuity of the city, he has been argued to fail in this ultimate respect: subsequently to his flight, the morally non-vacuous common sphere that was lacking in Dos Passos's New York still remains "[p]retty far" (378).

Federico Sabatini

"Im-marginable Langscape"

Re-creation and De-creation in Joyce and Beckett

This paper explores the subtle union (and dis-union) between *space* and *place* and their relationship to human consciousness. It begins by delineating some crucial epistemological views which poignantly elucidate the essence of the topic (Aristotle, Bruno) and relates these closely to Joyce and Beckett. Spatial re-creation in early Joyce is analyzed next, in order to enlighten, in the style of *Dubliners* and *A Portrait*, the ability to render the materiality and volume of places (as argued in Hamon's theory of dynamic description) and the simultaneous a-material character of imagined or transcended space (such as the European Continent in Gabriel Conroy's imagination). Particular emphasis is put on the suspended states of *spacelessness* during which consciousness absorbs the surrounding physical world in a timeless feeling dematerializing space (as illustrated by Bachelard). Beckett's own depiction, in contrast, is defined as *placelessness*, a devaluation which shows a more de-material aspect than a-material spacelessness. Beckett's de-creation of real inhabitable places echoes/mirrors the absolute reduction of his language, whereas Joyce, by furthering his experimentation, accentuates the hypertrophic re-creation of places within an "im-marginable" space, in which places melt into language, so as to enlarge a landscape and turn it into a personal, and yet universal, "langscape."

Deriving from the fourth book of *Finnegans Wake*, the notion of "langscape" in my title combines the words *language* and *landscape* and suggests a new kind of landscape which is made possible through words and, at the same time, it evokes a kind of language (the one enacted in *Finnegans Wake*) which is itself to be conceived as a landscape. It is worth noticing that in such a long and linguistically complex book as *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce never uses the word *landscape* alone. It only appears as part of the aforementioned pun and in one more passage which also reflects upon Joyce's literary method itself:

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> It *scenes* like a *landescape* from *Wildu Picturescu* or some seem on some dimb Arras, dumb as Mum's mutyness, this m*image* of the seventyseventh kusin of. . . (*FW* 53.1–2)[1]

Here, the author underlines the escapist character of his scene-making process by evoking a landscape which escapes from mere representation and from mimesis. And mimesis, in its Joycean version, contains the word *image* itself, which is to be referred to a mind's image, original and unique, rather than to a mere representation/imitation of a pre-existing one.

Starting from this very powerful Joycean standpoint, this essay aims at suggesting one of the possible interpretations of the concept of space in Joyce's production, or, more precisely, the relationship between space and place and their mutual, and interchangeable, negative counterparts: *spacelessness* and *placelessness*. This only apparent dichotomy in Joyce's own philosophy reflects, and at the same time draws on, his philosophical background, and activates an enlightening and stimulating link to the work of his friend Samuel Beckett, a subtle union and *dis-union* which, in my opinion, is able to offer a fruitful perspective on the two authors' poetics, by underlining the differences and the similarities of their literary methods when confronted with the de-creation and simultaneous re-creation of space and place within their literary discourses.

The difference between space and place informs the epistemological investigation since time immemorial and may be presented, to various and variable degrees, as a dichotomy between those philosophers who tend to privilege the concept of a more restricted, confining and containing relative place (most notably Aristotle with his theories on place as a vessel which surrounds beings within the finite space of the universe) and those who, on the contrary, tend to focus on the more generalized concept of absolute space, being it finite or infinite, in which human beings are situated since their appearance on earth and which is a pre-existing entity second to void alone (from which, in fact, matter has arisen). Given this extremely sketchy introduction on such a complex and infinitely open-to-discussion subject, it is important to note that the ambivalent attitude of James Joyce toward the subject starts from the very beginning of his prose, especially with *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Here, the notions of an infinite absolute space and a relative, often claustrophobic place, always go together in his stylistic re-creation, as well as in the characters' perceptions and, finally, in the reader's mental re-creation. The places

1. All parenthesized references to *Finnegans Wake (FW)* are to this edition: James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975).

which surround or confine the Dubliners are not described by an omnipresent narrator but readers perceive them in the same way as the characters do. As argued by Hamon and Genette in their theories on "narrative description"[2] (according to which temporal narration and spatial description always overlap), in Joyce, readers are made able to follow the characters both in the development of the plot and in their wanderings, their visual trajectories, as being on a constant and almost conditioning spatial, and temporal, threshold. This is metaphorically represented as the doorstep of houses, the entrance to the library for Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait* (which will be then re-actualized in *Ulysses*), the margin between the mundane space of the college, the holy place of the chapel and so forth. The threshold is often to be seen as the boundary between *places* (abodes and prisons at the same time), and a universalized, though personal, *space*. More precisely, we ought to talk about a constant longing for a "spacious" space, a bitterly missed possibility to achieve it physically or to recreate and fix it in the characters' imagination or reveries. Evelyn,[3] for instance, is only able to dream about such a space, and her condition remains the (Beckettian) awaiting one of being torn between the sheltered but confining place of her home and the empty space of the vast unknown ocean which will free her from the dusty routine of her life. Gabriel Conroy, in "The Dead," continuously daydreams about the Continent and finds himself almost trapped in his streams of consciousness, which do not only enlarge his temporal and spatial being (according to the concept of the epiphany as theorised in *Stephen Hero*) but also make him realise his life's limitations and that centripetal force which prevents him from those mental spaces described by Gaston Bachelard as "intimate immensity,"[4] a personal condition which, thanks to poetic reverie, is able to make one feel and live (as well as recreate linguistically as, for Bachelard, every reverie is a linguistic process) that immensity which the phenomenological world in which we are living often denies. The house of the Morkan sisters in "The Dead" is a chief example here, as it is always presented according to an opposition between its inside and its outside, which, on its turn, mirrors the contrast between the intimate, daydreamt-as-immense world inside Gabriel's mind and the external physical space around him, which can be reduced to a receptacle of tinier and tinier places. This kind of ecstatic state which absorbs all physical space and makes spacious an otherwise narrow place is also able to convert

2. Gerard Genette, *Figures II* (Paris: Seuil, 1969); Philippe Hamon, *Introduction à l'Analyse du Descriptif* (Paris: Hachette, 1981).

3. James Joyce, "Evelyn," *Dubliners* (London: Penguin, 1992), 37–43.

4. Gaston Bachelard, *Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon, 1964), Chapter VIII, 183–210.

time from a linear and horizontal succession into a vertical suspension that expands a moment and bestows it greater spaciousness. As critic Alexandra Anyfanti states about *Ulysses*, "Joyce retains the temporal and spatial frameworks of his book only to dissolve them, while the development is progressively relocated from external reality to the internal psychic states that this reality creates."[5] In this respect, while time becomes atemporal and timeless together, physical space turns into mental *spacelessness*, into the possibility to remove all elements of matter and achieve a state of a-materiality, in which the nucleus of one's consciousness can be reached. This opportunity, almost always denied to the characters in *Dubliners* (except for the more ambivalent case of Gabriel Conroy, as extensively argued by John Paul Riquelme[6]), is then made achievable by Stephen in *A Portrait*, even though only in some ephemeral phases of his psychological and artistic growth. As a matter of fact, it can be argued that the *space–spacelessness* process only culminates in the physical and yet mental and meditative peregrinations of Leopold Bloom-Ulysses. As for the spatial structure of this novel, Ian Gunn and Mark Wright have recently described Joyce's method very accurately:

> Throughout the book the narrative moves from place to place and character to character. The narrative focus is sometimes close-up with interior monologue or at others godlike over and above the action. Characters appear in the spotlight for a while and then drift off-stage into the shadows only to return later in another location.[7]

Place is more and more relative in *Ulysses* and often seems to serve the purpose of creating a whole amalgam with the characters' own mental image of it. The mental image of an infinite space, however, is always linked to its divisibility into smaller and smaller places, loci of the vibrant city and loci of the vibrant minds and memories, as we read in several passages from the "Ithaca" episode. Some of these strongly illustrate a definite connection to Samuel Beckett's work, in the light of Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, who influenced both Irish writers. When Stephen and

5. Alexandra Anyfanti, "Time, Space and Consciousness in *Ulysses*," *Hypermedia Joyce Studies* 4.2 (2003/4), August 10, 2007 <http://hjs.ff.cuni.cz/archives/v3/anyfanti.html>.

6. John Paul Riquelme, "For Whom the Snow Taps: Style and Repetition in 'The Dead,' " in *The Dead*, ed. Daniel Schwarz (Boston & New York: St. Martins Press, 1994), 219–233; "Styles of Realism and Fantasy," in *James Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 103–130.

7. Ian Mc Gunn and Mark Wright, "Visualizing Joyce," *Hypermedia Joyce Studies* 7.1 (2006/7), August 10, 2007 <http://hjs.ff.cuni.cz/archives/v7/main/essays.php?essay=gunn>.

Bloom are observing the stars at the end of their (meta)physical journey, the reader witnesses a very significant meditation on the simultaneity of centripetal and centrifugal spatial forces, a concurrence which shapes the physical world as well as our perceptions of it:

> Of the eons of geological periods recorded in the stratifications of the earth: of the myriad minute entomological organic existences concealed in cavities of the earth, beneath removable stones, in hives and mounds, of microbes, germs, bacteria, bacilli, spermatozoa: of the *incalculable* trillions of billions of millions of imperceptible molecules contained by cohesion of molecular affinity in a single pinhead: of the universe of human serum constellated with red and white bodies, themselves universes of void space constellated with other bodies, each, in continuity, its universe of divisible component bodies of which each was again divisible in divisions of redivisible component bodies, dividends and divisors ever diminishing without actual division till, if the progress were carried far enough, nought nowhere was never reached.[8]

Here the concept of involution diverges from the immediately previous "Ithaca" passage about evolution,[9] and with the previously described centrifugal force of the poetic reverie which takes the character out of his narrow physical world and introduces him to the spaceless dimension which his imagination can conceive. A chief example of this kind can also be found in the earlier famous passage of *A Portrait*, in which Dedalus writes his name and address on his book and, from Dublin and Ireland, makes himself reach to the continent, the world and, eventually, the universe:

> He turned to the flyleaf of the geography and read what he had written there: himself his name and where he was.
>
> *Stephen Dedalus*
> *Class of Elements*

8. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 699, my italics.

9. "With what meditations did Bloom accompany his demonstration to his companion of various constellations? Meditations of evolution increasingly vaster: of the moon invisible in incipient lunation, approaching perigee of the infinite lattiginous scintillating uncondensed milky way, discernible by daylight by an observer placed at the lower end of a cylindrical vertical shaft 5000 ft deep sunk from the surface towards the centre of the earth . . . of the parallax or the parallactic drift of socalled fixed stars, in reality evermoving from immeasurably remote eons to infinitely remote futures in comparison with which the years, threescore and ten, of allotted human life formed a parenthesis of infinitesimal brevity" (James Joyce, *Ulysses*, p. 698, my emphasis).

Clongowes Wood College
Sallins
County Kildare
Ireland
Europe
The World
The Universe.[10]

As Joyce aims at recreating in his writing, centripetal and centrifugal forces simultaneously influence human consciousness and place it in front of what he calls "an obsolescent unhinged door" which "reveals an aperture for free egress and free ingress."[11] The role of imagination is extremely significant in such a spatial investigation because it is through it and through fantastic re-creation that the artist is able to shape a spatial and temporal world by reshaping and eventually transcending Euclidean geometry (so as to relate closely with non-Euclidean round ones) and scientific time. The adjective *incalculable* in the aforementioned passage from *Ulysses* shows indeed the impossibility of a scientific and paradigmatic measurement for such an inner and consciousness-belonging conception of space.

This brief background illustrates the progressive awareness which takes Joyce to the creation of the notion of the *immarginable* (*FW* 4.19)[12] in the very first book of *Finnegans Wake*. This infinitely readable concept vibrantly illustrates the *langscape* which the author has now managed to re-create. The *immarginable langscape* in the title of this essay refers to a space of language in which *place*, *space* and *placelessness* are finally subsumed into *language* itself, which is then able to enact and re-create a constantly *renewed and renewable* space. Most significantly, this happens both with the author's act of recreation and with the readers themselves, who recreate this multiply hypertrophic dimension in their minds, through the sensory data which language evokes.

10. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 12.

11. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, p. 701.

12. The concept of the *immarginable*, present in the first book of *Finnegans Wake*, draws on the philosophical and cosmological investigation by Giordano Bruno, according to which we live in an infinite universe made up of countless finite worlds, and our spatial perception of it constantly changes according to our position in space, thus enlarging indefinitely. Joyce, who also wrote on the philosopher in 1903, synthesizes here notions of margin, figuration, infinite, marginality and imagination.

Both in Joyce's and in Beckett's productions, the reader is obliged to re-create his own space in the inner universe of the text, to participate in a sort of intransitive discourse, "one that bears no fixed meaning in relation to external reality which tends, in fact, to destroy referentiality and with it, the readers' sense of balance."[13] They both mix innovative techniques into their literary discourses, they both highlight artifice and, as argued by David Hayman, they both affirm the "flux" as an essential component of our experience. But while Joyce deliberately "squidscreens his very language," Beckett chooses to write impoverished and primitive prose. It has been often observed, and it is readily applicable to this spatial investigation, that while Joyce was re-creating such an "immarginable langscape" evolving from an associative flux ("buildung supra buildung," *FW* 4.27 and "one world burrowing on another," *FW* 275.5), Beckett, on the contrary, was dismantling and de-creating a world, he was shaping that void which Joyce was filling *ad infinitum*. The two authors, however share two common traits which don't really suggest too strictly divergent outputs: in fact they both combine auto-destruction of experience and language with self-generation of them, even though one chooses the way of presence and the other the way of absence. Joyce's hypertrophic re-creation and Beckett's hypotrophic de-creation, however, are not necessarily to be conceived in an antithetic relationship, but in an alternate and reversible ambivalence which synthesizes the two opposite concepts. Each word, each sentence, each sign in their worlds, as a matter of fact conceals amplification even when they choose different stylistic directions. From a thematic point of view, it can be easily argued that Beckett, more than an *atemporal spacelessness*, deals with a sense of *placelessness* as conceived by Leonard Lutwak,[14] namely the alienation of human beings when dealing with abodes that are no more able to contain them as inhabitants. As for this thematic aspect, Beckett's characters align themselves with Kafka's ones, always waiting and searching for homes to inhabit. *All strange Away*, for instance, begins with the sentence: "A place, that again . . . a place, then someone in it. . . No way in, none out. . ."[15] while in *From an Abandoned Work* we read: "I simply will not go out of my way, though I have never in my life been on my way anywhere, but simply on my way."[16] These "places," too many to mention them all, are all deprived of their basic peculiarities, reduced to a zero de-

13. David Hayman, "Joyce – Beckett – Joyce," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 7 (Spring 1982) 19–47, p. 32.

14. Leonard Lutwak, *The Role of Place in Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984).

15. Samuel Beckett, *All Strange Away* (Milan: SE, 2003), p. 10.

16. Samuel Beckett, *From an Abandoned Work* (Milan: SE, 1999), p. 12.

gree which is however an oxymoric synonym for infinity, both spatially and temporally. A crucial example of this kind is given by the title itself of the work *Lessness* (a translation of the French *sans*), which evokes a progressive and continuous process of reduction, and clearly shows a never-ending, as well as an ever-changing, character. Similarly, in one of the texts from "Texts for Nothing," the paradoxical "reductive growth" is metaphorically associated to a "feeble sand" which grows less and less until it becomes extremely small (but never really disappears), so as to be conceived and perceived only by an imaginative eye:

> Without what hope, haven't I just said, of seeing me alive, not merely inside an *imaginary head*, but a *feeble sand* to be, under a restless sky, restless on its shore, faint stirs day and night, as if *to grow less* could help, *ever less and less and never quite be gone*.[17]

Beckett's works, both dramatic and narrative, show how the characters are destined to stay there, repeat the same actions, create slightly different dialogues and wait for something to happen during this kind of endless process, something which could change the state of things. Joyce also gives several interpretations of waiting in *Finnegans Wake,* and most notably in "Anna Livia Plurabelle," "a little lady waiting" (*FW* 102.22), or in the famous passage about *continuarration* which contains the expression "*amstel waiting*,"[18] where the water stream of the Dutch river Amstel, together with the phono-symbolism of "I am still," suggests a watery everlasting waiting condition.

In a more generalized way their works deal with the same eternal condition, even though one seems to reveal presence and the other to reveal absence. In the light of this analysis, the two outputs more than contrasting each other, set the two authors in a kind of chiasmus relationship between presence and absence, as well as between the two double categories of space/spacelessness and place/placelessness. If Joyce's style is *hypertrophically* affirming presence, Beckett's can be seen as *hypotrophically* affirming absence. Nevertheless, they both call for expansion and infinite amplification, and in Beckett's we can find countless examples of this tension, even in the recreation of the most reductive and confining condition. In *Murphy*, for instance, the narrative voice states that "neither elements nor states but

17. Samuel Beckett, "Text for Nothing VIII," in *No's Knife (Collected Shorter Prose 1945–1966)* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1975), p. 108, my italics.

18. "Never stop! Continuarration! You're not there yet I amstel waiting. Garonne, garonne!" (*FW* 205.14–15).

forms becoming and crumbling into the fragments of a new becoming."[19] Similarly, and echoing the structure of *Finnegans Wake*, in *The Unnamable*, Beckett declares that "all that is needed is to wander and let wander, be this *slow boundless whirlwind* and every particle of its dust."[20] The tension is one between generation and dissolution, between materiality and abstraction, which is enacted in a very similar way in the structure of meaning in *Finnegans Wake*. Concerning the treatment of space and place, we notice in both authors that the greatest containment is "at once an unbounded exteriority,"[21] and such a peculiarity confirms the direct influence of Giordano Bruno on both writers, especially on the Joycean notion of *immarginable*, which is thus readily applicable to Beckett's prose style as well.

Although he postulates the minimum, Bruno's universe is infinite and opposed to the Aristotelian bounded one. Being the minimum everywhere, like a ubiquitous centre, the philosopher asserts that his universe is more spherical than a finite sphere, because every point is at the centre and equidistant from the circumference, which is always an infinity away, so that man, from his own perspective, is always at the very centre of the cosmos. Therefore, placial minimum (the relative position) coincides with spatial maximum (the universal immensity) and becomes the same as the immensity of all being.

The expression "The broadest way immarginable" combines margin, marginable, imagination and at the same time evokes the notion of the *thinkable* and of the *unthinkable*: this clearly establishes Joyce's debt to Giordano Bruno, the one who is to be considered, in Joyce's own words, "the father of what is called modern philosophy . . . more than Bacon or Descartes."[22] Jean Michel Rabaté, in *Joyce upon the Void*, convincingly defines the oxymoric aspect in Bruno's philosophy as the core of Joyce's interpretation. In his essay on Bruno, Joyce writes: "Every power in nature or in spirit must evolve an opposite as the sole condition and means of its manifestation; and every opposition is therefore a tendency to reunion"[23]. Joyce speaks of the "identity of the infinitely small, the point and the infinitely great, the broad, deep

19. Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (London: Routledge, 1957), p. 69.

20. Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable* (London: Grove Press, 1978), p. 102.

21. Michael Guest, "Beckett and Brunonian Minimalism," *Reports of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Shizuoka University* 30.1 (1994) 32–47, p. 45.

22. James Joyce, "The Bruno Philosophy," in *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 93–94, p. 93.

23. Jean Michel Rabaté, *Joyce upon the Void: The Genesis of Doubt* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 12.

immeasurable universe"[24] as the first simultaneous ambivalence which Bruno's theory comprehends. Similarly, Beckett, both in his plays and in his novels, states the impossibility of such a separation, providing the characters and the readers with a series of threshold places in which all contraries merge and become interchangeable signifiers. Joyce writes that "by the coincidence of their contraries *reamalgamerge* in that identity" (*FW* 49.35–36), synthesising the word "amalgam" with "merge," "emerge" and the very Beckettian "game." Beckett echoes such a sentence in the *Lost Ones*, by writing about the range of light which is "shaken by a vertiginous tremolo between *contiguous contraries*."[25] In his works, in fact, absolute light is absolute darkness and so an infinite perception corresponds to a kind of blindness. This non-distinction would bring the analysis forth to the relationship between the authors' simultaneous de-creations and re-creations, with the *void*. This is presented in a very dynamic way by the two Irish authors and it is very close to the examination conducted by Jean Starobinsky in his essay "Void and Creation." Here, he affirms the necessity of the void, for any kind of creation, be it a linguistic one or a spatial mental recreation of a place, as "there won't be any form if not in constant relationship with the void,"[26] and similarly, it could be argued that there won't be any kind of space, or place, if not incessantly related to the void. Once we realise this, as Joyce and Beckett did, the perception of the void, to its extreme extent, will be corresponding to the extreme perception of being, or of an "expanded being,"[27] as Bachelard put it. Both Beckett and Joyce had to empty their language and the space in which it was to be actualised, in order to pave the way to their creation, recreation or, more precisely, to what Joyce called "*concreation*" (*FW* 581.28), a kind of perceptive and artistic creation in which all forces, human and natural, must "reamalgamerge."

24. Rabaté, p 13.

25. Quoted by Guest, p. 45.

26. Jean Starobinsky, "Vide and Création," *Magazine Littéraire* 280 (September 1990) 41–42, p. 42; my translation.

27. Cf. Bachelard, Chapter VIII.

Omar Swartz

Buddhism as Critical Lens

The Dharma Bums as Social Criticism[1]

Kerouac's Asian transcendence – identified as his critical Buddhism – offers alternatives to the status quo by which individuals can live, grow, and interact with society. Specifically, Kerouac's Buddhism exemplifies a crucial social deviance, in which he rejects the superficiality and "supervision" associated with television and the cultural denial of our more authentic selves.

In his celebrated 1957 novel *On The Road*, Jack Kerouac dramatized his search for authenticity in a mid-century America that worshipped conformity and materialism.[2] This dramatization contributed to a distinctly American transcendence – a Whitmanesque revisioning of self, society, and purpose in the context of mid-20th-century America – as well as to a criticism and redescription of American cultural practices.[3] Like Walt Whitman before him, Kerouac both celebrated and critiqued the nation that he loved in ways that angered some and inspired others in fundamental ways. In 1958, Kerouac published his next book, *The Dharma Bums*.[4] Unlike *On The Road*, however, which became a prototypical American novel, Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* is a much more alien novel for an American audience, providing readers with an Asian (in particular, a Chinese) transcendence, one based on an Eastern spiritual mysticism. Such multicultural perspectives, while popular today in our postmodern society, were not widely embraced when *The Dharma Bums* first appeared. The United States is a much more culturally and politically tolerant society

1. The author would like to thank Katia Campbell, Dee Morgenthaler, and *The AnaChronisT* referee Judit Friedrich for their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this essay.

2. Steve Wilson, "'Buddha Writing': The Author and the Search for Authenticity in Jack Kerouac's *On The Road* and *The Subterraneans*," *The Midwest Quarterly* 40 (1999), p. 304.

3. Omar Swartz, *The View from* On The Road*: The Rhetorical Vision of Jack Kerouac* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999).

4. All parenthesized references are to this edition: Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Penguin, 1986).

than it has been, and part of that tolerance (for example, racial and spiritual tolerance) is the result of authors like Kerouac who offered alternative ways of thinking and being.

In this essay, I argue that Kerouac's Asian transcendence – what I identify as his critical Buddhism – was a challenge to American culture, suggesting the importance of personal agency and independent thought in confronting the dominant culture. By "critical Buddhism" I mean Kerouac's idiosyncratic, yet heartfelt and serious engagement with an idealized Buddhist philosophy and his attempt to apply aspects of that philosophy to an American audience imbued with antithetical materialistic values. Kerouac's message, offering alternative ways by which individuals can live, grow, and interact with society, while inspiring to counter-cultural audiences in the late 1950s and 1960s (such as the Beats and Hippies), is also useful today for encouraging social critique and helping readers to question the normative assumptions grounding the social order – an order often situated in mass mediated manipulations and illusions.[5] *The Dharma Bums* highlights (among other things) Kerouac's critique of television, a position informed by his critical Buddhism. While media studies has come a long way in the forty plus years since Kerouac wrote *The Dharma Bums*, a study of Kerouac's interpretation of Buddhism helps to frame current issues in critical studies by seeking standards of authenticity by which to define alternative (and more preferable) social constructions to replace the dominant manipulative ones that exist currently. In other words, while critical studies have become increasingly sophisticated and professional, there is something earthly and anarchistic in Kerouac's writing that scholars, I hope, will find appealing.

Kerouac's portrayal of Buddhism – or what can be understood as Kerouac's mystic naturalism (i.e., his ascetic embrace of a primordial holistic natural order of balance within nature) – is clearly the central narrative defining the persona of Ray Smith, Kerouac's protagonist in *The Dharma Bums*. Japhy Ryder's (Kerouac's character modeled on poet Gary Snyder) own understanding of Buddhism, one more hedonistic and social, largely exists for contrast, a foil against the backdrop of Smith's perspectives. Both senses of Buddhism and their relationship to Kerouac's writing have been discussed in many sources.[6] Yet, as Alan L. Miller notes, "there is

5. See Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 2002) and Noam Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies* (Boston: South End Press, 1989).

6. Notably, John E. Hart, "Future Hero in Paradise: Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*," *Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction* 14 (1973) 52–62; William Blackburn, "Han Shan Gets Drunk with the Butchers: Kerouac's Buddhism in *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums*, and *Desolation*

no agreement among the critics regarding the depth or even the authenticity of Kerouac's Buddhism."[7] Complicating matters are other sources who are dismissive or contemptuous of Kerouac's Buddhism (or of Beat spirituality, more generally). As Stephen Prothero notes, "Historians of American religion who have explored beat spirituality have tended to focus almost exclusively on the Beats' engagement with Zen and then to dismiss that engagement as haphazard."[8] Even among Kerouac's supporters, authoritative statements exist that question Kerouac's Buddhist identification. For example, eminent Kerouac scholar Ann Charters maintains that Kerouac's Buddhism was merely a "discovery of different religious images for his fundamentally constant religious feelings," which were essentially Catholic.[9] Philip Whalen, Kerouac's friend, Zen monk, and fellow Beat writer, questions if Kerouac "ever really understood Buddhism."[10]

Regardless of what "really" was the nature of Kerouac's Buddhism, the fact remains that he became an important interpreter of the Asian Buddhist tradition, making Buddhism accessible for many Americans at a time in which Asian culture was

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Angels," *Literature East and West* 21 (1977) 9–22; Jeffery Miles, "Making it to Cold Mountain: Han-Shan in *The Dharma Bums*," in *Essays in the Literature of Mountaineering*, ed. Armand E. Singer (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1982), 95–105; Jacob Leed, "Gary Snyder, Han Shan, and Jack Kerouac," *Journal of Modern Literature* 11 (1984) 185–193; Robert S. Ellwood, "Conservative and Radical Themes in American Zen: Three writers," in *Zen in American Life and Letters*, ed. Robert S. Ellwood (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1987), 147–160; Susan Kayorie, "The Ten Precepts of Zen in Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*," *Moody Street Irregulars* 28 (1994) 18–20; Carole Tonkinson, ed., *Big Sky Mind: Buddhism and the Beat Generation* (New York: Riverhead, 1995); and Rod Phillips, "*Forest Beatniks" and "Urban Thoreaus": Gary Snyder, Jack Kerouac, Lew Welch, and Michael McClure* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001).

7. Alan L. Miller, "Ritual Aspects of Narrative: An Analysis of Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 9 (1999) 41–53, p. 43.

8. Stephen Prothero, "On the Holy Road: The Beat Movement as Spiritual Protest," *The Harvard Theological Review* 84 (1991) 205–222, p. 207. Two notable examples of this trend are Carl T. Jackson, "The Counterculture Looks East: Beat Writers and Asian Religion," *American Studies* 29 (1988) 51–70 and Alan Watts *Beat Zen, Square Zen and Zen* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1959).

9. Ann Charters, *Kerouac: A Biography* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow, 1973), p. 190. Kerouac was a complex man, and the commentary on his life and work grapples with this complexity. In this passage, at least, Charters is clearly discounting Kerouac's Buddhism, seeing it as an expression of his Catholicism. I disagree with Charters on this point.

10. Quoted in Jackson, p. 60.

considered antithetical to American values. As Susan Kayorie notes, Kerouac's version of Buddhism has become "so basic to the counter-culture that [it] no longer seem[s] counter-cultural at all, but familiar and as American as apple pie."[11] In contrast to the "Square Zen" of Alan Watts – an important source of traditional Buddhism in the United States – "the popular culture took Jack's book [*The Dharma Bums*] to its heart and it remains there still."[12]

There is nothing problematic, I argue, in Kerouac's appropriation and popularization of an important Eastern religion or philosophy, even if what comes to us through this medium is an Americanized and romanticized version of Eastern spirituality. From an anti-essentialist perspective, which I embrace, spiritualities have no essences; they morph and grow in response to the needs of the communities they serve. The truth of any spirituality is pragmatic – not ontological.[13] Thus, instead of passing judgment on Kerouac's Buddhism *per se* – what his Buddhism *was* or was *not* – I assume Kerouac's Buddhism as *given* and argue in this essay that Kerouac's critical Buddhism can be a tool for contemporary cultural criticism. Such criticism involves an emphasis on the deleterious effects of the mass media, television in particular. Kerouac's persona as a Buddhist hero helps focus attention on the world that he is rejecting and his reasons for so doing. Many cultural critics share in the sentiment that television is a major cause of cultural malaise and a reinforcement of corporate values and consumerism.[14] I repeat that claim here and demonstrate how, with Kerouac, we learn that, in addition to critical theory which comes from Western sources, a critical Buddhist perspective can aid us in constructing alternative critiques of the mass media. My thoughts on this subject are informed by the late philosopher Richard Rorty, who eventually gave up philosophy (i.e. normative analytical scholarship) and embraced literary criticism as an important reservoir for forming arguments of human meaning. I am quite sympathetic with his view, taking, as he does, "literature" in its widest possible sense. Thus, I derive the claim that Kerouac and the Beats, in general, are *useful* for helping us develop new frameworks, literatures, new visions and new definitions of authenticity. This essay is an exploratory attempt at this goal.

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11. Kayorie, p. 20.
12. Kayorie, p. 20.
13. Richard Rorty, "Cultural Politics and the Question of the Existence of God," in *Radical Interpretation in Religion*, ed. Nancy K. Frankenberry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 57.
14. For example, Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

Before discussing Kerouac's contribution to a new vision, his critical Buddhism must be understood in the context of the anti-Asian prejudice that existed in the United States during the period in which Kerouac was writing. This context is important because Kerouac's evocation of Buddhism was *in-and-of-itself* a critical act, serving as a catalyst for social critique. The subsequent popularization (in the late 1960s) of Asian culture was an important and much needed development in popular cultural resistance to American racist and corporate practices. While, as mentioned above, the contemporary United States has become significantly less overtly racist, the U.S. is *more* corporate today than it was in the 1950s, thus Kerouac's critical Buddhism has utility for contemporary cultural analysis.

Anti-Asian Prejudice in the United States

Anti-Asian (particularly anti-Chinese) sentiment has always been palpable in the United States and was, for many decades, the most discernable prejudice embodied in the U.S. immigration code.[15] While tens of thousands of Chinese citizens were imported into the United States in the mid-nineteenth century for exploitation in the construction of the U.S. railroad system, many thousands were deported when their utility was depleted.[16] Federal legislation was also enacted to bar future Chinese from entering the country.[17] This exclusion was enforced through the 1950s, when it was modified to appease the Kuomintang government, a wartime ally of the U.S. which controlled Taiwan after 1949, and considered by the U.S. to be the only "legitimate" China.[18] An important exception to the exclusion of Asians as a result of the Chinese Exclusion Acts was Imperial Japan, which had the diplomatic and military clout to petition for favorable treatment. Consequently, there were hundreds of thousands of Japanese Americans in this country by the start of World War II. These Japanese Americans had been interned, *en masse*, during the war and their property was con-

15. See Charles J. McClain, "The Chinese Struggle for Civil Rights in Nineteenth Century America: The First Phase, 1850–1870," *California Law Review* 72 (1984) 529–568 and Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1998).

16. See *Fong Yue Ting v. United States*, 149 U.S. 698 (1893), upholding the Chinese Deportation Act of 1892.

17. Kitty Calavita, "The Paradoxes of Race, Class, Identity, and 'Passing': Enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Acts, 1882–1910," *Law and Social Inquiry* 25 (2000) 1–40.

18. Philip S. Foner and Daniel Rosenberg, eds., *Racism, Dissent, and Asian Americans from 1850 to the Present: A Documentary History* (Westport: Greenwood, 1993).

fiscated.[19] The war against Japan fueled the flames of a racial hatred toward what many Americans considered to be the "indiscernible" Asian.[20] The successful Chinese Communist Revolution of 1949 further evoked images of Asian "hordes" and the prospect of a Third World War.[21]

The actual Korean War during the 1950s (a significant part of which was fought against Chinese troops), and the political stalemate that resulted in an increased Chinese diplomatic strength, further underscored the "threat" from the East.[22] Moreover, the French war in Vietnam was just starting to intensify, and the seeds were being laid for the U.S. war against the communist North.[23] Given this context, Kerouac is provocative when he has Ray Smith state that "East'll meet West. . . . Think what a great world revolution will take place when East meets West finally, and it'll be guys like us [i.e. he and Japhy Ryder] that can start the thing. Think of millions of guys all over the world with rucksacks on their backs tramping around the back country and hitchhiking and bringing the word down to everybody" (203). Passages such as this evoke Edgar Snow's description of optimism surrounding the Chinese revolutionaries in Yenan in 1936 during the most idealistic phase of Chinese communism.[24] By the 1960s, Chinese communism was widely respected by counter-cultural and dissident groups (such as the Black Panthers and the Weathermen) in the U.S.,[25] and with that a positive interest in Chinese culture more generally.

In an important manner, the Chinese (or Asians in general) – racially dissimilar to Euro or Anglo Americans – were seen as much more of a threat than the Soviet Union, which shared common cultural and ethnic heritages with the West. In other words, hatred of Russia and Russian satellite countries were largely ideological and

19. Wartime Relocation Commission. *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relation and Internment of Civilians* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

20. Kevin R. Johnson, "Race, the Immigration Laws, and Domestic Race Relations: A 'Magic Mirror' into the Heart of Darkness," *Indiana Law Journal* 73 (1998) 1111–1159.

21. For my analysis of anti-Chinese imagery in U.S. Cold War rhetoric see Swartz, "The 'Faith of Freedom' vs. the Freedom of Faith: Exploring the Totalitarian Discourse of J. Edgar Hoover," *Speaker and Gavel* 33 (1996) 59–73.

22. James Armstrong, *Revolutionary Diplomacy: Chinese Foreign Policy and the United Front Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

23. Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Penguin, 1991).

24. *Red Star Over China* (New York: Bantam Books, 1978). See Franklin W. Houn, *A Short History of Chinese Communism* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

25. Max Elbaum, "What Legacy From the Radical Internationalism of 1968?" *Radical History Review* 82 (2002) 37–64.

the product of Cold War conditioning and geo-political realities, while hatred of Asians was visceral and racist, exasperated perhaps by ideology, but certainly predating it. Compare, for instance, the treatment of Germans and Japanese by Americans during the Second World War. While both nations were at war with the United States, the German enemy was portrayed as *Nazis* and the war was portrayed as against Nazism. Germans, to the extent they were not Nazis, were not considered a threat.[26] In contrast, the United States was at war with Japan, and *all* Japanese were considered the enemy.[27] Where the Nazis were positioned as ideologically mistaken Germans, the Japanese were considered genetically inferior, a threat as defined by the eugenic pseudo-science popular at the time.[28] Caucasian racism helps explain the difference in attitudes, and ultimately, in treatment of Japanese and German soldiers, citizens, and their descendants living in the United States.

Critical Buddhism in *The Dharma Bums*

The Dharma Bums begins with Ray Smith declaring himself a "perfect Dharma Bum" and a "religious wanderer" (5). Smith wanders from North Carolina to Washington state via Northern California and several places in-between, stopping in any one place only long enough to meditate and pray. Unlike Japhy, who experiences his Buddhism through more mainstream and social activity ("I wanta be enlightened by actions") (169), which includes both productive labor and physical activities like hiking and sex, Smith prefers to sit and commune with nature. The lengthy middle portion of the novel is comprised of Smith sitting in the North Carolina woods for a year meditating.[29]

Japhy frequently criticizes Smith for his detachment (and for his excessive drinking, which Smith models on classical Chinese poets who had a reputation for

26. Benjamin Alpers notes that President Franklin Roosevelt's dependence on political support from white ethnic groups "led the White House to shun representations of the European war as a battle against German-ness. Officially, at least, World War II was an ideological, not a national conflict" (*Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture: Envisioning the Totalitarian Enemy 1920s-1950s* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003], p. 189).

27. Peter H. Irons, *Justice at War: The Story of the Japanese-American Interment Cases* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

28. Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1996).

29. Detailed in Alex Albright, "Satori in Rocky Mount: Kerouac in North Carolina," *The Southern Quarterly* 24 (1986) 35–38.

alcoholism). Japhy, who sees Smith's behavior as anti-social, asks, "How do you expect to become a good *bhikku* or even a *Bodhisattva Mahasattva* always getting drunk . . . ?" (190). One day, when Japhy barges into the shack where he and Smith are staying, he demands, "Why do you sit around all day?" (180). Smith responds, "I am the Buddha known as the Quitter" (180). In another passage, Japhy asks Smith, "Why do you sit on your ass all day?" Smith responds, "I practice do-nothing" (175), *wuwei* in Chinese philosophy. Even Alvah Goldbook (modeled on poet Allen Ginsberg) comments on Smith's detachment: "Don't you think its much more interesting just to be like Japhy and have girls and studies and good times and really be doing something, than all this silly sitting under trees?" (33).

For the other characters in *The Dharma Bums*, much of this "doing something" involves sex ("believe me I get more of a *satori* out of [having sex with] Princess than out of words," states Alvah; 34), something for which Kerouac's Buddhist persona has little use. As Smith declares, "Pretty girls make graves" (29). Working from this assumption, Smith attempts (although not always successfully) to sit through the novel's drunken naked revelries (and orgies) with his eyes shut. As he explains, "I was really sincerely keeping lust out of my mind by main force and gritting of my teeth. And the best was to keep my eyes closed" (178). Thus, while sexual activity is prominently displayed in the book, Kerouac clearly downplays the transformational qualities of sex that he celebrated in *On The Road*.[30]

Kerouac's Buddhist persona, I argue, is an important reason why many readers who were enthralled with *On The Road* found *The Dharma Bums* disappointing. In the mid 1960s, *The Dharma Bums* became more popular when former Beats such as Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg imported Eastern perspectives into the counterculture (i.e., spiritual support for the Vietnamese struggle against French and later U.S. colonialism), respect for nature, and communalism. As such, *The Dharma Bums*, which is ironically associated in the public mind with Kerouac's advocacy of promiscuous sex, does little more with the topic than to anticipate the sexual abuse that was rampant in the 1960s, when many women were raped in the name of the "free love." As Robin Morgan, a feminist activist at the time reflects, "[M]y actual experience of the so-called sexual revolution of the sixties and seventies – like that of most other women – felt depressingly more like rape than revolution."[31]

30. See Swartz, *View From* On The Road, pp. 74–81.

31. *The Word of a Woman: Feminist Dispatches, 1968–1992* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), p. 31.

