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**LITERARY-ISMS/ ETUDES
LITTERAIRES/
LITERATURWISSENSCHAFTLICHE
STUDIEN**





**Personal Survival and Authorial Fictionality/
Rettung des Ich und auktoriale Fiktionalität/
Survivance personnelle et fiction auctorielle**

Wanderung und Heimatsuche in Hölderlins *Hyperion*¹

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explain, how Friedrich Hölderlin's protagonist of his only novel, *Hyperion or The Hermit in Greece*, is inspired by the image of Greek antiquity and by the ideals of freedom of the French Revolution in his struggle to renew modern Greece by fighting against an outer and inner enemy that prevents him to come to terms with his fate. I will show Diotima's and Alabanda's influence on Hyperion's personality and describe his journey to find a place where he can feel home. Because of his idealized image of his homeland, which he associates with the perfection of ancient Greece, his initial search for the modern equivalent of the classical civilization fails, and he tries to find peace, comfort and beauty in nature living like a hermit.

Keywords: Hyperion, Hölderlin, journey, homeland, nature, hermit.

Einleitung

Friedrich Hölderlins erste Werke sind weitgehend von Klopstocks und Schillers Werken inspiriert und betrachten das antike Griechenland als Quelle und Ideal der poetischen Inspiration. Gleichzeitig jedoch, bemerkt Hölderlin inwieweit die Kultur des antiken Griechenlands hoffnungslos verloren war, weshalb er einen grundlegend elegischen, gar tragischen Ton in vielen seiner Werke verwendet. In dem Kapitel *German Classical Poetry* in *The Literature of Weimar Classicism*, stellt Cyrus Hamlin fest, dass das repräsentativste Werk, das sowohl das Streben nach Erneuerung der griechischen Kultur, als auch die Erkennung der Unmöglichkeit dieses Unterfangens verkörpert, Hölderlins Briefroman *Hyperion oder Der Eremit in Griechenland* ist.² Die Hauptfigur des Romans, Hyperion, erzählt rückblickend die Geschichte seines Lebens nach seinem Scheitern in der Liebe und in der Heimatsuche, und dient als Muster für

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² Hamlin, Cyrus: *German Classical Poetry*. In Richter, Simon (Hg.): *The Literature of Weimar Classicism*, Rochester: Camden House, 2005, S. 184.

den modernen Dichter, der versucht die Bedeutung der Ruinen in Griechenland zu entdecken, um sich für eine künftige Rückkehr zur glorreichen Kultur der Antike vorzubereiten, zu der er noch keinen Zugang hat.

Fritz Martini bemerkt, dass Hölderlin in seinem Roman sein eigenes Schicksal, seine Trauer, verursacht von der elenden Wirklichkeit und dem Streben nach einem Deutschland, in dem die Menschen in Harmonie mit Gott und der Natur leben sollen, durch das Schicksal des jungen Griechen Hyperion illustriert. Angeregt von dem Bild der griechischen Antike und von den Freiheitsidealen der Französischen Revolution, verfolgt Hölderlin die Erneuerung seines Vaterlandes auf revolutionärem Wege. Wie die Romantiker, sucht der deutsche Dichter Zuflucht von der Wirklichkeit des zeitgenössischen Deutschlands, in einem idealisierten Griechenland unter dem Einfluss der Schönheit der antiken Kunst. Im Griechentum, wie es bei Johann Joachim Winckelmann vorkommt, fand Hölderlin das viel ersehnte Leben: Eine Menschlichkeit, die in Reinheit und Wirken, in Schönheit und strahlender Heiterkeit, dem Göttlichen unmittelbar nahe ist.³ Der Dichter hat sich in verächtlicher Isolierung von seiner Epoche gehalten, so wie aus den kritischen Worten seiner Hauptfigur, gerichtet an die Deutschen, hervorgeht, die sich mit dem Wesentlichen zufrieden geben, oberflächlich sind und die unfähig sind, sich über etwas wirklich zu freuen. Deren größter Makel ist jedoch ihre Unempfindlichkeit gegenüber dem Schönen im Leben.

1. Hölderlins 'Hyperion' auf der Suche nach der Heimat

Der Name 'Hyperion' kommt ursprünglich aus der griechischen Mythologie, wo Hyperion (wörtlich: hyper 'droben', 'drüberhin' und *ion* 'der Gehende') einer der zwölf Titanen ist, Sohn des Uranos (der Himmel) und der Gaia (die Erde). Hyperion, der mit seiner Schwester, Theia, einer der Titaniden, verheiratet ist, wird meistens als Vater des Sonnengottes Helios, der Göttin der Morgenröte Eos und der Mondgöttin Selene betrachtet, wie auch bei Hesiod in der *Theogonie* oder *Die Schöpfung der Götter*. In der homerischen *Ilias*, wo er als *Helios Hyperion* vorkommt, wird Hyperion mit der Sonne identifiziert, während in der *Odyssee*, der *Theogonie* und in der homerischen Hymne an Demeter, die Sonne *Hyperionides* ('Sohn des Hyperion') genannt wird. In der *Theogonie* wird Hyperion als Lichtgott bezeichnet. In der griechischen Literatur nach Hesiod wird Hyperion nicht mehr mit Helios gleichgesetzt, denn er ist der, der vor der Sonne (Helios) erscheint. Hyperions drei Kinder haben sich durch ihre Schönheit und Tugend ausgezeichnet, was die Eifersucht der anderen

³ Martini, Fritz: *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte: von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, 19. Auflage, Stuttgart: Kröner, 1991, S. 304.

Titanen nach sich zog. Der Legende nach soll Theia für ihre Kinder Herrschaftsansprüche gestellt haben, und deswegen wurde sie hart bestraft. Die anderen Titanen töteten Hyperion bevor sie Helios im Fluss Eridanos ertränkten, während Selene sich das Leben nahm. Laut einem Mythos von Diodor aus Sizilien, hat Hyperion die Bewegung der Sonne, des Mondes und anderer Himmelskörper entdeckt, und gab diese Kenntnisse an die Menschen weiter.

Der Mythos des Hyperion wurde in der Weltliteratur von dem deutschen Schriftsteller Friedrich Hölderlin in dem Briefroman *Hyperion oder der Eremit in Griechenland* (1797-1799), von dem englischen Dichter der Romantik John Keats in den Gedichten *Hyperion: ein Fragment* (1818-1819) und *Der Sturz von Hyperion: Ein Traum* (1819), von dem amerikanischen Schriftsteller Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in *Hyperion: Eine Liebesgeschichte* (1839), von dem rumänischen Romantiker Mihai Eminescu in dem Gedicht *Luceafărul (Der Morgenstern, 1873-1883)*, und von dem amerikanischen Schriftsteller Dan Simmons in seinem Sammelband *Die Hyperion-Gesänge (Hyperion, 1989, und Der Sturz von Hyperion, 1900)* bearbeitet. In *Hamlet* benutzt Shakespeare den Namen Hyperion als Personifizierung der Sonne, als Hamlet seinen Vater mit dem Gott Hyperion, und seinen Thron raubenden Onkel, Claudius, mit einem Satyr im ersten Akt vergleicht, indem er der Schönheit des Ersten die Hässlichkeit des Zweiten gegenüberstellt.

Der Roman *Hyperion oder Der Eremit in Griechenland* kann als ein lyrisches Porträt des Dichters selbst interpretiert werden, aber auch als eine Art Kompendium seines Werkes. Hyperion ist ein junger Grieche angeregt von dem brennenden Wunsch, sein Vaterland von dem türkischen Joch befreit zu sehen, und zu den alten griechischen Tugenden zurückzukehren. Der Roman hat einen komplexen Aufbau, in dem sich klassische und romantische Elemente verbinden. Klassisch sind der symmetrische Aufbau und die Feinheit und Einfachheit des poetischen Ausdrucks. Zu diesen Merkmalen kommt auch Hyperions Dilemma hinzu, der sich zwischen seiner Liebe für Diotima und dem Versuch, seinen Zustand zu überwinden und zur Rettung der Heimat beizutragen, entscheiden muss. Zu den romantischen Zügen zählt das Thema des unverstandenen und verliebten Genies, des Titanen, der gegen seinem Zustand rebelliert, die enge Verbindung zwischen Liebe und Natur, die Landschaft, das Streben nach dem Absoluten und die Intensität der Gefühle.

Alabanda, ein überzeugter Rebell, ist der Freund des Helden, und Diotima, deren Seele die ganze strahlende Zukunft einer Menschheit, die aus den inneren und äußeren Fesseln des Künstlichen befreit ist, widerspiegelt, ist Hyperions Geliebte. Der Protagonist deutet an, dass, wer nicht in Harmonie mit der Natur

lebt, keine Harmonie mit sich selbst finden kann. Der oft paradoxe Kampf des Helden, um seine innere Zerrissenheit auszudrücken, kommt aus einer richtungslosen Verzweiflung heraus bis zu dem Punkt, in dem seine Hoffnungslosigkeit und sein Leid Hinweise für die Richtung in der er gehen soll, werden. Es ist eine Reise, die die Rolle vertieft, die Griechenland und die Tragödie in Zukunft spielen werden, aber es ist auch eine Reise, in der die Erfahrung der Natur, die ihre Bedeutung in Hyperions ersten Briefen ankündigt, stets ihren elementaren Charakter für das menschliche Leben bestätigt. Am Ende stellen wir fest, dass die Erfahrung der Natur nicht mehr unabhängig in der Tragödie gefunden werden kann. Das ist das Schicksal der modernen Welt.

Hyperion, der das poetische Streben darstellt, erklärt, dass das Schicksal ihn in die Ungewissheit drängt. Laut Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, erlebt Hyperion die Einheit der Natur in ihrer großen Vielfalt in Momenten des Glücks unter den Schönheiten der Natur, in Träumen, durch Freundschaft und Liebe.⁴ Die glücklichen Momente werden aber ständig durch die Einschränkungen der menschlichen Subjektivität unterbrochen. Der kriegerische Held, Alabanda, stellt die Tendenz zum bewaffneten Aufstand dar. Die Heldin des Romans, Diotima, verkörpert die Tendenz der friedlichen religiösen und ideologischen Aufklärung. Sie möchte Hyperion zum Erzieher seines Volkes machen. Nach dem Scheitern der Revolution, verliert sich Hyperion in einer verzweifelten Mystik, während Alabanda und Diotima gleichzeitig mit seinem Sturz verschwinden.

Hyperion verbringt seine Kindheit im Süden Griechenlands Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts im Frieden der Natur. Gerade in Griechenland zurückgekehrt, entmutigt wegen der enttäuschten Hoffnungen und unglücklich wegen des Zustands seines Vaterlandes, schreibt Hyperion seinem Freund Bellarmin eine Reihe von Briefen, in denen er sehr ergreifend die Geschichte seines Lebens, seine Aussichten und seine Enttäuschungen schildert. Er gesteht Bellarmin, dass es eine Zeit gab, als er große Hoffnungen hatte, sich wichtige Ziele setzte und optimistisch in die Zukunft blickte. Das einzige, was ihn noch motiviert, ist die Idee einer allumfassenden Natur, die alles vereinigt, denn sonst gibt es nicht mehr, wovon er behaupten kann, dass es ihm gehört.