Japhy repeatedly tries to help Smith "mature" as a Buddhist thinker, but Smith, who learns the technique of mountaineering and wilderness survival from Japhy, is not transformed by Japhy and rejects Japhy's Buddhism as academic and intellectual (i.e., book learned).[32] Consequently, Smith and Japhy disagree about religion throughout the novel.[33] Thus, while Japhy is ostensibly "the number one Dharma Bum of them all" (9), he is ultimately dispensable for Smith, who insists on his own experiential interpretations of Buddhism. At the end of the novel, when Japhy goes off to Japan for formal study in a Japanese monastery, Smith retreats to a mountain perch on Washington's Desolation Peak and happily lives a liminal existence. Smith, not Japhy, is the liminal character of the novel, the one whose experiences allow readers to gain a new perspective.[34] While ostensibly describing Japhy in the following passage, Kerouac enunciates his romantic vision of himself and the hobo he frequently idealized:[35]

> I clearly saw a crowded dirty smoky Chinese market with beggars and vendors and pack horses and mud and smoke pots and piles of rubbish and vegetables for sale in dirty clay pans on the ground and suddenly from the mountains a ragged hobo, a little seamed brown and unimaginable Chinese hobo, had come down and was just standing at the end of the market, surveying it with an expressionless humor. He was short, wiry, his face leathered hard and dark red by the sun of the desert and the mountains; his clothes were nothing but gathered rags. . . . I had seen guys like that only seldom . . . beggars who probably live in caves. But this one was a Chinese twice-as-poor, twice-as-tough and infinitely mysterious tramp and it was Japhy for sure. Maybe he'll leave that monastery and just disappear and we'll never see him again, and he'll be the Han Shan ghost of the Orient Mountains and even the Chinese'll be afraid of him he'll be so raggedy and beat. (208)

32. See Gerald Nicosia, *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 494–496.

33. See Prothero, p. 218.

34. Liminality is a concept, originally from anthropology, that designates a position between two social categories. It is the space that a person occupies when he/she is neither X nor Y and who, consequently, has a special insight that derives from the freedom of being outside of constraints. See Swartz, "Kerouac and Liminality," in *The View From* On The Road, pp. 94–102.

35. For Kerouac's idealization of the hobo, see Frederick Feied, *No Pie in the Sky: The Hobo as American Cultural Hero in the Works of Jack London, John Dos Passos, and Jack Kerouac* (Falls Church: Writers Club Press, 2001).

Smith rejects formal Buddhist lectures and study, which Japhy, as a student of Chinese language at the University of California, Berkeley, embraces. Smith's Buddhism, consequently, is idiosyncratic, choosing his own way by mixing various strands of Buddhism, Catholicism, and the philosophical individualism of Henry David Thoreau, making it particularly appealing to the U.S. counterculture. Whether Smith is hopping freights or returning from two months alone on a mountain, he is an "old-time *bhikku*" (wandering monk) who transverses the "immense triangular arc of New York to Mexico City to San Francisco" (5) rejoicing in the freedom he gains from his lack of possessions, his hobo status, his rejection of station and responsibility.[36] Utilizing such liminality, Smith declares himself "a future hero in Paradise" (5). This heroic persona is reinforced later in the book, when, in a vision, a Buddhist saint tells Smith, "You are empowered to remind people that they are utterly free" (239).

To actualize the above freedom, people must learn to reject the world of *samsara* (or illusion). This is the same world, although in a different cultural context, that the youthful Brahmin rejects in Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*.[37] In rejecting illusions, Kerouac forcefully rejects the corporate consciousness that is the root of many cultural illusions (and alienation) in U.S. society. This rejection of corporate consciousness is most clearly articulated in Kerouac's critique of television (or the television mentality), as when Kerouac worries that Americans have been desensitized by television against the part of them that is human and joyful – that is, animal, pure, free, and unsupervised, like his romanticized Buddhist heroes of ancient China. Kerouac, in other words, anticipated (as well as inspired resistance to) the surveillance society, a society in which monitoring has increasingly come to mean, in a Foucaultian fashion, *self-surveillance*, in which the watched and the watcher are frequently the same person. With Kerouac's critical Buddhism, we can learn to watch the watchers and ascertain our own complacency in a system that is dependent upon us to be its willing accomplices.

Throughout the novel, Kerouac makes frequent references to the stultifying effects of television on people's ability to live authentic and critical lives. Television, as positioned by Kerouac, is the antithesis of the *Dharma* (the Truth or the Way). As Ellwood notes, Kerouac accuses "the average samsaric person of just wanting everything he's told to want by the high priests of consumerism, while he sits watching the

36. See Ellwood, p. 155.
37. Herman Hesse, *Siddhartha*, trans. Hilda Rosner (New York: Bantam Classics, 1982).

same TV pablum and thinking the same thoughts as everyone else."[38] The fact that limited programming existed at that time is beside the point – the contemporary existence of cable, satellite TV, video, and similar technologies does little to counter Kerouac's critique – television style may change, but its substance remains vacuous and commercial: in Ben Giamo's words, "TV is the insidious extension of consumer capitalism into the living room and bedroom."[39]

An early example of Kerouac's critique of television culture occurs when Smith and Japhy are walking through the U.C. Berkeley campus. Smith, while contrasting the "manliness" of Japhy with the neutered students he sees, criticizes college life for its sterility, its forced categories and its abstractions that have little to do with real experience. For Kerouac, the college experience is little more than the drabness of middle-class life exemplified in the crew cuts and preppy clothes of the students. As Smith remarks:

> [C]ollege being nothing but grooming schools for the middle-class non-identity which usually finds its perfect expression on the outskirts of the campus in rows of well-to-do houses with lawns and television sets in each living room with everybody looking at the same thing and thinking the same thing at the same time while the Japhies of the world go prowling in the wilderness to hear the voice crying in the wilderness, to find the ecstasy of the stars, to find the dark mysterious secret of the origins of the faceless wonderless crapulous civilization. (39)

Notable in this passage is Smith's emphasis on "sameness," the result of television, which is contrasted with the spontaneity and animality of Japhy – he "prowls" in the "wilderness" and pursues "dark mysteries." This animality, our primordial health as found in Buddhist mysticism (which rejects the pretensions of the intellect by which many humans position themselves metaphysically as being *above* the animal kingdom, as created in the image of God), is caged by the walls of living rooms and by the projections of illusion that radiate from television screens. This sense of animality, caged or denied, is something Kerouac often describes with different language strategies.

For example, our denial of some essential human part of ourselves can also be seen in the above passage with the descriptor "crap" (as in "crapulous"). "Crap," de-

38. Ellwood, p. 154.

39. Ben Giamo, *Kerouac, the Word, and the Way* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), p. 139.

scriptions of the anus, and fixation with excretionary functions are frequent tropes in Kerouac's lexicon, as is the case throughout much Beat literature. As David Sterritt notes, "Kerouac draws on the oral, anal, and genital levels of activity not merely to offer a string of suggestive metaphors, but to invoke verbal creation as an act of physical exchange and interpenetration with the world outside the self."[40] This orality is exemplified by the following typical passage where Kerouac describes a lackadaisical afternoon party:

> [W]e picked mussels right off the washed rock of the sea and smoked them in a big woodfire covered with seaweed. We had wine and bread and cheese and Psyche [a member of the Party] spent the whole day lying on her stomach in her jeans and sweater, saying nothing. But once she looked up with her little blue eyes and said, "How oral you are, Smith, you're always eating and drinking." (181)

The flip-side of such consumption is excretion. Kerouac notes how easy consumption has become in the United States and how we have come to ignore the implications of our consumption (both literally and environmentally). Thus, with the "crap" trope, in particular, Kerouac focuses upon the symbolism of our denial of our nature. Crap is something natural, human, an essential part of life and ourselves. Yet we find excretion dirty, embarrassing. Thus, we deny and hide that essential part of ourselves in an attempt to escape our animality or to escape responsibility for our actions through a "toilet bowl" mentality in which we flush away our problems. Kerouac rejects this game, considering the denial of our animality as part of our larger social suppression of spontaneity and freedom – an extension of our compulsion to surround ourselves with an unreflective material comfort (anathema to Buddhism). In this way, Kerouac strives to break down our pretensions; he reminds us of how human we are. Many of us, he notes with derision, are "eager young men in business suits going to work in insurance offices hoping to be big Harry Trumans some day" (131). Yet, as Kerouac reminds us:

> All these people . . . they all got white-tiled toilets and take big dirty craps like bears in the mountains, but it's all washed away to convenient supervised sewers and nobody thinks of crap any more or realizes that their origin is shit and civet and scum of the sea. They spend all day washing their hands with creamy soaps they secretly wanta eat in the bathroom. (39)

40. David Sterritt, "Kerouac, Artaud, and the Baroque Period of the Three Stooges," *Mosaic* 31 (1998) 83–98, p. 88.

In this passage we are confronted with an important nexus between "crap" and "supervision." To the extent that we must defecate, we have to process it, sanitize it, and manage it as we manage the rest of our lives. Similar to our sex drive, or our compulsion for healthy communities, we have within ourselves a nature that does not fit with the packaged suburban life of middle-class America. Supervision, therefore, is essential – even self-supervision – for otherwise we may allow our "dark side" to creep forward, as liberation movements (or the counterculture) threatened throughout the Cold War period. If that were to happen, then we would risk unleashing a real "rucksack revolution," a greening of the world and a renaissance in our thinking of the place of self in society. Such revolt, unthinkable in our managed, profit-driven society, is explicit in Kerouac's critical, Buddhist-informed perceptive. For example, later in the novel, Smith is told that he cannot sleep outdoors because such activity is "against the law." Sulking, Smith observes: "The only alternative to sleeping out, hopping freights, and doing what I wanted . . . would be to just sit with a hundred other patients in front of a nice television set in a madhouse, where we could be 'supervised' " (120).

In the "madhouse," all aspects of our life are controlled. We see nothing but the bars, the white walls, the gowns and pale flesh of the other inmates, the sterility, the enforced sameness, the insistent blinking and insect-like humming of the fluorescent lights, the sedations of television and medication, and, above all else, the management (or mismanagement) of our emotions and life-tendencies.[41] Such institutions are as much about the "supervision" of excretion as are our sewers. We manage our excretion the same way we "manage" ourselves. Each of us has our own "place," and the organic wholeness of human life and its interconnectedness with others is lost. We become judged on our "utility" to the system, to the profits of others; whatever or whoever does not fit in is disposed.

The conditions of the "madhouse" are in contrast with the Buddhist "lunacy" of Kerouac's vision. In one passage, Kerouac details his dissatisfaction with the mindlessness and mental castration of the world created by television and consumerism:

> But there was a wisdom in it all [meaning Japhy's "Zen lunacy"], as you'll see if you take a walk some night on a suburban street and pass house after house on both sides of the street each with the lamplight of the living room, shining golden, and inside the little blue square of the television, each living family riveting its attention on probably one show; nobody talking; silence

41. This is a point highlighted dramatically by Ken Kesey in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (New York: Viking, 1973).

> in the yards; dogs barking at you because you pass on human feet instead of on wheels. You'll see what I mean, when it begins to appear like everybody in the world is soon going to be thinking the same way and the Zen Lunatics have long joined dust, laughter on their dust lips. (104)

Kerouac's critical Buddhist world is, for him, the authentic world, where people do not need automobiles for mobility, where people think different and original thoughts, and where the iridescent, luminous, eerie and ghoulish glow of the television is replaced by crisp moonlight and the intoxications of the mountain air that Kerouac describes in his novel. What American culture celebrates as "freedom" and "security" resemble, according to Kerouac, control and placation for "the millions and millions of the One Eye" (104). Simply, the American multitudes suffer from misplaced priorities (deadly in the atomic age), alienation, and pacification – the result of a materialistic culture. Kerouac, therefore, wants to remind "people digesting dinners at home that all [is] not as well as they [think]" (188).

Discernible in *The Dharma Bums* are two senses in which people are pacified. First, people are literally suckled by the electronic breast, trading adult independence for a child-like dependency upon simple amusements. Second, they are pacified in George Orwell's sense – they have been rendered politically impotent, militarily subdued, and psychologically castrated.[42]

Kerouac contrasts these sedated, "supervised," and peaceful television viewers with an image of Japhy: "I see him in future years stalking along with full rucksack, in suburban streets, passing the blue television windows of homes, alone, his thoughts the only thoughts not electrified to the Master Switch" (104). Toward the end of the novel, Smith is camping in a thicket outside of Eugene, Oregon, on his way up to Washington to work as a fire-look-out. He lays in his sleeping bag across the road from "cute suburban cottages that couldn't see me and wouldn't see me because they were all looking at television" (219). Kerouac's comments highlight how television bestows a singularity of sight, a focused vision which, as a paradigm, understands only that which it can accentuate or collapse literally into a box. Some things, however, are outside the range of the camera, do not fit into the box, or are off the radar screen and are thus unperceivable – as is Smith contemplating the night. As such they (and he) become invisible (the more authentic, the more invisible to the television audience). For a world nurtured on illusion, the presence of Truth is easily overlooked – this is a foundational assumption in Buddhism.

42. See George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," in *Propaganda*, ed. Robert Jackall (London: Macmillan, 1995), 423–437.

Conclusion

As suggested in this essay, the more Kerouac's critical persona becomes manifest in *The Dharma Bums*, the more anomalous and alien Kerouac becomes to his American audience. At the same time, Kerouac's persona is suggestive of a cultural corrective to the alienation endemic to American society. His shadowy figure, lurking in the darkness outside our homes bright with the glare of television, challenges us to turn off the television and to open our minds to other ways of existence. Following Kerouac we understand that we have the power to author our own lives. We learn that the status quo reifies "garbage" and calls it Truth because garbage is all we expect. Once we understand this we can live in a different world. This is not a radical change. When we assume that there is nothing "deep" to human beings that we can appeal to through language or faith it is not as difficult to change as we think (although it does requires an increased sharing of resources and a willingness to enact humanistic and progressive values). Kerouac, and the counterculture of the 1950s and 60s, I believe, can be appreciated in this manner. The time is long overdue for a Kerouac-like vision of critical spirituality (Buddhist or otherwise) to grow and to spread across the nation and the world. It would be tragic if the counterculture of the 1950s and 1960s, inspired to a large extent by Kerouac's writing, constituted the *end* of America's moral growth as opposed to its *beginning*.

Marek Oziewicz

Joseph Campbell's "New Mythology"

and the Rise of Mythopoeic Fantasy

If the twentieth century witnessed a "rehabilitation of myth" in literary studies, the upsurge of interest in mythic systems with their ideologies, worldviews, and functional modes is rightly attributed to the work of C. G. Jung, Mircea Eliade, Northrop Frye, and Joseph Campbell. Behind their thousand faces, those thinkers argued, myths carry one message, which reflects the psychic unity of humankind. And because we are becoming more conscious of this unity, we face the need to "tell ourselves" anew and imagine a new mythology apposite to the modern situation. In *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, Joseph Campbell presents this new mythology as one of the whole human race; saying it is relevant to our present knowledge, already implicit among humans as intuitive knowledge, and will be realized in and through art. These postulates are met in and chronologically overlap with the emergence of modern mythopoeic fantasy in Tolkien, Lewis, L'Engle, Le Guin, Alexander, and others. This paper suggests that works of mythopoeic fantasy can be seen as exploring the components of the new story of unifying the human race and play an important role in shaping modern readers' response to contemporary challenges of an increasingly shrinking world.

Introduction

The late 1940s saw the publication of several important works which can be seen as thread-ends of the two strands – rehabilitation of myth and the rise of mythopoeic fantasy – I want to weave together in this paper. As early as in 1941, Carl G. Jung and Carl Kerényi's *Essays on a Science of Mythology* argued for mythology as "the rearising of a primordial reality in narrative form" and a type of narrative whose "meaning is so hard to translate into the language of science because it can be fully

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expressed only in mythological terms."[1] In 1947, two years before Jung and Kerényi's work was made available to an English audience, a collection *Essays Presented to Charles Williams* brought out for the first time two articles which became seminal for the development of mythopoeic fantasy: Lewis's "On Stories," and Tolkien's "On Fairy-Stories." In these groundbreaking essays Lewis and Tolkien argued for a new genre, a new type of mythopoeic literary formula most conducive, in the present circumstances, for expressing important things about the human condition. That same year, on the other side of the Atlantic, a young Canadian critic published *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* which demonstrated how important a rich mythopoeic structure was for Blake's total vision and for our understanding of his work. And if with this first major book Northrop Frye embarked on his own literary-critical crusade aimed at re-evaluating the place of myth in our culture, he was not meant to be alone. In 1949 he was joined by two other champions of the revival of myth who would become prolific and influential writers on the subject. These were Joseph Campbell, whose *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* posited that mythologies are creative manifestations of the human need to be intimately in touch with our universal psychological and spiritual realities; and Mircea Eliade, whose *The Myth of the Eternal Return, or Cosmos and History* substantiated that myth is an ontological, value-conferring narrative which allows humans to participate in a transcendent, perennial existence.

This was just the beginning, for the remaining decades of the twentieth century saw an unprecedented amount of research into myth and its survival in our culture. While the scope of this essay precludes even a general exposition of this huge project, I propose to link the modern renewal of interest in myth with the rise of the genre of mythopoeic fantasy. In this context I shall argue that Campbell's postulates about the Western civilization facing the need to "tell itself" anew – to come up with a new mythology apposite to the modern situation – are being realized in mythopoeic fantasy.

Twentieth-Century Rehabilitation of Myth

The colloquial functioning of the word "myth" in our culture – meaning a story or its underlying belief which is false, manipulative and superstitious – suggests the extent of mauling that the term underwent since the Enlightenment. In the pre-modern

1. Carl G. Jung and Carl Kerényi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton UP, 1993), pp. 6; 3–4.

times, as Karen Armstrong shows in her 2001 *The Battle for God*, it was believed that there are two modes of thinking, arguing, speaking, and acquiring knowledge called, in shorthand terms, *mythos* and *logos*. "Both were essential," says Armstrong, "and each had its special area of competence."[2] While myth was regarded as primary since it was concerned with the origins of life, with the foundations of culture, and invested human existence with meaning, "*logos* was the rational, pragmatic, scientific thought that enabled men and women to function well in the world."[3] Although they had separate jobs to do, "both *mythos* and *logos* were regarded as indispensable" for the people of the pre-modern world continued to see them as complementary ways of arriving at truth – complementary to the extent that one would be impoverished without the other.[4] This, however, is precisely what happened in the wake of the Enlightenment enrapture with *logos*. Starting in the late eighteenth century, amazing success in science and technology has encouraged people to disregard *mythos* as something false and superstitious.

For the nineteenth-century minds myth – with its literal or symbolic "interpretations" of the world – was the primitive counterpart of science whose advent made it, in the words of Robert Segal, "not merely redundant but outright incompatible" with a modern outlook.[5] While the naturalists led by a comparative mythologist Max Müller saw myth as a disease of language which sets out when the symbolic or metaphorical referents of a story to abstract concepts are forgotten and replaced with personifications, anthropologists such as E. B. Tylor and folklorists such as Andrew Lang interpreted it as primitive science. In both perspectives, however, myth was equally false and misinforming – a reason why Eleazar Meletinsky, who meant that myth was "a pre-scientific method to understand the environment" and the human experience of it, in 1976 contended that "the contrast between the naturalists and the anthropologists is not particularly profound."[6]

In this respect the most important difference between the theories of myth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is that the latter "have tended to see myth as almost anything but an outdated counterpart to science" and never posited that it

2. Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (London: HarperCollins, 2001), p. xiii.

3. Armstrong, p. xiv.

4. Armstrong, p. xv.

5. Robert Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 5.

6. Eleazar Meletinsky, *The Poetics of Myth* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

must be abandoned for science.[7] On the contrary, whether derived from anthropology, psychology, sociology, religious studies, literature, linguistics or other disciplines, these theories asserted that myth cannot be disregarded in any serious inquiry that purports to understand how we function as individuals, as a society, and as a culture. Already in 1941 Carl Kerényi asserted that we must "demand *back* from science . . . this feeling of immediacy between ourselves and scientific subjects. Science herself must throw open the road to mythology that she blocked first with her interpretations and then with her explanations."[8] This urge must have been felt by many other scholars for soon it was followed by such proliferation of theorizing that by now, in the words of Robert Segal, "each discipline harbours multiple theories of myth." To complicate matters, Segal explains,

> theories of myth are theories of some much larger domain, with myth as a mere subset. For example anthropological theories of myth are theories of culture *applied* to the case of myth. Psychological theories of myth are theories of the mind. Sociological theories of myth are theories of society. There are no theories of myth itself, for there is no discipline of myth in itself.[9]

If Segal is right – as I think he is – about there being no such discipline as myth in itself, one implication of this statement is that any theorizing of myth offered from within any discipline is perforce provisional. Segal's claim may also be taken to explain the mechanism behind the contemporary multiplication of theories of myth: if no discipline can claim myth as exclusively its own, it is legitimate that specialists from many fields may want to comment on it from their respective angles. The most obvious consequence of this broad process has been the twentieth-century rehabilitation of myth, evident not through the emergence of some dominant theory of myth but in the fact that in the past six or seven decades more scholars took myth seriously than ever before. While the answers they provided to the questions of its origin, function, subject matter, universality and truth value differed, the theories proposed can be roughly divided, as Segal suggests, into those that contend "that myth arises and functions to explain natural processes" and those that declare that it "arises and functions to unify society."[10]

7. Segal, p. 3.
8. Jung and Kerényi, p. 2.
9. Segal, p. 3.
10. Segal, p. 4.

Impossible and unnecessary as it is to review all those theories, the most important ones for the argument of this paper belong to the second category and have explained myths as carrying one message which reflects the psychic unity of humankind. Four theorists were especially prominent spokesmen for this approach: Mircea Eliade who discussed myths from an angle of religion studies; Carl Gustav Jung who theorized about them in the context of psychology; Northrop Frye who studied the working of myth in literature, and Joseph Campbell who explored the totality of myth's impact by referring to the insights of all three disciplines. These four, at least, are usually credited with generating the modern upsurge of interest in mythic systems with their ideologies, worldviews and functional modes in literary studies.

For Eliade, all myth is religious in a sense that it records hierophanies of everyday life, or, as he says in his 1963 *Myth and Reality*, it describes "the various and sometimes dramatic breakthroughs of the sacred (or the 'supernatural') into the World."[11] As a result, Eliade's

> interpretations of myth consist of identifying and analyzing the deep structures and meanings, often hidden and camouflaged, of the mythic disclosures of the sacred. Even when he speaks of modern, "secular myths," these are invariably analyzed as responding to deeper religious nostalgias and desires for the sacred, as revealing hidden or repressed religious structures and meanings, as inadequate substitutes for the fully mythic sacred, or as superficial, transitory, pseudoreligious creations.[12]

This – just as much as Eliade's definition of myth as "the most general and effective means of awakening and maintaining consciousness of another world, a beyond, [which] represents a superhuman, 'transcendent' plane, the plane of *absolute realities*"[13] – points to the underlying unity that Eliade posits for and behind myths. In his perspective, myths are stories which reveal that each of us is, deep in our core, a *homo religiosus* – archaic or religious being – whose experience of the world is meaningful inasmuch as it is tied to the sacred. Besides being powerful statements about us and our cognitive apparatus, myths also suggest an ontological reality: that of an objective, transcendent reality to which all creation is inherently bound. This is

11. Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 6.

12. Douglas Allen, *Myth and Religion in Mircea Eliade* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 185.

13. Eliade, p. 139.

why Eliade insists that myths are "true stories," different from fables, legends and other types of tales which have no claim to reality.[14] Irreducibly religious, for Eliade myths are also irreducibly symbolic, with their "own symbolic logic, symbolic mode of cognition and so on – all aimed to disclose a meaning of human existence."[15]

In many ways Eliade's claims echo those of Jung whose perspective on myth from within analytical psychology involves recognition of "the existence of an authentic religious function in the unconscious mind," which operates by means of symbols and symbolic narratives.[16] Strongly opposing the literal interpretation of myths, Jung saw them as stories of archetypal encounters which affect us so much because they derive from the collective unconscious – "a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us."[17] Conceived as a reservoir of archetypal structures, experiences, and themes, Jung's collective unconscious is his most compelling contribution to the study of myth for a number of reasons. It suggests that "the pre-conditions for myth-formation are present within the structure of the psyche itself" and thus implies a deep psychic unity of all humankind.[18] It accounts for the affective power of myth whose "archetypal situation[s]" make us "suddenly feel an extraordinary sense of release, as though [we were] transported, or caught up by an overwhelming power. At such moments we are no longer individuals, but the race; the voice of all mankind resounds in us."[19] It redefines myths and mythic stories "as statements of psyche about itself";[20] statements which are not invented as rather experienced by us in that myths, as Jung says, "are original revelations of the pre-conscious psyche, involuntary statements about psychic happenings."[21] It accounts for the similarities between myths of the societies remote from one another in time and place. It gives us the key, in the form of his theory of individuation, to understand the role of myths in the process of harmoniz-

14. Eliade, pp. 6–8.

15. Allen, p. 180.

16. Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1966), p. 3.

17. Carl Gustav Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1969), p. 4.

18. Andrew Samuels, *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1986), p. 95.

19. Carl Gustav Jung, *The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1971), p. 82.

20. Jung and Kerényi, p. 74.

21. Jung and Kerényi, p. 73.

ing the components of personality by means of which a person achieves, in the words of Meletinsky, "the definitive synthesis of consciousness with the unconscious, of the individual with the collective, and of the internal world with the environment."[22] Finally, it translates so well into the study of mythic structures, imagery and narrative elements in literature that it has even generated a school of criticism called archetypal criticism.

Contrary to Jung's explicit focus on the archetypes and through them on myth, Northrop Frye's centre of attention was myth and only indirectly archetypes. Thus, although in his 1957 *Anatomy of Criticism* Frye did employ Jungian terms and archetypal concepts, his approach should more appropriately be termed myth criticism. Besides his focus, two factors distinguish Frye's approach from the archetypal angle. One is his downplaying of Jung's theory of collective unconscious as "an unnecessary hypothesis in literary criticism"[23] combined with his redefinition of archetype as a communicable symbol or a kind of literary occurrence *per se* resembling a convention – by which he severs the connection between archetype and depth psychology.[24] Two is his concern as a literary critic to make literary criticism more methodical so that its interpretations could be more precise – a sharp contrast with Jung who claimed that "an archetypal content" which manifests itself in symbols and metaphors of myths must "remain unknown and [can] not to be fitted into a formula."[25]

With that said, Jung's and Frye's theories greatly overlap; the former used archetype and myth to illumine the working of the unconscious, the latter used them to rediscover the content of literature. Frye believed that the totality of literature is an extension and sophistication of a set of basic and universal formulas found in myths, and wrote his *Anatomy* in an attempt to build taxonomy of literature as a "displaced" mythology, best understood if interpreted in its correct mythical context. Although the system of literary classification he proposed never caught on, Frye has been especially influential in identifying the quest-myth as the central myth of literature and the source of all literary genres. In this, without collapsing literature into myth, he not only asserted the mythic origin of literature but also demonstrated the survival of mythic patterns even in most realistic genres – with myth being "not only the beginning but also the culmination of [his] five-mode cycle."[26]

22. Meletinsky, p. 42.
23. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton UP, 1973), pp. 111–2.
24. Frye, p. 107.
25. Jung and Kerényi, p. 76.
26. Meletinsky, p. 85.

If for Eliade myths point to the underlying unity behind humanity's religious experience, for Jung to unity behind our conscious minds, and for Frye to unity behind our artistic creations, especially literature, Campbell is a great synthesizer of all those positions. A literature scholar by training, a comparative mythographer by passion, and a transcendentalist – actually a "mystic" according to Segal[27] – by nature, Campbell believed that humanity lives in "the one, shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story." Called myth, it is "the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation," bringing forth "[r]eligions, philosophies, arts, the social forms . . . discoveries in science and technology" and all other products of human civilization.[28] Its social function notwithstanding, myth for Campbell also serves the psychological and mystical functions: in the former it conducts individuals through "psychophysiological stages of transformation of a human lifetime";[29] in the latter it provides "a sense of actual participation in . . . a realization of transcendence, infinity, and abundance" which opens a person's "mind and heart to the utter wonder of all being" and reveals the universe as an epiphany.[30]

Just as it was in the case of Eliade, Jung, and Frye, one of Campbell's leading assumptions was that Western civilization's neglect of *mythos* and unqualified idolatry of *logos* has brought us to the verge of collapse. In this sense, for each of those scholars, the passion with which they argued for the need to "return to myth" and grasp its crucial place in the life of an individual and of a society was informed by an acute sense of crisis – an almost life or death choice, the stake of which was individual's sanity and the survival of a civilization. If we can no longer ignore myth, they argued, let us try to understand it and attune ourselves to its universal message: that of unity of all humankind. And because we are presently becoming more conscious of this underlying unity, they said, we face the need to "tell ourselves" anew – to do what in his 1986 *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space* Campbell has called constructing a new mythology apposite to the modern situation.

For Campbell, who was the most ardent proponent of this idea, already in his 1968 *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* it was clear that "[t]he rise and fall of civilizations in the long, broad course of history can be seen to have been largely the

27. Robert Segal, *Joseph Campbell: An Introduction* (New York: Penguin, 1990), p. 58.

28. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton N. J.: Princeton UP, 1973), p. 3.

29. Joseph Campbell, *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2002), p. xxiii.

30. Campbell, *The Inner Reaches*, pp. xx–xxi.

function of the integrity and cogency of their supporting canons of myth." Given that, as he claims, the modern West has too long rested on "beliefs no longer universally held . . . but universally enforced,"[31] and given that no civilization can live without some myth, we are now in need of a creative mythology – "a totally new type of non-theological revelation, of great scope, great depth, and infinite variety [which will] become the actual spiritual guide and structuring force of [our] civilization."[32] That this revelation will come from literature, secular philosophy and the arts, Campbell reiterates – along with the implications that this fact has for the modern change in consciousness – in *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space,* the last book completed before his death. Having defined mythology, ancient and modern, as metaphorical of the psychological posture of a civilization, and located it within "the sociological structure coordinate to such a posture [called] a cultural monad," Campbell claims that the role of these monads is to invest culture with spiritual sense.[33] The modern predicament, however, is one of vacuum: "there are no more intact monadic horizons." Their dissolution suggests that "a fundamental transformation of the historical conditions of [the world] and its inhabiting humanity is in prospect."[34] For Campbell, this entails a pressing need for "constructing" a new mythology – one "which is rapidly becoming a social as well as spiritual necessity," and which will rest on a foundation of four major characteristics.[35] It will be of the whole human race, will be relevant to our present knowledge, is already implicit among men as knowledge *a priori*, native to the mind, and will be realized in and through art.

The Rise of Mythopoeic Fantasy

Whether Campbell was aware of it or not, the process of constructing new mythology in and through literature was well advanced by 1980s. It was happening in fantasy, the rise of which is one of the most spectacular literary development of the twentieth century. Given the number of novels written and the amount of serious academic criticism that has accompanied them, the process invokes explicit comparisons with the rehabilitation of myth that was happening simultaneously. This synchronicity, I

31. Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (New York: Penguin, 1991), p. 5.
32. Campbell, *Masks*, pp. 3–4.
33. Campbell, *The Inner Reaches*, p. xiv.
34. Campbell, *The Inner Reaches*, p. xix.
35. Campbell, *The Inner Reaches*, p. xxii.

think, is mostly due the fact that fantasy – as a cognitive strategy which presupposes the existence of the supernatural and an artistic mode in narrative fiction – demands from its readers a kind of mythical openness and thus can be seen as a backlash of the rationalist and reductionist stifling of *mythos* in favour of *logos*. In literature, the core of fantasy is the genre of mythopoeic fantasy: a narrative constructed from artistically re-imagined mythic materials and archetypes aimed to create an imaginative experience of a universe in which metaphysical concepts are objective realities. In this world the supernatural not only exists objectively but also places moral and ethical demands on the protagonists. As a result, their actions and the development of the plot are meant to show why and how moral choices and qualities matter; why and how they make us truly human. It is with this understanding of the major impulse behind fantasy that in her 1992 *Twentieth-Century Fantasists* Kath Filmer asserts: "[t]wentieth-century fantasy writers have often been in the vanguard of the movements which now characterize the conscience of the western world [and displayed] vision and courage . . . in raising, through a popular medium, issues of both cultural and global significance."[36] This is also why Patricia Karen Smith in her 1993 *The Fabulous Realm: A Literary Historical Approach to British Fantasy* thinks it most appropriate to designate the post 1950s stage of the evolution of fantasy by the name "dynamic,"[37] and sees it as "characterized by a complex, fast-moving, and energetic approach" informed by "the mythic priorities" and by "the key premise [of] belief and its prevailing strength."[38]

It is not insignificant that the emergence of mythopoeic fantasy, primarily in the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis in the late 1940s and 1950s, coincided with the emergence of powerful reinterpretations of myth in the writings of Jung, Eliade, Frye, and Campbell. Although it would be misleading to claim that Lewis and Tolkien were absolutely unique in the tradition of fantasy literature, it is useful to single them out not only because, as authors, they elevated fantasy to academic respectability and created the genre of mythopoeic fantasy, but also because, as critics, they explored its value, techniques, mechanisms and appeal. Perhaps the deepest link between Lewis and Tolkien and the four myth theorists is their shared belief that the imaginative and spiritual impoverishment characteristic of much of contemporary life may be countered by soul-nourishing stories composed in the "poetics of

36. Kath Filmer ed., *Twentieth-Century Fantasists: Essays on Culture, Society and Belief in Twentieth-Century Mythopoeic Literature* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1992), p. 3.

37. Patricia Karen Smith, *The Fabulous Realm: A Literary Historical Approach to British Fantasy* (Methuen, N. J. and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1993), p. 3.

38. Smith, pp. 310–311.

myth" – that is with conscious use of re-imagined mythic materials such as archetypes, plot structures, characters, events, motifs, and so on, derived from both ancient mythologies and from myths cherished by contemporary culture. Tolkien explicitly linked these specific stories with the "mythical or total (unanalysable) effect" and demonstrated that they educate the soul on four levels which he called Fantasy, Recovery, Escape, and Consolation.[39] Lewis asserted that mythopoeic narratives draw from the world of the spirit, convey "certain profound experiences which are . . . not [transmissible] in any other form,"[40] and may be seen as recreations of Jungian archetypes.[41] These, and many other of their claims about the specific kind of literature they produced and defended resonate well not only with Jung's, Eliade's, Frye's and Campbell's theorizing about myth, but also with the statements of numerous mythopoeic authors such as, among others, Ursula Le Guin, Lloyd Alexander, Orson Scott Card, Madeleine L'Engle, Peter Beagle and Susan Cooper. In this way, Lewis and Tolkien must be credited with having proposed a template of fiction which integrates *mythos* and *logos* as complementary ways of realizing and expressing the full human potential, while refining the mind and educating the "feeling intellect" of its readers in the language of symbols and archetypes.

In what way this type of fiction can be seen as an exploration of the components of the new mythology that Campbell posited I have endeavoured to demonstrate in my book *One Earth, One People*.[42] Perhaps the most important conclusion I was able to arrive at in my study was a perception that although each mythopoeic author is unique and presents a vision of the secondary world unlike others, they all share certain universals, such as deep structures, interpretative paradigms and values that run through them. Before I suggest what common thematic elements identified by Campbell as components of a new mythology in the making can be traced in specific fantasy novels, an important proviso must be made. Whereas I am positive that these novels may be said to *participate in the search for a new mythology* as Campbell imagined it, I must stress that that no specific fantasy novel, a genre, or a group of novels can be taken as *a formulation of new mythology*. Given that no novel or

39. J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories" in *Tree and Leaf*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (London: Grafton, 1992), 9–74, p. 32.

40. C. S. Lewis, "On Stories" in *On Stories and Other Essays on Literature*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Harvest/HBJ Publishers, 1982), 3–20, p. 15.

41. Lewis, p. 3.

42. Marek Oziewicz, *One Earth, One People: The Mythopoeic Fantasy Series of Ursula K. Le Guin, Lloyd Alexander, Madeleine L'Engle and Orson Scott Card* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2008).

group of novels in the modern world is able to carry the same social, spiritual and existential importance as was attached to the old mythologies for centuries, a new mythology for unified humanity that Campbell spoke about may issue from a cumulative effect of dominant patterns of thinking and feeling evident in art and other areas of human activity rather than from a specific, single "revelation" – narrative or otherwise.

Campbell's conviction that the new story will embrace, respect and treat equally the people of all religions, all racial backgrounds, and of both genders is being realized in mythopoeic fantasies which stress that only through cooperation instead of separatism, through mutual respect instead of mere tolerance, and through partnership instead of domination we can secure peace and happiness for our multicultural, multi-religious and bi-gendered planet. Good examples of such narratives are Ursula Le Guin's *The Earthsea Sequence* and Orson Scott Card's *The Tales of Alvin Maker*. The former is a mythopoesis on the Taoist notion of harmony and complementarity of opposites, with the plot woven around overcoming the divisions and prejudices which separate men from women, white Kargs from brown Hardic people, humans from dragons; the latter – a mythopoesis on the myth of America as a Promised Land and a Land of Freedom for All – deals with an imagined possibility of a peaceful coexistence of white, black, and red peoples in an alternative, 19th century United States.

Another aspect of the new mythology implied in Campbell's claim about its universal applicability and future-oriented potential, is the recognition of the fact that building the future entails integrating the past. In other words, the new story of unified humanity will need to incorporate the valid elements of cultural and religious traditions which for centuries guided different human civilizations and are still a strong presence in many people's minds. This integration reflects Campbell's conviction that, while none of the present cultural monads available to humanity is fully relevant to the modern situation, many of their insights and elements are. These will be included in the new story, providing a sense of continuity and evolution between the old and new paradigms. Mythopoeic fantasies which explore and explicitly reflect this desire for the integration of the past and the future are, among others, Lloyd Alexander's *The Chronicles of Prydain* and Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising Series*. Both series are mythopoeic recreations of Welsh myth; although Alexander's narrative is set in an imaginary 10th century and Cooper's in the 1960s, both series are a type of myth-telling in which relationships between the past, the present, and the future are encoded. As Cooper and Alexander suggest, our personal and collective

past is irretrievable and retrievable, gone yet always present, not only in the universe of our memory but also in the universe of our hopes and aspirations.

Campbell's assertion about the new story of humanity as compatible with the discoveries of modern science applies to mythopoeic fantasy as well. If the new mythology of our soon-to-be-unified planet should continue to nourish a sense of actual participation in a realization of transcendence, infinity, and abundance – this, in Campbell's opinion, being "the first and most essential service of a mythology" – it can do so only by incorporating the insights of holistic sciences.[43] As mythologies of old, it will serve an important cosmological function of relating human species to the awesome spectacle of the universe, but will transcend the nineteenth-century, long-obsolete dichotomy of science versus religion by redefining our conceptions of universe, of transcendence, and of the human being in a way that will be in keeping with the discoveries of modern sciences such as physics, biology, neurobiology, developmental psychology, ecology and many others. Perhaps the best example of this type of mythopoeia to date is Madeleine L'Engle's *Time Quartet*. A mythopoesis on the Christian myth, the series is an extended imaginative experiment about how specific claims of modern holistic sciences may be used to articulate Christian and spiritual truths in the language of contemporary culture, a culture that is very much science oriented.

The fourth major element of the new mythology Campbell spoke about is that the new story will reawaken us to the sacredness and preciousness of the natural world, and thus re-enchant it for us. The cosmological scope of the new mythology will be matched by its simultaneous stress on the ordinary, on what we have so far taken for granted and abused so much. If Campbell says that in the new story the natural world will be resacralized, mythopoeic fantasy it a perfect realization of ecological and holistic narrative that he has in mind. Indeed, since mythopoeic fantasies negotiate between the human and the nonhuman, often questioning the anthropocentric attitudes; since they assert that human culture affects the physical world and is affected by it; since they frequently manifest "the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support systems";[44] and since they stress the ethical, environmental, cultural and political implications of human actions, they

43. Campbell, *The Inner Reaches*, p. xx.

44. Cheryll Glotfelty, "Introduction. Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis," in *The Ecocriticism Reader*, eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Bloom (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), xv–xxxvii, p. xx.

may be seen as especially congenial to the exploration of our relationships with nature. Joseph Bruchac's *Dawn Land Series*, Orson Scott Card's *The Tales of Alvin Maker* or Ursula Le Guin's *The Earthsea Sequence* are just three of the many examples which could be used to substantiate this point. While Bruchac recreates the Great Lakes region and the world Native Americans from around 8000 B.C., Card does so with all of North America of the alternative 19th century, and Le Guin does so with an imagined, medieval-looking cultures of the world of the Earthsea, each author stresses the importance of environmental balance and associates ethically sound behaviour with thoughtful and responsible attitude to the natural world.