In *Epistolary Writing, Fate, Language: Hölderlin's 'Hyperion'*, stellt Edgar Pankow fest, dass Hyperions Vorstellung von dem antiken Griechenland keine

⁴ Gosetti-Ferencei, Jennifer, Anna: *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language: toward a New Poetics of Dasein*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2004, S. 113.

verlorene Illusion ist.⁵ Sein weiser Lehrer, Adamas, führt ihn in die Welt von Plutarchs Helden, dann in die magische Welt der griechischen Götter und weckt in ihm die Leidenschaft für die Vergangenheit der Griechen. Adamas, der Erzieher, ist der, der den jungen Hyperion zum Menschen formt. Die Hauptfigur weist auf den Sonnengott hin, dessen Namen er trägt. Adamas zeigt ihm, was es bedeutet, Hyperion der Sonnengott zu sein, selbst wenn dies ihm Einsamkeit bringen wird.

Der Held zieht nach Smyrna, um seine Entwicklung unter gebildeten Menschen fortzusetzen. Hier trifft er den ebenfalls begeisterten, und doch so unterschiedlichen Gefährten Alabanda, mit dem er dasselbe Ideal teilt: die Rettung des Vaterlandes. Auch Alabanda sieht in ihm eine göttliche Natur. Hyperion lernt Diotima in Kalaurea kennen und lieben. In ihrer Gegenwart erlebt der, dessen Geist voller Widersprüche und traurigen Erinnerungen ist, die höchste Freude. Der Held gesteht Bellarmin, dass er einst glücklich war, indem er sich auf die Zeit mit seiner Geliebten, Diotima, bezieht, die für ihn das Ideal des Schönen verkörpert:

Ich habe es Einmal gesehen, das Einzige, das meine Seele suchte, und die Vollendung die wir über die Sterne hinauf entfernen, die wir hinausheben bis ans Ende der Zeit, die hab' ich gegenwärtig gefühlt. Es war da, das Höchste, in diesem Kreise der Menschennatur und der Dinge war es da!⁶

Hyperion glaubt, dass er an der Seite von Diotima ein glücklicherer und vollkommener Mensch gewesen wäre. Hyperion strebt nach besseren Zeiten, widmet sich völlig seinem Ideal und daher ist er auch von dem tiefen Leiden des Verlustes des antiken goldenen Zeitalters gekennzeichnet. Er glaubt, dass das Schöne aus dem Leben der Menschen in dem Geist Zuflucht sucht. Das, was Natur war, verwandelt sich ins Ideal, und in diesem Ideal, in dieser verjüngerten Gottheit, erkennen sich die wenigsten, und werden Eins, weil in ihnen ein einziges Ideal ist, und mit ihnen beginnt das zweite Zeitalter der Menschheit.

Der Held stellt seine Auffassung vor, entsprechend derer die alten Athener vollkommen und wortgewandt waren. Der Protagonist glaubt, dass das athenische Volk in jeder Hinsicht sich freier von jedem einschränkenden Einfluss als jedes andere Volk der Welt entwickelt hat. In Hyperions

⁵ Pankow, Edgar: *Epistolary Writing, Fate, Language: Hölderlin's 'Hyperion'*. In Fioretos, Aris (ed.): *The Solid Letter: Readings of Friedrich Hölderlin*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, S. 157.

⁶ Hölderlin, Johann, Christian, Friedrich: *Hyperion*, Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1979. S. 17. Abrufbar unter: <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/264/17>, abgerufen am 17. März 2011.

Vorstellung waren die Athener tadellos. Die Vollkommenheit der Athener in der Antike war das Ergebnis einer moderaten Reife, der Entdeckung des perfekten Gleichgewichts. Diese Vollkommenheit offenbart sich in der Harmonie von Geist und Schönheit, in der historischen Reihenfolge von Kunst, Religion und Philosophie, die ihren Höhepunkt in der Philosophie als Kult des Schönen erreicht. Hyperion kann sich in die alten Zeiten hineinversetzen, die er als göttliches Leben betrachtet, als der Mensch im Mittelpunkt der Natur stand. Er ist jedoch ein Skeptiker, weil er in allem, was er denkt, nur Widersprüche und Unzugänglichkeiten findet, da er die Harmonie der makellosen Schönheit kennt. In Athen, vor den beeindruckenden Ruinen der antiken Zivilisation, gibt Diotima ihrem Geliebten eine Aufgabe. Er muss seine Ideen und Ideale in die Tat umsetzen. Die junge Frau rät ihm, ins Ausland zu gehen, seinen Geist zu entwickeln, seinen überlegenen Zweck zu entdecken, damit er, wenn er zurückkehrt, selbst zum Erzieher des griechischen Volkes wird.

Obwohl Hyperion entschlossen ist, zusammen mit Alabanda an dem Kampf um die Befreiung Griechenlands von der türkischen Herrschaft teilzunehmen, rät ihm Diotima sich nicht an dem Krieg zu beteiligen, weil er nicht für so etwas geboren wurde, aber seine Begeisterung für die Herrschaft des Schönen in einem freien Staat ist nicht zu bändigen. Hyperion setzt all seine Hoffnung in den radikalen Wandel des künftigen griechischen Volkes. Als seine Männer die eroberte Stadt überfallen und er das nicht verhindern kann, fühlt er sich ungeduldig, inaktiv und verachtet seine Kampfgefährten. Der Befreiungskrieg scheitert. Verzweifelt, gedemütigt und betrogen, will Hyperion der russischen Flotte beitreten, weshalb sein Vater ihn verleugnet. Er schreibt Diotima, dass er gar nichts bedeute, dass er sich unrühmlich und verbannt, wie ein Diener, wie irgendein Rebell fühle.

Hyperion wartet auf einen Brief von Diotima, der nicht mehr kommt und deshalb sucht er den Tod in der Seeschlacht zwischen den Russen und den Türken. Der junge Mann wird schwer verletzt, das Schiff verbrennt, er wird aber gerettet und wacht in Alabandas Anwesenheit auf, der ihn an Diotima erinnert. Hyperion möchte ihr sofort schreiben, aber er bekommt einen Brief von ihr. Es scheint, dass seine Briefe nicht angekommen waren, so dass die junge Frau geglaubt hat, dass er sie verlassen hatte. Hyperion schien der einzige junge Mann zu sein, der in der Lage war, seine Hoffnungen zu erfüllen, und sie betrachtet sich selbst als seine Muse. Er ist aber auch zu stolz, um sich um sein Volk zu kümmern. Diotima verabschiedet sich und rät ihm in ein Land zu gehen, wo er seine Aufgabe erfüllen kann. Die junge Frau glaubt, dass der Tod göttliche Freiheit bietet, während die Armseligen, die nichts anderes kennen als ihren elenden Beruf, die nur den Bedürfnissen dienen und das Genie verachten oder das einfache Leben in der Natur nicht zu schätzen wissen, sich vor dem

Tod fürchten. Der Protagonist irrt durch die Welt unruhig, ziellos und ohne einen Sinn im Leben, zuerst in Sizilien, wo er auf den Ätna steigt und über Empedokles Schicksal nachdenkt, dann kommt er als Fremder unter die Deutschen. Hyperion fühlt sich unter ihnen nicht wohl. Der Held meint, dass die Natur die Deutschen, die die besten von ihnen kritisieren, über alles, was sie nicht sind, lästern und sogar das Göttliche verspotten, beurteilen wird.

Hyperions Kritik stellt den indirekten Angriff von Hölderlin gegen seine Mitbürger dar, die seinen wahren Wert nicht zu schätzen wissen. Hyperion bezieht sich auf die Lage jener Künstler, die am Anfang ihres Werdegangs unterstützt, dann aber vergessen oder verachtet werden. Der Protagonist beschließt, Deutschland zu verlassen, da er genug von den grausamen Beschimpfungen hat, so wie Hölderlin sich entscheidet, einige Jahre nach der Veröffentlichung seines Romans Deutschland zu verlassen und nach Frankreich zu ziehen. Hyperion kehrt nach Griechenland zurück, wo er als Eremit lebt. Er findet Trost nur in der Einsamkeit der Natur, wo er sogar Diotimas Stimme hört, die ihm einmal mehr die Vision der einigenden, versöhnenden Kraft der Natur offenbart. In seiner Abgeschiedenheit findet er in der Schönheit der Landschaft den Weg zu sich und überwindet die Tragik des Lebens als Einsiedler.

Obwohl Hyperions Lebensgeschichte voller Ereignisse ist, stehen im Mittelpunkt des Romans die Erinnerungen des Eremiten, seine rückblickenden Beobachtungen, seine philosophischen Betrachtungen über die Vollkommenheit der klassischen Athener und das Elend der modernen Welt, sowie auch seine Gedanken über die richtige Bildung des Menschen zum wahren Menschen. Der junge Grieche Hyperion fühlt und leidet schon seit seiner Kindheit wegen der Kluft zwischen seinen Idealen und der erlebten Wirklichkeit. Da, im klassischen Sinne, was wahr und gut für die menschliche Seele ist, auch schön sein muss, wird Diotima für den Helden zum Mittelpunkt des Kultes der Schönheit und der Liebe.

Die Einheit, die Hyperion von Anfang an zu erlangen versucht hat, wird von ihm auf unterschiedlicher Weise in verschiedenen Stufen seines Lebens erfasst. Am Ende wird er feststellen, dass keine von ihnen zufriedenstellend ist, sondern sie stellen verschiedene Herangehensweisen an die Grundeinheit seines Lebens dar. Diese verschiedenen Darstellungen des Einheitsideals sind die des antiken Griechenlands (widerspiegelt in seiner Kindheit), des von der türkischen Besatzung befreiten modernen Griechenlands und der ästhetischen Schönheit. Diese Trilogie ist nicht zufällig, sondern sie entspricht unterschiedlichen zeitlichen Einsichten über die Idee der Grundeinheit des Seins. Zuerst wird sie so betrachtet, als gehöre sie der Vergangenheit (der Kindheit/ des antiken

Griechenlands), dann der Zukunft (des befreiten Griechenlands), und schließlich der Gegenwart (der sofortigen Schönheit). Jede Lebensweise wird durch eine Figur veranschaulicht, mit der Hyperion in Kontakt kommt: durch die Beziehung Meister-Lehrling (Adamas), die Freundschaftsbeziehung (Alabanda) und die Liebesbeziehung (Diotima). In jedem dieser Fälle, versucht Hyperion vollständig die entsprechende Verhaltensweise zu übernehmen, nur um seine Grenzen zu entdecken und sich mit dem Bedürfnis zu konfrontieren weiterzumachen.