Although the above elements do not exhaust the list of characteristics which make it possible to see works of mythopoeic fantasy as part of imaginative speculation on the components of the new mythology, they are sufficient to suggest the viability of this perspective. Two other things may be added here. The first is Lewis's and Tolkien's insistence that in order to express the truths of the inner world mythopoeic fantasy must employ the regenerative powers of myth and mythmaking; the imperative which clearly situates the genre in the mainstream of the twentieth-century revaluation of myth. The second is that its mythopoeic component opened the genre to a seminal interaction with the discoveries of holistic sciences. Fantasy and science fiction – here the demarcation line may be blurred at times – are probably the two categories most responsive to such modern and often subversive hypotheses as the theory of relativity, multidimensionality of existence, Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphic resonance, James Hillman's archetypal theory, Richard Dawkins' theory of memetics, Ken Wilber's spectrum of consciousness, James Lovelock's Gaia theory and many others. This, of course, is not evidenced as much in Tolkien's and Lewis's mythopoeic fantasy as in that of later authors, especially that since the early seventies, which saw the incipient awareness of a global change of consciousness[45], the recognition of the crisis and the hope for renewal drawn from mythic stories were in the air. The decades which saw the proliferation of fantasy – from 1960s through 1990s – coincided with the appearance of books such as Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of*

45. See, for example, Chad Walsh's argument in his 1974 "Charles Williams's Novels and the Contemporary Mutation of Consciousness" (in *Myth, Allegory and Gospel: An Interpretation of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, and Ch. Williams*, ed. John Warwick Montgomery [Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974], 53–77). Here, Walsh claims that "a genuine change of consciousness is taking place before our bewildered eyes" and that certain works of literature represent "visible byproducts of that change" (59). Walsh calls this fundamental transformation of the way life was felt a "historical rarity" (60) and ascribes to it seven characteristic elements (59–62), all of which are actualized in mythopoeic fantasy.

Scientific Revolutions (1961), Ken Wilber's *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (1975), or Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics* (1977). All of them suggested that our culture and science witness the reshaping of the old, local paradigms toward a universal one, more suited to the needs of the modern, increasingly unified world.

How perceptive Tolkien and Lewis were in their assessment of the liberating potential of mythopoeia can be glimpsed from the proliferation of fantasy literature and movies, from the growing popularity of Role Playing Games, and from the plethora of scholarly publications of the last four decades, many of which expand certain claims made by Tolkien and Lewis. Increasingly, the focus is on the regenerative powers of myth and mythmaking as is the case, for example, in Jane Yolen's 2000 *Touch Magic*. In this brilliant book the American mythopoeist, children's literature author and critic explores four major functions of mythic narratives in the intellectual development of the child. Asserting that these stories provide (1) a landscape of allusion, (2) a knowledge of ancestral cultures, (3) a tool in moulding "a mentally stable individual,"[46] and (4) "a framework or model for an individual's belief system," Yolen calls "an understanding of, a grounding in, a familiarity with the old lores and wisdoms of the so-called dead worlds . . . a basic developmental need."[47] Like other mythopoeic fantasists she knows that "stories lean on stories, cultures on cultures."[48] She is also convinced that "we remake our mythology in every age out of our own needs."[49] In this perspective mythopoeia – the artistic recreation of older, mythic elements which are then woven into new stories – and familiarity with mythopoeic stories is a vital part of every child's education, without which the child "lacks true memory and thus lacks the ability to learn," nor can they "generalize or interpret [their] experience."[50] Yolen asserts that "if we deny our children their cultural, historical heritage, their birthright in the stories" the result will be that

> instead of creating men and women who have a grasp of literary allusion and symbolic language, and a metaphorical tool for dealing with the serious problems of life, we will be forming stunted boys and girls who speak only a barren language, a language that accurately reflects their equally barren minds.[51]

46. Jane Yolen, *Touch Magic. Fantasy, Faerie and Folklore in the Literature of Childhood* (Little Rock: August House Publishers, 2000), p. 17.
47. Yolen, p. 14.
48. Yolen, p. 15.
49. Yolen, p. 16.
50. Yolen, p. 18.
51. Yolen, p. 18.

Conclusion

A glance at any among a large number of recently published books on moral education, character education, and literary education[52] leaves no doubt that arguments such as those advanced by Yolen are almost universally accepted. Also, a continuing appreciation of, on the one hand, Jung, Eliade, Campbell, Frye along with other serious theorists of myth, and of Lewis, Tolkien, Le Guin and other mythopoeic fantasists on the other suggests that theories of myth as somewhat reflecting the psychic unity of humankind have remained as appealing as mythic narratives, old and new. Whereas it remains to be seen whether western civilization is, as I would tend to agree, taking a holistic turn, it is quite clear that in many areas – politics, economy, ecology, culture – the planet rather than a state is seen as a point of reference. A new, polyphonic cosmopolitanism is being born in the circulation of what Benita Parry calls "the 'global flows' of transnational cultural traffic."[53] Part of the process is the recognition of fantasy and science fiction as legitimate subjects for academic study. Another is a trend to accept the value of myth as – in Ursula Le Guin's definition – "a nonintellectual mode of apprehension" capable of connecting the conscious and unconscious realms and thus crucial for the healthy, non-alienating development of human societies and individual human beings alike.[54] In this process, the role of such popular literary genres as mythopoeic fantasy should not be underestimated.

Works of mythopoeic fantasy uphold belief in transcendence and in its intimate relation to human life. They sustain the belief in the ultimate conquest of death

52. See, for example, Colin McGinn, *Moral Literacy: How to Do the Right Thing* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), Vigen Guroian, *Tending the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child's Moral Imagination* (New York: Oxford UP, 1998), Paul S. Fiddes ed., *The Novel, Spirituality and Modern Culture* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), Hanan Alexander, *Reclaiming Goodness: Education and the Spiritual Quest* (Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 2001), William Damon, *Bringing in a New Era in Character Education* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), Stephen Prickett and Patricia Erskine-Hill ed., *Education! Education! Education! Managerial Ethics and the Law of Unintended Consequences* (Thorverton and Charlottesville: Imprint Academic, 2002), and Guroian, *Rallying the Really Human Things: The Moral Imagination in Politics, Literature, and Everyday Life* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2005).

53. Quoted in Bruce Robbins, "Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," in Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins eds., *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998): 1–19, p. 1.

54. Ursula Le Guin, "Myth and Archetype in Science Fiction," in Susan Wood ed., *The Language of the Night*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1979), 68–77, p. 70.

based on the conviction about the essential oneness and continuity of life; they affirm individualism and the value of life based on ideals; and they evince practical concern with the good of the holistically conceived universe on all levels: personal and communal, local and global, spiritual and material. In these and other ways, the genre thus plays an important role in shaping modern readers' response to contemporary challenges, influences other genres of fantasy fiction and explores the components of a new story, or new mythology, for all humankind. It does so by creating in their readers a state of mind in which fantasy "fiction" becomes a "true narration" about the possibility of achieving harmony on earth and illuminates the real world by prefiguring possible human actions and institutions.

Sophie Croisy

Michelle Cliff's Non-Western Figures of Trauma

The Creolization of Trauma Studies

This paper shows that Michelle Cliff's work puts Western trauma theory through the work of creolization. It critiques the inadequacy of trauma theory *qua* colonial theory in the process of understanding a historical trauma that centers around racial (and partially gender) difference. To do so, we look at Cliff's *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven* in order to question certain givens in the field of trauma studies, reconceptualize the problematic theories of this Eurocentric frame of thinking, and promote the revision of the field's intentions in order to become productive in the postcolonial context. The paper also shows that Cliff takes her readers and characters through the difficult work of re-membering Caribbean history, a history erased by colonial fables. The dissemination of historical truths and positive images of prominent black characters which were, in the past, imposing figures of resistance, helps the readers and characters to reflect upon the damage done to the country of maroon warriors in the past and the repercussions of that damage on the present. This is one step in the process of identity recovery for the main character Clare Savage, whose progressive discovery and critique of social discrepancies based on racial difference and eventual struggle enable her to understand the historical trauma of her own people and use that trauma as the root for re-constructing a positive Caribbean identity.

In the introduction to a collection of texts entitled *Caribbean Creolization*, Kathleen Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau define creolization as a "process of transverse dynamics that endlessly reworks and transforms the cultural patterns of varied social and historical experiences and identities."[1] This process counters colonial and neocolonial desires for the homogenization and sometimes problematic authentication of cultures. Creolization came as a theoretical and practical polemical response to

1. Kathleen Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau ed., *Caribbean Creolization* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), p. 3.

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colonialism in the Caribbean islands and can be linked to postcolonial thinker Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity which counters the "production of discriminatory identities that secure the pure and original identity of authority."[2] In this essay, I intend to creolize trauma studies by defining new figures of trauma, new sites of trauma that have not been considered by traditional conversations around trauma. I want to unveil the unhealthy colonial/patriarchal desire rooted into certain areas and arguments of psychoanalysis, and rethink these arguments through an analysis of the work of Caribbean writer Michelle Cliff in which traditional psychoanalytical concepts about self/identity formation cannot explain the characteristics of the main character's identity crisis or help us imagine its possible resolution.

In this essay, I want to combat imperial practices by denouncing the ways in which the use and manipulation of psychoanalytical concepts have participated in the imperial project of promoting the deployment of Eurocentric values made universal and reproduced so as to erase the colonized and her cultural paradigm. I want to participate in what Ranjana Khanna calls "worlding," that is "a projection into existence of certain elements in the world which now become unconcealed."[3] According to Khanna, "The project of worlding is one of strife between the unconcealed (worlded) and the concealed (earthed)."[4] My work in this essay is the work of unconcealment, of unveiling the ways in which global psychoanalytical conclusions on the characteristics and effects of trauma participate in the colonial project of erasing difference and foreclosing possible productive connections between "enemy" cultures (the ex-empire and its ex-colonies, but also the new empires and their colonial targets) in the post-colonial era.

Khanna defines psychoanalysis as a colonial discipline which has "formalized strategies to normalize a form of civilized being constituted through colonial political dynamics."[5] In my essay, these norms are pitted against non-Eurocentered, postcolonial social and cultural contexts. They are scrutinized and challenged by a Caribbean author who, to use a term coined by Dipesh Chakrabarty, participates in the *provincialization* of this European colonial strategy and unveils "the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force and the tragedies and ironies that attend it."[6]

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2. Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," in *The Postcolonial Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1995), 29–35, p. 34.

3. Ranjan Khanna, *Dark Continents, Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 4.

4. Khanna, p. 4.

5. Khanna, p. 6.

6. Dipesh Chabrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History," in *The Postcolonial Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft *et al.* (London: Routledge, 1995), 383–388, p. 383.

In order to transform trauma studies into a productive post-colonial field of study, writers in/about the field have to put it through the work/process of provincialization/creolization. The field of trauma studies has to open itself up to the consideration and analysis of forgotten traumas, and it has to recognize its own delinquencies, its own colonial tradition. Moreover, it should stop pretending to draw universal conclusions as to the "nature" and effects of trauma, and begin dealing with local traumatic events and their specific characteristics and repercussions. Western criticism, which includes the field of trauma studies, should put itself at the service of understanding difference – the different historical and political trajectories of cultures, their specific traumas, their particular evolutions according to locale. Trauma theories should let themselves be transformed and transformed again by the testimonies of those who have lived through trauma. As a matter of fact, rather than looking at a testimony as the (impossible) retelling of a victim's past (as trauma studies sometimes do), one needs to think of a testimony as "a verbal action of resistance which, as such, is not a simple statement or description of the historical conflict it narrates, but an actual intervention in this conflict."[7] Through their narratives, the victims and/or witnesses of trauma both resist history as truth and become the agents of history as memory, hence the relevance of genealogical memory in the healing process after trauma. We will see that Michelle Cliff's main character Clare Savage in *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven* is both witness to the erased traumatic part of her Jamaican past (that is her maroon heritage, a heritage denied to her by her "white" father) and victim of that erasure as she is unable to know herself and her history until she begins to recuperate her mother's and her maroon people's genealogical memory. In *History and Memory*, Lacapra clearly articulates a useful relationship between history/identity and memory. He relies on Freud's work on mourning and melancholia which poses melancholia as this ambiguous, even tricky concept: "both a precondition to (or even necessary aspect of) mourning and that which can block processes of mourning insofar as it becomes excessive or functions as an object of fixation."[8] In an essay entitled "Mourning and Melancholia" published in 1917, Freud stressed the separation between those two processes (despite their similarities in the way they materialize) and the necessary ending of the melancholia period so that mourning can take place. However, in *The Ego and the Id* (1923),

7. Shoshana Felman and Dauri Laub, Testimony*: Crises of Witnesses in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 98.

8. Dominick Lacapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 183.

Freud defines melancholia as a step in the process of mourning. According to that new, non-binary equation between mourning and melancholia, the memory of what was lost, instead of being detached from the present and future of the melancholy person or group, can remain for Lacapra a "modality or component of working through problems. Memory in this sense may become a manner of recalling misguided ventures and critically taking leave of less desirable aspects of the past as well as of attempting to honor other aspects or make them the bases of a constructive action in the present and future."[9] Instead of detaching oneself from the memory of a lost object (a lost past, a lost history), the subject preserves this memory which can, in a positive and performative way, impact present and future. The subject, still impressed by this memory of what is lost, will refuse to give it up for her own benefit (healing) and to substitute this loss with a consolation prize (such as imposed empty narratives of remembering, monuments, or other techniques of memorialization) – hence the possibility for regenerating responses to loss, to death through a preservation of their memory. Hence also a reconceptualization of what it means to recover. Recovery here is not a selfish move towards self-wholeness, but a productive but difficult progression towards a future that does not erase the memory of the past and uses it to think through the possibilities for reconstructing one's identity (a group's, a nation's) while keeping the past, its traumatic aspects, in mind. Clare Savage will go through this process of remembering and using the traumatic memories of her people in order to construct her own identity as a créole woman.

Trauma theories should also recognize the importance of analyzing localized traumas, the shapes they have taken, and the possibilities for new forms of resolution which depend on the traumatized individual or community's specific needs; they should let themselves be revised, revisited by the very witnesses of trauma. Only through a dialogical relationship between (Western) trauma studies and non-Western cultural histories can trauma studies shed its colonial skin and become a universally meaningful post-colonial field – universally meaningful because concerned with an analysis of localized traumas and their specificity.

The unearthing of the concealed counter-traumatic and counter-colonial potentiality of trauma studies takes place in the work of the writers of difference like Michelle Cliff. Such writers manage to give back trauma studies its revolutionary potential by deterritorializing it, detaching it from its colonial heritage (though always recognizing and foregrounding that heritage), and transforming it into a productive post-colonial practice critical of its origins, its evolution, its violence.

9. Lacapra, p. 185.

Recontextualizing Creolization

Creolization/hybridization was and still is a political project that offsets conservative notions of identity and promotes the idea of constant cultural mutation, of cultural sharing. Creolization involves interaction between cultural groups, an interaction which defines the heterogeneous origin of Caribbean identity/ies. This definition is a broad one which is modified according to geographical, regional perspectives. As a matter of fact, the meaning of the term creolization and the term itself will change according to location within this non-homogeneous, linguistically and culturally pluri-dimensional place called "the Caribbean." This notion of hybridity will, for some writers (e.g., West Indian author V.S. Naipaul), be synonymous to unrecoverable fragmentation and a life lived in the limbo of non-identity. For others (e.g., Barbadian author George Lamming), it will become a place from which to speak against and beyond colonial discourses and institutions that promote cultural essentialism and the hierarchization of cultural groups according to race/social status. Yet others will move away from that problematic binary, from these two mutually exclusive forms of displacement that become problematic either-or ontologies and thus reproduce the homogenizing practice of colonial discourse. Michelle Cliff is one of these "others" who critique the transparency of these two opposite discourses and acknowledge the ambivalence and complexity of the creole/ hybrid position. This position, one of resistance, involves both traumatic fragmentation and the possiblity for making one's voice heard, the two being intricately linked in the process of countering problematic colonial/metropolitan binarisms – binarisms found at the core of trauma studies as we will see in this essay.

Cliff puts trauma studies through the work of creolization – an ambivalent, multiple, complex process that brings forth complicated sites of trauma and figures of trauma that have not been recognized and analyzed by trauma theories. In this essay, I will rely on Michelle Cliff's two novels *Abeng* and *No Telephone To Heaven*. I see the process of creolization she describes as performative since it participates in the project of re-telling forgotten traumatic stories and modifying a narrow metropolitan, rather static, envisioning of what trauma is and can do to one's sense of being and belonging.

In the two above-mentioned texts by Cliff, desire for a unitary, non-fragmented self is the very root of trauma, of violence, for the main character of both texts, Clare Savage. Throughout these two texts, Clare wavers between Jamaican stories of origin and both witnesses and works (consciously and unconsciously) against the homogenization and commodification of her own and her people's cultural identity. She

refuses the authentication of her origin through the construction of strict cultural attachments with the European side of the family, a process largely imposed by her father who is, for Clare, and as Jenny Sharpe would argue, one of the "representative figures that foreground the rhetorical strategies of the dominant discourse from which the truth-claims of [Clare's] counter-narratives are derived."[10] Clare will disturb that paternal/patriarchal/colonial imposition in *Abeng* to participate in cultural survival against the traumatic homogenization of her identity, a trauma brought about by the father's desire to embody, and to see his "light" daughter embody, a purely modern, colonial self.

Caribbean Traumas

As discussed above, according to very conservative notions of healing after a traumatic experience, one needs to fully overcome trauma in order to recover a well-structured sense of one's self, one's identity. What then happens when identity is constructed upon one or a series of traumatic historical moments? How can one overcome trauma when it literally shapes one's history, one's cultural identity (or absence thereof)? An archeology of the history of The Caribbean clearly points out the successive violent interventions of colonial outsiders upon the islands and their populations from the part of one or several colonial nations since 1492 – be it the Portuguese, the Spanish, the French, the English. The colonization of the Caribbean islands often involved a succession of colonial interventions, a repetition of violence without a difference except for the language in which imperial discourses and institutions were repeatedly constructed and imposed.

Michelle Cliff, in *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven*, writes about the trauma of Jamaica. The Arawak Indians from Venezuela and later the Carib Indians from Guinea were the first settlers of the island. Columbus arrived in 1494 followed by Spanish Jaun de Esquivel in 1510 to continue the process of destruction of Jamaican lives and culture started by Columbus. Jamaica for the Spanish was of little importance except as a passageway towards Mexico which the Spanish wanted to conquer. The British arrived in 1655 and put in place the slave economy which lasted until 1834. Jamaica was granted political independence in 1962 through the presence of a governor general, in the same ways as for Barbados, who represents the British Crown on the island. Though the head of the government is an elected Prime Minis-

10. Jenny Sharpe, "Figures of Colonial Resistance," in *The Postcolonial Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1995), 99–103, p. 99.

ter, the involvement/acquiescence of the governor general is still required in certain instances. This everlasting presence of the "ghost" of the British Empire is reflected in Cliff's work as she fictionalizes the near-impossibility for Jamaica in general, and Clare in particular, to escape the island's oppressive colonial past[11]. However, Clare does manage to deconstruct the imperial and paternal panoptic gaze that holds her and her island still, and she manages to renegotiate her hybrid identity not by overcoming the traumas of the past, but by asserting them, recovering them, and by acknowledging trauma as the very stuff of her identity and history (though Cliff never lets Clare fall into the discursive trap of victimhood). According to rather traditional definitions of trauma, trauma implies a splitting of identity[12]. Recovery implies the mending of the wound. However, in instances that are not taken into account by trauma studies, splitting will be, against all odds, a sign of healing. This process also involves the recognition of new sites, new figures of trauma that are not discussed in psychoanalysis or trauma studies, and a rethinking of traditional psychoanalytical sites/figures of trauma.

Trauma as Site of Memory and Identity

In *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven* by Michelle Cliff, the young light-skinned Jamaican Clare Savage stands at the center of the process of memorial recovery she begins as a child. This process of recuperating the silenced side of her cultural heritage proceeds from Clare's developing consciousness as to the existence of a gap, a lack that splits her into fragments. On the one hand, Clare is aware of her colonial heritage through her father's repetitious grounding of his and his daughter's identity in White colonial history. This grounding takes place through a series of legitimating narratives told by the father and the Jamaican colonial education system. These narratives are sites of indoctrination through myth-making and the totalitarian imposition of these myths upon Clare as she seeks to penetrate her obscured genealogical past. One of those myths appears in the social construction of the family name: "The definition of what a Savage was like was fixed by color, class, and religion, and over the years a carefully contrived mythology was constructed, which they used to pro-

11. For more information about Caribbean history, see Thomas G. Mathews, *The Caribbean: History, Politics, and Culture.* (Publishing House unknown: Copyright in the United States, 1999). See also Thomas Bremer and Ulrich Fleischmann, *History and Histories in the Caribbean* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2001).

12. Ruth Leys, *Trauma: a Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 125.

tect their identities. When they were poor, and not all of them white, the mythology persisted. They swore by it."[13] On the other hand, Clare becomes aware of her mother's difference, her not fitting into the paternal/ colonial stories of origin because of her darker appearance, and her being repeatedly silenced by the father. This silenced difference, Clare realizes, also defines her own identity, and Clare will strive to understand the wordlessness of her mother and make up for it through the recuperation of a rather female-centered Jamaican history of colonial resistance. Trauma as resistance becomes the leitmotiv of both novels and forces readers to analyze the history of Western myth-making (that is Western trauma stories and theories) and complicate that history by acknowledging the need for a disruption of it through a process initiated by Clare in the novels: she struggles against the latency of resistance history through her witnessing, wording, and analysis of Jamaica's traumatic heritage and the social practices of trauma. To use Cathy Caruth's argument, Clare's encounters with her traumatic past lead to the realization that "history is no longer referential (that is, no longer based on simple models of experience and reference)."[14] Clare-the-young-adult in *No Telephone to Heaven,* sequel to *Abeng*, will eventually consciously participate in the progressive deconstruction of patriarchal/colonial systems of reference in order for the not-known and not-said to irrupt out of the disquieted volcano of the past. However, the first step is for Clare-the-child in *Abeng* to witness the trauma of her "dark" history and perform unconsciously (though the process is made conscious for the reader by the heterodiegetic narrator) "a rethinking of reference . . . aimed at . . . permitting *history* to arise where *immediate understanding* may not."[15] This "arising" of history through Clare's witnessing in *Abeng* is signified by the narrator's interventions in the consciousness-searching story of Clare. These interventions are in fact pieces of Jamaican resistance history which come to disrupt the narrative of Clare's life whenever she performs an important act of witnessing.

In *Abeng*, Clare-the-child visits with her father an old Jamaican plantation turned into a tourist attraction where foreigners can come and experience the "atmosphere" of a "long gone" past. There she witnesses the commodification of colonial history, a history which shows itself so tangible on the plantation since if the "white masters" are represented by "white plaster dummies from a factory in New

13. Michelle Cliff, *Abeng* (New York: Plume Printing. 1995), p. 29.

14. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 11.

15. Caruth, p. 11.

York City,"[16] Clare notices that "Black Jamaicans, also in period costume but alive, not replicas were paid to stand around with machetes and hoes, and give directions to the parties."[17] This present witnessing of the performance of pre-abolition racial structures alludes to the colonial system still in place at the time of the narrative (1958) but is disrupted by the narrator's intervention. As Clare witnesses and assimilates, the narrator intervenes and "permits history to arise" by taking the reader back in history through a narrative of past resistant movements to slavery.

Paradise Plantation is the place where the Savage family, ancestors of her father, used to live as producers of cane and slave owners. The "great house" where the Savage family used to live has remained untouched on the plantation while the rest of it has been turned into a tourist trap. There, foreigners can buy vacation homes the look of which takes them, rather romantically, back in history. Clare's father wants her to visit the old house since it represents for him the remains of the glorious past of the Savage family. Upon entering, Clare's eyes focus on the walls of the house and detect "a pattern made of the same picture, of people in a park in a city somewhere in Europe. The women wore long dresses. . . The dresses and parasols were red, the woman white. White children played across the paper, and red dogs jumped at sticks. The scenes were repeated again and again across the wall."[18] As they both prepare to leave the house, and after a long observation of its insides, Clare "licked her finger and touched it to the wall, then tasted it-it was salt."[19] The wallpaper which symbolizes the repetitive structure of the colonial system tastes of salt and is in fact completely covered with salt, which was used as compensation to sweating by slaves working in the plantation. Moreover, " 'salt-water' slaves"[20] was the name given to slaves brought from Africa. This making visible of the slaves' haunting presence in the master house, of the human sacrifice made in the process of preserving colonial structures and economy, takes place through Clare who becomes a medium between past and present in this newly imagined place, Paradise Plantation, which seeks to erase the violence of history. Her tasting the salt on the wall makes real the trauma of slavery and her involvement in it and feeds her growing desire to redefine herself beyond the boundaries imposed by her father. Antonio Benitez-Rojo writes that the instability of Caribbean identities "is the product of the plantation (the big bang of the Caribbean universe), whose slow explosion throughout modern history threw out

16. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 37.
17. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 37.
18. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 24.
19. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 25.
20. John Gilmore, *Faces of the Caribbean* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2000), p. 162.

billions and billions of cultural fragments in all directions,"[21] fragments the "coming together and pulling apart"[22] of which create the creole subject. Clare, as the novel moves forward, learns to desire the *creolité*, this unstable cultural interstice her father refuses her.

Though Clare-the-child does not know all the intricacies and details of that erased creole history at the time of witnessing, her seeing and tasting of the past, and her walking around the plantation are acts of memory, acts of return to the not-known, the not-said. They are also acts of departure from the colonial structures, a departure that will become more and more conscious with age. Clare-the-young-adult in *No Telephone to Heaven* will retrospectively re-interpret, replay (thus repeat), these unconscious acts of memory and continue to construct her dispersed identity and her political struggle against colonial structures of power.

New Evaluations of Traumatic Return, Departure, and Repetition

Clare's return/departure, though unconscious at the time of witnessing, is necessary ground for the narrator's interventions upon the structures, the references of colonial history and its representations. It is necessary ground for Clare-the-young-adult's subsequent " 'striking' of the insight"[23] offered to her through the act of witnessing. However, contrary to Caruth's argument based on her analysis of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, between Clare's unconscious acts of witnessing/living trauma and her realization that the Jamaican colonial trauma is hers, there is no fall because the act of departure (from the myth of an ideal white colonial past promoted mainly by her "light" father) is immediately counterbalanced by the act of return (of a history of resistance to the myth). This return is not, as explained above, performed by Clare herself but by the narrator who incorporates resistance history into the narrative of Clare's witnessing. The narrator (this other voice of history) refuses the fall through her interventions and offers Clare a different fate than the one predicted to the traumatized, the victim of history. Clare never falls victim to the unconscious traumatic loss of her colonial historical connections because as this traumatic loss grows, as the acts of witnessing trauma succeed each other, the holes are mended by

21. Antonio Benitez-Rojo, "Three Words toward Creolization," in *Caribbean Creolization*, ed. Kathleen Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 53–61, p. 55.

22. Benitez-Rojo, p. 55.

23. Caruth, p. 22.

the constant interventions of the narrator who continues, repeats, her new historical tale. In *Abeng*, this repetitious telling of Jamaican resistance history, the repetition of the names of resistance (Nanny the sorceress and warrior who fought against slave-owners during the Maroon revolt, Kishee her army commander, Mma Alli the obeah woman who taught the young to remember their history, etc.), is not an index of trauma. On the contrary, this narrative "acting out" of trauma through the repetition of ignored resistance stories is part of the slow process of identification Clare will continue to go through in the sequel to *Abeng*. In *Abeng*, repetition denotes Jamaican author's Michelle Cliff's desire for a non-resolution, a no-end to the act of witnessing trauma since this witnessing is the very road to freedom for Clare, the very stuff that will make it possible for her to redefine her identity along new historical lines. Clare-the-child 's unconscious loss of markings (markings imposed by the father) in the process of witnessing the traumatic effects of the island's colonial past, though already disruptive to Clare's identity, turns out to be covered and healed by the narrator's counter-traumatic process of recuperating what was "forgotten" by her father Boy in his telling of the island's history to Clare in *Abeng*. This pattern of recuperation is repeated in *No Telephone to Heaven* as Clare remembers and interprets her acts of witnessing with the knowledge of an adult who understands the implications of what she did witness. What is cathartic for Clare is thus not the transformation of forgetting into memory and self-representation as Freud would have it, but the conversion of the unknown; the unsaid never forgotten, though undecipherable at the time of witnessing; into knowable, utterable, acts of resistance to colonial mythologies about Jamaican self-representation and recollection.

Contrary to Caruth's positive conclusions about Freud's departure from the trauma of Nazism, Clare's departure from the "traumatic" history she was born into according to her father, would be catastrophic, not at all the gift of freedom, which is how Caruth reads departure in the context of Freud's story. Such a departure for Clare would forbid the proper weighing of returned memories instigated by the narrator of *Abeng* against patriarchal/colonial history. If the recuperation of Maroon history is crucial to Clare's identity formation, her remaining attached to her father's mythology of pure white origin is also crucial. Clare has to retain the memory of paternal/colonial desire – the desire to see Clare fall into monolithic categories of subjecthood – and combat this desire by keeping it within hands' reach. The linear movement of departure, the product of trauma for Caruth and prospect of freedom, becomes for Cliff the agent of Clare's trauma in the same way as it has been an agent of Jamaica's historical trauma (Caribbean exiles living in the "motherland" embody

that trauma for V.S. Naipaul), hence the intervention of Cliff's historical returns in *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven*.

According to Lacanian psychoanalysis, the ego is constituted through the very process of alienation. Hence Lacan's conclusion that the ego is in fact an alter ego since identification with the Other takes place in the process of ego formation. The term used by Lacan to refer to that process by which alterity becomes central to subject formation is extimacy.[24] In *Abeng*, Boy the father both symbolic and real, is responsible in part for Clare's disappearance (a disappearance against which she fights), her departure from herself. He is the symbolic Father/Other through whom Clare is expected to constitute her subjectivity. His traumatic ever-present shadow in Clare's life forces her into a process of adaptation to a reality regimented by a patriarchal/colonial symbolic order. This conforming process implies, for Clare, a betrayal of the mother/owner of counter-colonial knowledge, and of herself who is biologically (essentialism comes in but for a good cause) and culturally the heiress of that very knowledge. The omnipresence of the symbolic law of the father forces maternal knowledge and power into absence, but this binary opposition against which Clare struggles as she lives under its aegis is indeed disrupted through Clare's acts of witnessing. Clare's departure from the colonial matrix through her acts of witnessing in *Abeng* is later materialized in *No Telephone to Heaven* by her actual departure from colonial Jamaica to New York in 1960 when Clare is fourteen, and later to London where she lives and studies until she makes her comeback to Jamaica in the 1980s. She will then take the decision to fight on the side of resistance to governmental powers which, though officially independent from the British rule, are still the faithful heirs to colonial governments in the 1980s (and today). This return is, on the one hand, a physical return to and recovery of the native/real mother/land though land and mother were never forgotten, and on the other hand, the beginning of Clare's material involvement in the armed struggles against the remains of the Empire. This physical departure/ return is again, not marked by the curse of trauma since Clare continues, even abroad, as she lives and grows in America and then England, the process of filling in the gaps and holes created by her father's myths. Though Clare will always be bonded genealogically to a violent colonial structure, Clare-the-young-adult rediscovers her mother's erased history and her citizenship in a new nation that strives to preserve its practical bonds to the past and limit the in-

24. or further development on the concept of extimacy (*extimité*), see Jacques Alain Miller in *Lacanian Theory of Discourse: Subject, Structure, and Society*, ed. March Bracher et al. (New York: New York University Press, 1994), p. 75.

fluence of more unpractical ones. Through this process of departure/return, this constant movement of migration, Clare is definitely undone, but this undoing is performative as Clare becomes the meeting place between different pasts, as well as between these pasts and the present of Jamaica in the 1980s. She also becomes a figure of hope for the future, a positive vision of recovery from colonial lies, against cultural disavowal. According to Anne Cvetkovich, "Migration can traumatize national identity, producing dislocation from or loss of an original home or nation. But if one adopts a depathologizing approach to trauma, the trauma of immigration need not be healed by a return to the natural nation of origin or assimilation into a new one."[25] In the context of Clare's story, thanks to her acts of witnessing and her actual physical departure from and return to the island, migration is not traumatic because it implies this double movement of intellectual and physical departure and return, a movement that prevents the traumatic fall. This movement never implies an eventual return to the nation of origin, nor does it involve assimilation into a new one. Clare does return to Jamaica, but a Jamaica quite different from the place defined and described for her by her father. The Jamaica she returns to is the place she has managed to reconstruct through this constant migration process, these theoretical and physical departures/ returns that have helped her come to terms with the absolutism of her father's stories of origin. Clare embodies the successful contestation of cultural hegemony and comes to replace the negative image of the exile in V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, for whom both departure and return are unrecoverable traumatic events that forever prevent any kind of identity recovery and negate the possibility for finding a place one could call home.

New Figures of Trauma, New Figures of Knowledge

Theorist Laurie Vickroy recognizes "the mother/daughter relations as an important locus of identity formation."[26] She also describes this relation as a locus where the "perpetuation of traumatic legacies"[27] takes place. In this part of the essay, I want to look at the ways in which Michelle Cliff redefines the mother-daughter relation as a locus of knowledge and resistance, and not simply as a tie that enables the continua-

25. Anne Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 121.

26. Laurie Vickroy, *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), p. 10.

27. Vickroy, p. 10.

tion of trauma, though trauma there is. Clare's mother does not only "offer" her daughter a traumatic legacy, on the contrary. Clare is made aware of Jamaica's traumatic past and thus steps into history through the voice of her mother and other women around her. These voices are counter-traumatic since they participate in the events of return in the departure/return process I described earlier. In Lacanian psychoanalytical theory, the concept of the devouring mother[28] in the pre-oedipal child-mother relationship, and his focus on the child's "duty" to detach herself/himself from her in order to enter the social realm in the oedipal phase, puts the mother in a lesser position than the father in her role as parent since she is the one from whom one needs to get away, the one from whom one needs to be "saved," when seeking social acceptation. For Lacan, the father, not the mother, owns the keys to the social realm. In Cliff's *Abeng* and *No Telephone To Heaven*, Clare's mother Kitty is the one who saves her daughter from rejection by the social realm as she erases her own self. Clare's mother keeps her maroon legacy, her non-Western, non-White origins silent so that her light-skinned daughter can find her place in the racist Jamaican social system. Though this "other" origin is obvious form the color of her skin (Clare's mother is "red"; she is of European and Maroon descent), Kitty never clearly acknowledges her maroon heritage in front of her daughter: "Better to have this daughter accept her destiny and not give her any false hope of alliance which she would not be able to honor. Let her passage into that otherworld be as painless as possible."[29] Kitty remains quiet, subdued to her husband's desire to pass Clare as a young white girl and erase Clare's other heritage. The father, Boy Savage, takes over, rejects his wife's and daughter's difference, and imposes upon them the racist myths produced by colonial powers through Jamaican cultural amputation. He embodies a patriarchal/colonial social system of control in which women are objectified and rejected if they are too "dark," and pedestalized if their skin is light. This system is regimented by its Eurocentrism, its racism, its dogmatism, and its lack of ethics. Through his teaching of a dubious version of history, his history, Boy tries to pass onto her daughter the meta-narratives (to use Lyotard's term) constructed by and through colonial institutions. Boy's own indoctrination (as a child) into a realm built and controlled by "a force outside himself which was responsible for all,"[30] a force promoting separation between races through scientific proof and religious

28. See Lacan's 1956–57 seminar on object relations for further information on the "devouring mother" in *Le Seminaire, Livre IV: La Relation d'Objet et les Structures Freudiennes* (Paris: Seuil, 1994).

29. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 129.

30. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 44.

dogma, led him to believe in the concept of the "elect," "those whose names were recorded before time. Those who no matter what they did or did not were the only saved souls on earth."[31] This belief, Boy strives to force it into Clare whom he wants to see continue the White Savage line through the promotion of colonial mythology/ideology. By doing so, Boy serves to secure the repetition of Jamaican history qua trauma. He is the cannibal, the one who devours the child and the mother both so as to perform their personal and historical erasure. As Clare observes both father and mother she becomes conscious of her father's desire to mold her so as to fit colonial structures of oppression. Clare does take in her father's teachings and takes advantage, though in a very conscious and often guilty manner, of her "lightness" and her mastery of "proper English." In an episode where she and her "dark" friend Zoe sunbathe naked near the river on Clare's grandmother's property, Clare steps back in the position of privilege she had left aside while playing with Zoe in order to scare away a cane-cutter observing them from a distance: " 'Get away, this is my grandmother's land.' She had dropped her patois – was speaking buckra – and relying on the privilege she said she did not have."[32] This episode follows an earlier conversation between her and Zoe during which Zoe, whose only language is *patois*, points out Clare's privileged social position and weighs Clare's past and future against hers. Zoe does not see Clare as one of her people: "Fe wunna people have been here long, long time. Dem own land. Dem have meeting in dem parlor. But fe me people been here long, long time too. We even been slaves."[33] This originary difference will separate them when they enter womanhood, Zoe foresees. Even if Clare does not want to accept Zoe's predictions, the cane-cutter episode makes her reflect upon her friend's words, and Zoe's intervention becomes for Clare another illuminating moment after which she feels the split between "white and not white, town and country. . . Boy and Kitty"[34] grow wider and deeper.

Despite her occasional safe returns to a position of privilege, Clare does manage to interrupt and counteract her father's narratives and teachings. Despite the father's marked influence upon his daughter, Clare, through her acts of witnessing, reads and analyzes her mother's silences in order to disrupt the world order imposed by the father. Kitty's silencing, though quasi total in the presence of the father, gets perturbed through the intervention of characters and events that force Kitty's maroon

31. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 45.
32. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 122.
33. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 118.
34. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 119.

heritage to come out. Clare is a witness to these "coming outs" and works to weigh them against her father's imposed knowledge. The mother's interventions lead to very conscious moments of questioning for Clare who feels split as she witnesses the subtle struggle between her mother's past and her father's version of the past. One of these interventions take place as the Savage family passes a mourning march on their way to Kingston. As the mourning party marched on, they were singing in a language "strange, unrecognizable"[35] to Clare. When Clare asked her parents, "what are they saying," Kitty alone was able to answer, "They are singing in the old language; it is an ancient song, which the slaves carried with them from Africa,"[36] to which the father says, "some sort of pocomania song."[37] Boy's disrespect for the cultural heritage brought by Jamaican slaves is contrasted by his wife's knowledge of that heritage and the language associated with it. This father/mother division reoccurs throughout the novel and infuses in Clare this feeling of a split: she is torn between mother and father, old language and colonial language, plural history and Western colonial knowledge. Another instance of disruption of patriarchal/colonial knowledge erupts when the mother-daughter relation is undisturbed by, separated from, the lucubration of the father. During these very short moments, Kitty partially unveils the extent of her knowledge about Maroon culture. One such moment of unrestrained sharing informs Clare on the medicinal power of the plants that grow in the small town of St. Elizabeth, her home town: "Kitty knew the uses of Madame Fate, a weed that could kill and that could cure. She knew about Sleep-and-Wake. Marjo Bitter. Dumb Cane. . . She knew that if the bark of the [Goodwood] tree came in contact with sweating pores, a human being would die quickly. She taught her daughter about Tung-Tung, Fallback, Lemongrass. . ."[38] Kitty is to some extent the embodiment of the late maroon female healer Mma Alli, a slave on the Savage plantation, who used to "[teach] her children the old ways – the knowledge she brought from Africa – and told them never to forget them and to carry them on."[39] Though Kitty does not tell her daughter to carry on the knowledge of her ancestors, she is a site of memory for such knowledge, a knowledge Clare welcomes and takes in in the same manner as she takes in her father's teachings. Such revelations would have been dismissed by Boy who, contrary to Kitty, believes in the benefits of city life, the city Kingston being the locus of production and reproduction of colonial power struc-

35. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 50.
36. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 50.
37. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 50.
38. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 53.
39. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 34.

tures Boy defends and perpetuates. Kitty, though silenced by her husband, will throw fits of anger during which the voice of the past, which she strives to subdue in order to make life easier for her "light" daughter, will come out. Kitty shares these hysterical outbursts with other female characters in the novel, characters that talk back to and resist the very structures that keep their knowledge and life confined to a set of roles and codes to be respected. They take patriarchal/colonial institutions through a re-mystification as they replace patriarchal/colonial mythology with the myth-making traditions inherited from female Jamaican slaves. They represent a distance from origins, a renouncement of what De Man called "the desire to coincide"[40] with certain given understandings or meanings of social structures. They open the way towards new kinds of reading (and writing) of history, and permit a critique of and flight from the doctrines or set of practices that sustain colonial myths. Their knowledge comes through as mnemonic traces of the past that constantly return and restitute whatever has been concealed by colonial history. They consume this imposed history, these imposed structures, and loudly counter the very institutions that define their female maroon knowledge as ignorance. Kitty feels the weigh of this erasure in Jamaica and reacts to it punctually.