Das Motiv der Rückkehr ist typisch für die griechische Klassik. Die Erfahrung und das griechische Denken wurden in einer Kreisbewegung dargestellt. So kehrt Odysseus, der griechische Held schlechthin, nach Ithaka zurück. In Bezug auf diese griechische Interpretation, bedeutet „sein“ - „zurückkehren“, und Hyperion möchte offenbar auch zurückkehren, aber nicht in das moderne Griechenland seiner zeitgenössischen Heimat, sondern zu der Erfahrung und zum Denken des antiken Griechenlands. Er möchte zur Möglichkeit der Rückkehr zurückkehren. Die Lektüre eines Mythos der Rückkehr, in dem Platon über das Älterwerden und die Verjüngung spricht, liegt dem Beginn der Freundschaft mit Alabanda zugrunde, die später mit dem erfolglosen Versuch, das Gebiet des antiken Griechenlands durch Gewalt zurückzuerobern, ihren Höhepunkt finden wird. Vor der letzten Rückkehr nach Griechenland, ist Hyperion verwirrt; er weiß nicht, wo er Zuflucht suchen soll, weil für ihn alles ungewiss ist und er sich sogar in seinem Vaterland als Fremder fühlt. Die Rückkehr in die Heimat ist ein Treffen mit einem fremden Gebiet. Seine Rückkehr umfasst auch sein Exil, da sie von der Unzugänglichkeit seiner eigenen Herkunft geprägt ist. Der Protagonist kehrt nach Griechenland zurück, aber der gestiftete Sinn seiner Reise, weist nicht auf eine Rückkehr in antiker Auffassung hin. Hyperion kommt in seiner Heimat an, aber diese ist nicht mehr dieselbe. Weder Homer noch Platon hätten die Beschaffenheit von Hyperions Erfahrungen akzeptieren können: Dass die Essenz der Rückkehr in das Vaterland keine Rückkehr in die Heimat bedeutet. Wieder in dem Vaterland angekommen, lebt Hyperion auf einem fremden Gebiet. In seiner Rückkehr trifft der Protagonist ein in der Antike unbekanntes Exil.

Wie wir bemerkt haben, nehmen Hyperions Erinnerungen die Form von Briefen an, die an Bellarmin gerichtet sind. Für den Protagonisten, wie für den Leser, erscheint der deutsche Freund als abwesende, aber angedeutete Figur, ohne die das Bestehen der Briefe unvorstellbar gewesen wäre. Hyperion dankt ihm sogar am Anfang des dritten Briefes: „Ich danke dir, dass du mich bittest, dir von mir zu erzählen, dass du die vorigen Zeiten mir ins Gedächtnis bringst.“⁷ Indem er

⁷ *Ebd.*, S. 5.

Hyperion dazu bringt, sich an sein Leben zu erinnern, ist der Empfänger der Briefe von Anfang an, an dem Fluss der Erinnerungen beteiligt. Der Held erinnert sich nicht im Sinne der Wiedergabe oder Darstellung der zerstörten oder vergessenen Ereignisse. Edgar Pankow meint, dass Hyperions Schriften nicht mimetisch sind. Statt sich zu erinnern, erzeugt Hyperion seine Erinnerungen aktiv.⁸ Seine Erinnerungen sind das Ergebnis eines Briefwechsels. In seinen Schriften sind Hyperions Erinnerungen von der Abwesenheit des Empfängers in der Dynamik des Briefwechsels geprägt, was ihm ermöglicht, die Abwesenheit des antiken Griechenlands zu erkennen. Für den Protagonisten ist Bellarmin ein symbolischer Name, der den schönen Deutschen darstellt, im Sinne der Schönheitslehre, die im Roman gefördert wird und des deutschen Helden, der in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts gefeiert wird, des antiken Fürsten des Cherusker, Arminius.

In dem Essay „*Nächstens mehr.*“ *Erinnerung und Gedächtnis in Hölderlins Hyperion*, in *Erinnern und Vergessen in der europäischen Romantik*, bezeichnet Manfred Weinberg das vorherrschende Modell des Erinnerns im ersten Buch von Hölderlins Roman als „die eindimensionale Erzählung der eigenen Vergangenheit.“⁹ Im zweiten Band bemerkt Weinberg, dass das Erinnern zunehmend komplexer wird:

Es wird erweitert durch die Erinnerungserzählungen auch anderer Figuren (Alabandas Vorgeschichte), reduziert durch die Verweigerung eines aktiven Erinnerns etwa des Kriegsgeschehens, das nur durch die Kopien der von Hyperion und Diotima gewechselten Briefe zum Thema wird, schließlich variiert durch den Vortrag eines einstmals von Adamas gelernten Schicksalsliedes.¹⁰

Die Figur Hyperion hat sich aus Hölderlins eigenen widersprüchlichen persönlichen, sowie abstrakt-philosophischen, individuellen und historischen Erfahrungen und Gefühlen entwickelt, die dem Roman eine geistige Offenheit geben, wie bereits im Titel angedeutet. Hyperions Hass gegen die Lage seines

⁸ Pankow, Edgar, *a.a.O.*, S. 157.

⁹ Weinberg, Manfred: „*Nächstens mehr.*“ *Erinnerung und Gedächtnis in Hölderlins Hyperion*. In Oesterle, Günter (Hrsg.): *Erinnern und Vergessen in der europäischen Romantik*, Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen und Neumann GmbH, 2001, S. 102.

¹⁰ *Ebd.*, S. 102. Siehe auch den Essay von Butzer, Günter/ Jacob, Joachim/ Kurz, Gerhard: »Und vieles/ Wie auf den Schultern eine/ Last von Scheitern ist/ Zu behalten.« *Zum Widerstreit von Gedächtnis und Erinnerung an Beispielen aus der Lyrik des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts*. In Oesterle, Günter (Hrsg.): *Erinnerung, Gedächtnis, Wissen: Studien zur kulturwissenschaftlichen Gedächtnisforschung*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, 2005, wo bemerkt wird, dass „Die Erzählstruktur des *Hyperion*-Romans [...] als Nach-Denken in Form eines erinnernden Schreibens konzipiert ist“, S. 279.

Vaterlandes im 18. Jahrhundert, seine Liebe zur griechischen Antike und die Suche nach einer Möglichkeit der Erneuerung dieser längst vergangenen goldenen Zeiten, entsprechen Hölderlins Einstellung. Im Gegensatz zu Alabanda stellt Diotima die Schönheit in Harmonie mit der Natur und im Reinen mit sich selbst dar, und ihr ruhiges Leben wird auch auf Hyperion übertragen. Statt einer politischen Revolution nach französischem Muster ist für Deutschland eine künftige Revolution der Gefühle und Auffassungen geplant, deren Ergebnis ein anderes Verhältnis zwischen Menschen und Natur ist, die sich in einer allumfassenden Gottheit vereinen.

Zusammen mit Diotimas Tod aus Liebe kann die Verklärung des antiken Griechenlands als Ausblick einer erhabenen Welt interpretiert werden, die als letzten Zweck des Lebens die Rückkehr des geistigen Menschen in die Natur fordert. Der Mensch muss handeln, aus der Vergessenheit aller Formen der Erinnerung und des Denkens aussteigen, und sich als selbst wahrnehmen, um eine eigene Identität aufbauen zu können. Grundsätzlich, sind alle modernen Menschen, die den Versuch machen, sich selbst zu vergessen, innere Eremiten wie Hyperion. Der Untertitel des Romans deutet darauf hin, dass der Protagonist sich nicht anpassen kann und Nihilismus ausübt. Hyperion ist aber eine komplexe Figur. Er erscheint als junger Intellektueller, der hingebungsvoll von der Vergangenheit träumt. Seine Gegenwart und sein Lebensraum ist das Griechenland des 18. Jahrhunderts, das viel von seinem ehemaligen Glanz durch die türkische Herrschaft verloren hat. Das antike Griechenland, als Symbol der Kunst, Philosophie, Einheit und Freiheit, bringt den Helden dazu, ein Benehmen aufzuweisen, das typisch für die Romantik ist, durch die vorübergehend volle Entfernung von der Außenwelt. Es scheint, dass Hyperion die Gegenwart und das Leiden, das sie verursacht, unterdrücken möchte. Die Erinnerungen an seine Jugend und an die blühende Kultur des antiken Griechenlands bieten ihm nicht nur eine Zufluchtsmöglichkeit, sondern stehen gleichzeitig für Hoffnung und Inspiration.

Der Protagonist stellt fest, dass er persönlich kämpfen muss, um seine Ideale zu verwirklichen. Sein Leben ist von Leid gekennzeichnet, aber kein schwermütiges Gefühl von Selbstmitleid, sondern eine Trauer ähnlich mit der von erhabenen Figuren, wie Antigone. So unbeständig Hyperions Charakter auch sein mag, so deutlich sind auch seine persönlichen Ziele: Er kann und will die derzeitige politische Lage Griechenlands nicht akzeptieren. Der Wunsch nach Änderung ist immer da, aber ihm fehlen die Kraft und die Mittel ihn umzusetzen. Hyperion ist kein Held im traditionellen Sinne, weil seine Entscheidungen in der Regel nicht seine Eigenen sind, sondern gehören anderen stärkeren Einzelnen, wie Adamas, Alabanda, Diotima und sogar Notara. Diotima ist Hyperions dritte Station auf dem Weg zum Freiheitskämpfer und zu

einem neuen Erfahrungshorizont in seinem Leben. Nachdem Adamas Hyperion in seiner Jugend begleitet und ihm die notwendigen Grundkenntnisse vermittelt hat, folgt eine ungestüme Vergöttlichung Alabandas, die auf eine gemeinsame Utopie beruht. Er trifft Diotima in einem Moment der Verwirrung, als ihm ein Ziel fehlt und er fühlt sich sofort erfüllt und glücklich. Als Hyperion zum zweiten Mal in den Krieg zieht, spürt Diotima schon die Folgen der Teilnahme ihres Geliebten an dem Krieg. Er lebt aber nur für die Zukunft, widmet sich nur seinem persönlichen Projekt und vermutet nicht, wie betroffen Diotima von seinen Taten ist.

Wie Hölderlin bereits angibt, ist Hyperion ein elegischer Charakter, der zwischen der Annahme der entfremdeten Moderne und dem Streben nach dem Ruhm der griechischen Antike, und auch zwischen Wort und Tat als Mittel hin- und hergerissen ist, um das verlorene Ideal wiederzuerlangen. Am Ende wird Hyperion zu einem Eremiten, der sich in die Berge zurückzieht. Diotima, benannt nach der Frau, die Sokrates gelehrt hat, was Schönheit und Liebe ist, rettet ihn aus seiner Niedergeschlagenheit. Als Verkörperung der Schönheit stellt sie die ästhetische Offenbarung der Göttlichkeit dar. Als ein anderes Ideal von weiblicher Integrität und Harmonie, heilt sie seine geteilte Persönlichkeit. Nach Diotimas Tod versucht Hyperion seine Geliebte in der Natur wiederzuentdecken, um sich mit seinem Schicksal abfinden zu können. Hyperions Briefe enden mit einer neuen Erkenntnis der Dissonanz des Todes und dessen Verbindung zum Leben und zur Einheit des Lebens: „Wie der Zwist der Liebenden, sind die Dissonanzen der Welt. Versöhnung ist mitten im Streit und alles Getrennte findet sich wieder.“¹¹ Diese letzten Worte zeigen etwas Unbestimmtes, was folgen wird; sie sind wirr und weisen auf ein offenes Ende hin: „So dacht ich. Nächstens mehr.“¹² Nach allen Versuchen und Qualen, die er durchgemacht hat, kann Hyperions ein neues Kapitel in seinem Leben aufschlagen.