In *No Telephone to Heaven*, the Savage family is forced into a move from Jamaica to America by Boy who seeks economic achievement out of the move. In 1960 racist America, Kitty, forced to work for a laundry business, feels even more heavily her silenced position than on the island. Boy, giving into the capitalistic desire promoted in Jamaica by the influence of Western Europeans and Americans, displaces Kitty from home to a foreign place where nothing at all is familiar. She loses her "place of reference – the place which explained the world to her,"[41] that is the island, and is forced to become a 'faithful servant' in a cleaning business. This state of servitude to her husband's dreams places here in an abusive economic system which employs people like her, people who speak with a strange accent. Her job is to rid garments of their dark stains for a cleaning store called White's Sanitary Laundry, "White" referring to the name "Mrs. White," the supposed owner of the place, a constructed character who came out of the imagination of the very real Mr. B. The owner uses the association between white middle-class women and the traditional occupation of cleaning the home to attract businessmen into his store. Paradoxically enough, only colored and "exotic" working class women perform the cleaning tasks in the store.

40. Paul De Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 173–210.

41. Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven* (New York: Plume Printing, 1996), p. 66.

Thus, to her husband's silencing, Kitty can add a whole country's unwillingness to listen to the unfamiliar: "people are used to certain sounds. . . it confuses them when there are new ones . . . especially from exotic places."[42] Kitty resents this forced silence and will disrupt it punctually through a rewriting of the messages put in the pockets of clients to promote the cleaning store and encourage their return. Instead of simple advertising messages meant to help the store prosper, Kitty writes inflammatory notes about the racial and social inequalities she is able to witness around her: "Ever try to cleansing your mind of hatred? Think of it,"[43] and "We can clean your clothes but not your heart. . . White people can be black-hearted."[44] These little acts of subversion are reinforced by Kitty's betrayal of the cleansing project embodied by the imaginary Ms. White through her adoption of a new female figure as point of reference in her life. After a visit to a New York Cuban store and the encounter with the statue of La Morenita, the black virgin, she decides to return to Jamaica with her second daughter, her 'dark' daughter, and leaves Boy and Clare behind. She does not leave, however, before going back to the cleaning store and write one of her last illuminating messages: "Hello. Mrs. White is dead. My name is Mrs. Black. I killed her."[45] This "hysterical" note of assassination and Kitty's departure mark her recuperation of voice and self. She can redefine herself through her black/maroon heritage, a process which does not have any impact upon the social and cultural structures that promote separation through difference. She can only recuperate her sense of self by departing, escaping from Boy and an oppressive economic system. This self-marginalization, her return to Jamaica, and then soon-to-come death imply a failure which thankfully Clare will know to avoid. However, it is a failure that does not erase Kitty's mad desire to change with the means at hand the fate of her clan. This desire is clearly expressed for the first time to Clare in the last of her letters to her daughter: "I hope someday you make something of yourself, and someday help your people."[46]

In *Abeng*, different historical figures, cultural ancestors of Kitty and Clare, come into the narrative as "hysterical" interruptions that seek to disrupt the structures of colonial power. Nanny, a Jamaican revolutionary figure, "the sorceress, the obeah-woman,"[47] was the leader of the "Windward Maroons" who held out against the

42. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 74.
43. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 78.
44. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 81.
45. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 83.
46. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 103.
47. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 14.

forces of the white men longer than any rebel troops. They waged war from 1655 to 1740. Nanny was the magician of this revolution: "she used her skill to untie her people and to consecrate their battles."[48] This historical and hysterical (if we define hysterical knowledge and practices as counter-colonial practices, as going against the dissociation of colonized bodies from her or his history and performing a new dissociation from colonial structures) female warrior and leader of her people is a focal point of the novel. Her ghost seems to haunt Kitty and other female characters of Cliff's fiction as Nanny reappears throughout the novel when her intervention as counter-traumatic remembering of the past is needed. She is a haunting presence made visible and audible through punctual hysterical calls for rebellion against colonial practices and discourses. One of these calls takes place through Mma Alli who, by lying with a woman, teaches her how to "make her womb move within her."[49] Mma Alli was a slave on the Savage plantation, and through her relationship with Inez – Clare's great-grandmother on the side of her father who was raped by Judge Savage – and other women on the Savage plantation, she passed on necessary knowledge and strength so that the slave women could "keep their bodies as their own, even when they were made subject to the whimsical violence of the justice."[50] The link between Mma Alli's teachings on the "wondering womb" are intriguing considering very early medical explanations of the "disease" called hysteria as the erratic movement of the womb in the body of the sick woman. The cure to that disease was replacement of the womb in its appropriate place. Here, Mma Alli teaches hysteria in order to counter the traumatic dissociation performed through violent colonial practices. Slave women regain strength through this recalling of obeah practices, the recovery and repetition of slave knowledge which opposes itself to the bodily, cultural, and social paralysis imposed by colonial structures upon colonized women – whether enslaved like Mma Alli or freed like Kitty and Clare. Mma Alli's cultural counter-practice serves as a point of departure for Inez and her descendants to fight against the colonial myths, the colonial "hallucinations" that promote personal and cultural dissociation from one's history. Hence, if hysteria produces paralysis, it is on the side of the colonizer that this paralysis is witnessed, and it signifies the recovery of counter-narratives to patriarchal discourses and the uncovering of their hallucinatory nature and their innate violence. Towards the end of the novel, Clare, questioning the worthiness of her father's teachings, will begin the active process of

48. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 14.
49. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 35.
50. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 35.

"paralyzing" his discourse as she refuses to go and live with Mrs. Phillips, an old friend of the Savage family who will teach her how to become a "lady." When Kitty describes Mrs. Phillips to Clare as a nice person, but someone who "is narrow-minded about colored people. You know a little like your father,"[51] Clare responds, "Then what do you want me to learn from her?"[52] Clare's reaction is proof of her transformation from "daddy's girl" into "mommy's defender" as she dismisses her father's point of view and asserts her desire to stay with her mother whom she wants to learn from. Unfortunately, and despite Kitty's hysterical tantrums against patriarchal institutions, Clare will be forced by her re-silenced mother to obey her father's decision. Despite Kitty's disavowal of her daughter's racial consciousness, Clare has reached an epiphany towards the end of the novel and can recognize Jamaica as the locus of unfair racial and social (the two being intricately linked) hierarchization. She will continue that metamorphosis in *No Telephone to Heaven,* a metamorphosis which eventually takes Clare black to Jamaica where she will participate in the armed struggle against a corrupted Jamaican government post-colonial only in name.

The women's "hysterical" resistance in *Abeng* demonstrates that the colonial construction of aboriginal women's knowledge as ignorance, as a backward reliance on a past dismissed by colonial history, is in fact an index of the empire's refusal to memorize, to acknowledge history. Thus, hysterical resistance involves a post-colonial reading of negation. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick discusses the relationship between knowledge and ignorance in *Tendencies*. She posits ignorance as being inveterately intertwined with knowledges which, in fact, give birth to ignorance: "there exists . . . a plethora of ignorances, and we may begin to ask questions about the labor, erotics, and economics of their human production and distribution. Insofar as ignorance is ignorance of a knowledge. . . these ignorances, far from being pieces of the originary dark, are produced by and correspond to particular knowledges and circulate as part of particular regimes of truth. . ."[53] The production of ignorance by the colonial matrix is counterbalanced by women who in Abeng impose a re-reading, a revision of history through madness.

Madness is one of the "pathologies" that have been widely described and studied by psychoanalysts. Psychoanalytical theorist Shoshana Felman asserts that today, madness is a commonplace and cannot be imprisoned within the realm of the patho-

51. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 151.
52. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 151.
53. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 25.

logical anymore. Madness is part of the everyday. The question of the place of madness in the everyday is often combined with that of the status of knowledge. Felman states that what interests us today is not an answer to the question "who knows?" (the master does not matter), but an answer to the question "What is knowledge?"[54] In *Abeng*, Mad Hannah, gone mad after the death or her son Clinton, becomes a site of knowledge through her very madness. Mad Hannah is the product of the inhuman behavior of St. Elizabeth's community which refuses to help Hanna and "assist her in the rite of laying the duppy at peace":[55]

> No one came to sing the duppy to rest and put bluing on the eyelids of Clinton, nail his shirt cuffs and the heels of his socks to the board of the casket. No one to create the pillow filled with dried gunga peas, Indian corn, coffee beans, or to sprinkle salt into the coffin and make a trail of salt from the house to the grave. . . So Mad Hannah buried her son alone the next morning when it should have been done at midnight. On the third night after the burial she saw his duppy rise from the grave.[56]

The reason behind the community members' shunning of Mad Hannah lies in their belief in the rumors about her son's sexual difference. Clinton's gayness, his "sinful" destabilization of the patriarchal/colonial, strictly gendered structures regimenting St. Elizabeth's community – structures internalized by its members – requires punishment even after death. Mad Hannah's wandering around the city looking for her son's duppy is a reminder of the community's failure in assisting one of its members, a reminder of their guilt in choosing the values of a system that alienates them from their beliefs and cultural roots. The guilt, however, disappears with Mad Hannah after the Baptist preacher of St. Elizabeth – representative of the very discourse that condemned her son and his like for their "sin" in the eyes of the community – has her arrested and sent to an asylum.

According to Shoshana Felman, cultural history has to open to the presence inside and outside itself, as well as to open the meaning of madness. Felman argues that madness should become a tool in the process of reading and re-reading cultures, nations, or simply texts. Madness involves certain linguistic procedures which transform what appears as logic into a counter-rhetoric that is coherent. Madness and its rhetoric lead towards demystification and thus, calls for different readings, mad

54. Shoshana Felman, *La Folie et La Chose Littéraire* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1978), p. 12.
55. Cliff, *Abeng*, p. 63.
56. Cliff, *Abeng*, pp. 63–4.

readings that unveil the arbitrary nature of the sign, the colonial sign in the case of Michelle Cliff's novel *Abeng*. This madness, Clare inherits it from her ancestors and Mad Hannah herself when she decides to go hunt for Massa Cudjoee the wild pig in order to show her opposition to the gendered binaries to which Clinton and her mother fell prey. She fails in this endeavor, and though this desire for resistance to the place assigned to her is eventually restrained by her forced departure for Mrs. Phillips' house, it does not dissolve in thin air. Clare's trajectory throughout *Abeng* leads to the death of another sort of "pig," the symbolic father, and to the birth of a maternal metaphor (as opposed to Lacan's 1957 concept of the paternal metaphor) as Clare progressively replaces the word of the father by that of the mother. In *Abeng* Clare's desire for maternal knowledge induces a re-identification outside the framework of patriarchal/colonial structures, though Clare never negates the role played by these structures. Though politically outside of them, she will perform her role as a "white lady" until adulthood and her involvement in the turmoils of the Jamaican struggle for racial equality.

Resistance against Nationalistic, Traumatic Use and Abuse of Creole/Hybrid Rhetoric

In *Abeng*, Clare strives to reconstruct herself beyond the racial and social boundaries imposed by the colonial system. What she desires to promote is a creolized/hybridized identity which could become a place from which to speak and fight against the oppressive structures of colonial power. *No Telephone to Heaven* begins with a scene that shows post-independence Jamaica at the heart of racial and social tensions. Clare has joined forces with an armed group that seeks to defend the Jamaican population across racial differences, a group which works to fight the remnants of a colonial system the structures of which have been adopted by successive post-independence Jamaican governments. Charles V. Carnegie explains that in post-independence Caribbean nations, "tensions have sometimes arisen between the ideology of the state and that of the majority of the population."[57] Jamaica has been and still is the preferred site for such a tension. As a matter of fact, post-independence Jamaica is, in *No Telephone to Heaven*, a site of racial and social tensions. Carnegie points out the problematic behavior of a "brown middle class (who also hold political office), who are afraid that their historically privileged position

57. Charles V. Carnegie, *Postnationalism Prefigured, Caribbean Borderlands* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), p. 36.

will be eroded by the aspirations of the nation's black majority."[58] He also points out a contradiction that arose while the Caribbean was still fighting for its independence: "While being cautious not to openly advocate nationalisms based on race, the anticolonial, preindependence movement in the English-speaking Caribbean did appeal to precisely this shared popular understanding in its rhetoric."[59] Jamaica, for example, elevated Marcus Garvey as well as other unmistakenly black historical figures to the status of heroes. The independence movement and postindependence political campaigns were definitely founded upon the positive redefinition of blackness and its potential for becoming a powerful political tool in fighting colonial structures. As Carnegie argues, "Successive postcolonial governments in Jamaica have vied each other to gain popular support through their manipulations of symbols of blackness."[60] However, economic power in this country is still in the hands of a local white and "brown" elite and the nationalist promise of "black political and economic sovereignty"[61] remains theoretical. Here the Jamaican government's promise of racial and social equality is in fact a political lie that seeks to protect the economic interests of the nation no matter how detrimental this preservation can be to the Jamaican black population. This false promise of equality and protection, and thus the Jamaican government itself (the very institutions that are there to protect the population) becomes a site of trauma that Cliff seeks to critique in her sequel to *Abeng*.

In *No Telephone to Heaven*, in an independent Jamaica, social separation based on economic status and lightness of skin are as pervasive as they were in *Abeng* under colonial rule. Paul H., a boy whom Clare meets during one of her returns to the motherland as a young adult, embodies, along with the rest of his family the postcolonial social and racial differences reinforced by the "brown middle class." Here, "brownness"/hybridity, becomes, through the racist discourse of the "brown" privileged ones, a discourse nourished by the "underlying" racism of governmental political and economic choices and practices. *No Telephone to Heaven* speaks of the conflicts that spring from such a class and racial division through the character of Christopher who, at the start of the book, appears to be the good, quiet, and obedient gardener of the H. Family. This defined position changes after Christopher asks his "buckra master," Paul's father, for a favor. Christopher, longing for his grand-mother who has been dead for thirteen years, and haunted by her image, decides to look for

58. Carnegie, p. 37.
59. Carnegie, p. 37.
60. Carnegie, p. 35.
61. Carnegie, p. 38.

her body and give her the funeral she never had thinking that it would put her soul at rest. With that purpose in mind and feeling even more the urgency of such an endeavor after having had a few drinks, he goes to his "master" in the middle of the night and asks him for "one parcel 'pon you propity. Dat all. Fe bury she."[62] Mr. H responds to Christopher's demand angrily and with the intent of ridiculing a man who believes that a body can be recovered after 13 years spent in the ground: "Bwai, you is one true jackass. Me nuh know when me ever hear such nonsense. Firs', she jus' dus' by now. Secon', no way in hell dem can fine she."[63] The answer to Christopher's begging for a burial place is thus negative and climaxes into Mr. H's infantilization and mocking portrayal of Christopher. Mr. H.'s lack of understanding and respect for Christopher's odd beliefs and desire, his cruel treatment of Christopher whom he deems stupid and intrusive, trap Christopher into the web of racist and elitist buckra discourse about black men like him who are the reason why "dis dan country don't amount to nothing."[64] This traumatic moment for Christopher forces an apology out of him only to then put him in a state of hysteria as he raises his machete and kills his master before assassinating the rest of the H. family. Mr. H's refusal to help Christopher in putting his grandmother's duppy at rest can be compared to Mad Hannah's loneliness in confronting her son's death in *Abeng*. Hannah's roaming around town in search of her son's duppy and Christopher's violent elimination of his master are both mad disruptions of the oppressive conditions that regiment their respective lives. They are punished for their disruptive beliefs and mere presence by the colonial system and its spiritual constraints, its definition of 'civilized' knowledge, in the case of Hannah; and by the oppressive remains of that system in the case of Christopher.

For them, economically privileged "brown Jamaicans" are not at all the actors of resistance to colonial structures. They are their puppets, their representatives as they keep reproducing the very structures against which they swore to fight before independence. They reject their own complex liminal position and its political implications. They are not agents of change and adopt a homogeneous persona afforded to them by their "lightness" of skin and the social privileges that come with it. For the characters clearly defined as black Jamaicans such as Christopher, hybridity becomes a site of trauma since the term, which appears in nationalistic discourses that promote equality, only comes to mean as the defining trait, the very site, of privilege.

62. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 46.
63. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 47.
64. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 47.

This envisioning of the hybrid as both site and perpetrator of the colonial trauma is of course veiled by positive discourses of national unification through racial difference. In order to give hybridity back its political potential for resistance and productively counter, though in very punctual ways, the image of the hybrid as traitor to the cause of racial equality, Clare joins the armed forces that seek to protect restless Jamaican underprivileged racial/social groups against the wrath of a government that in fact promotes social separation through racial difference. This process of recuperation of a positive hybridity reaches a climax when Clare learns of her mother's death. This loss makes her more aware of the need to speak up her hybrid origin in her mother's stead. She then brings forth her mother's heritage by reminding her father of the fact that "my mother was a nigger"[65] when he accuses Clare of having "more feelings for niggers than for your own mother" after he realizes Clare is not crying over her mother's death. Rather than cry, which is what Boy does when he learns of his wife's death, Clare takes on the responsibility to continue her mother's hysterical fight against history. Her joining the armed forces against the enemies of independent Jamaica symbolizes her participation in "this new sort of history"[66] that she has taken on, a history at the center of which she stands:

> I am in it. It involves me. . . the practice of rubbing lime and salt in the backs of whipped slaves. . . the promised flight of Alexander Bedward in rapture back to Africa. . . cruelty. . . resistance. . . grace. I'm not outside this history – it's a matter of recognition. . . memory. . . emotion.[67]

Clare recognizes her hybrid position as both victimizer and victim in the history of her nation. She proposes to stop denying the presence of that contradiction in the process of her becoming Jamaican, and turns this contradiction into a place from which to denounce the aforementioned political contradiction upon which Jamaica has constructed itself after independence (blackness as both nationalistic rhetorical tool for equality and material site of social and economic distress). Clare redefines créolité as the positive, personal and historical counter-traumatic process of unveiling contradictions and restoring agency through a re-imagining of what cultural heterogeneity can bring to history. This re-imagining counters the oppressive presence of Mrs. White (Mr. B's invention for his the laundry store), a false figure of purity which in fact seeks to hide traumatic colonial and neo-colonial structures of

65. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 104.
66. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 194.
67. Cliff, *No Telephone*, p. 194.

racial, social, and gendered oppression. Clare's re-imagining involves the unveiling of the traumatic patriarchal/colonial project of forced forgetting of Jamaica's plural, "hysterical" history. It also re-invents creole identity as a complex meta-metropolitan, meta-colonial position. These two adjectives point to a place both inside and outside colonial and post-colonial discourses about otherness, a place that deconstruct the colonial/post-colonial dichotomy and stresses the entanglement of these discursive structures. These two adjectives point to a place of resistance which integrates trauma as this implicit and complicit element of resistance; as this transgressive, complex feature in the process of identity reformation away from the binary opposition of trauma/fragmentation versus healing/unity.

Eamonn Jordan

Menace and Play

Dissipating and Emerging Dramaturgies in Irish Theatre in the 1990s

Irish Drama has changed radically over the last century, and especially during the last decade of the twentieth century. Globally, the state of Irish theatre has never seemed healthier. The vibrancy and recent accomplishments, in terms of box office and awards, of Martin McDonagh, Conor McPherson, Frank McGuinness, Marina Carr, Marie Jones, and of course Brian Friel bear this out. Just as clearly, there has been a dissolution of a dramatic practice that goes back to J.M. Synge and Sean O'Casey, that consolidated in the late 1950s and early 60s, and that later matured and modified, while retaining reasonably consistent artistic aspirations and fundamentals. I map this transition by portraying what seems to me to be shared dramaturgical conventions of an older male generation and the demise or depreciation of those practices (there is still residual evidence of it) in a younger one. I will argue that it is a shift from a post-colonial to a postmodern consciousness that accounts for much of the changes. To make my case, I will work primarily with Brian Friel, Tom Murphy and Frank McGuinness and offset them against Sebastian Barry, Conor McPherson, Martin McDonagh and Mark O'Rowe.

I

From the late 1980s until the end of the millennium and after, Irish society altered racially at a pace previously unknown, thanks to the impact of European Union membership and the structural funding that ensued from it, direct foreign inward investment mainly provided by American multinationals, benefits from the Peace Process in Northern Ireland through the Good Friday Agreement (1994), a progressively more liberal agenda informing legislation, significant increases in prosperity per capita, declining unemployment, and substantially decreased emigration figures.

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Indeed the rise in immigration and multiculturalism, and the decline in the influence of the Catholic Church in part due to scandals, increasing acceptance of same sex couples, the election of two women Presidents, a slackening of the propensity to include Britain in the evaluation of Irish identities and cheaper travel internationally, have all led to different types of mobility, individually, economically and socially. During this period Irish Theatre transformed its dramaturgy as well, and I stress this without ever claiming a direct relationship between society and text. Arts funding altered significantly, the quality of training and educational opportunities for the sector strengthened, there was a greater alertness to what was happening internationally in terms of form and content, and also, Irish production companies took their work abroad more frequently to events like the Edinburgh Festival, and some Irish directors trained abroad and also allowed their work to be informed by international best practice. The Dublin Theatre and the Galway Arts Festivals, amongst others, were further opportunities for companies to engage different experiences and knowledge. Most substantially, international companies were increasingly willing to perform Irish plays, either in the language/context as written, as adaptations or in translation. (It could be argued that written texts were more exportable than individual performers, designers or directors.)

So, globally, since the mid-1990s in particular, the state of Irish theatre has never seemed healthier and a great deal of scholarship has followed the impact of this body of work across the globe. The vibrancy and recent accomplishments, in terms of box office and awards for Sebastian Barry, Conor McPherson, Billy Roche, Frank McGuinness, Tom Kilroy, Anne Devlin, Marina Carr, Martin McDonagh (London-Irish), Enda Walsh, and of course Brian Friel bear this out. The late twentieth century dramaturgy of Irish theatre must be traced back through Samuel Beckett to William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and, in particular, John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey. These writers collectively shaped the dramaturgy of the century in very different but considerable ways. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, new and different types of writing emerged; Tom Murphy's *A Whistle in the Dark* (1961) and Brian Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) were the plays that most pronounce the emergence of a new approach to writing and performing for Irish Theatre. Many argue that these plays were a reaction against the conventional conformism of the writing from the 1930s forward, but current scholarship on this period argues that this was not necessarily a period of stagnation and traditionalism, but one of vitality and experimentalism, if one looks beyond the activities of the more conservative producing houses. But the plays of this new era from the late 1950s forward were cognisant of developments in Europe and America, were intent on addressing sub-

jects that had long remained undiscussed, were focused on confronting repression, injustice and the historical and contemporaneous implications of colonialism.

In fact, it was not until the mid-1980s/early 1990s that such a dominant approach to theatre writing began to shift and modify noticeably. This says as much about the relative stagnancy of Irish society during this period, as it does about the rich seam of concerns that were available to these writers. Of course the emergence of the Northern Irish "Troubles" in the late 1960s obliged an additional type of additional focus.[1] Here in this article I map this transition from the late 1980s/early 1990s into a period of contemporary writing towards the end of the millennium, by portraying what seems to me to be shared dramaturgical conventions of an older generation and the demise or depreciation of those practices (there is obviously still residual evidence of it). I will also identify the distinctive components of the newer generation of writing.

Brian Friel's *Faith Healer* (1979) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), Frank McGuinness' *Observe The Marching Towards The Somme* (1985) and Tom Murphy's *Bailegangaire* (1985) are four transition plays which exemplify the conclusion of this era and point to the emergence of a new era in writing. However, it is within the framework of metatheatre/play that I specifically wish to focus the transitions in this article, how each group, the first and second post-war generation and the contemporary cohort of playwrights, deploys the notion of play or performativity in very different ways, the former utilising play as a subversive strategy, the latter using play either to heighten violence, to make strange character interaction or to utilise play through a framework of naivety and innocence. I argue that the dislocation of play, even its disempowerment, is the key to the demise of an older dramatic practice and the emergence of a new one, signalled in part by a loss of context. By metatheatre, I mean play as it is present in play-within-a-play, storytelling, role-play, re-enactment, pretence, disguise and self-conscious performativity. Specifically, for the first and second generation post-war playwrights, play often provides the external framework, where difference is accentuated, possibilities experienced, and where identities and fears can be processed. For Richard Schechner "Playing, like ritual, is at the heart of performance. . . . Play is looser, more permissive – forgiving in precisely those areas where ritual is enforcing, flexible where ritual is rigid. To put it another way: re-

1. As early as 1992 Tom Kilroy had identified the demise of the traditional Irish play, subdividing them into four categories, The Irish Peasant Play, The Irish Religious Play, The Irish Family Play, The Irish History Play. See Thomas Kilroy, "A Generation of Playwrights," *Irish University Review* 22 (Spring/Summer 1992), p. 141.

stored behaviour is playful: it has a quality of not being entirely 'real' or 'serious.' "[2] Schechner outlines how play is both "indispensable and untrustworthy," "anarchic" and in need of control, especially by those versed in official culture.

Such play is about the acknowledgement of roles, about the comprehension of pretence, and about the expansiveness of identities that are neither fixed nor completely groundless, but are in process. As a disruptive and elastic force, play acknowledges boundaries and demarcations by the very act of transgression that is crucial to so many theatre texts. For it is at the borderlands of play, both an intermediate and intermediary space – where visibility is not good, where depravation unsettles responses, and where dynamism evades reflexes and where performativity or role-playing can unsettle the spectator. By ironising cultural and political assumptions, by aping inappropriate behaviour, by tinkering with prejudice, or by highlighting the inadequacy of certain perceptions, play can distort binary oppositions and undermine stereotypical expectations. Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) and Kilroy's *Double Cross* (1986) are useful examples of dialogical disruption, where play is a space of exchange and disguise, where co-habiting, surrogate or antithetical realities can feasibly exist. Richard Pine, prompted by the writings of Victor Turner, notes that play is "both innocent and dangerous, both a revel and a risk."[3] Pine identifies this as the "if-ness in Friel's work,"[4] which is about reflection, scenario imagining, re-configuring the past, anticipating the future.

Marina Jenkyns uses Robert Landy's ideas that at the core of performance is the paradox of the "actor living simultaneously in two realities."[5] She goes on to say that for Landy, "taking on a role and taking off a role is a kind of living and dying," one of striving and surrendering, of catalysing and crystallising, of display and disguising, of status altering and of lowering, of revelation and duplicity, and one of being and not being. Of course when an actor assumes another role within a script, then an additional layer of complication is added. Foregrounding the performativity of their characters brings an alertness to the given circumstances, a reflexivity to power, domination, and licence, and, of course, tilts towards the viability of difference. Performing emerges as a mode of being, of knowing, of imagining, and of embodying

2. Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 2nd Edition (Routledge: London and New York, 2002), p. 89.

3. Richard Pine, *The Diviner*: *the Art of Brian Friel* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998), p. 269.

4. Pine, p. 269.

5. Marina Jenkyns, *The Play's The Thing: Exploring Text in Drama and Therapy* (Routledge, London and New York, 1996), p. 10.

creativity, confidence, or engagement. Performance can also function as intransigence, conservativism and stagnation. Performance may be a reciprocal exchange with other, embracing other or a rejection of it. Terry Eagleton argues that Oscar Wilde adopts "a performative rather than a representational epistemology,"[6] so it is that sense of a performative epistemology that I wish to pursue.

II

In order to trace this post-war dramaturgy, I first need to outline the templates provided by an even earlier generation of writers, and in particular how they speculated on confinement, poverty, power, subjectivity, and agency. The basic expectation of drama, deploying Augosto Boal's summary of Lope De Vega's definition, must be "two human beings, a passion and a platform."[7] Under this model, there must be between these characters passion, celebration, disharmony, discord, revelry, conviction, and danger; circumstances where the characters invest heavily in relationships and/or are provoked on unwanted journeys, leading to clashes of perspective, vision and disposition. Such acute engagement must therefore be hazardous, festive, even relentless, driven by competing passions, with serious loss the ultimate consequence of failure. Great plays more often than not tend to locate themselves at moments of severe transition, disintegration or dismantlement, when the overlap between the individual, society, history and mythology is again crucial. The characters might invest in difference, yet there is still a sense of access to received and shared, or, if not shared, then aspirational moral codes or modes of being. The incisive loss of perceived core values and the emergence of new awarenesss, which are often unwanted, even unwarranted, generate circumstances that help build the dramatic situation. Drama in this instance becomes at times mythic or ritualistic, or at least sharing the imperatives and inclinations of both. These substantial texts are layered ones, marked by differences in scale, and are dominated ultimately as much by chaos as destiny. The clarity of great drama is possible, having exposed, pursued and validated severely restricted choices. A completely pared down, elemental survival is often the key, with the notion of the performative self, facing down chaos, inventing worlds and strategies with which to prevail, rather than prosper.

6. Quoted by Margaret Llewellyn Jones, *Contemporary Irish Drama and Cultural Identity* (Bristol: Intellect, 2002), p. 115.

7. Augosto Boal, *The Rainbow of Desire* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 38.

European dramatic realism, as one of the basic embryonic models for twentieth century Irish Theatre, has relied on severely confined stage spaces and the restricted, repressive, including class and gender consequences of its very form, in order to exacerbate a sense of cultural or political entrapment and to intensify the claustrophobic quality of the scenography. Irish theatrical stage spaces are often not only singular but also multiple, with off-stage space vital in establishing the existence of huge pressures elsewhere – in particular, repressive, oppressive, other worldly, even surreal forces. There is often a sense of someone looking on, voyeuristic on the one hand and dominating on the other. Absent characters or the absent feminine can exert a powerful influence on such scenarios. More substantially, the presence off-stage points to another consciousness, another alienating reality.[8] Calling attention to the world offstage and never sealing the plays away from the real world ensures that many of the best Irish plays resist rigorous formal experimentation in favour of layered, detailed and hugely combative dramatic texts which often strive after a tangible, tangential connection between text and context.

Henrik Ibsen's early work, driven by a strong sense of Protestant independence, placed at times a great deal of trust in individual action. In the later Ibsen texts, we get a notion of character not just character as disposable, but more importantly character as something dispersed across a continuum of characterisation. Characters mimic one another and mischievously repeat lines once said by another; characters in some ways are energised by the dilemmas faced by others. Character identities are not singular, but are duplicate or replicate, splitting and feeding off one another. In a similar fashion, split characters, doubles, twins, etc., recur across the range of Irish Dramas, and from Synge forward. Irish Theatre has tended to resist notions of coherent subjectivity and has been even complacent about the absence of singular subjectivity thanks, in part, to imperialistic oppression, a repressive education system, religious doctrines and a circulating over determined masculinity.

Play has therefore been central to the discovery of limitations and to the meshing of identities and has been a way of generating ruptures and discontinuities. Christy Mahon's transformation in *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) is driven by a carnivalesque disruptive force, Winnie in Beckett's *Happy Days* (1961) finds her only solace in the illusion of play, or Krapp in *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958) playfully renegotiates with an older version of self, and who can ignore the unsettling nature of fabricated identity as is found in Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895).

8. This may be war zones, isolated spaces, voids, the Fifth Province of the Field Day plays or the mystical Camelot at the core of Billy Roche's work, especially in *The Cavalcaders* (1993).

Consistently, imitatively and successfully, Irish playwrights have relied upon dismal social situations in order to energise their realities. In selecting such circumstances, existential choices, primordial struggles and sibling rivalries were accentuated. This struggle is to be seen most painfully in the temporary illusion (carnivalesque inversion) of riches in O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* (1924), where the Boyles, believing to have inherited a fortune, surround themselves with the trappings of wealth and mimic the perceived behaviour of the wealthy. Captain Boyle's behaviour exemplifies all of this. The gap between the new desperate roles they play and their behaviour (desperate in a different way) of the First Act strikes home superbly. In the older generation of writers – Lady Gregory, Synge, and O'Casey – comedy redeemed the destitution in some ways and at the same time legitimised the resistance of play. Verbal dexterity in the hands of the poor was therefore acceptable, particularly in a historic frame – depravation and theatricality were once the hallmarks of acceptance. Conversely, the traditional overplay of comedy at the expense of dire social circumstances was one of the motivating factors behind Garry Hynes's brilliant 1991 production of *The Plough and the Stars* (1926). Here the social devastation could not be any more visible, yet there was valid opposition to the essential obliteration of the blatant counter-pointing comic rhythm in the play text; increasingly in the contemporary situation verbal richness is not only aligned with arrogance but also perceived as a luxury.[9] Certainly, plays like John B. Keane's *Sive* (1959) and *Big Maggie* (1969) and Hugh Leonard's *Da* (1973) evaluate how deprivation shapes consciousness. Christina Reid in *Joyriders* (1986) goes a step further by emphasising the additional political apathy that sponsors her dramatic reality.[10]

9. In contrast, three of Friel's more recent plays – *Wonderful Tennessee*, (1993) *Molly Sweeney* (1994) and *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (1997) – coupled with Murphy's *Too Late for Logic* (1989) and McGuinness's *The Bird Sanctuary* (1994) are all set in the contemporary world, all have bourgeois settings, all try to debunk a middle-class rationale, all attempt to do something with choice, and all endeavour to do something with time and space. Murphy deploys the dream play format in *Too Late for Logic*, Friel uses monologue and interiority in *Molly Sweeney* and McGuinness flirts with a kind of magic realism in *The Bird Sanctuary*. The most effective scenes in *Give me Your Answer, Do!* are between the father and his sick, hospital-bound daughter – he twice plays the role of enthusiastic and carefree visitor, but his pain and anxiety are apparent. (These two scenes frame the play, yet the variations on performance within the text do not have a similar impact.) Declan Hughes's *Digging for Fire* (1991) may be one of the last Irish examples of a drama that is successfully set in a middle class situation. I am sure that Bernard Farrell and Hugh Leonard would vehemently oppose this idea.

10. More recently Dermot Bolger's attempts to map socio/economic disadvantage in a modern setting have been striking and unsettling in *The Lament for Arthur Cleary* (1989),

In the past, choice, or, more accurately, limited choice was one of the keys to most standard dramatic models. We see this also in the early work of Friel and Murphy. Gar O'Donnell in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* enacts memories, orchestrates fantasies and stage manages events all to no avail, locked as he is within a cycle that is unbearably restrictive. Within this model, freedom is hard earned and opportunities are not a recurring phenomenon but are a one-off gamble – the odds of victory are extremely low and postponement means the loss of all possibility.[11] The crossover from society to the dramatic frame is of course extremely complicated and I make this point again. Here I only wish to deal with the perception of choice (even where illusion might be the most important variable). The dilemma ultimately is how to frame choice, frame opposition and frame confrontation. Defiance might provide a feasible and inarticulate option. Thus, for example, Ibsen could blur distinctions – Hedda Gabler is victim and aggressor, bound and yet free to choose and she is a playmaker (she manufactures the scenarios, orchestrates the setting), yet is totally fettered to some unknowable and unnameable text. Such drama is therefore structured so that no motivation can be attributed with any great certainty: choice is not seen as an authoritative selection but as something deficient in conviction and lacking in justification. If choice is absent, the manner in which the characters conjure the illusion of choice, as in *Waiting for Godot* (1953) or McGuinness' *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* (1992), can prove to be just as dramatic.

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one of the great plays of the last decades, and *One Last White Horse* (1991). Paula Meehan's *Mrs Sweeney* (1997) is set in an inner city flat complex in a world of unemployment, drug dealing and broken homes, and AIDS. When Mr Sweeney's pigeons are slaughtered, he finds sanctuary in madness. The play's women characters find some resolution in a very conscious, exorbitant theatricality, as if this is the only way to promote serious social defiance. These same writers, along with Paul Mercier, tackle poverty and all that accompanies it, but I believe there is in this an underlying assumption, that such specifically issue-led drama is more within the remit of community drama.

11. Such scenarios are less available to today's writers. Less investment in the present, more opportunities to procrastinate and more scope to evade or to at least postpone action means that dramas are losing one of their key ingredients: possibility has become a key cultural resource and brings in its wake the near elimination of single opportunity (the last chance saloon upon which Irish drama has in some ways relied). There is now easier access to a second chance, in terms of employment, education, and, more appropriately, second chance relationships. In addition, in today's world of choice, decisions are to an increasing degree, institutionalised, perversely downgrading individuality in a world that prioritises it. The absence of choice or a disinterest in choice is a striking recurrence in many plays of the latest generation.

So both individuality and collective circumstances are complicated, even before we introduce the notion of power. Synge, O'Casey and Beckett, in his early work, manipulated quite brilliantly the power dynamic, capturing simultaneously the perversity and the theatricality of power, offsetting it by a huge emphasis on the performative self. In earlier forms of drama the notion of the enemy or oppositional force was clear-cut. Power was apparent and more often than not blatant. The inversion and confrontation of power often took place within the framework of play, with an obvious relationship to the context from which texts emerge. Society and text interfaced in very complex ways. The capacity of texts to query ideology or to be agent for an ideological position remains.

III

All of the four transition plays named earlier have inherited this dramaturgy as part of its gene pool. All four plays validate that society/text interface, as they are history/memory plays; they are state of the nation plays, concerned with identity, place, repression, confinement, exile, mobility, home, and authority. Most importantly, all four texts have metatheatre/play as their propelling impetus. In *Bailegangaire*, story-telling and the laughing competition – both story-within-a-story and carnivalesque underworld – are central to the liberating, enabling consciousness that Murphy structures into the work, with three different time frames, past, present and future jostling for space. Mommo's story as to how the town called Boctán, acquired its new appellation Bailegangaire (town without laughter) implicates both characters and nation in a tale of defiance, suffering and complicity, that is in need of purgation.

McGuinness's *Observe The Sons Of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* blends monologue, basic realism, cross-cutting and simultaneous scenes to prepare an audience for the layered, saturated reality of its final section, Part Four, where the spectator witnesses the soldiers in the trenches before they go into battle at the Somme during WW1. As the soldiers re-enact the Battle of the Boyne as a confidence boost – "something to make the blood boil"[12] – the result does not stay the same as historical precedents require; King William loses and James triumphs, and thus, the inevitable continuities of destiny and certainty are unsettled through the awareness that the consciousness of play brings. History is over-rehearsed, tribal conventions are subverted, and the noise of myth obliterates almost all illusions for these soldiers.

12. Frank McGuinness' *Observe The Marching Towards The Somme*, in *Plays One* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), p. 181.

Faith Healer, which relies on four monologues, offers contradictory and overlapping versions of the lives of its three main characters, Frank Hardy, his partner, Grace and his business manager, Teddy as they tour with an event that showcases Frank's faith healing abilities. Each character offers an alternative account of his/her life on the road. Even the central incidents to their stories are heavily disputed. The central themes are that of failed relationships, faith healing, with the faith healer (or artist) as performer or conjurer and that of memory as both a sustained and deliberate failed performance and a poor rehearsal for the future.[13] Memory is more faith than fact.

The most successful Irish play internationally during the period under discussion, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, is set primarily in the 1930s. It is a memory play of sorts, framed by the narration of Michael, who remembers the key incidents from one summer in the life of his family when he was a child. The play deflects that reality through ritualism, through the inventiveness, fabrication and licence, while relying on the energetic exuberance of dance or dance-play to destabilise all sorts of conventions – dramatic, political, religious and social.[14] No matter how hard Friel attempts to destabilise nostalgia through his description of the grotesque and celebratory dance by the Mundy sisters in the stage directions, the response of productions and audiences is to reject Friel's particular subversive framing and instead celebrate their energy and sense of communality. This play was the high point of a generation of writers, but also the one that signalled its demise, as it seemed to have spawned few imitations.

Play is the dialectical force that energises all four plays by the substantiation of firm, conflicting oppositions and by the establishment of divergent points of view; all of these plays are alert to the overlap between memory, history, fantasy, and narrative and use play for a "seditious purpose."[15] The four named transitional plays constantly rely on, to use Homi Bhabha's phrase "the menace of mimicry" to challenge power and authority.[16] Impersonation undermines and questions the status of power structures, suggesting either a challenge to these modes of authority or that power is

13. Meanwhile, in Murphy's *The Gigli Concert* (1983), JPW King, prompted by drugs and alcohol, manages to sing like Gigli.

14. Brian Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), pp. 3–22.

15. Joanne Gilbert and Helen Thompkins, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 1.

16. Homi Bhabha, quoted by Jenny Sharpe in "Figures of Colonial Resistance" in *Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, eds., Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 100.

transitory, reversible, and can be made obsolete. The notion of fixed and immutable structures are destabilised by the concept of play.

The McGuinness play is deeply political, the other three less immediately so, but they still set up realities that must be contested, from within through their "seditious" dramaturgies, and from without, by the engagement of the spectator with certain templates and expectations of Irishness, the latent subjugations and possibilities therein. *Faith Healer* kick-started a tradition of monologues, but all the work that followed was less capable of shape changing in the way that this play does. *Bailegangaire* attested to a bleakness that needed to be overcome in the Irish psyche. The topics for the laughing competition included a roll call of the dead, children found in shoe boxes, crop failure and famine. It is laughter of defiance at despair, and it is a longing for difference and possibility. In many ways it is an example of what Richard Schechner calls dark play. So we can link play to notions of challenging oppression, destabilising politics and to the challenging of authority, with alertnesses to instability, insubstantiability and incompleteness.

IV

When it comes to the newer generation of writers, it is obvious that they are not only writing from within a tradition and against it, but also even more than the previous generation, they seem more open to a range of additional influences, like pop culture and cinema. (Two writers that seem to buck this trend are Marina Carr and Sebastian Barry, writers that while younger in age, their dramaturgies seem to be easier to categorise as part of the older generation of writers.)

Firstly, it is the over-reliance dramaturgically on a metatheatricalized innocence and/or a childlike consciousness (or adult children) which is an attempt to get round the nastiness and undramatic qualities of adult living.[17] Secondly, there is evidence of a strange attitude to violence having performative, ironic and fantasy components. This facet has something to do with the spate of exceptionally violent plays on British stages during this same period. Ultimately, I believe there is a way of interconnecting innocence and violence and I will do so towards the end of my argument.

Both the younger and older generation of writers use the concept of innocence in their work, and both link up innocence with play. While playwrights have always used the figure of the dead child to emotionally heighten dramas, Friel, Murphy and

17. I cannot deal here with the fixation on monologues in Irish writing practices, only to say that I have argued that such forms have play as a substantial feature of the work.

especially McGuinness do so across a range of plays.[18] For the contemporary generation it is increasingly almost a dramaturgical consistent or staple ingredient. Dermot Bolger in *The Passion of Jerome* (1999) sources the demise of the relationship between the two main characters back to a child who died just after childbirth. Marina Carr, for her part, allows *Portia Coughlan* (1996) to be haunted by the death of a male twin, which left his surviving female sibling, fixated on death. The only other example I will mention is the celebrated and multi-award winning *The Weir* (1997) which is set in a pub in the West of Ireland. On one level this play is without the contemporary sensibility of earlier monologues because it looks like a 1970s play full of characters that are burdened by the past or by restraints placed on them in the present due to family responsibilities. Three of the male characters deliver a ghostly/supernatural narrative that attests as much to their own sensibilities and fears as it does to the environment in which they live. Each of these tales is challenged by Valerie's story of her dead child, Niamh. Niamh's absence haunts the end of the play and puts an end to the male one-up-man-ship that the play's events opened with. Indeed it prompts Jack to tell a story that is far closer to the bone than his previous story about fairy forts. However, I have argued elsewhere that Valerie's story can be seen as more of a trumping than anything else.[19] She turns, perhaps, innocence into trickery, Mamet-like.

There is in all of this a sense as if only the dead can motivate the living. The death of children suggests the elimination of innocence, but innocence cannot be the singular response to the complication and corruption of the adult world. There is nothing much in terms of dead children to differentiate the older generation from the newer one. Where the two generations differ however is the over-reliance on the presence of adult-children in the dramaturgy of the younger writers.[20] This takes a

18. Hugh Leonard in his complicatedly structured play, *Love in the Title* (1999), also uses the device, where three generations of a family imaginatively meet. The audience and two of the characters know the future of a third, whose children drown. The secret is central to attempts at empathy.

19. See "Pastoral Exhibits: Narrating Authenticity in Conor McPherson's *The Weir*," *Irish University Review* (Autumn 2004) 351–368.

20. The opening part of Paul Mercier's *Kitchen Sink* (1996) is also a return, in part, to a childlike innocence while plays like Owen McCafferty's award winning *Mojo Mickybo* (1998), and a lot of the work of Barabbas . . . the company, especially *Hupnouse* (1999), written for the company by Charlie O'Neill, are sorties into childhood, where poetic innocence is used to express occasional profundities, where the complexity of the adult world is not so much pushed to one side as an insistence of a different, playful type of reality, where an alternative set of values is countenanced.

variety of forms, the aged/child-like adult, or the thirty-something and older males with teenage at best, child-like at worst, thinking. Perhaps the most successful of all in this area is Sebastian Barry with *The Steward of Christendom* (1995) whose central character, Thomas Dunne, lives his final years in a mental hospital as he resorts time and time again to a childlike state. (He is, in addition, haunted by the spirit of his dead son in particular.) Within this framework of childlike innocence a strange eloquence of language is available. Indeed, a lyrical eloquence has been appropriated as part of a new poetic drama (poetry at the expense of play).[21] Barry's poetic interiority in *The Steward of Christendom* places the burden not on the individual but on history, thereby accommodating frailty in a pastoral sense.

The most obvious use of innocence occurs when play and innocence conspire. Over the last number of years Barabbas . . . the company produced a number of plays, most notably a new production in 1997 of Lennox Robinson's *The Whiteheaded Boy* (1916),[22] where clowning, performativity and actors playing multiple roles, sometimes two characters in the one scene, seemed to be one of the plays that shaped this development.[23] Two further examples are worth noting.[24] The traditional victory against the odds is taken out of the political arena and re-imagined on the rugby pitch in the case of John Breen's *Alone it Stands* (1999) a drama that marks Munster's famous victory over the New Zealand All-Blacks in 1978, when amateur minnows toppled what was regarded as the greatest team in the world at that time. Six actors play over thirty parts, sometimes across gender. This is revived regularly to this very day, drawing huge audiences. Breen's work along with Marie Jones' *Stones in his Pockets* (1999), are two brilliant examples of the new emphasis on

21. This scenario was put forward as both a development and solution by Fintan O'Toole who has described the plays of Sebastian Barry as dramas of evocation, where the intensity of the language at least displaces or has come at the expense of conflict. See, "Lament in a Hushed Voice," *Irish Times*, 13 June 1992, p. 5.

22. See also Corn Exchange, prompted by the American born director Annie Ryan, offered contaminated, hybrid Commedia Dell'Arte versions of *A Street Car Named Desire* in 1996 (*Streetcar*), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* in 1997 (*Big Bad Woolf*) and a new version by Michael West of Chekhov's *The Seagull* in 1999. This work is in part about play but also about the dark components of play that stretch away from innocence.

23. *True Lines* (1993) and *Double Helix* (1995), both devised metatheatrical shows, shaped by John Crowley for Bickerstaffe Theatre Company and which had a substantial impact on devising theatre practices.

24. Donal O'Kelly's *Catalpa* could also be included as part of this discussion.

metatheatricality. The Jones play is set in a small Co. Kerry village, where a film crew is on location, making *Quiet Valley*.

This movie in the making is a typical Hollywood attempt to do the usual Irish shtick, interweaving a tale of romance, political victimisation, and victory against the odds found in the relationship between the young man (Rory) who falls in love with and marries the woman (Maeve) from the Big House. Maeve has been asking her father to give the land back to the peasants, but the marriage of Rory and Maeve will seal its return. In Jones's play two male actors perform multiple characters, from a Scottish bouncer to a female Hollywood star, from a young and over-eager third assistant director to a drunken local. The two main characters Jake and Charlie are energised by their acts of resistance towards the insensitivities of the movie industry, particularly in the face of the needs of the film to run within budget and on schedule versus the need and right of the local villagers to grieve and wake one of its own who dies during the making of the movie. They write a script in response to their ordeal, where the extras become the stars and the stars the extras. Jones generates an innocence of revolt. In the performance of the play, the conceit is that the theatre audience is in a cinema watching their film, before which there is an advertisement for the forthcoming Hollywood movie, *Quiet Valley*. The extras beat Hollywood to the release as well.

The play's title is derived from the suicide of Sean Quin who after his first unsuccessful attempt to kill himself, re-enters a river laden down with stones in his pockets. The spectator has no real feel for Sean, despite how he is introduced into the play and despite the testimonies about him from others. Sean's suicide is well integrated in the Second Act, but as a plot device it is thin, as an audience has no real opportunity to generate empathy for him, really he never moves beyond the cliché of a disgruntled, angst-ridden, disillusioned, drug-taking seventeen year old male. Sean makes but a few brief and abrupt appearances during the First Act. The cast will not be released for the funeral as fresh flowers are to be shipped from Holland and three catering companies are booked in for the wedding feast scene. The extras threaten to withdraw their services, if they are not allowed to go to the funeral. Given that they are paid by the day, and given that many of the scenes have already been filmed, it would be necessary to re-shoot the scenes again, so if the extras were to withdraw their services, a new power dynamic would come into play. The insensitive film producers are forced to relent to their demands, as a compromise is reached. Of the four productions of the play I have seen, one got the balance exactly right between mimicry, poignancy and an inclusivity of an audience in the metatheatricality of the piece. Yet the fact that most of the metatheatrical style plays rely on male characters

and male actors is worth noting. The success of the masculine within the limits of the play contrasts with the increasing ineffectualness of the masculine socially.

For the older generation, innocence functioned as a calibrated differentiation that was infectious, appropriate and anomalous simultaneously. The contemporary writer operates within an innocence paradox. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines innocence as a "freedom from cunning or artifice; guilelessness, artlessness, simplicity: hence, want of knowledge or sense." Ultimately it is the crossover from innocence to artifice, which the dictionary's explanation cannot accommodate, is where we find contemporary writing in the main. Innocence is an alternative, pastoral space, independent of the real. Innocence has been courted and then subsumed into something else by metatheatricality. The lost resonance of play is displaced by a regimented, performative innocence. The disposition towards an uncontaminated, unblemished, irreproachable, innocence is indeed problematic, particularly in relation to violence, violation and destructiveness. Marina Carr's *On Raftery's Hill* (2000) confronts the issues of an innocent young woman violated by incestuous rape and family destroyed by intergenerational sexual abuse. Carr seems to be bucking the trend outlined above. Sorrel Raftery is a young woman living with her sister (Dinah), grandmother (Shalome), brother (Ded), and her father (Red). The young girl is engaged to Dara Mood. Towards the end of the First Act, and, just prior to her wedding, her father rapes her on the kitchen table. Nobody intervenes, even though the other family members are all aware of the assault taking place. As the play progresses, Sorrel discovers that Dinah is not only her sister, but also her mother. Father and daughter, at the age of twelve, were forced together by Dinah's own mother. Carr deals with issues of sexuality, power, violation, shame, secrecy, deception, inferiority, and indignity. She also confronts the issues of power, gratification, and addiction at the core of sexual abuse.

Red is the child of an incestuous relationship between his mother and his grandfather. The fact that Red is conceived in that way is not brought in to diminish his moral responsibility, but does so to complicate simplistic responses to the evil/victim binary structure that often exists in discussions on such issues. The persistence of a sexual relationship between Dinah and Red into the present is the most dramaturgically ambitious and disturbing feature of the play. Carr brilliantly captures Dinah's ambivalence. The play ends in stalemate, but the fact that the female lead does not kill herself[25] as has happened in all of Carr's other Midlands'

25. This links Michael Harding's *Una Pooka* (1989), Murphy's *Too Late for Logic*, Carr's *The Mai* (1994) and *Portia Coughlan* (1996) (and earlier in Keane's *Sive* and Friel's *Living*

plays, might be regarded as a strained optimism in its own right. Carr's interrogation of violation and innocence puts her at odds with her contemporary male counterparts.

While danger, violence, madness and murder have always prevailed in Irish plays, something very different is happening with violence currently and thus conflict is treated in a very different way.[26] Of all work by the contemporary generation, the work of Martin McDonagh in particular has been berated because of its inability to challenge the imperatives and inclinations of violence. McDonagh's first three plays *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996), *A Skull in Connemara* (1997), and *The Lonesome West* (1997), collectively known as The Leenane Trilogy, all contain scenes of extreme violence, Maureen murders her mother in *Beauty Queen*, in *The Lonesome West*, Girleen has a strong streak of violence, and Coleman kills his father for insulting his hair. In *Skull in Connemara* murder and violence are frequent occurrences. In *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (2001) Padraic is sadism personified and Mairead is his match. This play contains scenes that some find carnivalesque and that others find gruesome in the extreme. Towards the end of the play, the stage is covered in blood as Donny and Davey, under close supervision, hack up the bodies of dead paramilitaries. Of course, the body parts are fake, and in performance, there is no attempt at authenticity; yet people found such scenes offensive. *The Pillowman* (2003) contains scenes of murder, torture and suggest at all kinds of other violations through the lens of Grand Guignol. For Shaun Richards: "what is most striking about *The Leenane Trilogy*'s violence and depravity is the absence of any informing moral structure on which authority itself rests."[27] John Lahr is alert to an alternative reading arguing that the characters are gargoyle-like representations.[28] Mary Luckhurst believes that the characters in *Inishmore* are "all psychopathic morons."[29] She is not

Quarters (1977). Frank Hardy's death in *Faith Healer* is a sacrificial suicide of sorts and in Johnston's *Melonfarmer* there is a failed suicide attempt. Across these plays protest is interiorised. Suicide is both the elimination of possibility and the eradication of play: self-annihilation becomes the final performance of sorts.

26. Brian Friel's *Translations* (1980), *Observe The Sons Of Ulster*, Brendan Behan's *The Hostage* (1958) spring to mind as plays that use violence for specific and varied dramatic effects.

27. Shaun Richards, "'The Outpouring of a Morbid, Unhealthy Mind': The Critical Condition of Synge and McDonagh," *Irish University Review* 33 (2003), 201–14, p. 211.

28. John Lahr, "Blood Simple" *New Yorker*, 13 March 2006, p. 92.

29. Mary Luckhurst, "Martin McDonagh's *Lieutenant of Inishmore*: Selling (-Out) to the English," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 14.4 (2004) 34–41, p. 36.

alone in these accusations. Clearly, McDonagh's critics are divided and his own comments on violence in his plays are often contradictory, or self-congratulatory. However, McDonagh is not alone as being perceived in sensationalising violence and mayhem. O'Rowe *Made in China* (2001)[30] is set in gangland Dublin and Stella Feehily's female characters in *Duck* (2003) have their run ins with gangland as well. In Declan Hughes' *Twenty Grand* (1998) the nature of the family business has changed, from small time village shopkeeper of traditional Irish theatre to big time Drug Dealer. Horror comes cheap, especially if it is set within an underclass.

Mark O'Rowe's *Howie The Rookie* (1999) is made up of two monologues, delivered by unrelated The Howie and The Rookie Lee, falls into this category. The violence is prompted by one of the The Howie Lee's friends, Ollie**,** picking up scabies from a mattress. The source of the contagious disease is The Rookie Lee. Later The Howie, on The Rookie's behalf, faces down in a scene of extreme violence, an intersex character called, Ladyboy. Towards the end The Howie is flung from a window, impaled on a railing and then smashed to pieces by a van which crashes into him as he lies there. It is a play full of spoken violence, implicit and explicit. The details of the fights take on a surreal context, yet the general devastations of poverty extort a different form of social violence. Scarcity or subsistence living is that disease. It is the indifference to health, love, and family that come across most strongly. The connection between the two Lees is Bruce Lee, actor and martial arts expert. Bruce Lee is the heroic figure who licences a macho culture of retributional violence. The Howie is broken by the death of his young brother The Mousey Lee. (Again, another dead child is the spring board for action.) Nothing seems to bring either pleasure or pain. The characters are also in a trance, where little registers beyond a very confined range of reference. The larger issues that impact on the characters are closed down in a most casual, indifferent fashion. For the characters there is no escape route. The language and tone of the piece thus becomes equally bravado and a form of entrapment, while there is no confidence in one's ability to articulate rage and compassion beyond this limitation of a playful, exaggerated hyper fiction, with violence as its basis, as if irony has lost its articulacy, and has become entrapment. This is of course in line with postmodernism.[31] Somewhat differently, Gary Mitchell's *A Little World*

30. Mark O'Rowe's *Crestfall* (2003) contains scenes of great depravity and violence; heroin abuse (the scourge), bestiality, forced abortions, animal mutilation, incest, paedophilia, human violation, and six murders are documented by the three narratives delivered by the three female characters.

31. Mark O'Rowe's *From Both Hips* (1997) does something similar.

of Our Own (1997)[32] deals with a loyalist working class community, and the macho, deluded, self-destructiveness therein. Most of his other work considers the same terrain of violence. Mark Ravenhill's play *Shopping and F***ing* (1996)[33] and David Cronenberg's film *Crash*, based on the novel by J.G. Ballard, offer additional, alternative perspectives and point to other emerging patterns. In both, re-enactment, mutilation, internalisation and an almost complete blurring of pleasure and pain are dramatised, with little or no enabling energy in operation.[34] So from these two texts, one can see how Irish playwrights are engaged with similar scenarios.

V

McGuinness's *Carthaginians* (1988) is about magic, resurrection and the recuperation of memory. In *Carthaginians* the presence of guns is indicated throughout and kept off-stage, but the play includes plastic guns for the mock gunfight in the play-within-a-play (*The Burning Balaclava,* which assists in the release of parodic annihilatory energy). In the mock play, the carnivalesque and parodic version of the Bloody Sunday incident allow the characters distance but also access to their individual and collective memories of the event. The inappropriateness, distastefulness and irreverence of play paradoxically liberate horrific memories and wounds of Bloody Sunday; whereas, Declan Hughes in *Twenty Grand* breaches one of the significant codes of Irish comic drama, that of death and resurrection, where the pretence of death is

32. McPherson's *This Lime Tree Bower (1995)*, Alex Johnston's *Deep Space* (1998) and the Mitchell play use the rape of a woman offstage.

33. Sarah Kane's work is just as dark as that of Ravenhill's, where relationships are substantially dysfunctional, with the odd exception. British plays like Kevin Elyot's *My Night With Reg* (1994) and Patrick Marber's *Closer* (1996) are examples of plays which offset this trend.

34. In *Crash,* after a fatal accident, the characters re-enact (as part of their sexual fantasy) the gruesome details of a fatal car crash. Others re-stage, for an audience, the car crash which killed James Dean; while attempting to replicate the death of the actress Jayne Mansfield, they die in the process, fulfilling in part some underlying death wish and in part some post-modernistic impulse, by essentially refusing to distinguish between the world of play and the real. In effect, there is no overlap from one world to the next, there is no sense of retrieval; play has lost its purpose. At one point the performance artist/stunt man comes across the crash scene where his friends have been injured or just died and he proceeds to take photographs. Cronenberg's desire may have been to insist that increasingly there is no distinction between fact and fiction and that the characters are locked into a cycle of re-enactment.

nearly always one of the dominant tropes in operation. Instead Hughes, in a manner akin to *The Revenger's Tragedy,* litters the stage with dead bodies. There is little or nothing to offset the carnage.

Because of cultural and dramaturgical changes, increasingly violence seems to be the only mode of articulation. It is a violence of the margins of the dispossessed, or the mad or insane. Their stories remain untold and a shock value – a voyeurism – is garnered from that which is archaic, marginal, exotic and eccentric.[35] If confinement, as mentioned earlier, was one of the main features of the older writing practice, it is now replaced by cordoned off stages and imaginatively sanctioned cocoons, often understandably beyond the world of politics, morality and justice. On offer now from the younger generation is therefore a new strain of realism, a new age or virtual realism that is often shrivelled and bled dry of social forces. It is a chemically induced realism; achieved by spawning synthetic, de-hydrated, mechanically extracted, imitative copies or replicas, that while properly hostile to the illusion of the real, still maintains a conservative alliance with the real. Today, the self-dramatising impulse is most evident in seedy scenarios, set in the world of decayed squats and bedsits, in locations that were previously taboo. Increasingly the worlds of sexual deviance, violence, drugs, organised crime, money laundering and contract killing are the staple diet, where dramatic momentum is propelled by the forces of danger and illicitness. At its worst, this amounts to little more than the eroticisation of violence (beyond a queasy if easy voyeurism); at its best, such violence can distort and disturb.

For an older generation violence is viewed in terms of wantonness and revenge, release and retribution; what is new, however, is that the distinction between pleasure and pain has been blurred, so neither pain nor pleasure proves to be any provisional point of reference. The dialectical tensions of truth and deception, freedom and constraint, tyrant and justice cannot be played out easily. A distinction between pain and pleasure seems to be the more realisable mode. Yet, pain is rightly decontextualised in many modern texts, given a spectator's immunity to it, but it also tends to be sanitised, whereas previously play offered a deliberate and dialogical process, that subtly underlined the pain and at times saw it as enabling – Patricia Burke Brogan's play *Eclipsed* (1992) does something like this. It is the decontextualistion of pain and how pleasure has been commodified that are the mainstay of the contem-

35. This is to keep to one side the horrendous statistic of the prevalence of suicide amongst young males. But it is easier to be younger, given that one's anxieties have been articulated and accepted to a greater extent. All one needs to do is to look at the newspaper columns given over to teenagers, teenage magazines and an emphasis on parenting, which ensures that "not knowing," can no longer be an excuse.

porary dramaturgy, which has as much to do with irony as it has for the lack of empathy available to an audience when it comes to contemporary work. Pain is alienated to such an extent that its impact is utterly devoid of meaning beyond the frame of performance.

Historically, the trauma of identity was associated with imperial rule and the need to confront oppression.[36] The pain aligned with both generated empathy for the disposed. It is no wonder that the successes of Irish theatre is dominated by history/memory plays. Declan Kiberd notes that colonial rule operates through patterned cycles of "coercion and conciliation."[37] He attaches to this the notion of the imperial power using the host country as a form of laboratory. Conspiracy, plotting and stage-managed violence must be added as other ingredients, from the side of imperialism and the host country. This explains in part the experimental conspiracy of play which haunts an Irish consciousness. In the early post-war Irish drama the sentiment strung from the dramatisation of weakness or ineffectual characters, usually male, is difficult to grasp fully outside of the post-colonial frame (and now its perpetuation must be seen within a postmodernist one). Today hierarchies are no longer so discernible and obvious; jurisdictions are fluid and definite demarcations are not so evident. The capacity of institutions to adjust, anticipate and absorb criticisms or oppositions is striking. Power has become very problematic, to such an extent that one cannot immediately name it, and if one can, one cannot dramatise it with any sense of persuasion. Discernible power in a dramatic frame becomes, ironically by the very nature of its usual subtle reality, stereotypical, primarily because it loses its invisibility, diluting in most instances the dramatic effect.[38]

Consequently, the notion of play can be or veers towards that of a mere imitative, simulated and ungrounded activity, which is marked by a complete disacknowlegement of presence and by a dangerous refusal to champion any value system or prioritise any judgements. In effect, the post-modern emotion can be fetishistically

36. Vincent Woods with *At the Black Pig's Dyke* (1993) represent other superb attempts to bring together the linguistic richness and a vicious, hostile dramatic situation, energised by the distance and rawness of history and by the dynamics of play. Anne Hartigan's *Jersey Lillies* (1996) is another example of this; a drama trapped inside a recurring linguistic and social nightmare, where memory, violence and defiance are all woven into the unsettling dramatic reality. Christina Reid's *Tea in a China Cup* plays with history and memory (1983).

37. Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 43.

38. Likewise the dominant parent figure, once one of the most potent expressions of power, has lost its power base as it slides into caricature with incredible ease, and now functions best in a surreal or grotesque sense, with the exception in the instance of sexual abuse.

internal and graphically demonstrative only in terms of performance, really play for play's sake. Bertolt Brecht's phrase "Acting in quotation marks" is applicable now, for within the post-modern frame it is quoting in acting marks that is appropriate, with performance the key; a performance that is not derivative of anything else, a performance that is blatant simulation, with the virtual absence of a referent, in a world without sufficient boundaries and more tellingly without the significant disorientating effects of an older notion of excess, even when excess is one of its most visible or blatant features.

Increasingly, complicity not a quest for justice, complacency not the terror before possibility are the values revered. If parody, pastiche and the postmodernist impulse to perform dominate at the expense of all else then Bond's comment that "modern society does not own imagination, it only exploits it,"[39] serves as a serious warning, especially if the increasingly artificial bonds of culture ensure that theatre has lost its collectively ritualistic ambition, spectacle is increasingly the governing reality. Under this new dispensation, the imagination does not point towards alternatives – it is not available as a position of difference or dissent, for it takes the shape of deviance and aberration only. But we cannot just take a single perspective on this. It needs to be made more complicated. While it is true that governing patriarchal ideologies have been active in the silencing or in the elimination of difference, something which the feminist movement has confronted, nowadays cultures operate within a very different, more subtle, frame, being more likely to assert the right to be plural, inclusive and accumulative. However, it has resulted in difference being bleached of its possible radical aggression.[40]

McGuinness's characters are alert to the implications of their own performance in *Carthaginians* or *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, the Mundy sisters are also alert to their defiance through performance of the dance in *Lughnasa*. Although they

39. Edward Bond "Modern and Postmodern Theatres" in an interview with Ulrich Koppen, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 50, May 1997, 103.

40. Between the old and the new, a blatant model of contrast would compare the wild dancing in Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* to the beat of the traditional *Mason's Apron* to the sound of *Bullet with Butterfly Wings* by the Smashing Pumpkins used in Declan Hughes's *Halloween Night* (1997) (both dances were performed on top of tables), would oppose the operatic influence on the structure of Murphy's *The Gigli Concert* (1983) with the effect of the television soap opera format on McDonagh's work and would differentiate between the significances of the King James Bible, William Shakespeare or Mikhail Bakhtin's underworld of the carnival on McGuinness's writings to the influences of Quentin Tarantino, Irvine Welsh and *The Simpsons* on the work of Alex Johnston.

are marked by the performance, and tainted by the sensibility of play, when the characters returned to the notionally real world of the drama, they bring with them a different type of acuteness. In *Double Cross*, awareness is of a different order, it is the alertness to how performance had in a way dehumanised, how the alternative identities of both William Joyce and Brendan Bracken were not liberating as they had hoped, but prison houses, a hall of mirrors where not even a provisional sense of identity could be found, both being tricksters and traitors. The characters are brought to an awareness of their own performances in *Double Cross*, without admitting to the source of such needs. The history play could be seen to have died a death if Friel's most recent play *The Home Place* (2005) is anything to go by.

In McDonagh, the characters seem to have internalised a sense of self that is without awareness, un-alert to their own performances, unwilling to acknowledge that they are acting out of sibling rivalry in *The Lonesome West*, and spurious republican propaganda in *Lieutenant of Inishmore*. Empathy is in abeyance. Donny and Davey hack bodies, with the playfulness of boys playing in a sandbox, there is nothing with which to contest their hermetically sealed worlds. That type of infringement is down to the spectator. It of course is dependent on the willingness of the spectator to engage. The dramaturgy does not oblige the characters to bring that mode of reflection to their performances. Contrast the implications of the carnage that grows out of *The Burning Balaclava* in *Carthaginians* with that of *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*. *The Lieutenant* shares the sensibility of that play-within-a-play, with its cartoon, carnivalesque world, where characters die needlessly over a missing cat. The triggering incident in the McGuinness piece is the death of a dog.

In Richard Schechner's words "Performances mark identities, bend time, reshape, and adorn the body, and tell stories. Performances – of art, rituals, or ordinary life – are 'restored behaviours,' 'twice-behaved behaviours,' performed actions that people train for and rehearse."[41] The notion of "Restored behaviours" also invites the idea of acquired or anticipative behaviours, and this is the acquisitive skill that play can offer. The characters in *The Lonesome West* are locked into patterns of engagement that are not easily moved. When the brothers decide to mend their ways, the confessions to each other quickly follow the pattern of one-up-manship that has dominated their interactions previously. They restore the patterns of previous encounters. Indeed they are imprisoned by their pattern of "restored behaviours." One might suggest that the temporary ceasefire at the end of the play offers a degree of hope, but it is minimal. Compare this to Gar in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*. Above all

41. Schechner, p. 28.

else Gar wishes to challenge the "restored behaviours" of those around him. He wishes for the script to change. While he mocks his father's predictable patterns, his desire is for these to be cast to one side and audiences align themselves with the desire for difference. McDonagh's characters do not share the same desire, but perhaps an audience might. That way the onus shifts from character to spectator. With an older generation, I think one can talk about the fusion of the real and play, with the contemporary one, a fissure between the real and play, where often real is merely play.

To account for the attraction of this new work I would argue that it maintains implicitly and explicitly a link with the post-colonial model, while at the same time it crosses over into the irony and transgression, the depthlessness of a post-modern one. It is both national and international simultaneously, less state of the nation, and more state of a global generation. (The idea of nation has been displaced and replaced by the idea of a fragmented nation, a hinterland or splinterland consciousness, which in total adds up to a complex notion of contemporary culture.) For me writers are still flirting with the energetic possibilities of such postmodernist thinking without embracing it completely; they are simultaneously persisting and letting go of post-colonial awarenesses and actualities without fully grasping either the substance or significance of them.

VI

The productivity of global economies alongside labour and technological alienation, new concerns about ownership and belonging, a growing redundancy of faith, an increasingly assertive intercultural penetration and a previously unknown dynamic economy have all led to a society in serious transition. Effectively the confusions and confidences delivered by a period of social liberalism, the collapse of political difference with the demise of left-wing alternatives, the apparent confluence of political thinking and the influence of politically correct ideology have ensured that difference has been submerged and the impact of oppositional energies diluted. From a contemporary perspective it is easy to see the decline of one writing style and the emergence of another. The difficulty of course is not so much to compare one against another but also to measure one against another. For most commentators, the older generation is way ahead in terms of quality, having generated plays that will be performed again and become part of the repertoire. The more contemporary writers are enjoying unprecedented international successes and their work is anticipated not just nationally, but internationally. It is my suspicion that it says as much about the quality of the work as it does about the paucity of good writing for the theatre inter-

nationally. Judgment on this work seems premature, other than to say I do not expect most of it to have a long shelf life. There are exceptions in the work of Carr, McPherson, and McDonagh.

Under postmodernism, subjectivity supposedly has mutated into commodified individuality or into something which is not fixed but circulating and volatile and the concept of the real has been textualised to a high degree. But to be seduced by such a scenario is erroneous, principally because it tends to casually obliterate history, deny difference in the proper sense of the word, and more importantly to refuse either to value or validate change. In the past, of course, play was, in part, ritualised. Ritual is often associated with fertility, yet the contemporary notion of play is about its opposite sterility and barrenness, play has little call on otherness and no specific relationship to myth. It is almost without symbolic resonance, as irony is its dominant validator. It may well be that even though fantasy was once the liberating feature – indulgent under its own terms, elaborate and escapist, wish fulfilling and aspirational – it might become the thing that limits, the simulation, even the convention. As Garry Hynes notes, "If we in the theatre are about anything we are about invention. We are about imagining."[42] Play leads the way often transgressively, suspiciously, fractiously, duplicitiously, and imaginatively.

Incompleteness, rather than overview, drives the contemporary dramaturgy, stories partially tell what is, characters display partial awareness to the worlds in which they live and construct. In the work of an older generation, there is an anxiety or concern in the writing to be inclusive, to provide the overview, the critical frameworks necessary to engage with the work, hard work that shapes the journey of the characters, the arc as Hollywood screenwriting manuals call it. There is a sense of explanation, even if it is privileged and prejudiced. The contemporary writing seems confident in its incompleteness. The real dilemma lies within the dramaturgy itself, it is not necessarily one of articulation, but one of dramatisation; the increasing inability to find dramatic situations or circumstances into which to pitch characters in a collective space, where there is something substantial and uncertain at stake.

42. Garry Hynes, "Accepting the Fiction of Being 'National,' " *Irish Times*, 3 May 1993.

María Jesús Martínez-Alfaro

Revisiting Modernism and the Myth of the Descent to the Underworld

The Fin-de-siècle Hell of Indifference and Fragmentation in Charles Palliser's *The Sensationist*

This paper approaches Charles Palliser's *The Sensationist* (1991) in the light of one of the myths most frequently found in modernist art and literature: the descent to the underworld. It argues that *The Sensationist* also resorts to the myth of the descent to hell, but it does so in a way that the final result can be regarded as an altered version of what Evans Lansing Smith has called the sequence "rape-revelation." Likewise, the novel's form is analyzed – with its alternation between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration – as illustrating an evolution which has left the once coherent ego further and further behind, moving from wholeness to alienation and then to fragmentation; that is to say, from unity to disintegration. The analysis concludes by briefly connecting the overall picture that emerges from *The Sensationist* with what Gilles Lipovetsky refers to as Narcissistic culture in the age of the void, which coincides with the cultural paradigm Palliser fictionally recreates in his second novel.

Charles Palliser's *The Sensationist* was published in 1991. To the reading public, this was Palliser's second novel but, as the author himself has explained, he actually wrote it during a short break from work on *The Quincunx* (1989).[1] After years of re-

1. The novel certainly did not pass unnoticed. Ballantine bought the American rights and a few months later Penguin purchased the UK paperback rights and published it in 1990. Palliser's novel was chosen by Waterstone's as Book of the Month and it was short-listed for The Saltire New Author, the Yorkshire Post First Novel, and the Hawthornden Prize. In April 1991 the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters awarded Palliser the Sue Kaufman Prize for First Edition for *The Quincunx*. Translation rights were sold in six languages and *The Quincunx* appeared at the top of many best-sellers lists in the UK, the USA, Canada, Holland and Belgium. In 1993 Viking reprinted a new hardback edition including an "Author's Afterword" to the novel.

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search into the history and literature of nineteenth-century England in order to produce a highly complex novel whose contents and style should be evocative of Victorian fiction, Palliser simply wanted to write something different from all that, a story for which he needed no research at all, something short, with a straightforward plot and a contemporary setting. He would try to portray life in a universe in which immediate sensations were paramount. The intensity of experience linked with sex, alcohol and drugs would come to the front through a character who did not ponder on his actions, who did not consider the moral implications of his behaviour. This was the genesis of *The Sensationist*, which Palliser has described as an "antidote," a reaction to all the process of writing *The Quincunx*.[2]

Despite all differences between *The Quincunx* and *The Sensationist*, the two novels have in common the fact that they engage the reader in a complex intertextual game, and so, where *The Quincunx* abounds in Victorian echoes, *The Sensationist* reverberates with allusions to modernist and early postmodernist writers, from D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner to John Fowles and the early Martin Amis. Aiming at intensity and economy, Palliser finally produced something similar to a long poem in the guise of a novel. Language is highly metaphorical, oblique, elliptical. Action is reduced to a minimum and the emphasis falls on moods and sensations suggested through images, sounds, smells. Sentences are short, syntax is fragmented, and the text resembles stream of consciousness.

Just as the novel's style is reminiscent of that in much modernist fiction, so the novel's contents can be rewardingly interpreted in the light of one of the myths most frequently found in the context of modernist art and literature: the myth of the descent to the underworld. In what follows, I will approach Palliser's novel from the perspective provided by such a myth and I will resort for that purpose to Evans Lansing Smith's study of the descent to the underworld and its treatment in modernist literature. The way in which *The Sensationist* fits, but ultimately departs from the scheme provided by Smith will throw light on Palliser's re-writing – from a postmodernist perspective – of what we find in much modernist fiction, which nonetheless functions as the novel's main intertext.

As Smith points out, the descent to the underworld is the single most important myth for modernist authors.[3] Nearly all the major writers from 1895 to 1945 use it as

2. Gilles Menegaldo, "Entretien avec Charles Palliser," *La Licorne* 44 (1998) 267–83, pp. 278–279.

3. Evans Lansing Smith, *Rape and Revelation: The Descent to the Underworld in Modernism* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1990), p. 1.

a means of conferring on their works that shape and significance which T. S. Eliot thought to be the consequence of the mythical method or, what is the same, of myth's ability to make "the modern world possible for art."[4] Indeed, the modernists themselves developed their own terminology to express an apocalyptic relationship between the descent into Hades and the revelation of the fundamental patterns shaping life and art (archetypes, in Jungian terminology). In modernist literature, more specifically, the discovery of those mythic patterns seems to require a previous crippling of the traditional, stable ego, a deathlike movement out of life and towards a renewed awareness. The self in crisis is thus healed by an illuminating experience in the works of W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Thomas Mann, James Joyce, Joseph Conrad and D. H. Lawrence, among many others.[5]

This conception of the underworld as a granary or repository of the only forms (archetypes) capable of making art and life meaningful at a time of flux constitutes one of the four chambers of the underworld. The other three have to do with the respective views of it as an ancestral crypt, as a sacred site of initiatory transformation (*temenos*) and as *inferno*.[6] As the crypt of the ancestral dead, the underworld contains those great poets of the tradition whose voices haunt the works of Eliot, Joyce, and Pound, to cite a few. As *temenos*, the underworld becomes a vessel of initiation. D. H. Lawrence has most fully exploited this dimension of Hades. His sexual scenes constitute a celebration of the erotic descent into darkness, a physical abduction from which his characters return (ideally) as resurrected ones. And, as *inferno*, the metaphor of the underworld is used in modernism to explore the dark side of psyche and history. This is the case with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), Mann's *Death in Venice* (1912) and *Doctor Faustus* (1947), etc. Later in the century, Malcolm Lowry, Herman Broch, and Thomas Pynchon would also concur in their visions of life during World War II as a catastrophic *inferno* inhabited by demons of political and sexual lust. In the same line, there is, as well, a slightly less cruel view of the world, like the one which inspired Eliot. His

4. T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order and Myth," *Dial* 75 (1923) 480–83, p. 483.

5. Not only the works but also the lives of many modernists feature a crisis that seems to have led to the revelation of the archetypal forms of imagination. Jung himself also experienced such a crisis, which he saw as his personal descent into Hades, and it was in the course of it that the myths at the core of his future work were revealed. For a discussion of the relationship between the underworld and the archetypal categories of the imagination, see his 1935 "A Psychological Commentary on *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*," in *Psychology and Religion: West and East* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958).

6. Smith, p. 3

"hollow men" lack the grandeur of real devils, they wander across the moral wasteland of modern life like spectres locked eternally in the hell of their own ennui.

What I would like to argue, in the light of Smith's contention, is that *The Sensationist* features the various aspects of the underworld distinguished by the abovementioned author and that it does so in such a way that the final result can be approached as a parody (in Linda Hutcheon's sense[7]) of what Smith has called the sequence "rape-revelation." The term "rape" here must be understood in relation to Persephone's myth, as her abduction to Hades begins, literally, with a rape. In the context of modernist literature, the "raped" figure is a victim in a more general sense: it is the alienated character, bizarre, peculiar, sick, in a word, *wounded*. That is the case of Eliot's Prufrock, the characters in Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914) and the husband in D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1932). Yet it is important to remember that the rape initiates the revelation in the myth, symbolised by the transformation of Persephone from struggling victim to bride of Hades. In literature, revelation is expressed in the form of archetypal images, mythical structures, epiphanic moments characters experience, etc.