2. Abschließende Bemerkungen

Die Jahre, die Hyperion nach Diotimas Tod in Deutschland verbringt, bedeuten eine neue verheerende Erfahrung, ausgedrückt in der Verurteilung des deutschen Volkscharakters am Ende des Romans. Der Protagonist, dessen politische Handlungen fehlschlagen und dessen persönliches Glück durch den Tod seiner Geliebten zerstört wurde, findet Vertrauen und Schutz in der Einheit der Natur. Das sollte nicht als utopische Einstellung verstanden werden, sondern als Ergebnis der Erweiterung seines Bewusstseins, das die umfassende

¹¹ Hölderlin, Johann, Christian, Friedrich, *a.a.O.*, S. 68.

¹² *Ebd.*, S. 68.

Kraft eines wesentlichen Universums erkennt und das individuelle Leiden entwertet. Am Ende des Romans wird Hyperions Seele von der Schönheit der Natur mit Freude gefüllt, und dieses poetische Gefühl der Einheit bringt den Helden dazu, die Trennung von Alabanda und Diotimas Tod zu verarbeiten. Hyperion findet einen Platz in der Natur, in dem der Tod dem Rhythmus und der Veränderung des menschlichen Lebens gehört.

Hölderlins einziger Roman, *Hyperion oder der Eremit in Griechenland*, bestimmt die Themen, die den Schriftsteller für sein ganzes Leben beschäftigen werden. Nach der Veröffentlichung von *Hyperion* widmet sich Hölderlin nur dem Schreiben von Gedichten, theoretischen Texten, Übersetzungen und dem Versuch ein Trauerspiel, *Der Tod des Empedokles*, das unvollendet geblieben ist, zu schaffen. Bei der Erforschung der Beziehung des Menschen zur Kunst sieht Hölderlin die Kunst als das größte Rätsel von allen, während der Mensch nur eine Antwort auf dieses Rätsel ist. Während *Hyperion* über die Tragödie in der Struktur des Romans spricht, wird sich Hölderlin in seinen künftigen Werken auf die Wiedergabe der Wahrheit der Tragödie konzentrieren.

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Kate Chopin. The Southern Feminine Touch ...

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Abstract: The present paper attempts to be taken as an x-ray revealing the modernity of Kate Chopin, a so-called classic-still-alive writer due to her open-mindedness and her bravery, emphasizing two dimensions of the author's writings, be it short-stories, be it novels: the Southern coordinate linked to her heritage, on one hand, and the feminine inner delicacy but also substantiality, on the other hand, and their fascinating and successful combination in her fiction.

Key-words: Southern literature; feminine voice; regional realism; local color; women issues.

Preamble

Following the well-known path of the majority of substantial writers of any period, Kate Chopin fell under the ingratitude of her fellow contemporaries: she became the subject of harsh criticism because of the narrowness and prejudices of those times. After the publication of *The Awakening* – her last novel –, *The Nation* magazine would define her as “a Southern lady who wanted to do what she wanted to. From wanting it, she did, with disastrous consequences.”, according to Harold Bloom¹. The rigid conventional society still hadn't had the proper ability to understand and gracefully embrace something new, something resembling modernity. On the other hand, the writer proved open-minded enough to surpass the limits of the literary category she belonged to, the so-called *regional realism*.

1. Kate Chopin, the Southerner

This *regional realism* accepted as a literary movement identifiable after the Civil War is sometimes admitted as a partial equivalent for the *local color* syntagm²; I say partial because *regionalism* has much more flexible conceptual

¹ See Harold Bloom in *Modern Critical Views – Kate Chopin*, Chelsea House Publishers, 1987, New York, p.9

² see Chirica Irina and Mateoc Teodor, *American Regionalism. An American Anthology*, Oradea University Press, Oradea, 2006, p. 9.

borders: it is an expression of the realist aesthetic, emphasizing the particularities of geographical settings. *Local color* instead has been thought to lack the interest in larger human issues. The *South* played, for instance, a major role in the *local color movement*. Local color stories, respectively, tend to be concerned with *the individual* and characters may become *stereotypes*: the Creole as a social and racial group is present in Kate Chopin's fiction and it is developed in the good old tradition of the miscegenation theme. She created some literary space for them and defined these characters according to their work and social ethics. Thus, the wealthy Creole planter is presented in opposition to the Cajun farmer who is very poor. In Chopin's short-stories one would notice the accurate use of dialect which successfully differentiates between African- American, Creole and Cajun heroes. As a prose writer, she slowly got rid of Maupassant's style and technique and offered her writings a flavor of their own, proving able to perceive life and preserve it properly. She explored the *minimal plot* device and a detached, objective and sometimes ironic tonality. Her narrative is simple but not simplistic, constructing her stories as *contrasts*, pairs of contrasts, exploiting natural imageries, cyclical plotting patterns, ambiguity, frame story, parallel sentence structures and modalities of disclosure – all these being some quite revolutionary techniques in her time. She embraced the *miscegenation theme* exposing the *racial prejudices* of the American society. Some works represent Kate Chopin's attitude toward race, so it happens in the cases of *Desiree's Baby* and *La Belle Zoraide*, for instance; it is a common fact that the female writer was constantly interested in pointing out the so-called *ethnic distinction*, revealing truths about race, class, money, divorce, sex, religion, social possibilities, duties, morality and tradition³.