In a wide range of modernist works, then, things fall apart in order to fall together again. But this is not the case with *The Sensationist*. Like Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981) and Iain Banks' *The Bridge* (1986), Palliser's revision of the myth as dealt with in modernist literature features the process of breakdown but not the moment of breakthrough. The novel abounds in images of the underworld and the protagonist's descent into hell is presented, in typically modernist fashion, as instability, alienation and threatened unity. When David, the novel's main character, finds what could have been the agent of his transformation, the artificer of his enlightenment, he proves incapable of responding adequately to the situation. As a consequence, the centre around which he could have arranged his life fails to hold, and things are not very different in as far as his job, his flat, and the city as a whole are concerned.

Myths themselves might not literally serve as a source for the writer, or at least a conscious source, but they serve as powerful underlying structures capturing human experience: myths contain a culture's most ingrained expressions of the experience of life. Thus, if as John B. Vickery points out, "literary plots, characters, themes and images are basically complications and displacements of similar elements in myths

7. Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teaching of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (London: Methuen, 1985).

and folktales,"[8] by delving into these "complications and displacements" one may reach some conclusions about a culture's deepest driving forces. Shape-shifting personae and plots are a common feature of myths and legends (one only has to think of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), but they also have a literary progeny in which it is the myths themselves that appear in different guises. Accordingly, when one focuses on Palliser's second novel and its connection with Persephone's legend, one cannot but conclude that the most significant transformation is that affecting the pattern suggested by the myth itself; and just as the metamorphoses within the myth have a meaning that goes beyond the story it tells, so the change affecting the myth's rationale (its rape-revelation dynamics) has significant implications when it comes to interpreting the novel and the worldview that emerges from it.

One of the most significant features of *The Sensationist* is that the traditional constraints of time, place and name are virtually eliminated alongside with fundamental information about the main character, his job, the people he meets, etc. No wonder, then, that the novel's plot can be summarised in a few lines. From what we are told, the protagonist arrives in a northern city (whose name is never mentioned) at the end of the summer. He has accepted a new job there, which will offer him the possibility of developing a risky but challenging scheme in the financial market world but which remains, from beginning to end, a sheer mystery. Long hours in front of the computer, together with parties, sex, alcohol and, eventually, drugs, fill David's (no surname) agenda. On meeting Lucy, things start to change, to make sense, but when further commitment is required of him, he answers by turning a blind eye to the symptoms of an emotional and mental breakdown (hers) that is under way. Eventually, both his relationship with Lucy and his job collapse and he leaves the city less than a year after his arrival, at the beginning of the summer fair.

The way in which David relates to other people, on the one hand, and the link that exists between him and the city, on the other, constitute the two points of reference (at the story level) against which the alienation and progressive fragmentation of the protagonist's self are to be measured. Through similes, metaphors, personifications and other rhetorical devices, the city is depicted as an autonomous mechanism whose streets and gutters resemble the entrails of a living being and whose inhabitants seem to be less alive than the city itself. Surrounded by a land-

8. John B. Vickery, ed., *Myth and Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 80.

scape "too remote from his own countryside of farms and villages" (94)[9] and unable, even, to understand the locals' northern dialect, David's feeling of alienation becomes acute. Detached from everything and everybody, his only link with the world around him becomes reduced to sensorial impressions. Special attention is paid to sights, noises, smells, but there is nothing deeper than that. No wonder, then, that the only way in which he relates to others should be purely physical. As David sees bodies, and not human beings in all their complexity, sex becomes the logical outcome.

In as far as sex is concerned, David's creation of a self through a promiscuous pursuit of ever-new lovers – reminiscent of Jinny in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) and Nicholas Urfe in John Fowles' *The Magus* (1965, 1977) – already involves discontinuity and fragmentation. His quick affairs are invariably of the kind in which no emotional attachment is involved, a fact that makes of sex the easiest relationship. Wary of further responsibilities, David has no interest whatsoever in his lovers' lives. On the contrary, "intimacy with strangers," we are told, "was the most exciting thing he knew" (38).

As if to fill the protagonist's lack of beliefs, sex is increasingly regarded by him in terms of ritual. Love-making becomes a form of worship, while his potential partners – women he sees on buses and in trains especially – are likened (in words that bring to mind the Marquis de Sade's blasphemous sexual ceremonies) to parishioners "waiting for a religious service to begin" (50). The climax, in turn, amounts to a privileged, sacred moment of clarity in which all meaning is held by the purposeful motions of two bodies. David's search for lovers actually hides a search for meaning, which appears to be invariably condemned to failure. As happens with D. H. Lawrence's male characters, the kind of fulfilment that sex provides is never permanent. On the contrary, its evanescent quality makes the meaninglessness that once and again follows it even harder to accept: "But then the consequence: nothing resolved" (50).

The other way in which David is presented to the reader turns the city into a metaphor, an image suggestive of the protagonist's solipsism and gradual dissolution. G. M. Hyde has argued that modernist literature was born in the city and with Baudelaire – especially with his discovery that crowds mean loneliness and that the

9. All parenthesised references are to this edition: Charles Palliser, *The Sensationist* (London: Cape, 1991).

terms "multitude" and "solitude" are interchangeable.[10] It was perhaps T. S. Eliot, above all others, who best pressed urban multitudes into service as specimens of degeneracy and sterility. *The Waste Land* (1922) is about sterility, especially where it is about burning sexual desire (in the section based on the Buddha's Fire Sermon). Likewise, sex and sterility get fused in *The Sensationist* and the city becomes the means through which the protagonist's relational problems are expressed. Like everything else in the novel, the city is described from David's point of view and, accordingly, it changes with him. The characteristically modernist dominance of viewpoint over material accounts, then, for a picture of the city which depends entirely on the way in which the main character looks at it.

From the very beginning, the city disturbs David with "its sense of mystery withheld, of strangeness made familiar" (1). Its grey atmosphere finds a prolongation in its inhabitants who look "bedraggled, beaten, sullen" (4). Human beings become microcosms which reproduce at a smaller scale the macrocosm where they are enclosed. Accordingly, both the city and the locals appear hollow at the core. The city is literally so: an elaborate network of wires and pipes runs under the ground, roads have been dug and re-dug, "like the scarred veins of an addict" (19) and, deeper, there are the ancient sewers, connected by fetid canals. The decadent, depressing aspect of the surface (derelict buildings, long hours of darkness, endless winters, the soft but steady rain) has its counterpart underground, in the wastes that circulate out of sight through the city's vacuities.

While the city becomes "a slowly evolving organism," its inhabitants are no more than artefacts "plugged" into it (19), neither living nor dead, "eating, heating, excreting" (18). Or, is it the city that does so? The statement remains teasingly ambiguous: it may refer to the people, but it could do as well to the "humanised" city, whose tunnels are compared to monstrous urinals (4) and whose buildings move like "loose teeth in a rotten gum" (24). Like the city, David is a "surface" enclosing a dark and empty core; like the buildings, he seems to be helpless against the forces which threaten to reduce him to a heap of fragments. Significantly, the atmosphere that surrounds David in this first part of the novel can be defined as hellish, depicted, quite often, with reference to motifs associated with the journey or descent into Hades.

From the day of his arrival, David seems to move in a world of shadows and unclear images. Lying in the darkness of his room, he gets engrossed watching the

10. G. M. Hyde, "The Poetry of the City," in *Modernism 1890–1930*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (1976; London: Penguin, 1994), p. 337.

transformations of the shadows made by the light that comes through the window. The city's weather conditions condemn him to move permanently "through darkness and rain" (11) and the clouds become a "misted glass" (35) which covers the sun, "the darkness lifting that late, returning so early" (40). The overcast sky and the slums, the humped old buildings which have become ghosts of what they used to be, make him feel enclosed, trapped among spectral figures. Sometimes even human bodies seem to blur around the protagonist. At parties, for instance, the revolting lights turn people into shapes perceived among wine bottles or reflected on glasses and windowpanes, all life frozen in the dizzying flash of the strobes. On such occasions, drugs and alcohol distort even more David's perception of external reality. Under their effect, he becomes "strange to himself" (21), hypersensitive to a body that, more and more often as the story goes on, seems to lead a life of its own. The painful darkness, the smell, the heat, which simultaneously attract and hurt him, further round up the depiction of each party as a nightmarish (underworld) scenario where, interestingly, every smile betrays "a soul in pain" (26).

Another view of hell is provided by the description of David's workplace: a suite of windowless offices which make him feel as if he were "hundreds of feet underground" (15). This is a realm of silence and a realm of death as well. Linking these two concepts, James Hillman points out that the speech of the dead usually appears as a whisper and that many are the authors who, following the Roman poets, refer to the dead as mute.[11] Thus, in Eliot's *The Hollow Men* (1925), those who have crossed over to the kingdom of death see formless shapes and colourless shades who whisper like the wind and huddle together like rats in a cellar. Likewise, the only sounds to be heard in the building where David spends most of the day are the hissing of the ventilation and the humming of the machines, as the carpeted floors in offices and corridors absorb not only louder noises but also human voices. In addition, the pale neon light accounts for the lifeless, colourless atmosphere of the place and makes David's colleagues look "hung-over" (7). The cafeteria, low and dark, has the same kind of fluorescent lighting under which people crowd as if living dead, lacking in spiritual energy, shuffling forwards in a way that is strongly reminiscent of Eliot's hollow men crossing London Bridge.

On David's first visit to what would be his flat, and even before he makes up his mind to rent it, he is already put off by the design on the coloured glass of the door: an ill-drawn St George, wrapped in the scaly coils of a serpent (an underworld crea-

11. James Hillman, *The Dream and the Underworld* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 206.

ture, often associated, in Christian symbology, with the Devil), and holding a sword which appears to thrust disconcertingly at his own body. The apartment is said to look *empty*, though it has quite a lot of furniture, and *dark*, even when the lights are on. In addition, the floors slope to the back of the building, a fact which generates in the protagonist a permanent fear of falling. As soon as he moves in, strange cracks start to awake him in the middle of the night, and yet, he manages once and again to get over the panic of feeling the bed move under his body by convincing himself that "all was normal" (24). The cracks, though, leave their scar on his mind and just as scars remain on the flesh, so the terror of losing touch will never abandon him. In fact, it seems as if it had always been with him, since the moment he learned at school that the earth was spinning and became "terrified of being flung off if he stopped concentrating" (62). Being flung off and falling down amount to the same thing here. Both are symptoms of the protagonist's mental unsteadiness and sense of groundlessness.

If David's malady links him with a wide range of modernist characters, such as Virginia Woolf's Rhoda in *The Waves* (1931) or the consul in Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (1947), his growing obsession with a hidden underworld as well as with the instability of the earth's surface can equally be related to the way in which modernist literature echoed the discoveries made by modern science in the early decades of the century, when Einstein published his theories of relativity and, along with Niels Bohr, laid the foundations of quantum mechanics. The notion that there is an underlying structure, a world within the world of the atom, captured the imagination of artists at once.[12] In fact, developments in science came to a dramatic climax with the shift from mechanicist to quantum-relativistic physics (a shift coterminous with modernism: say, from 1905, the year of Einstein's first publication on relativity theory, to the 1930s, when Bohr, Einstein and Enrico Fermi worked out the details of the New Physics).

The de-substantiation of the solid world described by the New Physics logically leads to the postulate that physical entities which seemed to be separate are actually linked, implicitly unified. This notion applies to Palliser's novel in as far as boundaries between characters, and between them and the city are concerned. Clear-cut distinctions disappear and individuals are reduced to "a *mass* of people" (8, emphasis added), a "*blotch* of noisy, frightened humanity" (9, emphasis added). Yet the screw is given a further turn when the city's inhabitants are presented as a mere counterpart of their environment. In strange and complex ways, then, the part is in

12. Cf. Jacob Bronowsky, *The Ascent of Man* (Boston: Little Brown, 1973), p. 330.

the whole and the whole is in the part, even if it is David's mind that effects such a connection. As Fritjof Capra puts it, those new theories suggested that consciousness may well be an essential aspect of the universe and that "the observed patterns of matter are reflections of patterns of mind."[13] David's view of things and events appears in this light as a reflection of his own psyche, a fact which highlights the importance of a recurrent element throughout the narrative: the protagonist's dreams and visions. Moreover, these products of David's unconscious can be regarded as a further link with the metaphor of the underworld. According to Smith, dreams and visions have often been used in modernism to explore the dark side of human psyche[14] and, in the same line, James Hillman begins his book on the dream and the underworld with a discussion of Freud's description of the subconscious as a "psychological underworld" inhabited by figures "fixed in their repetitions, unredeemable" and eternally suffering.[15]

Analysing *The Waste Land* (1922) or, more specifically, some of the motifs relevant to the descent to the underworld in the poem, Smith mentions, among others, that of a man swimming to the bottom of the sea and a dream vision of a person a long time dead from a Poe story about the collective presence of all the dead.[16] Likewise, on his very first night in the city, David dreams of a school-friend of his "whom he now saw drowning in front of him, crying out speechlessly, his white legs descending an invisible stair-way" (3). Once again, silence appears as the speech of the dead, while the way of dying recalls Eliot's death by water as well as the last stage in the Heraclitean *descensus ad infernos*: from air to earth to the waters below. Yet if the dead can be said to be present in the novel, such presence is achieved mainly through David's visions of Paul, which come to haunt the protagonist from the very moment he learns that his colleague has died of a heart-attack (probably due to the fact that he was "hitting too much" at the time). He first sees him after one of his quarrels with Lucy. Walking about the city, looking for her smile, her face, her beauty, what he finds, by contrast, is Paul's figure moving ahead of him in the street (81). Later on (121) he gets a close-up of his shadowed face, grinning at him and then laughing mischievously among other people (other dead?). He sees him asleep and awake as the nightmare of waking life gets mixed with his worst dreams.

13. Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture* (New York: Bantam, 1982), p. 93.

14. Smith, p. 4.

15. Hillman, pp. 18, 22.

16. Smith, p. 28.

David's constant fear of falling and his obsession with decay and rottenness (the wastes at the port, the city's stench, its demolished houses, or the fetid canals) also reach their climax in his dreams. If during the day he feels as if he could fall down at any moment, he actually does so in his nightmares (49, 89), which constitute perhaps the most vivid, hair-raising picture of the underworld's darkest chamber. But, as has been pointed out, the myth of the descent to the underworld appears at different levels in *The Sensationist*. The protagonist's view of the city and its inhabitants, already commented on, should be regarded as a less cruel, though not less terrifying rendering of an *inferno* crowded with lost and sickened (not really evil) souls. Thus dream and waking life combine in order to create David's private hell, a hell which, nonetheless, offers him a chance of transformation and renewal.

When the protagonist first sees Lucy in an art gallery, she, her dark hair, her blue eyes, come to obsess him: "It seemed to him that she was the centre around which the things that had long puzzled him would form a pattern" (46). Likewise, when he learns her name he thinks that she could have had no other: Lucy, the one who brings light to the darkness in which he is immersed. Thus, his memories of her lure David with a promise of order and coherence with which to overcome the randomness and unintelligibility of human life in general and of his own life, in particular. This is, in fact, the promise of the *temenos,* the sacred site of initiatory transformation that Evans Lansing Smith points out as one of the chambers of the underworld.

One day, looking out of the window, he sees Lucy again in the park opposite his flat. If, at the moment of being overcome by Hades, Persephone was playing with the nymphs, picking flowers in a meadow, David approaches Lucy in a park, where she is playing with her child Sally "running up and down on the grass, picking up and scattering handfuls of wet leaves" (53). The rain, the leaves on the ground, David's surprise at seeing snow on the roof of a car, which, he concludes, must have come from the mountains (as if the winter were still far), together with the fact that, from what we know, the protagonist arrived at the city at the end of the summer and has not been there long, these are all details that may help the reader place the scene in time and, at least, venture that it must occur in autumn, the same season when Persephone is said to have been taken away by Hades. In the myth, Persephone's mother, Demeter, succeeds only partially in recovering her daughter since, as Hades' bride, she must spend half the year with him: from autumn to spring. It is also in spring that David's relationship with Lucy starts breaking down and definitely ends shortly before David leaves the city, at the beginning of the summer. What happens, then, till they reach this point?

As has been explained, the fact that events, people and places are invariably presented to the reader from David's point of view brings to the fore the modernist contention of the impossibility to keep perceiver and world apart. Thus, the transformation that David notices around him as Lucy enters his life draws into sharper focus the notion that reality, far from being fixed, depends on who sees it and how s/he looks at it. "Seeing," in a word, gives way to what Wittgenstein called "seeing-as."

In the second part of the *Philosophical Investigations* (*Philosophische Untersuchungen*, published posthumously in 1953), and within the context of a broad consideration of the problem of meaning, Wittgenstein calls attention to a certain distinctive visual experience: the abrupt change in perceptual content that can occur through the dawning of a new aspect or the identification of a new principle of coherence. Thus we can see an arrangement of lines as convex and then suddenly as concave; Jastrow's well-known design may appear now as a duck, now as a rabbit; etc. What is distinctive about such cases, observes Wittgenstein, is that the object remains unchanged while the visual experience may alter radically: "I *see* that it has not changed and yet I see it differently." It is "quite as if the object had altered before my eyes," as if it "had ended by *becoming* this or that."[17]

This train of thought is perfectly applicable to the protagonist's altered view both of his life and of the world, which appears as the logical outcome of his having found a point of reference around which everything seems to cohere. The city now seems to him "a Florence turned inside out" (63). Likewise, a pattern emerges out of the maze of streets that criss-cross it, a pattern formed by the lines between his flat and Lucy's place, the gallery where she works, the school attended by her daughter Sally, the restaurants where they meet, etc. For the first time, he thinks of his future, his career, as something he can make, and the conviction that the path he will follow has not been marked out for him, but depends entirely on his own decisions, makes him feel alive and free. This sudden thrust towards coherence also affects David's fragmented self, which now acquires a new unity. Such an epiphany of self-identity, which reaches its climax when making love with Lucy, is described in words that, as Susana Onega has pointed out,[18] echo the trance-like experiences of D. H. Lawrence's heroes on similar occasions: "Until then, he believed, he'd never made love. Never known the findings of self in the unawareness of self, the celebration of something

17. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 193, 195, 206.

18. Susana Onega, "Charles Palliser," *Post-war Literatures in English* 19 (1993) 1–12, p. 8.

beyond the pleasure of receiving – even of giving – delight through the intimacy of two strangers' bodies" (67).

The protagonist's discovery of new patterns of meaning can be related to what Smith refers to as a transformation from the naturalistic perspective of ego to the psychic perspective of soul.[19] As the descent to the underworld produces an intensification of psyche, Persephone's abduction precipitates the revelation of the already-mentioned "*eidola* of Hades," that is, of "the ideational forms that shape and govern life."[20] Thus, David manages to experience order and meaning, and yet, he will prove incapable of responding adequately to them.

The more the relationship progresses, the deeper David's fear of compromise grows, a fear which prevents him from actually becoming part of Lucy's life. As Onega explains, Lucy possesses – like Lily in *The Magus* (1966), and also like Lydia Lenski in *The Rainbow* (1915) from whom both heroines can be said to descend – that combination of remoteness and mysteriousness which is the mark of the Lawrentian "true" woman.[21] It is this disquieting ambivalence that, on the whole, links Lucy even further with the mythical Persephone. In as far as the latter is concerned, she is, on the one hand, the delicate and innocent youth at play in the sunny fields, a creature of beauty and light frequently associated with flowers (which she was picking at the moment of her bereavement). On the other hand, there is Persephone Queen of the Underworld, a creature of darkness, tenebrous and unrevealed. This same double-sidedness can be applied to Lucy. Her eyes, brilliant blue, the clearest David has ever seen, are shadowed by thick dark lashes. Her pale skin contrasts with the dark hair, which "smelt of coal as if its blackness derived from that subterranean mineral, and shone like coal when it caught the light" (65). She is often referred to as "a child" (59), "a small child" (66), "a little girl" (67), whose face becomes "even younger" while making love, her slender body "rapt in its devotedness," "nun-like" (65). Yet her smile is "secretive" (63), and sometimes turns into a mischievous grin (63). Just as Persephone's life in the upper world remains unknown to Hades, so "Lucy's life apart from himself [David] was mysterious" (62). But even if she appears to be free and have a life of her own, David seeing her only when she lets him do so, there seems to be something in her relationship with the protagonist that makes her feel entrapped: "Let me go, let me go" (71), she cries out in her sleep.

19. Smith, p. 14.
20. Smith, pp. 13, 18.
21. Onega, p. 7.

So is Lucy, fragile, innocent, playful, childish, but also mysterious, absent and, sometimes, even cruel and cold.[22] As to David, his attitude towards her only manages to widen the rift in her personality. Far from trying to make her one and whole, David is ready to relate to the first Lucy while he keeps the second at bay, thus precipitating her eventual breakdown. Her previous lovers, her child's father, Sally, her career as a painter, all this remains confined to a darker sphere in Lucy's life which David is unwilling to explore or, rather, afraid to do so, because that would create a closer tie between them, a bond he is wary of. No wonder, then, that whenever the idea of forming a family with Lucy and Sally comes to his mind, he immediately dismisses it as "a temptation . . . to which he would not capitulate" (113). Significantly, by the time this happens, David has missed the one chance to renew himself, to make a start, not at Lucy's cost ("feeding off her energy," 67), but *with her*.

In a scene that recalls the trip to Mount Parnassus by Nicholas and Alison in John Fowles' *The Magus*, Lucy feels compelled to swim in the frozen waters of the loch while David gets annoyed with her and, unlike Nick in the aforementioned novel, chooses to remain on the shore, blind to the regenerative ritual symbology of bathing.[23] David's failure to perceive the potentially redeeming qualities of water turns Lucy's bath into the opposite of what it could have been: from (re-)birth to a figurative death by water. In this way, the picture of the underworld as *temenos* (place of initiation) recedes only to be succeeded by the initial view of it as *inferno*.

It is immediately after this episode that Lucy starts showing definite signs of mental imbalance, and it is also then that David first feels the desire to humiliate and hurt her while making love, thus feeding Lucy's dangerous masochism (a quality she shares with other archetypal virgin/whores like Henrietta, in *The Quincunx,* and also Sarah Woodruff in Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*). Afraid of her for him, rather than afraid for her, David's instinct for safety begins to operate until he remorselessly stops seeing the by now deranged Lucy. Far from being the solid and stable centre for which David is eager to take her, Lucy is, rather, the basis of an (unconscious) strategy through which the protagonist tries, as everybody else in the city does, to "ward off the terror and postpone the night" (37).

As their relationship breaks off, the nightmare of David's daily life comes back to him with even more intensity than before. He grows increasingly sensitive to noises (74) and smells (61, 82), and his own sensations come to hurt him. He cannot get rid

22. See, for instance, her reaction on learning about Paul's death or the way in which she often treats her child while she is still going out with David.

23. Onega, p. 8.

of the cold, which seems to filtrate through invisible cracks in his own body, and he notices a disgusting odour clinging to him (82), as if something were rotting inside. He feels "estranged" and "lonely" (78), and, eventually, he foresees "the down," "the dark depression" (83), which is coming on him with the inevitability of fate. He starts seeing other women again and increases his intake of drugs, but the feeling that his self is giving way, dissolving, fragmenting beyond remedy, never abandons him, until he reaches a kind of schizophrenic coma during which his mental and bodily functions seem to lead separate courses:

> Something grew in him, something beyond the deep shadows that followed him as he made his way to and fro across the streets. . . . Often as he walked alone his legs seemed to be moving to no effect, fixed on one spot while the streets and buildings slid cumbersomely past. Something dark so that when he stopped suddenly, behind his panting he heard another gasp. (110)

In *The Culture of Narcissism*, Christopher Lasch cites several psychoanalysts reporting on how their patients have been complaining of difficulties quite different from those that plagued the hysterical and obsessive compulsive patients described by Freud.[24] Among these psychoanalysts, Heinz Kohut manages to capture the difference between Freud's patients and his own in his distinction between Guilty Man and Tragic Man. The guilty human is torn by drive-instinctual Oedipal conflict; the primary anxiety is, in this case, castration anxiety, and the source of this patient's guilt is incestuous and aggressive wishes. The tragic human, on the other hand, has more archaic problems (in as far as the psychic development of the individual is concerned).[25] S/he cannot experience him/herself as a centre of initiative and suffers from disintegration anxiety. This patient feels despair, boredom; s/he complains of feeling empty, depressed, and, at times, unreal. In short, Tragic Man lives in fear of boundary loss, of potential fragmentation.

David's symptoms in *The Sensationist* are not very different from these. Moreover, they account for a picture of reality in which not only the protagonist but also everything around him – both things and people – falls apart, breaks down, and gradually dissolves into an increasingly fragmented plurality. This being so, the final section of the novel abounds in pathologised images which take us back to the dark-

24. Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), pp. 36–38.

25. These should be traced back to the dyad child/first love-object rather than to the father/mother/child triangle.

est part of the underworld and which eventually replace the revelation phase as posited by Evans Lansing Smith.[26] For modernist writers (and for their readers as well), this revelation took the form of mythical patterns, which offered them a way to cope with all the complexities and inconsistencies of the world and of man's inner reality. These mythical patterns became an image and a function of some great unity in life. Modernist characters, therefore, suffer the pains of alienation and the disquieting consequences of the loss of belief in the individual's power to take significant action and control him/herself and the world outside. As they do so, though, their afflictions get eventually healed by a view of the rainbow or the rose garden, which provides them, as it were, with the strength necessary to give the last stroke to a painting that, for a long time, they had been unable to complete.

For all its indebtedness to modernist literature, *The Sensationist* appears to be much bleaker than most of its predecessors in the sense that, even though the protagonist goes through the "torments" of the underworld, he misses the chance of revelation. David's intuition that Lucy is the answer to all that puzzles him comes to nothing as he never manages to overcome his fear of giving himself to another person and doing so without reservation. Lucy cannot become the centre of his life because that is already too self-centred. And yet, from another perspective, one feels that David is not the only one to blame. On the one hand, Lucy cannot save David because he does not let himself be saved, but, on the other, she cannot do such a thing because she is as much a victim as David is. She cannot become the centre of his world because hers, too, lacks a centre. What we get, then, is a sort of *mise en abyme* of voids within voids which extends itself from the city and its underground vacuities, to David, who uses Lucy to try and fill the void of his inner self, to Lucy herself, who, in turn, cannot fill it with anything but madness. In this light, the reader cannot help making his/hers the dreadful but inescapable conclusion reached by the protagonist, who, for all his attempts to rescue things "as if to assemble a jig-saw," ends up facing the fact that "there was no jig-saw for there was no picture" (122). And so, as the pieces cannot be put together, the only way seems to be for them to fragment even further.

The final collapse affects both work and personal life. In less than a page, the reader is offered a chaotic picture of David's workplace – now full of people shouting, phones ringing and screens going blank (129) – which is immediately followed by a nearly surrealistic scene in which David reaches Lucy's flat just in time to see her hitting Sally dead. Lacking all capacity for emotion and moral involvement, David is

26. Smith, pp. 137–138.

initially shocked by what is going on in front of his eyes but in no way affected by it. David's mental degeneration is thus shown to be paralleled by an increasing moral degradation, which also accounts for the protagonist turning his back on the maddened Lucy in much the same way as John Huffam does with Henrietta at the end of *The Quincunx*. The novel ends with a depressing image of Lucy in a mental asylum and David's short visit to the place just before he takes a plane away from the city. The protagonist, then, moves off the stage as he had entered it: a formless, contentless, almost featureless self who feels nothing and has no ethical dilemmas to confront.

On the whole, Palliser's second novel portrays a tragic world in which, paradoxically, nothing looks tragic. The degeneration of the environment, David's mental split, Sally's death, Lucy's madness, they all lack the distinctive tragic quality which, as Susana Onega explains, could have conferred on them a heroic and cathartic significance.[27] Accordingly, David remains indifferent to a reality (both external/physical and internal/mental) in which everything is falling to pieces, as if that were, like the business crash, a "system failure" for which nobody is to blame (70, 85). At this point, some lines by T. S. Eliot come to mind:

> There are three conditions which often look alike
> Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
> Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
> From self and from things and from persons; and, growing
> between them, indifference
> Which resembles the others as death resembles life.
>
> ("Little Gidding," Part III)[28]

If the medieval hell consists in the agony of perpetually remaining the self you once chose and lived, the modern hell (and Eliot's version is just one among others) lies in the incapability of ever attaining an identity – even an evil one. In a paradoxical way, as Eliot suggests above, it is better to do evil than nothing at all, because doing evil can at least be regarded as a proof that we are alive. What governs *The Sensationist* is precisely this something between attachment and detachment, neither good nor evil. Thus, the novel's world emerges as disquietingly inhuman and, worst of all, with no apparent possibility of change.

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27. Onega, p. 11.

28. T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 5th edition, Vol. 2 (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1962), p. 2203.

When writing *The Sensationist*, Palliser chose to portray the main character's subjectivity as a modernist author would have done. Yet there is a temporal breach that separates this novel from the modernist movement, a temporal breach in which – it could not have been otherwise – ideological changes have taken place and literary writers have found ways to express the new worldview by having recourse to already existing forms. It cannot be denied that *The Sensationist* echoes the typically modernist questioning of coherent and unitary selfhood. In the same line, it exploits the equally modernist themes of anxiety and alienation. However, it also portrays the change in what Fredric Jameson calls the dynamics of cultural pathology, namely, the progressive shift from (modernist) alienation to the (postmodernist) fragmentation of the subject.[29] And just as, at the level of contents, the sequence rape-revelation is truncated, split in the middle, as if the rifts affecting the protagonist's self could but get wider since they cannot be healed, so the novel's form can be said to illustrate an evolution which has left the once coherent ego further and further behind, as corresponds to the last stage of a process which has gone from wholeness to alienation and then to fragmentation, that is to say, from unity to disintegration.

Palliser creates an external narrative instance whose knowledge is always restricted to the main character's eyes and mind, as if stretching to the limit the possibilities implicit in what Henry James called "reflector" or "centre of consciousness."[30] This heterodiegetic narration is now and then interrupted by short italicised paragraphs where some of the events already described or altogether skipped over by the external narrator are reported or commented on by David himself, a David that looks back at that period of his life from some point in time posterior to the events recounted. But as important as the logic that seems to govern the relationship between typeface and narrative voice – roman-type sections-heterodiegetic narrator / italicised paragraphs-autodiegetic narrator – are the occasions when the pattern is broken: the third person is sometimes used in the sections in italics.

It is half way through the novel that we come across the first disruption: "*When she arrived he sensed her mood. She took off her headscarf and shook her head. . . . He saw the aggression*" (76–77, italics in the original). Significantly enough, this passage is closely followed by the one in which David's first schizophrenic experience is described: the protagonist slips away from where he is and contemplates himself and Lucy from a distance, as if he were remembering the episode from some time in

29. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (1984) 53–92, p. 63.

30. Henry James, *The Art of the Novel* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1984), p. 300.

the future (77). Given the fact that the protagonist's psychological evolution goes through stages which could be regarded as more and more clearly schizophrenic, it would not be farfetched to approach the instability that affects the grammatical persons in the text from the perspective provided by Lacan's account of schizophrenia as a disruption in the signifying chain. If, as Catherine Belsey points out (echoing Benveniste's approach), the basis of subjectivity is to be found in the exercise of language,[31] that is, if language is the only objective testimony to the identity of the subject, the linguistic strategies used in the novel may be seen as the ultimate vehicle for portraying a subject that has become nothing but a fragmented, crumbling, nearly lost object. In line with this, an analysis such as F. K. Stanzel's, which focuses on the alternation between first- and third-person pronominal reference, particularly in relation to the modern novel,[32] gains an additional topical interest from the connection that can be established between the variation in pronominal reference, on the one hand, and the psychology of the split personality, while on the other:

> Psychologically speaking, ego awareness and the splitting of personality are problematic not only in pathology. The change from first- to third-person and vice versa can be found in the language of the child, especially in the development phase of "Vorichlichkeit," the state of mind of a child when it is not yet conscious of itself as individual, but also in the socially or psychologically motivated role-playing of adults. The alternation of first- and third-person references of a patient to himself is a symptom of multiple personality in adults. Thus, it is highly probable that . . . the increase in the frequency of changes in pronominal reference in the modern novel is an expression of the growing identity problem of modern man.[33]

The blurring of boundaries between external and internal narration effected through the use of third-person pronouns in italicised paragraphs can be seen as a reflection *en abyme* of the alternation throughout the novel of external and internal

31. Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 1980), p. 59.

32. Stanzel calls attention to the increasing frequency with which this alternation of pronominal reference has appeared in the novels of the most diverse modern authors. He illustrates his point with a list of works which includes Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*; Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*; Saul Bellow's *Herzog*; Margaret Drabble's *The Waterfall*; Kurt Vonnegut's *A Breakfast of Champions*; Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum*; Max Frisch's *Montauk*; etc. F. K. Stanzel, *A Theory of Narrative*, trans. Charlotte Goedsche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 104–105.

33. Stanzel, p. 106.

narrative voices. If we apply what refers to the italicised sections to the novel as a whole, a hypothesis takes form according to which the two narrative instances may correspond to the same narrating subject. That is to say, it can be argued there is only *one* (albeit fragmented) narrator in the novel, even though the subjects of narration (the pronominal references in the text) are different. This difference would mark, then, a split within a single narrating agency – rather than a distinction between two separate [narrating] agents – related to the outward and inward facets of David's fragmented self. Such a view would posit a narrating self that resists total identification with his earlier, experiencing self, and that, consequently, refers to the latter as "he."

Setting up an image of oneself and dealing with it as something external to, independent from the very self which originates it, throws the subject further and further back into fragmentation and indeterminacy, this image working, so to put it, in a direction opposite to that of the fixed imago in the mirror phase of Lacanian psychoanalysis. By narrating himself in the third person, the narrating subject of Palliser's novel questions the stability of what could be taken as a sign of his determinate, symbolic self – the first-person pronoun, that is, the capacity of articulating himself as "I" – and replaces it with the kind of disintegration that is to be found everywhere else in the novel.[34] Accordingly, *The Sensationist* portrays a subject caught in a game with his own image, stuck in a process in which image and source, the self as mirrored and the self as origin, can never be made to coincide, an assertion that may recall the morals of Narcissus' myth. His fate serves as a warning that the gap of reflection cannot be closed or, if closed, closed only by death; a unified consciousness is, at best, an illusion and, at worst, a drowning pool.

My analysis of Palliser's second novel began with Persephone, but by the end of it, Persephone seems to have metamorphosed into Narcissus, an interesting transformation if one looks at it in the light of the social and cultural changes that took place throughout the twentieth century. Thus, Gilles Lipovetsky has approached these changes as a development to what he calls "*l'ère du vide*."[35] To him, the second half of the century brought with it an intensification of the process of personalisation, a cult of individualism that makes of Narcissus the epitome of *fin-de-siècle* attitudes. Postmodern culture is decentralised, eclectic: materialism and psychology,

34. In the city's ground and buildings, in its inhabitants, in human relations (man/woman, mother/child), in the business world (the stock market, David's scheme, his work place), etc.

35. Gilles Lipovetsky, *La era del vacío: Ensayos sobre el individualismo contemporáneo*, trans. Jean Vinyoli and Michèle Pendanx (1983; Barcelona: Anagrama: 1988).

pornography and discretion, innovation and nostalgia, sophistication and spontaneity, consumerism and ecology, almost everything can co-exist without contradiction. The possibilities of choice diversify and stable references and meanings are done away with. However, one key value remains: the individual and his/her right to self-fulfilment. Ours is a narcissistic culture which glorifies all that has to do with the sphere of the private. As beliefs and institutions turn flexible, unsteady, the individual also aspires to become kinetic. This would explain his/her wish to "fly," to feel more, to vibrate with immediate sensations, to plunge into a sort of integral movement, as if on a never-ending sensorial or pulsional trip. As Lipovetsky concludes, the individual had never before done so many things, accumulated so much material wealth and been so tormented by a feeling of emptiness. The void is also at the core of the modern metropolis, a paradoxical desert, without catastrophe, without tragedy or vertigo, in which the individual falls prey to a generalised disenchantment, a diffused malaise that invades all.

This Narcissus subjugated in his bell jar that emerges as a typical product of the second half of the twentieth century, this individual that lives in flash-sequence – always wanting to do more, feel more, but also unable to commit, and so, unable to find an external centre of gravity that can hold the self together, and with the self, his/her wishes, impulses, inclinations – is also "the sensationist" of Palliser's novel, a work that can thus be said to provide a disheartening though precise view of this so-called Narcissistic culture in the age of the void.

Tim Christensen

Kazuo Ishiguro and Orphanhood

In *When We Were Orphans*, detective Christopher Banks discovers that the problem of recovering the truth about his past is in fact a problem of memory and that the problem of memory involves a reiterative confrontation with a trauma – the disappearance of his parents – that has structured his adult life. Banks's problem of recovering his family's past is, moreover, simultaneously a problem of recovering a national past, for he believes that his parents' disappearance is somehow related to his not being properly English, or "not English enough." Banks therefore believes that if he can ascertain the elusive truth regarding the mysterious disappearance of his parents when he was a child, he will simultaneously restore English authority to pre-World War II Shanghai. Because Banks views nationality as both the cause of and the solution to an Oedipal trauma, the ideal of attaining a true or genuine national identity becomes, within the novel, identical to the wish to "restore" oneself to an idyllic state of childhood contentment, an imaginary state of pre-Oedipal, prelapsarian plenitude. Banks's development as a character, however, also suggests the possibility of moving beyond a state of eternal return to a traumatic past, beyond a fixation on an Oedipal fantasy. Banks's eventual acceptance of his orphaned state signals the possibility of an escape from the symbolic parent/nation authority and the possibility of a far more fluid and syncretic understanding of the self as the basis of future relationships. Orphanhood becomes a trope for a post-national identity.

Throughout the novel *When We Were Orphans*, renowned detective Christopher Banks obsessively pursues "evil," an idea that assumes metaphysical dimensions from the very beginning of his story. "My intention," he states, when explaining his choice of profession, "was to combat evil – in particular, evil of the insidious, furtive kind" (22).[1] His job, he reiterates a few pages later, is that of "rooting out evil in its most devious forms, often just when it is about to go unchecked" (31). For Banks, the profession of detective, understood as the practice of "rooting out evil" (31), requires an unrelenting scrutiny of the most minute details of the physical world because evil is invariably invisible, veiled, or masked; it is a thing of which "your ordinary decent

1. All parenthesised references are to this edition: Kazuo Ishiguro, *When We Were Orphans* (New York: Vintage International, 2000).

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citizen" (45) comprising "the public at large" (31) is unaware, and from which such decent folk must therefore be protected. Evil seems to have a will of its own, an "insidious, furtive" (22), and "devious" (31) will characterized by an ingenious knack for remaining hidden, or deceptively appearing to be part of the ordinary texture of life. Evil is therefore figured as a monster or "serpent" (144) that, "lurking around the corner," threatens to emerge from its hiding place and devour the forces of "civilization" (45). Alternately, evil is understood as a disease or "fungus" (45) that will silently and secretly infect the body politic, and from which society must be "cleansed" (31). The heavy concentration of metaphors of disease and monstrosity; of hygiene; of veiling and masking; of mask-like and frequently racialized faces and bodies; the Biblical references to serpents and temptation; the search for an evil that is assumed to be not only hiding but ingeniously devious all signal that we are in the territory of the classic detective novel.[2] Following the logic of this worldview, Banks, as one of the "few on our side every bit as clever as they are," must protect the metropolitan centre against mysterious and powerful forces that threaten "to put civilization to the torch" by policing the peripheries of the empire (45). Shanghai, where Banks's primary confrontation with "evil" takes place, is also the location of a "disease" that threatens to "spread its poison" to the "heart" of European "civilization" (144–47).

Ishiguro dramatically abandons what Brian Finney has termed "the mainstream fictional realism" of the classic detective novel, however, when Banks returns to his childhood home of Shanghai in order to resolve the twenty-six year old case of his missing mother and father.[3] At this juncture in the story, the novel takes on a markedly different, decidedly surrealistic feel. From this point on, a distinct tension develops between the awareness of the protagonist and narrator, Christopher Banks, and the overall narrative structure of the novel, which is built around Banks's unreliable memories of certain traumatic incidents from his past. This contrast between the level of narration – which is driven by Banks's attempts to construct a linear, continuist narrative of his past – and the larger narrative structure – which is distinguished by the radically discontinuous, performative subtext of Banks's attempts to recover his lost past – has the effect of highlighting the imaginary framework of the

2. References to Sherlock Holmes unambiguously emphasize that this is the literary terrain of the story. Moreover, Banks's mission of policing evil at the margins of the British Empire calls to mind Holmes's cases in *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four*, in which Holmes must solve crimes committed by Mormon polygamists in Utah and savage rebels in India, respectively, in order to restore order and protect the citizenry of London.

3. Brian Finney, "Figuring the Real: Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*," *Jouvert* 7.1 (2002) <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/ v7is1/ishigu.htm>.

"realist" symbolic order of classic detective fiction. The emphasis on this discrepancy increases as the story progresses, and provides Ishiguro with a vehicle to challenge traditional notions of national and personal identity founded upon a metaphysics of self-presence. By the end of the story Banks is able to envision alternatives, based upon the figure of orphanhood, to such traditional ideals of identity.

Within the dream-like world that Christopher Banks enters when, as an adult, he returns to his childhood home of the international settlement in Shanghai, he fantastically assumes, as does almost everyone he meets in the British community in Shanghai, that uncovering the secret of his parents' kidnapping twenty-six years earlier will somehow re-establish British imperial authority. He is officially greeted, upon arrival, by Mr. Grayson of "the Shanghai Municipal Council," who insists that plans for "the welcoming ceremony" for Banks's "parents after their years of captivity" must be carried forward immediately (169). When Grayson explains that "to organize something on the scale we're talking of [is] . . . no simple matter," we realize that the entire British population of Shanghai eagerly awaits the resolution to the mysterious disappearance of Banks's parents (169). We cannot help but be struck, at this point, with the question of why a twenty-six year old kidnapping of a minor British official and his wife should so vitally concern a community teetering on the brink of war. Ishiguro, however, refuses to articulate any clear answer to this question; instead, over the course of Banks's conversation with his greeting party, these expressions of seemingly excessive concern become vaguely associated with the case of Banks's parents as links in a metonymic chain. Such an association occurs, for instance, when another member of Banks's greeting party, Mr. MacDonald, repeatedly drops dark hints that "we don't have a great deal of time left" to resolve the case (166). Why, we might ask, should MacDonald, "a senior intelligence man," be assigned to this case, and irritably impress the urgency of its resolution on Banks (166)? It would seem that the resolution to the case is in some way associated with preventing the outbreak of war, although this connection is never stated. Another such association occurs when, in the midst of Banks's conversation with MacDonald and Grayson, an anonymous "grey-haired lady" expresses concern that "the Japanese will . . . attack the International Settlement" (169). She appears to qualify this concern, however, when she then informs Banks that "news of your impending arrival . . . was the first good news we'd had here in months" (170). While there is no explicit connection made between these two statements, the fact that one follows immediately on the heels of the other creates the implication that Banks's presence somehow assuages her fear of Japanese attack. Why should Banks's arrival ease her fear of a Japanese attack? Again, we are given no real explanation of the community's concern

with the case of Banks's parents; the text provides only vague expressions of a general expectation that Banks's restoration of his own family will in some way also secure British authority in Shanghai against Japanese invasion.

The vague yet persistent suggestion throughout this scene that the resolution of Banks's personal crisis will somehow also resolve a crisis of British imperial authority might strike the reader as strange, but Ishiguro is merely foregrounding a problem of what he has termed "emotional logic."[4] The character of Banks, moreover, provides Ishiguro with a vehicle to examine the equivalences between an oedipal emotional logic and the classic emotional logic of nationalism, an equivalence that has been noted by many cultural critics in recent years. Terry Eagleton, for instance, has argued that "nationalism," like the oedipal subject, "turns its gaze to a (usually fictitious) past . . . to press forward to an imagined future."[5] Eagleton elsewhere observes that this desire to become fully oneself through the recovery of an imagined past implies a metaphysics of self-presence that the national subject ultimately shares with the oedipal subject: the "metaphysics of nationalism," Eagleton states, in many ways mirrors the metaphysics of the "unitary" bourgeois subject, because both assume "a subject somehow intuitively present to itself."[6] Through the character of Banks, Ishiguro embarks on an intricate examination of the metaphysics of self-presence that, as Eagleton implies, is the source of an equivalence between personal and national identity on the level of the Lacanian imaginary. Banks believes that his parents' discontent and their later disappearance is in some way connected with his own lack of the elusive quality of Englishness; he believes that the loss of his parents is related to the fact that he, their son, is "not sufficiently English" (76). The restoration of an imagined past of idyllic familial existence, not yet riven by this lack of national being, therefore requires that Banks discover his Englishness. This discovery of his Englishness, in turn, requires the return of his mother and father; or, more particularly, the restoration of paternal authority at the level of the family. Banks apparently hopes to accomplish both by recovering his mother and father and returning them to their former residence. In the case of Banks, these two levels of subjectivity are so intertwined that they cannot be separated. It is, then, perhaps

4. Alden Mudge, "Ishiguro Takes a Literary Approach to the Detective Novel," *First Page Bookpage* (Sept. 2000) 10 August 2007 <http://www.bookpage.com/009bp/kazuo_ishiguro.html>.

5. Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2000), p. 86.

6. Terry Eagleton, "Nationalism, Irony, and Commitment," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1990) 23–42, pp. 28–29.

unsurprising that the recovery of his parents would simultaneously seem to promise a restoration of English authority to pre-World War II Shanghai.

It is precisely this interconnectedness of familial and national identity that Ishiguro emphasizes with Banks's arrival in Shanghai. At this point in the story, it is not only Banks, but the English population in general, who assume that a restoration of paternal authority on the level of the family will simultaneously restore English national authority. The surrealistic feel of this portion of the novel certainly has something to do with Ishiguro's choice to suspend an awareness of symbolic differences between the oedipal family and the nation in order to reveal their imaginary equivalence. For Banks, both forms of identity seem to require the replacement of a lack within one's national being – the dimension of the real within one's national identity – with an imaginary plentitude of national being. Moreover, both seem to require the space of master signifier be occupied by the father, the figure of paternal authority, in order for this economy of self-presence to be achieved.

Within this context, it seems quite appropriate that the association between solving the case of his parents' disappearance and reinstating British colonial supremacy should remain both insistent and ill-defined throughout his time in Shanghai, for Banks's earliest childhood memories expose this overlap of the public and the private self as existing on an imaginary, as opposed to a symbolic or logical level. Brian Finney has described the world of the classic detective novel as "a closed world from which evil can be separated and expelled," and has argued that such an imagined existence "represents a primitive desire for a prelapsarian world of innocence."[7] It would seem that it is just such a world, on both a public and a personal level, that Banks hopes to establish through his activities of detection. The "evil" that he seeks to expel is, on a fantasmatic level, the lack within his own English being, and the world he hopes to attain by doing so is not only a world of ideal childhood communion, but also a world in which English colonial authority remains untroubled.

Banks's crises of identity are, in short, defined in oedipal terms, and Ishiguro exposes and ultimately defines the logic of oedipal authority through his portrayal of Bank's ethos of detection. Banks's distinctive occupation of detective, as in classic detective novels, is essentially defined in terms of specific practices of reading material surfaces. Banks scans surfaces for objects that appear to the layperson to form part of the ordinary smooth texture of reality, but that, upon closer inspection by a professional detective, reveal sinister, hidden depths of meaning that threaten to overthrow this order of reality. In looking for clues, Banks searches surfaces for

7. Finney.

items that stand out, items that secretly form an exception to the continuity of the surface, yet which promise to re-establish a firm sense of such continuity if one can only learn their secrets. In practicing this art, one is searching for the object whose exclusion is necessary to reinstate the consistency of the surface; one is seeking the exceptional thing that seems to conceal a secret that, if known, would restore the symbolic realm to its imaginary state as a "homogeneous totality."[8] The activity of detection – the search for clues – repeatedly and relentlessly reveals itself to be a search for fetishes, a search for out-of-place, incongruous things that capture the fascination of the detective by promising a restoration of order if only the mysteries that their surfaces conceal can be penetrated. Banks, in the beginning of the novel, scrutinizes crime scenes for items that command his fascination in this way. He seeks material objects that are experienced as concealing a hidden and pathological evil, which he must "root out" and destroy so that it will not "unravel" or "scatter" the natural order of things (144). Banks searches for such objects, believing that their hidden meanings must be fully revealed if the smooth texture of reality is to be restored.

We might therefore state that "clues" function as fetishes, or material objects containing two sets of meanings that are irreducibly at odds with one another – one set of meanings insidiously making the offending object appear smoothly continuous with the surface to everyone except the specialist in detection, while another, concealed set of meanings threatens to overthrow the very order of the surface. In what might be taken as the definitive statement of detection as the search for fetishes, Banks declares that "'I've built up *a general picture of how certain forms of evil manifest themselves*" (146) [italics added]. Evil, metaphysical, pathological, and absolute as it is, must take the form of an image – or, in Banks's words, a picture – if he is to detect it through the obsessive scansion of surfaces.

Ishiguro reveals the method of classical detection to be an activity through which one attempts to restore an imaginary state of self-consistency to the surface by visually locating and excising that object which disturbs this ideal, or manifests "evil." It is an activity, in other words, according to which a certain attitude of Banks toward his fantasmatic identifications – the need for an imaginary, prelapsarian plentitude – organizes his relation to material reality. Banks imagines that the restoration of such a plentitude is possible, and that it is through the activity of detection that he can reinstate it. The fact that his perceptions of reality are organized by such a desire for imaginary wholeness is emphasized in Banks's recollec-

8. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso, 2001), p. 127.

tions of his reaction first to his father's, and then his mother's, disappearance. In a variation of Freud's famous *fort/da* scenario, Banks obsessively play-acts the part of a detective who discovers his father (and later, plays the same game of discovery after his mother disappears). Like the child in Freud's story, it seems that Banks must reconcile himself to his parents' absence, or find a way to "compensate" himself for "the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction" that is involved in accepting this absence.[9] The child in Freud's story "compensated himself . . . by . . . staging the disappearance and return of the objects within his reach."[10] Banks, similarly striving to compensate himself for lost love, informs us that the need to re-unite with his parents motivated him to become a detective, and it is, of course, the case of his lost parents around which the plot of the novel is centred.

As in Freud's *fort/da* scenario, however, Banks's problem of compensation does not lend itself to such ideal resolution – one cannot simply exchange a sense of control for a loss of control, or replace the lost object with a substitute object and be done with it. The child, through the "compulsive" re-enactment of his loss, may, on one level, be attempting a compensation for his loss according to the logic of the "pleasure principle." But this logic will always be dependent upon the more fundamental "operation of tendencies *beyond* the pleasure principle."[11] For Freud, *fort/da* becomes a figure for "a compulsion to repeat which overrides the pleasure principle," because it is "more primitive, more elementary, [and] more instinctual than the pleasure principle which it overrides."[12] The desire to regain an ideal state of being imagined to exist before the primal loss is, it seems, ultimately impossible to satisfy, because it is not really such an untroubled state of being, but the "economic disturbance" of the compulsion to repeat – a "demonic force" preventing such ideal self-realization – that resides at the subjective foundations of the child; the compulsion to repeat is the economic disturbance that founds the economy of the pleasure principle, and that one therefore ultimately runs up against if one traces the peregrinations of the pleasure principle far enough.[13] Which is to say that the child's attempts at compensation will always be incomplete.[14] Banks's at-

9. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1989), p. 14.

10. Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, p. 14.

11. Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, p. 17.

12. Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, pp. 24–25.

13. Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, pp. 40–41.

14. Lacan would re-christen the problem of subjective origins identified by Freud in his analysis of the compulsion to repeat as that of "the real," which, similarly, indicates "a cer-

tempts to restore himself to an imagined childhood state are similarly doomed to incompletion, for, significantly, the plot of the novel is driven by a similar compulsion toward repetition. As Mike Petry has noted in regard to Ishiguro's earlier novels, "[e]very decisive character, every important motif, and every major scene . . . exists, at least, twice."[15] Similarly, in *When We Were Orphans* events almost invariably occur at least twice, and with each iteration people, words, locations, and meanings are inverted, rearranged, included and excluded, expanded and retracted. The structure of the plot therefore might be understood to proceed by way of such "economic disturbances," or displacements and slippages within Banks's memory, which profoundly disfigure any attempt to discover an untroubled truth at the origins of the subject or the nation.

Joan Copjec has noted that the narrative structure in "classical detective fiction" tends to foreground the "performative" element involved in the production of a linear narrative, because "it is the narrative of the investigation that produces the narrative of the crime."[16] Ishiguro emphasizes this performative element of the classic detective story by structuring the narrative of *When We Were Orphans* around "economic disturbances" (in Freud's sense of the term) in Banks's memory, each of which initiates its own linear narrative. Such disturbances act as a structuring device of both the overall narrative and the problem of memory within the novel. This structure is evident from the first scene of the story, in which Banks, in London shortly after finishing college, runs into an old friend from grammar school who challenges Banks's memory of having "blended perfectly into English school life" (7) with the "casual judgment" that Banks was "an odd bird at school" (5). This statement, which seems, to Banks, irredeemably at odds with his own memory of a seamless adaptation to life in an English public school, at the age of ten, following the disappearance of his parents, nevertheless narratively precedes his own memory of the events. The disturbance caused by this statement becomes,

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tain *gap*" that "the function of cause has always presented to any conceptual apprehension," and from which the subject is symbolically born (Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller [New York: Norton, 1998], p. 21). For Lacan, the very possibility of imagining "the one," or an ideal, self-identical totality, "is introduced by the experience of . . . rupture" (*Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 26).

15. Mike Petry, *Narratives of Memory and Identity: The Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 25.

16. Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995), p. 174.

in fact, a seemingly bottomless source of fascination for Banks, which instigates him repeatedly to return to certain events in order to find, within his memory, some definitive thing that will pin down, or lend certainty to, his subjective experience of this period in his life.

A distinct pattern is established: Banks's memory is structured by disruptions, which inaugurate a reiterative process of return to certain scenes of desire. The obsessive return to these scenes never provides the sort of conclusive resolution sought by Banks, however, for remembering and re-remembering does not lead progressively to a definitive and final subjective truth on a narrative level. Rather, Banks's memories often contradict but invariably displace those that came before. Which is to say that each repetition of a memory is, in an important sense, incommensurate with those that precede it, to the extent that it is grounded in a transformed fantasmatic core that provides its own sense of imaginary continuity. We therefore witness, in the early pages of the novel, a dialectical, performative structure of memory and personal history, for we have, on one hand, a structure of breaks, rendering each memory separate and irreducible, yet oddly interconnected with the others; and, on the other hand, an imaginary sense of the continuity of personal history that is created and re-created with each break. This imaginary continuity is the equivalent of Banks's experience of personally possessing a linear temporal history, each earlier event exercising a causal effect on the events that come later (the loss of his parents, for instance, causes his ensuing state of social withdrawal and introspection within this temporal structure). This imaginary continuity, which is the equivalent of Bank's sense of his own temporal and symbolic consistency, however, is made possible only through the simultaneous co-existence of an incommensurate temporal structure, according to which personal history exists as a series of absolute breaks with the past, each break enabling a retroactive reconstruction of the imaginary, linear temporality of the self.

The narrative structure of *When We Were Orphans* emphasizes these two co-existing but ultimately incommensurate temporalities of the self because the story is not related in linear chronological order but loosely structured around the reiterative confrontation with certain unreliable memories. With this structure, Ishiguro discovers a way to narratively enact not only the dual temporality of the self described in Freud's *fort/da* scenario – the self split between the imaginary continuities of the "pleasure principle" and the radical discontinuities of "economic disturbances" – but the dual temporality of the nation, within which "there is a split between" a "continuist, accumulative temporality" and "the repetitious, recursive strategy of the per-

formative."[17] It would, in fact, seem to be precisely the disavowal of the performative supplement involved in the production of such a "continuist, accumulative temporality" that ultimately links Banks's crises of familial and national identity. Both the oedipal self and the nation, in *When We Were Orphans*, are built on a refusal to acknowledge the performative supplement of the imagined past. Both forms of identity are defined in terms of a search for an imaginary temporal continuity cleansed of its performative supplement – cleansed, in other words, of the dimension of the real. Both the oedipal self and the nation are built on identical economies of suppression. Banks, according to the demands of both national and familial identity, suppresses any acknowledgement of the performative supplement of his attempts to capture an imagined past throughout most of the story. He therefore experiences the uneasy remembrance and re-remembrance of his public school days as a gradual but progressive approach to the truth of his being.

Rebecca Walkowitz asserts that Ishiguro's novels are built on a "foundation of absent narrative" that Ishiguro challenges us to read "as cultural content."[18] As paradoxical as this statement may seem, it very aptly describes *When We Were Orphans*. The "foundation of absent narrative" is, in this case, the disavowed performative supplement of the linear, continuist narrative of the nation. We are challenged to read this absence in terms of "cultural content" because Ishiguro provides an intricate examination of the personal and cultural implications of such an economy of repression. And while there is, perhaps, no inherent reason that such a psychic economy should take a specifically oedipal form, this is certainly the case in *When We Were Orphans*; for, while the particular scenes of desire which Banks revisits prior to his return to Shanghai involve the disappearance of both parents, it is the indeterminacy of his memories of his father that seem specifically to demand resolution.

Prior to his journey to Shanghai, the site of his primal trauma, Banks becomes obsessed with correcting a particular recollection of an argument between his mother and an ultimately undetermined male figure. "[W]hile I am fairly sure I have remembered its essence accurately," Banks explains, "I find myself less certain about some of the details" (71). The "details" that shift relentlessly as he visits and re-visits the scene include what his mother actually said, what the argument was about, where it took place, whether or not his "mother would ever have lost control of the situation

17. Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 139–70, p. 145.

18. Rebecca L. Walkowitz, "Ishiguro's Floating Worlds," *ELH* 68.4 (2001): 1049–79, p. 1049.

to such a degree," and, finally, with whom his mother was arguing so passionately (71). We might ask what the "accurately" remembered "essence" of the recollection is, given that every aspect of the memory other than the identity of his mother alters in widely various and even contrary ways. In fact, why does Banks imagine that the various iterations form a continuity that allows him to group them together as a single "memory"? This continuity certainly cannot be attributed to the content, which shifts dramatically from one iteration to the next. In fact, this memory becomes a particular obsession not due to any consistent image or meaning it contains, but because of an absence, because of the radical instability of the image of the male figure with whom his mother argues. This figure, initially a "health inspector" (71) becomes, in later iterations, his father, his Uncle Phillip, and, finally, becomes split into two figures, his Uncle Phillip and the Chinese warlord Wang Ku. And it is the shift in the identity of the male authority figure that organizes the shifts in meaning. This vaguely paternal figure acts as a master signifier within the memory, and, in a larger sense, performs the same role in terms of Banks's struggles to discover the truth about his past, for it is this particular scene of desire that Banks feels he must decipher in order to discover his true past. In short, Banks feels that he must determine the actual identity of the male figure, and, if he can do so, the process of interminable displacement will come to an end and be replaced by a final truth. Banks believes, in other words, that the space occupied inconsistently by his father, from which the image of his actual father is subsequently displaced by those of other father figures, must be stabilized if he is to come to terms with his past. The instability of the images that occupy this space frustrates Banks's desire for this final truth of the self because each subsequent image de-centres and re-signifies the meaning of the memory, and thus the meaning of the self. During one attempt to fill in the absent space of the male authority figure in this dream, Banks comments that

> the truth is . . . I have become increasingly preoccupied with my memories, a preoccupation encouraged by the discovery that these memories – of my childhood, of my parents – have lately begun to blur. A number of times recently I have found myself struggling to recall something that only two or three years ago I believed was ingrained in my mind for ever. I have been obliged to accept, in other words, that with each passing year, my life in Shanghai will grow less distinct, until one day all that will remain will be a few muddled images. (70)

His trip to Shanghai is ultimately designed to assign a final and absolute image to this space, and therefore restore clarity and certainty to his memories of child-

hood. In other words, this space – which, within the oedipal configuration, is the space of the real – must be occupied by an image whose self-evident truth will put an end to the endless slippage of memory and meaning that reiteratively disrupts Banks's sense of himself in a process equated with the state of orphanhood.

Banks, unsurprisingly, discovers no such truth of his being during his trip to Shanghai. If he initially believes he must assign a stable image to the place of the paternal signifier in order to properly claim his identity, he must come to realize that the difficulty of this requirement is its ultimate impossibility; for it is precisely an absence in the place of phallic authority that enables the oedipal configuration to exist.[19] In place of any such miraculous discovery, Banks undergoes repeated confrontations with places from his childhood which, I think, can most precisely be described by the term "uncanny." Freud demonstrates, in his etymology of the German term *heimlich*, that it already contains its own negation – *unheimlich* – within it.[20] Uncanny, then, is a term meaning "homeliness," "the familiar," or "domesticity" that is, from the beginning, struck through with its own negation – "foreignness."[21] It is a term containing mutually exclusive but oddly interdependent meanings caught in what J. Hillis Miller termed "a performative embrace."[22] We see this uncanniness most directly referenced, perhaps, in an exchange between Banks and a Japanese colonel, who observes that "our childhood becomes like a foreign land once we have grown" (297). Banks responds appropriately to this strangely accurate assessment of his own situation, explaining that "it's hardly a foreign land to me. In many ways, it's where I've continued to live all my life" (297). That his childhood should come to be experienced not only as a place of "concealment,"[23] where Banks goes to confront hidden evil in the hope of discovering a revelatory truth, but that it should be figured as "a foreign land" that he nevertheless continues to occupy as home, sets the understanding of self reached by Banks while in Shanghai on the precise metaphorical

19. Lacan would explain that the "phallus is the signifier of . . . *Aufhebung*" that "inaugurates" the oedipal configuration "by its own disappearance" (Jacques Lacan, "The Meaning of the Phallus," in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, trans. Jacqueline Rose, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose [New York: Norton, 1985] 74–85, p. 82).

20. Following his etymological analysis of the term, Freud comments that "*Heimlich* thus becomes increasingly ambivalent . . . until it merges with its antonym *unheimlich*" (Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock [New York: Penguin, 2003], p. 134).

21. Freud, *The Uncanny*, pp. 126–30.

22. J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host," in *De-Construction and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1979) 217–53, p. 241.

23. Freud, *The Uncanny*, p. 129.

ground of Freud's uncanny. What Banks must discover in Shanghai, it seems, is his own uncanny difference from himself; he must realize that there is no image or idea that he can discover that will restore him to a utopian ideal of a childhood that never actually existed; he must recognize that there is no self-evident truth of the self to be discovered in the place of his own subjective origins, but a constitutive moment of difference from the self, which causes him to experience his own psychic origins, his childhood, as a "foreign land"; he must abandon the "myth that consciousness is pure and abstract, untarnished by its nebulous beginnings."[24] The landscape of his childhood, in short, only reiterates what we have learned from a narrative structured as a series of unstable, constantly self-displacing memories: to be himself he must, at the same time, remain different from himself. To return home, for Banks, is to discover a foreign land. And Banks's home, after all, is a home that is at the same time a foreign land. Living in the foreign section of Shanghai as a child, Banks's home is always already – definitively – also a state of exile – it is a home that is not a home, or a home that is defined by its own central absence, its meaning lying elsewhere – for Banks is English, despite being physically located in China, and England is elsewhere.

In a dialectical inversion of the meaning of "orphanhood" – a term that, like Freud's *unheimlich*, seems to always already contain its own negation – and that, like *unheimlich*, indicates a sense of at-homeness that is rooted in the experience of being a foreigner or stranger in one's own home – Banks comes to discover that orphanhood is definitively the state not only of those literally in exile from their nation, but also those who unselfconsciously embrace their nation, because the nation, like the oedipal family, is an entity that is premised on its own loss. This loss is registered in the story as the frequently desperate desire to recapture a past that never really existed. Sustained by a group of fetishized images of this imagined lost past, national identity dictates a melancholic state of mind, based, as it is, on the disavowal of a loss more fundamental than the loss of an idyllic past, a loss that cannot be acknowledged as long as one remains a nationalist / fetishist.[25]

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24. Christopher Lane, Introduction, in *The Psychoanalysis of Race*, ed. Christopher Lane (New York: Columbia UP, 1998) 3–37, p. 19.

25. Melancholia involves a loss that cannot be avowed, or "a setting up of the object in the ego" (Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, trans. Joan Riviere, ed. James Strachey [New York: Norton, 1989], p. 24). Freud contrasts melancholia to mourning, which involves a loss that can be acknowledged, and therefore can potentially lead to an acceptance of the loss. Judith Butler remarks that in the case of melancholia "there is no final breaking of the attachment. There is, rather, the incorporation of the attachment as identification,

Many critics have claimed that Ishiguro tends to define his protagonists through their tragic inability to imagine any alternatives to a national identity based upon "a powerful yearning for past glory."[26] Richard Pedot, for instance, contends that Ono, the protagonist of *An Artist of the Floating World*, ultimately remains trapped in such a fetishistic ethos of nationalism because his "desire to come to terms with the past is built on the illusion that one can paint the impossible picture." Ono's understanding of the past therefore renders him unable to break "free of his compulsion to repeat past failures."[27]

Bernard Gilbert reads Stevens from *Remains of the Day* in a similar light. Stevens, within this reading, ultimately remains attached to the rigid patriarchal ethos of British nationalism, according to which any "broken taboo leads to punishment through a refined, mandarinal ritual of cruelty."[28] I believe that Banks's fate is more hopeful, however; for while the emotional atmosphere of the story is for the most part profoundly melancholy, Banks does learn to embrace his orphaned state. We are therefore left with the impression that, unlike Ono, he is not destined to endlessly experience the loss of an imagined past. Banks is able to free himself from such a cycle through his realization that both his national and familial identities have been built upon imaginary entities designed to sustain the illusion of an absolute certainty – a certainty that is experienced as always already displaced or lost, just as Banks's story both begins and ends with the loss of his parents. His decision, in the final section of the story, to recognize the emptiness of his imaginary lost family and embrace a new family – based on his renewed connection with his own orphaned and adopted daughter, Jennifer – remains tinged with the definitive melancholy of the story, however.

This ending is reminiscent of Stevens's qualified embrace of banter in the final pages of *The Remains of the Day*, which represents his ability to let go of his desire

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where identification becomes a magical, a psychic form of preserving the object." Accordingly, "the lost object continues to haunt and inhabit the ego as one of its constitutive identifications" (Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* [Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997], p. 134).

26. John S. Su, "Refiguring National Character: The Remains of the British Estate Novel," *Modern Fiction Studies* 48.3 (2002): 552–80, p. 552.

27. Richard Pedot, "Revisions of Visions past, or 'the Texture of Memory: Kazuo Ishiguro's *An Artist of the Floating World*," *Authortrek*, Kazuo Ishiguro Page, 10 August 2007 <http://authortrek.com/kazuo_ishiguro_page.html>.

28. Bernard Gilbert, " 'Call Me Ish': East Meets West, a Comparison of Kazuo Ishiguro and Christopher Isherwood," *Etudes Britanniques Contemporaines* 4 (1994): 75–88, p. 78.

for absolutes and accept the pleasure available in the unrestrained multiplication of meanings within language. Banks's acceptance of his orphanhood represents a similar qualified success, for this acceptance is accompanied by the melancholy realization that "for those like us, our fate is to face the world as orphans, chasing through long years the shadows of vanished parents. [Yet there] is nothing for it but to try and see through our missions to the end, as best we can, for until we do so, we will be permitted no calm" (335–36).

Fairies, Old-wives, and Hobby-horses in Aristocratic Realms

Mary Ellen Lamb, *The Popular Culture of Shakespeare, Spenser, and Jonson* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006)

With her latest book, Mary Ellen Lamb leads her reader further along the path she was guided to by her previous works.[1] The author's approach to literature can be broadly delineated as gender-conscious, culture-focused and penetrative. She aspires to show Renaissance literature as an organic part of contemporary life, as a medium transmitting culture between different layers of society. In her momentous work *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Cycle* she has already given voice to her inspection of "higher" and "lower" culture from the perspective of women.[2] As the title-phrase, "popular culture," suggests, the present book further elaborates the intriguing detection: the work is entirely devoted to the investigation of the impact of Renaissance popular culture on other, higher strata of literature.

Introducing her work, Lamb clarifies her key terminology. Reckoning with numerous – especially cultural historicist – conceptions of the term popular culture, Lamb defines her use of the notion as "related to its use as a social sign, to refer to a simulacrum existing in early modern imaginaries created from cultural materials assembled from various lower status groups. Especially as transmitted through written works, this popular culture associated with the festive or the folk was invented or produced by elite and middling sorts as a means of coming to their own self-definition" (2).

Instead of classes – as the quotation above also indicates – she speaks of "sorts," marking the fluidity of early modern English society (19). The elite, the middling and the lower sorts are in constant interaction with each other, the boundaries still being transgressable, the struggle to enter a higher layer – or at least to appear so – characterizes everyday life. In the phase of formation, different social groups strive to create their own myths, and in so doing, to fictionalize their world. The amount of effort to maintain the façade of an honourable life, and social rank are inversely proportional: the lower sorts need all their creativity and imagination to present acceptable self-narratives, to fictionalize even criminal acts as righteous.[3]

The oral tradition of literature was an integral part of the lives of the poor, who represented popular culture. In-

terestingly, as Lamb points out, it is the lower sort's possession of the popular register that gave reference points for the self-definition of other groups. Two distinct ways were open: the complete denial of the vulgar and popular, or – what was more frequent – the re-read, re-written transformation of narratives attributed to the socially inferior. Lamb proclaims the opinion that through the interaction between different social groups, certain motifs, myths and legends streamed from the lower sorts into the culture of the elite where they were altered, transformed to be suitable and digestible for an audience of a different, refined taste. The disturbing elements were eliminated not to counter the "official" principles and politics, and not to subvert the self-fictionalizing of the ruling class. As a point of departure, Lamb interrogates the dissemination of popular culture, she attempts to explore its origin, and its infiltration into the elite culture. This goal is admittedly difficult, or given the volatile oral nature of social myths – in its entirety – even impossible. More realistic – as the author defines – is the detection of certain motifs and figures, their reappearance in higher literature, and the exploration of popular phenomena which significantly contributed to the creation of the self-narratives of elite and middling sorts during the socially and historically turbulent 16th and 17th centuries. Elements of popular culture were instituted from above rather than from below: their infiltration into higher narrative generated the appropriation of popular culture by the elite, which, at the same time, sought to differentiate itself from the lower sorts that it disdained. Thus, in the second half of the book, Lamb is going to show the ways in which works of three prominent and well-educated writers contributed to the production of popular culture.

Lamb first claims that three figures entered the realm of higher literature, through "three distinct forms of interaction" (12) with the lower status groups: fairies, old wives and hobby-horses. This triplet can be handled as keys to the book. The structure is also determined by these focus points: the introduction and a lengthy opening chapter discuss the leitmotifs' relevance, importance and necessity in Renaissance life, then three subchapters are devoted the in-depth analysis of these three representatives of popular culture. In these parts, the social-ethnographical context is described from a cultural-historical approach so as to serve as stable reference points for the literary analyses in later chapters, and provide the work with a strong and vivid background. The tone is anecdotal: interesting and shocking mosaics are shown from the burdensome life of the poor and luxurious pleasures of the wealthy. The reader is supplied with a

unique kind of knowledge: the neutral, far-from life, emptied motifs regain their original "function," reaching back to their origin, and appearing as essential bases of everyday myths – or lies.

The dubious morals of the fairies translate the socially unacceptable traits of marginalized groups. Extramarital pregnancy, rape, theft, and "the murder of deformed or otherwise unwanted infants" were, for instance, all commonly attributed to fairies (13). Meanwhile, these kinds of explanations of various unfortunate incidents served as a "weapon of the weak,"[4] a kind of resistance against the ones endowed with power. Still, Lamb also directs the reader's attention to an example of the upper class's alteration and re-reading of myths according to its needs: although "illicit or at least unspoken acts" (32) remained integral parts of the fairies, and referred to lower status groups, the aristocracy seemed surprisingly prone to be identified with fairies.

One of the most common and probably most influential connections between lower and higher groups was the institution of nursery. Nurses served as primary transmitters of popular culture, and thus "exerted an especially powerful and continuing influence on early modern culture" (49). Young boys – up to the age of seven – were dominated by women, and were therefore influenced by female narratives.[5] Lamb, not betraying her gender-conscious perspective, suggests that there was an important clash between these early female narratives and the later, male-created narratives of formal education, since humanist education aimed to suppress the faults remaining from an "earlier period of female domination" (52). Lamb also introduces an intriguing parallel: she compares the rivalling – male *vs*. female – narratives told to the developing male child to the Renaissance theory of humours.[6] The change form female to male narratives thus turns out to be analogous to the change in the human beings' system of humours. Gender, rather than being based on a binary model, was imagined to be a continuum: men are ideally hot and dry, with a proper balance of blood and choler, while women are normally cold and wet, being dominated by bile and phlegm. However, due to an imbalance of fluids, "some men are colder and wetter than others; some women are hotter and drier" (183). Since early modern society required males to act according to their gender, and effeminacy was regarded as a sign of weakness and failure (50–51), males had to suppress their female side. However, even though old-wives tales that threatened with femininity drew contempt, they never stopped possessing a touch of nostalgia (50). The three authors Lamb analyzes in the next part are also products of opposing cultures. During their early childhood they were sur-

rounded by the fairies and witches of their caregivers' tales, but after entering school, humanist education prevailed. Lamb argues that the clash between the male/female Latin/vernacular historical/fairy narratives produced a never-ending dichotomy in educated Renaissance males.

The third element Lamb enumerates as an indicator of popular culture is the hobby-horse, and with it the morris dance festivities. In this ethnographic chapter, the author describes the process of the increasing vulgarization of the tradition; how hobby-horses gained sexual and vulgar tones, and, in parallel with the advance of Protestantism, how the legend of Saint George lost its dignity and gradually merged with the image of morris dancers.

After having presented the most characteristic figures of popular culture, the author faces a methodological challenge: the selection of concrete pieces of literature displaying the reappearance of these popular elements. In the second half of the book, Lamb analyzes Shakespeare's *The Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Jonson's *Oberon, The Fairy Prince* and *The Sad Shepherd*. This choice appears to be slightly arbitrary: "While any one of these authors provides material sufficient for an entire volume from this approach, I have chosen to include works by all three in order to demonstrate the strikingly different appropriations of figures signifying a popular culture" (5–6).

The analyses of Shakespeare's pieces aim to prove the claims made in the opening chapter. In both dramas, fairies are mischievous but by no means dangerous: Puck's figure is reminiscent of the coarse Robin Goodfellow, but is notably tamed and domesticated and, similarly, the Merry Wives' appearance as fairies also deprives the magical creatures of dramatic weight. Other key figures in the plays can be seized through the persona of the contemporary actor, William Kemp. Lamb argues that Bottom and Falstaff acquired certain characteristics because the roles were created to be acted out by him. The author's argument seems somewhat tenuous at this point. Presumably, every fictional character had a real life equivalent or at least pattern, but the scrutiny of this background is highly contingent, since true traces are inaccessible. Embarking upon the path of searching for models of fictional characters can lead to a bottomless abyss, and only provide the reader with an immense amount of data concerning potential information that might have had an impact on the writer's creative process.

Lamb also relies on historical data to deal with Spenser and Jonson, although to a lesser extent. For instance, Sir Henry Lee's entertainment for Eliza-

beth I in 1575 and its influence on *The Faerie Queene* (172) seems slightly laboured. Such as the fact that in the analysis of Jonson's *Oberon, The Fairy Prince,* Oberon's and Prince Henry's figure are almost indistinguishable. This interpretation is rather perplexing, although there is a historical fact justifying it: "Performed in the court of King James on New Year's Day, 1611, Jonson's masque Oberon, The Fairy Prince was the second of two masques commissioned by Prince Henry, who entered a new phase of public life when he was created Prince of Wales in June 1610 at the age of sixteen" (200).

Despite these deficiencies, the section on *The Faerie Queen* is highly inspiring. Questions are asked that so far escaped the notice of Spenser scholarship. For instance, if fairies are morally dubious characters, how was it acceptable that Queen Elizabeth was one of them, albeit the highest in rank? Or else: what is implied when the impeccable Redcrosse Knight of Book I appears as the embodiment of Saint George, whose reputation in the 16th century was far from beyond reproach?

The register-analysis of the *The Sad Shepherd* is also revealing: the shifts between certain traditions and myths convey much about the contemporary perception of narratives. One of these is the myth of Robin Hood, whose point of departure was on the higher end of the stylistic scale, but became a constituent of the vulgar discourse. As Lamb points out, this was mainly due to the merge of the noble Lady Marian and the coarse Mother Maudlin. The fact that these roles were played by male actors might have facilitated this process.

As a summary, it can be stated that the author's ambition for writing this book was fulfilled: despite some seeming arbitrariness regarding the choice of the background data, the survival of elements of popular culture in the chosen pieces is convincingly demonstrated. The lucid style and the exhilaratingly new perspectives are also measures of the book's fine qualities.

Ágnes Pajtók

Notes

1. Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (Chicago: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); "Apologizing for Pleasure in Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*," *Criticism* 36 (1994) 499–520; "Engendering the Narrative Act: Old Wives' Tales in *The Winter's Tale, Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*," *Criticism* 40 (1998) 529–53.

2. "There is some evidence that the effect of gender-restrictions was weakened in lower classes and that a competing lower-class perception of gender and sexuality left its trace in some works produced by and for those members of the lower middle class who had access to written materials. Especially accessible to lower-class influence were popular works circulated orally as well as in print" (Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, p. 15).

3. "[T]he use of fairies as 'white lie' for property theft was practiced primarily although not wholly by males. The female domain, in the bearing and raising infants and small children, provides a somewhat more complex use of fairy allusions" (41).

4. J. C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

5. Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 78–79.

6. G. K. Paster, *Humouring the Body* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004); M. C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

New Books by Hazlitt, New Place for Hazlitt

Duncan Wu (ed.), *New Writings of William Hazlitt*, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

These two lavishly edited volumes of new writings by William Hazlitt might come as a surprise to those who still see Hazlitt as an interesting minor voice from the Romantic period. With these books on the table, one looks back on the changing reputation of the essayist as an amazing story of success (with the unavoidable dissenting opinions). After the steady, but almost unexamined reception of his work through the Victorian period, and the relative neglect of it in the first half of the twentieth century, Hazlitt began to come into his own with the rise of scholarly interest in the history of criticism in the mid-century. Walter Jackson Bate, for example, cast a very influential vote in placing Hazlitt among the most significant critics of all times in his *Criticism: The Major Texts* (1952).

In lending authority to Hazlitt's criticism, the significance of this anthology, in which 7 pages are allotted to Plato, 19 to Aristotle, while to Hazlitt an astonishing 38, can hardly be overstated. In his introductory essay to the Hazlitt section, Bate stressed the importance of the sympathetic imagination in Hazlitt's moral psychology and his criticism as well.[1] He elaborated the history of that concept in a well-known paper of 1945,[2] and went on to present it as a central problem in his great study of Keats, in relation to the poet's ideas connected to "negative capability."[3] With this he managed to place Hazlitt in a critical tradition of unquestionable importance, but left an important question open: examining Hazlitt's work seems justified only in so far as it contributes to our understanding of the theory and practice of Keats.

David Bromwich in his 1983 *Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic* still felt it necessary to justify producing a very thick book on the essayist in the following terms: "In making large claims for a critic better known to his contemporaries than to posterity, one faces the

question whether this is a task of antiquarian history or part of the history of the present. About any such writer one wants to know who read him then, that we should read him now. With Hazlitt the answer can be simple and satisfying. He was read by a genius of the next generation, who pronounced Hazlitt's 'depth of taste' one of the three things to be prized in that age – alongside Haydon's paintings and *The Excursion* – and who sought his company in person, for conversation, for practical suggestions, and for theoretical counsel."[4]

Hazlitt was not omitted from the large classics in the history of criticism that came out in the years following the publication of Bate's anthology either. In M.H. Abrams's *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953) Hazlitt's name features in the title of as many as two chapters, and props up in a number of other places as well; nevertheless, in the most extended discussion that he receives he is described as the critic who mediated between the Longinian critical tradition and John Keats. The criterion of "intensity" Keats is said to have derived from Hazlitt, who, once again is appreciated for his part in the maturing of the greatest mind of the next generation, but is certainly not seen as an author whose output is interesting in other respects as well.

It was in 1955 that the second volume of René Wellek's *A History of Modern Criticism 1750–1950*, the one covering *The Romantic Age* was published. Wellek already pays some attention to the specific qualities of Hazlitt's work. He carefully distinguishes Hazlitt's outlook from those of Coleridge and August Wilhelm Schlegel, examines the parallels with Charles Lamb, looks for possible sources, weights the advantages and disadvantages of Hazlitt's "impressionism," compares some of his most memorable critical statements with twentieth-century views,[5] and ultimately turns the common procedure upside down, that is, he relegates Keats to an "appendix to Hazlitt."[6]

George Watson's *The Literary Critics* (1962), if not on a level with the classics that precede it, is a good example of the discontents of Hazlitt's raising fame. The less then four pages Hazlitt receives in this book contain almost nothing but an outpour of intense dislike, usually left unsubstantiated. Hazlitt is not capable of serious analysis, he is "simple-minded," he is "like a schoolboy in hurry with his homework anxious to impress his master with a taste for rhetoric." There is "hopeless confusion" in his writings, which is only what you would expect from a "critic who flaunts his own personality at the expense of his subject," and who is "not saying anything, he is simply making a noise to suggest that he is, or has been, excited about something." The bombastic conclusion sounds like this: "he is the father of our Sunday journalism."[7]

Probably one of the reasons why Watson may have felt it unnecessary to further corroborate his sweeping denunciation of Hazlitt, is that the authority of T. S. Eliot was still strong enough to uphold any statement in agreement with his views. It was John Kinnaird who pointed out in 1978 that Eliot's passing statement in his essay "John Dryden," that Hazlitt "had perhaps the most uninteresting mind of all our distinguished critics," was "almost literally the sentence of death for Hazlitt's reputation in this century (or until very recent years) as a critic of poetry."[8]

It was, then, in the 1970s that book-length studies began to appear on Hazlitt. Roy Park in 1971 examined his place in the romantic period with more attention than anyone before, but has been criticised for ultimately falling back upon the old notion of Hazlitt as a precursor to Keats's "negative capability."[9] Kinnaird's above-quoted study was the first to seriously question the view that squares Hazlitt with Keats. Two relevant books by John L. Mahoney, and Bromwich's study all emphasise the Keats-connection, but they, especially the last one, which still remains the single most detailed holistic interpretation of Hazlitt's oeuvre, heavily contributed to the readiness to accept Hazlitt as one of the major voices of the romantic period. Finally, it was left to Uttara Natarajan, in her still unchallenged *Hazlitt and the Reach of Sense* (1998), to argue for taking Hazlitt seriously as a philosopher, and to radically dissever almost all connection with Keats, at least as it was traditionally seen. In her view, most literature on Hazlitt is trapped in the problem of egotism versus disinterestedness, which, however, "is easily removed when we separate Hazlitt from Keats to decipher his theory of genius as a theory of power, that is, a theory not of self-annihilation, but of self-affirmation."[10]

Hazlitt, then, does not lack supporters these days. Here is Tom Paulin, probably the fiercest of them all: "[w]e have for too long allowed Wordsworth and Coleridge to overshadow or occlude Hazlitt's genius, and it is for a new generation of readers and scholars to restore him to his rightful place as philosopher, master critic, political journalist and unequalled prose stylist."[11] In 2003, labour leader Michael Foot unveiled the restored Hazlitt-monument in Soho, on which an unknown hand (maybe his first wife, Sarah Stoddart, which would be a case of almost unexplainable generosity) describes Hazlitt as, amongst other things "The first (unanswered) Metaphysician of the age. . . . A lover of the People, poor or oppressed: A hater of the Pride and Power of the Few. . . A man of true moral courage."[12] Today we have a Hazlitt Day-School, titled *England's Missing Critic? William Hazlitt*

(established in 2001), we have a Hazlitt Society that hosted the third annual Hazlitt lecture in September 2007, and which is planning to launch an annual Hazlitt Review.[13] But the towering achievement of all these attempts is that of Duncan Wu. In 1998 he brought out an acclaimed 9-volume *Selected Writings of William Hazlitt*;[14] a much-needed updating of P.P. Howe's edition of the *Complete Works* (1930–34). He is currently working on a biography of Hazlitt, which, judging by his recent publications, will be a very important source, clarifying, at long last such essential issues as Hazlitt's intellectual background and reading. And now he has published the *New Writings*, which includes a number of items earlier attributed to Hazlitt by Stanley Jones, Jules Douady, and others, but also many never before seen as his.

Two huge beautiful hardbacks, luxurious in execution, overawing in scholarly apparatus, the very sight and touch of *New Writings by William Hazlitt* toss aside all questions as to Hazlitt's importance. Obviously it is a classic of the English language that we are dealing with, not a single word of whose is to be allowed to get lost. Since most of the items here attributed to Hazlitt appeared anonymously, and no manuscript survives, attribution is argued either by circumstance or by "diction, style, and content. Of the first, there is less to draw on than with other Romantic writers, so that the latter assumes considerable importance" (1.lix). Duncan Wu is disarmingly honest when it comes to the more slippery areas of the editor's job. "Only in a certain proportion of cases can one be sure of Hazlitt's authorship. Usually it is a strong probability, somewhere between 'highly likely' and 'near certain,' the evidence not permitting the case to be more strongly put" (1.lxiii–lxiv). And indeed, it is not often that one sees so many conditionals in a scholarly commentary to a critical edition: "it is likely that, had he seen this news item, he would have responded as the writer does here" (2.271); "I imagine that Stanley Jones (who first suggested this attribution) would have argued etc. (2.136)."

But if identifying texts by style is unavoidably fraught with problems, Wu is as convincing as anyone can be. He has the almost uncanny ability to recognise even the most minute Hazlittian (a word he likes to use very much) turns of phrase. Has he committed the whole oeuvre to memory, one is tempted to wonder. He is also brilliant at describing Hazlitt's style. "[T]he prose is taut, eloquent, and witty . . . the metaphor precise and evocative" (2.369). Hazlitt is set aside from most journalists by his ability to think "about contemporary events in Shakespearean terms," and "as a trained artist" to "see the world in artistic terms," he is "prone to aphorism," "happy to use the rhetorical

question," even "in series," expert at repeating words, phrases and rhythms for effect," and has a keen "sense of the ridiculous" (1.lix–lxii). There is the problem, of course, that Hazlitt's style, like any other style, "can be imitated," but, Wu reassures us, "Hazlittian thought is beyond imitation" (1.lxii).

Uttara Natarajan has described the "canonising purpose" of Wu's editorial practice.[15] Nothing shows this better than his determination to collect any text, where there is some likelihood that it may have come from Hazlitt. A complete essay is included by Charles Lamb, for instance, because it contains, so Lamb tells his readers, one paragraph by Hazlitt. "None of this points unswervingly to Hazlitt, but the evidence suggests him rather than his colleagues" (2.280), "The nature of the evidence precludes a conclusive case, but it remains a strong one" (2.354), "the paucity of evidence leaves one with little choice but to speculate" (2.431). At times one feels that quality is the strongest indicator of Hazlitt's hand. The primary meaning of "Hazlittian" for Wu seems to be "strikingly good."

The second volume has a section entitled "Early Versions of Selected Essays," which Wu introduces by complaining that "[o]ur understanding of Hazlitt's texts and his development is at a primitive stage compared with that of any major writer of the period. The successive manuscript drafts that lie behind *The Prelude* have long been in print, not to mention a number of different versions of the poem itself" (2.429). Side by side with *The Prelude*: there is surely no higher place than that for any Romantic text!

Virginia Woolf believed that Hazlitt "will live in a volume of essays in which is distilled all those powers that are dissipated and distracted elsewhere, where the parts of his complex and tortured spirit come together in a truce of amity and concord."[16] Wu emphasises that here we see not Hazlitt the essayist (and even less Hazlitt the philosopher) but Hazlitt the busy journalist. Taken together with the commentary, which as Charles Lamb said about Coleridge's annotations "in *matter* oftentimes, and almost in *quantity* not unfrequently, vi[es] with the originals"[17] presents splendid pictures of the life of the newspaperman in the "mighty metropolis, where," in Hazlitt's powerful description, "myriads of human hearts are throbbing – where all that is busy in commerce, all that is elegant in manners, all that is mighty in power, all that is dazzling in splendour, all that is brilliant in genius, all that is benevolent in feeling, is congregated together" ("London Solitude," ii. 355). "He could have begun his evening," Wu recounts in one of the places, where the commentary comes alive with excitement, "at Covent Garden, watching Reynolds's play, before making the

journey to Drury Lane (a walk of five minutes, if that) for the afterpiece there. As soon as the curtain dropped, he hot-footed it to the Times printing-house in Blackfriars, where he dictated his review to the setter" (1.265).

Probably most readers will be interested in the reviews on the major contemporary poets. The one on Wordsworth's 1827 *Poetical Works* is a strange companion-piece to the portrait of the poet-revolutionary in *The Spirit of the Age*: the older Wordsworth appears completely lacking in power; he is described "as the passive subject of monarchy" (2.38), somewhat similarly to Coleridge, whom Hazlitt forever criticises for his weakness of will, and is in one of the newly collected essays classed among "the more placid genius[es]" (1.133).[18] If power lays hold on us principally through aesthetic means (through the imagination), as Hazlitt argues for instance in "The Spirit of Monarchy" (1823), then it takes extreme force of the understanding or a figure that grasps the imagination instead of "legitimate" (a veritable swear-word with Hazlitt) power. Hence the efforts of Hazlitt to transform Napoleon into such a powerful image.

The reviews of Coleridge are mostly savage, and the frightening figure that Wu provides, demonstrating Hazlitt's animus, is that "[d]uring the course of nine months he attacked *The Statesman's Manual* no less than four times" (1.205). There are interesting statements about Shelley, however, which show that he could be far more sympathetic towards the poet, with whom he was acquainted, than it appears from the incomprehensibly harsh review of Shelley's posthumously collected works (the major statement that has been available).

The texts related to Napoleon are fascinating, and shed new light on a much debated field. Paul Johnson in 2004 wrote with fury about Hazlitt's allegedly blind cult of Napoleon. "Of course, force and its shameless use in supposedly progressive causes, has always appealed to left-wing intellectuals. Hazlitt not only backed Napoleon at all stages, but wrote an interminable and unreadable life of him. He is the exact equivalent, c 1810, of the Shaws and Webbs who, c 1930, glorified Stalin."[19] In light of the material now made available by Duncan Wu this position looks utterly flawed, and seems to give further evidence to Simon Bainbridge's view, who concluded that "Hazlitt's writing on Napoleon Bonaparte, then, was no simple indulgence of his own idolatry, but a calculated campaign of imaginative terrorism," where the key-word is "calculated."[20] In fact, Hazlitt, in one of the newly collected pieces confesses that "Bonaparte was *not* the personification of our *beau ideal* of a hero. He partook too much of the *egoism* of the old model" (1.480). He

speaks about the emperor's "fearful repose upon the simple elements of force" (1.479). Additionally, "[t]here is something interesting to the feelings, although repulsive to the judgment in the enthusiasm of M. Savary [for Napoleon]. We are no admirers of the military profession" (2.145). This, of course, is not to deny that, as Wu says, Hazlitt's perspective was "distinctively pro-Napoleonic" (2.103). But it is a reminder that we ought to be cautious when charging Hazlitt with unthinking dictator-worship.

Finally, may I confess that I still find those essays the most intriguing where we get a glimpse of Hazlitt the familiar essayist. Anyone who has no time to read through the two volumes should directly go to the late piece "On Table Companions and the Art of Dining." This delightful essay amounts to a retrospective *ars poetica* composed by the writer almost on his death-bed: "Companionship, which is the essence of a pleasant party, demands equality among diners" (2.402).

Bálint Gárdos

Notes

1. "[T]here is one point of view which permeates and colors many of his other principles and gives a certain unity to his criticism: that is, his conception of the sympathetic character of the imagination, and his belief in the absolute dependence of great art upon it" (Walter Jackson Bate, *Criticism: The Major Texts*, Enlarged Edition [New York: Harcourt Brace, 1970], p. 283).

2. Walter Jackson Bate, "The Sympathetic Imagination in Eighteenth-Century English Criticism," *ELH* 12 (1945) 144–164.

3. Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963).

4. David Bromwich, *Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 362. For lists and evaluation of the relevant literature see: Uttara Natarajan, *Hazlitt and the Reach of Sense: Criticism, Morals, and the Metaphysics of Power* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 107-119 (especially p. 109) and Roy Park, *Hazlitt and the Spirit of the Age: Abstraction and Critical Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 26–42 (especially pp. 34–35).

5. This was exactly the problem: the history of criticism was not yet an autonomous field of study. See Péter Dávidházi, *Hunyt mesterünk: Arany János kritikusi öröksége*, 2nd ed. (Budapest: Argumentum, 1994), 15–71, especially pp. 67–71.

6. René Wellek, *The History of Modern Criticism 1750–1950: The Romantic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 212.

7. George Watson, *The Literary Critics: A Study of English Descriptive Criticism* (London: Hogart Press, 1986) pp. 124–5.

8. John Kinnaird, *William Hazlitt: Critic of Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 211.

9. Natarajan, p. 108.

10. Natarajan, pp. 8–9.

11. Tom Paulin, "One Impulse: Hazlitt, Wordsworth and *The Principles of Human Action*," in *Metaphysical Hazlitt: Bicentenary essays*, ed. Uttara Natarajan, Tom Paulin and Duncan Wu (London and New

York: Routledge, 2005) 98–111, p 111. See also Paulin, *The Day-Star of Liberty: William Hazlitt's Radical Style* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998).

12. Tom Paulin, "Spirit of the Age," *The Guardian* 5 April 2003 <http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,12084,929528,00.html>.

13. See http://www.williamhazlitt.org.

14. See, for instance, Robert Morrison, "Well-Feathered Thoughts," *Essays in Criticism* 52.3 (2002) 258–262.

15. Uttara Natarajan, [untitled review], *The Review of English Studies*, 240/59 (2008) 470–472.

16. Virginia Woolf, "William Hazlitt," in *The Second Common Reader* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1960), 156–166, p. 166.

17. Charles Lamb, "The Two Races of Men," in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas (London: Methuen, 1903), 22–27, pp. 26-7.

18. Seamus Perry notes this in his review of the volumes: "A man of singular opinions," *TLS*, 18 April 2008, p. 12.

19. Paul Johnson, "A Role Model for All Dictators," *The Daily Telegraph* 17 October 2004 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2004/10/24/bohaz24.xml&sSheet=/arts/2004/10/24/bomain.html>.

20. Simon Brainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 207. More recently, Paul Stock has written about Hazlitt's conscious use of Napoleon as an "ideological symbol" (Stock, "Imposing on Napoleon: The Romantic Appropriation of Bonaparte," *Journal of European Studies* 36.4 [2006] 363–388).

Representability and Pathological Discipline

Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, translated by Sophie Hawkes, foreword by Georges Didi-Huberman (New York: Zone Books, 2004)

Scholars who have tried to give an overall description of Aby Warburg's structure of theory have always faced enormous difficulties. He himself admitted the presence of a private overtone in all his works, something he called an "autobiographical reflex."[1] It is this private tone in Warburg's style; increasingly deviating from the accepted conventions of academic prose, with hints to meanings that were not explicitly stated, that has proved to be the most difficult challenge for scholars. These private dimensions may be further expanded by taking into consideration the huge amount of notes and drafts he never intended to see in print.[2]

The style of the few studies he edited is very dense and strict and the notes and drafts sometimes explore an embarrassingly private and relaxed sphere of a scholar's mind. The fact that the number of studies he published throughout his life is very small, there are many themes he only planned to write about, give his oeuvre an unfinished character, at the same

time making it impossible to disregard the notes and drafts. Interestingly enough the way he constructed the structure of the famous library he founded and the criteria according to which he again and again re-arranged the books also add a lot to the understanding of his methods. In the foreword to the English translation of Philippe-Alain Michaud's *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, Georges Didi-Huberman stresses that this is "the first book on Warburg to be written in French" (7), which is important because art historians such as Henri Focillon and Andre Chastel, who determined the scope of French art history in the last few decades, had neglected Warburg's theories.

Georges Didi-Huberman devotes much attention to the Warburgian term *pathos* and with a little twist of the etymological game to *pathology* (14). This association which in the light of the translation problems and the fact that Warburg spent almost six years in Kreutzlingen Clinic for "paranoid phantasies" and "psychomotor disorder" may seem a sensitive issue.[3] Michaud, in a permanent debate with commentators on Warburg,[4] argues that his theoretical heirs developed a domesticated iconology based on the decipherment of symbols whereas he argues Warburg's project was remote from this level of positivist approach.[5]

Warburg never laid down any theoretical basis for a study of art history. The thesis concerning what iconology means is based on his famous interpretation of the frescoes of the Salone dei Mesi in Palazzo Schifanoja, Ferrara he presented at the first art history conference in Rome in 1912, where he described his approach as an "iconological analysis."[6] *Pathosformel* (pathos formula) is a key concept in Warburg and is the epicentre Michaud argues of the whole system to be re-interpreted.

In opposition to Winckelmann's "tranquil grandeur," in 1893[7] Warburg elaborated the idea that it was not the untroubled serenity of its majestic beauty- the motionless well-balanced body- that served as the model for the imitation of Antiquity "but rather the body caught up in a play of overwhelming forces." The model of sculpture is reversed with that of the dance, accentuating the dramatic and temporal aspect of the works rather than the tranquil and eternal features. What Renaissance artists derived from antiquity was not an association between substance and immobility but, on the contrary, they stressed tension and drama. They refused to identify with aesthetic categories in favour of ecstatic expressive formulae. These forces destabilize the figures rather than pulling them together: divine serenity that served as the model of ideal beauty was transformed into bacchantes (28).

Up to this point Michaud's argumentation does not seem new in realizing Warburg's Nietzschean preoccupation with tension and ecstasy, irrupting the Apollonian equilibrium as a driving principle in the Renaissance, all commentators including Gombrich underlined it as his basic principle.[8] Michaud's new approach is that he goes much beyond the mere recognition of Warburg's revolutionary idea. He claims that it is not only motion, movement and tension, but the presentation of their representability that Warburg aimed at: "a whole series of Renaissance artists and poets. seem to have used a work of Antiquity, including its deterioration, to express the phenomena of appearance and disappearance, seeking to reproduce not so much the figure depicted as the fact of figuration itself, and the pulsing presence and absence of conditioning it (72). Movements he explores become associated with the subject's entrance into image through the rites of passage and with dramatizations of his or her own appearance (32).

For Warburg, Michaud argues, symptom had a more complicated meaning than how it is usually understood:[9] symptom should be interpreted as an archaeological and simultaneously current implication in bodies represented revealing their innate pathetic capacities through movement. Starting from Warburg's theory of motion and movement, Michaud arrives at the conclusion that a kind of cinematic perception is basic in Warburg's thinking, which meant to re-establish the synchrony between image and discourse. "To join an image with a sound, a figure with a voice, such was the way precursors of cinema envisaged the recording and mechanical reproduction of movement before it was thought materially possible," he adds (39).

This is the point in the argumentation when the author starts to introduce parallels from other categories of imagery. Examples are taken from the history of the cinema to prove the presence of identical categories and similar visual perceptive capacities. Parallels are drawn with W. K. L. Dickson's Filmed Effigies and kinetographic scripts, the Japanese Kabuki theatre, the theories of the photo-cinematic images by Kracauer, Russian film theory and even with Jean-Luc Godard. These parallels and comparisons, though peculiar, are also exciting, but seem to lack the minimum expectations towards academic writing. The comparison with the Japanese theatre for example starts with the sentence: "Let us imagine he wanted to see Kabuki theatre" (271).

A really unique and exciting section of the book is chapter three where the Warburgian notion of motion is elaborated. In 1902 Warburg published two studies, both devoted to what he called

"living art of portraiture": "The Art of Portraiture and Florentine Bourgeoisie" and "Flemish Art and the Florentine Early Renaissance."[10] Warburg's scope is no longer how Italian Quattrocento artists and Flemish painters represented bodies agitated by external forces but rather how bodies are animated by inner principles. Michaud's daring and unique approach reveals Warburg's novel treatment of his topic. In these two studies beyond the strict and scholarly style, we can really trace a structure of thought not revealed or unnoticed by earlier interpretations.

There is a definite wish to reconstitute the singular reality of the individual depicted through a montage of texts and images within the works themselves (similarly to Burchardt's attitude in his *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, a book Warburg regularly referred to). Michaud suggests there is a "direct relationship between model and painting which is not mediated by the artist, whose function thus becomes slightly blurred. In other words the painting is qualified not simply by its site but as a site" (125). There is a space created between the model and the painted surface putting the author of the work of art in a strange position.[11]

The most exciting part of the analysis is the chapter on "Three Portraits of Maria." Warburg in his study analyses three portraits of Maria Portinary: the so called Turin portrait by Hans Memling, the Paris portrait by Memling and the portrait on Hugo van der Goes' Uffizi triptych. In examining the signs of physical changes over the course of the three portraits Warburg, Michaud claims, applies the ancient medical technique of *prognostics* based on Pliny's *Natural History*.[12] The painted surface becomes a transparent screen, a space between the model and the historian. The figures thus created are not immobile ones but rather figures delivered to the limits of time: "the stages of Maria's entry into the universe of representation reveal the spectacle of her physical deterioration" (131). According to Warburg the Portinary triptych, in the end, transforms Maria's image into a votive effigy. The movement of a single body is exposed "through a succession of juxtaposed images" (135). Maria (or rather her image) seems to *travel* from painting to painting.

Through the travel of the same model, Michaud argues, the same image gathers fractions of the modifications of the model's own fleshly being. Separate semantic essences are being created through a montage made up of cross sections of single works of art. The procedure of upholding the figure in its duration within the circles of representation is a passage leading from the world of things to that of images. The spectator has to give up passive

contemplation in order to intervene actively in the representation.

Michaud's interpretation is not far-fetched at all – Warburg really aimed at a very personal approach to pieces of art where the scholar or the spectator is invited to get into close and combinative relationship with the works of art. The analysis of Maria's portraits was facilitated by photographic reproduction which is an important element in Michaud's argumentation: he claims that Warburg's increasing use of photography tells us much about how he developed a cinematic way of visual conceptualization. In itself, the fact that the sequence is created through photographic representation may well lack all significance, since the three paintings theoretically could be put side by side at any time to represent the idea of juxtaposition.

Another weak point in Michaud's argumentation, in my view, is that his concept of "travelling" is definitely a linear movement, whereas the elements (the paintings) of this sequence can be mixed and changed any time (by non-linear irregular motions). The facts that the paintings listed here are of different functions (portrait and altarpiece) and were painted by different artists (Memling and Hugo van der Goes) seem to have fallen outside Michaud's scope, not to mention aspects like artistic value or differences in material and size.

A few months after the publication of his study on the Florentine Intermedi festivities, "Warburg would discover the phenomena of apparition he had observed in the history of court spectacles, in an intersection of proximity (Annährung) and strangeness (Unheimlichkeit)" (170). The identification of the Florentine festivities (and through them Renaissance art) and the Hopi rituals is one of the most difficult elements of Warburg's thought. The journey to New Mexico to the Hopi (the result of which was the lecture on the serpent ritual in the Kreutzlingen clinic) has always been the most debated episode of Warburg's activity.

After returning to Europe in 1927, he began a correspondence with the ethnologist Franz Boas as he still wanted to initiate a study programme combining the disciplines of art history and anthropology. For Warburg the travel was a displacement of knowledge, a technique of anamnesis, "a parable of loosening the grips of melancholy." By replacing the study of texts and works of art with a "more physical activity" the discipline itself was modified: the research gained an unusual practical significance (181). The dances and rituals of the Hopi were equalled with the ecstatic Dionysian level of Greek culture. Warburg said: "I do not believe I am wrong to consider that gaining a vivid representation of the life and art of a primitive people is a valuable cor-

rective to the study of any art" (184). The research becomes the reflection of his own personality, whereas the geographical distance is a metaphor of the past (359). Analogy is not only drawn between cultures viewed but between the scholar and the object of his knowledge. Actually in his journal in 1929 a few weeks before his death he calls himself a "psycho-historian" (238). Michaud explains: "like the doll dancers in the Kachina ritual, the researcher gives meaning to something that has no meaning – not in understanding but in reproducing the world in the closed universe of representation" (236) while "abolishing the boundary between world and representation" (232). The Indian rituals just like the Florentine Intermedi were for him scenographic models for transformation of the world into representation (33). Dancers (motions) produce an intermediate being between body and image and transform themselves into representation. This idea is directly inspired by Burchardt who interpreted the Renaissance festivities as "a path leading from life to art whereas in the Oraibi ceremonies Warburg discovered the path from art to life (203).

The exoticon, the unfamiliar object places the cameraman or the art historian into a situation of discovery: to understand that the world operations we set into play cease to be the simple object of research and become its own reflection (36). Warburg's lack of interest concerning styles did not let him question why, for example, the Pueblo Indians did not represent their dances in their visual art. What conditions are there to make a certain type of representation become realizable? Michaud who neglects many aspects of the cultural atmosphere of Warburg's age other than photography and cinema, to which Gombrich devoted two chapters, fails to face the question why the parallel was anthropology for Warburg, and not some other discipline.

Warburg – and, we may add, Michaud as well – treated his studies and his journey on an equal epistemological ground that does not seem to allow any critical approach. As Wind had already remarked in 1931[13] Warburg always showed special interest in intermediate themes not accepted by the code of art history. Michaud claims the constructive idea of creating the Mnemosyne atlas appears to be suggested in the enigmatic phrase "iconology of the intervals" in his journal in 1929 (252). With this remark Michaud definitely means to prove that Gombrich wrongly mentions it was Saxl who played an important role in the genesis of the project.[14]

While Gombrich looks upon the strangely arranged material of the Mnemosyne panels[15] as on illustrative and practical solutions to represent the interrelations and interactions,

Michaud treats the execution as a genre or a construction intentionally created exactly like that, something that is informative in itself. In this "ghost story for adults" ("eine Gespenstergeschichte für ganz Erwachsene"), as Warburg called his project, the images assembled this way "function as discontinuous sequences that find expressive significance only when considered in an arrangement of complex interconnections," They are like screens on which the phenomena produced in succession are reproduced simultaneously," like in a cinema (259–260).

A "cinematic mode of thought" or film technique: this is what Michaud calls Warburg's handling of his subject in the chapter on the Mnemosyne to which he adds Freud's motto, "our realm is that of the intervals." The Warburgian idea is that pictures put next to one another will enter into strange and sometimes unexpected relationship with one another. This is an organized network of tensions and anachronisms causing "violent associations, which over time would loose their intuitiveness and become structural" arising "not from simple comparisons, but from rifts, detonations, and deflagrations." They introduce differences within the identical" (255). He calls the images of Mnemosyne "engrams," later "photograms," capable of recreating an experience of the past in a spatial configuration (255). The atlas, Michaud claims, does not only aim at describing the migration of images through the history of art. The essence is not description but reproduction (272) with this montage of photographic reproduction the question of the transmission of knowledge is submitted with that of its exposition (37). Michaud argues Warburg's visual presentation is a filmic approach.

A scene Michaud explores is the image of the filmic operation itself at the same time, just as the painted scene is the image of *representability*: each, he claims, is the expression of the process creating it (66). Michaud's idea that here is a relationship between Warburg's project and Eisenstein's "*obraznost*" theory (282), although interesting seem to lack again explanation at least according to academic conventions. *Obraznost* ("imageness" or "imaginicity") means a "semantic saturation obtained through the conversation in meaning into a signifying system of several levels."[16] Eisenstein's famous theory that the combination of two hieroglyphs is equivalent to their product and not to their sum total (284) is a concept really excitingly similar to the Warburgian idea. But the fact is that no direct influence can be traced, the relationship is only the overlapping in time.

All studies on Warburg mention his lack of interest in stylistic questions,[17] which is a curious issue although evi-

dently in connection to his disinterest towards the historical approach. It is still somewhat strange that Michaud treats the problems of visibility and representation concerning the visual appearance of the Mnemosyne project without any reference to visual categories like form, size, or material. The Mnemosyne images are black and white photographic representations (of varying quality) of paintings (originally colourful), of reliefs (necessarily partial) and of architectural details and sculptures (objects originally spatial). Naturally there is no system of any proportion among the representations and no reference to their function. Consequently the pictures are various meaning units from the strict visual point of view which may contradict the idea of any approach of homogenous scope such as film art where the picture units are definitely of equal visual value.[18]

On the one hand, the violation of the traditions of academic writing makes it impossible to define the genre of Michaud's book: it is a real "Warburgian montage" made up of elements of knowledge and information, a work of art itself, a book written not on but together with Warburg. On the other, the comparative method comes to exciting conclusions: he suggests that by dislocating the aspect of the spectator (and the function of the scholar) a semantic model is given by Warburg for an interpretation of interrelated and interconnected units of knowledge. In sum, this volume confirms the "prediscursive" purpose of the Mnemosyne project of founding an art history without text, or, alternatively, "the critique of the supremacy of language in the genesis of meaning" (272).

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Notes

1. "[I]n my role as a psycho-historian, I tried to diagnose the schizophrenia of Western civilization from its images in an autobiographical reflex" (quoted in E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* [London: The Warburg Institute, 1970], p. 303). The affinities of his last and strangest project, the Mnemosyne atlas "are less with works of history than with certain types of poetry, not unknown to the twentieth century where hosts of historical or literary allusions hide and reveal layers upon layers of private meanings" (Gombrich, p. 302).

2. "Warburg selbst wäre gewiss der letzte gewesen, diese Zettel der Publikum zu übergeben. . . Aber als Quelle für den Historiker ist dieser Nachlass eine unerschöpfliche Fundgrube. Wie manche Sammlernaturen, so warf auch Warburg nie etwas weg. . . Der schriftliche Niederschlag von mehr als 45 Jahren ist hier erhalten" (Gombrich quoted in Dieter Wuttke ed., *Aby Warburg: Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen* [Baden-Baden: Koerner, 1992]).

3. Gertrud Bing, Warburg's colleague, who collected and arranged many of his theories he did not write down, decided to approach Warburg's ideas through stylistic

analysis; see Wuttke, pp. 433–455. Gombrich in his biography devotes a whole chapter to the very heavy and concentrated Warburgian language full of allusions, which Warburg himself called *Aalsuppenstil*. Basic terms such as *Kulturwissenschaft* or *Pathosformel* gain a definite shift in meaning when translated to English. The word *pathos*, he claims will mean "suffering" with a stress on "misfortune," whereas in German the focus is more on "grandeur" and "sublimity."

4. His disagreements are elaborated concerning Edgar Wind (75–80), Gombrich (252, 262), and Panofsky (143). Only Gertrud Bing receives a positive appreciation (15–16).

5. Michaud is mistaken in stating this. As early as in 1934, Edgar Wind, in his "Kritik der Geistesgeschichte: Das Symbol als Gegenstand kulturwissenschaftlicher Forschung," *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliographie zum Nachleben der Antike* 1 (Leipzig, 1934), had referred to the fact that Warburg went beyond the narrow meaning of iconology. Cf. Gombrich: "he sometimes referred to this preoccupation as 'iconology,' but his iconology was not the study of complex emblems and allegories but the interaction of forms and contents in the clash of traditions" (Gombrich, p. 313). Perhaps there is an oversimplified image about the Warburgian meaning of iconology in everyday usage, although even contemporary university books give a relatively refined assessment such as Gabriele Kopp-Schmidt, *Ikonographie und Ikonologie: Eine Einführung* (Cologne: Deubner, 2004) pp. 48–49.

6. Wuttke, p. 173.

7. Wuttke, p. 11.

8. See for example Gombrich, p. 57.

9. "[D]ie Kunst wird eine Symptom, ein Ausdrucksträger, für eine spezifische kulturelle Situation" (Kopp-Schmidt, p. 51).

10. Wuttke, p. 65 and p. 103.

11. With such remarks the perspective of the book seems to stretch beyond its own scheme by raising theoretical questions concerning the location of the author, intentionality, etc.

12. Pliny mentions that the portraits of Apelles were so perfect that he prophesied "people's future by their countenance" (Michaud, p. 131); i.e. he recreated faces not simply in their present form but also with reference to what they would become.

13. Wind, p. 331.

14. Gombrich, p. 283.

15. The only exhibition organized about the panels of the Mnemosyne was the reconstruction in Vienna in 1994. The catalogue on the basis of which Michaud elaborated his ideas was not complete, it omitted variants and unpublished material. A new, critical edition was published in 2006, two years after Michaud's *Aby M. Warburg: Mnemosyne "Materialen"* (Munich & Hamburg: Dölling & Galitz, 2006) had appeared.

16. Michaud quotes Pietro Montani (p. 284).

17. Gombrich, p. 308.

18. Michaud's associations concerning the comic strip in the Hearst newspapers with Krazy Kat and Ignatz Mouse (287) seem rather absurd.

Translation as Tribute

Thomas Kabdebo (ed.), *A Tribute to Attila József on the 70th Anniversary of His Death* (Courtenay Hill: Abbey Press, 2007)

As anyone who has ever applied for a job knows, CVs require an inconvenient balance between the personal and the impersonal. You are supposed to present a full and sincere account of your life and knowledge, but paradoxically you are also expected to suppress the really interesting stuff: your joys and sorrows, your regrets and hidden desires. You can put it into a narrative or just list the facts, but you should not even consider showing your sense of humor or adding a touch of self-irony in the clever arrangement of the material or an unusual turn of phrase. CVs are boring, and we can live with that, and that is one of the reasons why Attila József's "Curriculum Vitae," the first text by the Hungarian poet in the volume entitled *A Tribute to Attila József on the 70th Anniversary of his Death*, provides interesting reading. József's narrative CV keeps all the formal conventions of the genre, it provides significant dates, information about qualifications, and ends with the enumeration of the poet's marketable skills, knowledge of languages, familiarity with business correspondence, shorthand, etc.: "I am familiar with the technicalities of printing and can express myself clearly and precisely. I consider myself to be honest and I am, I think, intelligent and a hard worker" (17). You don't have to read between the lines, however, to realize at once that József uses these conventional elements to convey information about the things that are not normally included in CVs. Thus, we read about his childhood suffering, the loss of his mother, his conflict with one of his university professors, and the reception of his poems by his friends, and his enemies: "nor did they [his senior colleagues at Mauthner Bank] omit to chaff me about my poems appearing in the press. 'I used to write poetry when I was your age' - they would say. Some time later the bank failed."

Like many Hungarians who had been taught their Attila József at secondary school – much of the school curriculum concerning 20th century Hungarian poetry is focused on his poetry – I have read József's CV often enough to interpret it in direct relation to the poems as a possible frame of reference for, or an extension of the author's poetic *oeuvre*. Many readers have been socialized in this way, to commit all the major New Critical fallacies on József's work, and I cannot even say they are totally wrong, since the intensely personal

voice of the poet invites comparison with the life (i.e. the several different accounts of it at our disposal). Nevertheless, this indulgence in the obvious could prevent us from noticing certain aspects of the texts, and I had to read the lines quoted above in translation to realize the wry humour informing József's account of his work experience at Mauthner Bank. As any good rendering, the English text of "Curriculum Vitae" transforms its source at unexpected points, surprising readers who are familiar with the Hungarian version by making the straight crooked and the plain places rough. It is of course not only the poet's autobiography that provides such surprises: the *Tribute* volume contains an extensive, chronologically arranged selection of József's poetry in translation which abounds in such instances. Two examples will suffice: the very first poem of the volume, the 1922 "Winter" starts with the line "We should build a bonfire, a super-duper one," while in the final stanza of the poet's last piece, the 1937 "Behold I have found my land" we read: "The spring is good and summer, too, / But autumn better and winter best / For him who finds his last hopes through / Family hearths he knew as guest." In both cases the Hungarian original is reshaped significantly; in "Winter," a touch of light irony is highlighted in the solemnity of the original (literally: "We should build some big-big fire") through the use of the colloquial "super-duper," whereas in "Behold I have found my land," the last two lines significantly soften the chillingly hopeless Hungarian lines (literally: "For him who hopes for a hearth and a family only for others") by emphasizing memory as a source of positive hope. Here, and in many of the translations published in the *Tribute*, it is refreshing to recognize emerging traits that have for the most part remained outside the scope of the mainstreams of the Hungarian critical reception.

But of course *A Tribute to Attila József* was published for an English-speaking audience not necessarily familiar with or interested in the poems' relation to their originals or the traditional ways of interpreting József's *oeuvre*, so the question comes up: what extra pleasure (besides that of the poems) could these "innocent readers" derive from this collection? After all, as the editor, Thomas Kabdebo points out, the volume represents the fourteenth attempt to turn Attila József's poetry into English – and we might note that a fifteenth book of translation also appeared in the meanwhile (*A Transparent Lion*, trans. Gábor Gyukics and Michael Castro [Los Angeles: Green Integer, 2006]) – making the poet one of the most widely received

Hungarian authors in the English-speaking world. One possible answer to this question lies in the latter fact: by selecting seventy-three translations by nineteen translators Kabdebo created an anthology of verse which, besides offering an up-to-date, accessible collection of József's major poems also functions as a reservoir of the historical reception by featuring earlier, often out-of-print translations of individual poems. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the selection is not simply a "best of" collection of Attila József's poetry; alongside the highly serious, and in the Hungarian reception immensely influential "great" poems ("With a Pure Heart," "Ode," "Consciousness," "By the Danube," etc) there are lighter pieces ("I never yet saw a pig," "Keep going!," etc) as well as poems usually included within anthologies of children's literature ("Bear dance," "Lullaby," etc). If anything is missing, it is the juvenilia, especially the poet's very first piece ("Kedves Jocó!" approximating "Dear Jo!"), which, with its wishful and wish-fulfilling fantasies already anticipates József's lifelong obsession with privation and desire as well as the powerfully concrete imagery of his mature work.

Another interesting feature of the volume is that the seventy-three poems (sufficient by all means to stand alone) are provided with a frame: they are preceded by Peter Denman's introduction, and some of the poet's prose ("Curriculum Vitae," "Old Shuffler, the Cobbler" which is a tale known to every Hungarian schoolchild, and a philosophical fragment entitled "Reality and Truth" by the editor), and followed by a handful of tribute-poems by late 20th century authors, and a selection of critical essays. The tribute-poems are written mostly by Hungarian poets, and testify to the influence József's poetry has been exerting on Hungarian literature for the past decades, while the long free verse lines of John W. Wilkinson in his "Homage to Attila József" provide an important glimpse of the different contexts of the foreign reception.

The scholarly essays deal with three different aspects of József's work: Zsuzsa Beney reinterprets the theme of death in the poet's *oeuvre*, István Cserne dismantles some of the myths surrounding the poet's life, and Thomas Kabdebo discusses the possible interpretive frameworks available to appreciate the language of the "Ode," József's most famous love poem. The latter study, as well as the volume's preface implicitly posit the "Ode" (and thus József's love poetry in general) as the center of József's work; this strategy (I presume) strikes a balance between the several different interpretive possibilities present

throughout the poems (philosophical, psychological, socially-oriented and socialist perspectives), it surely helps introduce English-speaking readers to the complex interdependence of the different aspects and themes of József's poetry.

One of the points repeatedly made in several texts of this interpretative framework is that József was a contemporary of the so-called high-modernists (Eliot, Pound, Auden, etc.), but his poetry is very different from theirs. The tribute rendered to the poet may, therefore, be interpreted as salutation, the recognition of a remote poetic style by the inheritors of anglophone modernism (the translators, the poets, and the audience). On another level, however, "tribute" may be interpreted as a debt to be cleared, i.e. as if seventy years after József's death his work still needed introduction and translation into English. Due to the constant need for new translations and new interpretations, it is the nature of such debts to remain ever-standing; nevertheless, the volume edited by Kabdebo goes a long way toward paying a large, if not the final, installment.

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