Generally, the land, *the plantation* is always present in the *Southern plantation fiction*; it is an indispensable element of such a literary text. The image of the plantation is a picturesque representation of the *old world*. The *archaic rural life* depicted as a happy and virtuous one would be threatened by the future, as it happens in the case of *Desiree's Baby* where the revelation of truth might put an end to the calm existence there, at L'Abri. The land is the symbol of *social hierarchy*: on the top there is *the master*, who in plantation fiction is introduced as an *archaic father* – in the eyes of the abolitionist he is portrayed as the cruel slave-owner. *Desiree's Baby* embodies both perspectives. Armand inherited this land and rank from his father. On the bottom of this *Southern social hierarchy* one can identify the slaves. Slaves have been in Armand's family for ever. *Slavery* is not depicted as taking one's freedom, but as a perfectly natural

³ see Jones W. Suzanne, *Race Mixing, Southern Fiction since the Sixties*, John Hopkins University Press, 2004, Baltimore, Maryland.

phenomenon. Armand has become a kinder man as a result of his marriage. L'Abri, the sad looking place, may be a hint of Armand's evil nature being tied to having no maternal affection and influence during most of his boyhood. Madame Valmonde immediately noticed the baby's mixed ancestry, but she did not mention it to her daughter; the environment quickly changed on L'Abri and Desiree was completely unaware of the circumstances that had lead to this particular shift; her husband had recognized that the baby was not entirely white and had turned into his old malicious self and decided to ignore his family. Kate Chopin's most famous story attacks several Southern issues: the interracial conceiving of children, man's dominance over his wife and whites' dominance over blacks. Desiree's Baby's thematic deals with the racial tragedy in its close connection to the process of miscegenation and its consequences; it is constructed with the use of the flashback technique, the technique of ambiguity and that of multiple narrators – all these combined with symbols and irony. In regional terms, the story exploits some specific Southern elements, such as: plantation and slave owner, slavery, mixed ancestry. They all seem significant, but the unexpected reversal of the given situation at the very end of the story is quite spectacular and modern. The majority of Kate Chopin's works are set in worlds where stability/ permanence is quite a precarious state: change is always threatened by fate, by the assaults of potentially ungovernable individual passions or merely by the inexorable passage of time. It is the mark of the author this particular device of coloring existence as necessarily uncertain.

In her collections, *Bayou Folk* and *A Night in Acadie*, one may refer to the ambivalent position of the author, as she writes both as a member of community and as a reflector of it, both accepting and commenting on the values of that community. Being aware of the given reality that a person's place is within the given community, she emphasizes the hyper-reality that mostly a community lives inside that person; she knows quite well the forces that would shape a human being. Generally, her characters seek a better existence, but as inner parts of a community, usually one labeled by problems, they end up appropriating the others' values in their attempt to reach for a balanced life. Thus, she integrates issues such as *regional character, race, culture, power and sex* to the larger area denominating women concerns – the blending of so many elements results in the presentation of a multiracial, multiethnic, multilingual, gender-sensitive America⁴.

2. Kate Chopin, the Feminine Voice

⁴ As it is suggested by Jones W. Suzanne in *Race Mixing, Southern Fiction since the Sixties*, John Hopkins University Press, 2004, Baltimore, Maryland.

Some critics consider her a significant feminist in the American literature for her focus on women's lives and for underlining their perpetual efforts to create an identity of their own; nevertheless her purpose was not to become an acknowledged feminist warrior, but only to analyze some constant feminine issues, such as women's emotions, women's relationships to men and women's sexuality in a society ruled by male figures, the tensions in female's life, the work and love conflict and so on. So she was not quite a feminist, but she definitely took women very seriously, as she openly believed in the inner feminine strength and her sympathies dealt with the individual seen in the context of personal life and society. The topics of her stories concerned the everyday common existence of Louisiana inhabitants; these she turned into characters, portraying all social classes: aristocratic Creoles; middle- and lower-class Acadians; mulattoes and blacks; Native Americans or immigrants; the rich and the poor. Her stories explore relationships among these various classes and, especially, relationships between men and women. She was interested in her surroundings and she preserved her observations accurately in her writings.⁵

Several of her works contain some *autobiographical elements*, as it is the case of her first novel *At Fault* or the short-story *The Story of an Hour*. She did not use a subjective perspective, as her narratives were not confessionals. Whatever the reader finds out about the characters is a result of the narrator's indirect and occasional report deriving from small signs of their interaction with the others. *The wordless understanding* is a typical Chopinian technique and she makes use of it both to white and black protagonists: the author tried to capture and consequently to offer the reader a distinct *speech pattern* applicable to each category of protagonists, be it white, be it black; she portrayed her characters as an outsider of her own text, the deeper recess of them and their motivations emerging exclusively from action, conversation or the unraveling of the plot. One may speak about a certain sense of complexity and also tragedy in Kate Chopin's thematic. She was mostly concerned with the revelation of the inherent conflict between the traditional requirements of a wife and a woman's need for discrete personhood – this particular tension, in Kate Chopin's fiction, usually prevents a woman from having both a happy marriage and a fulfilled life of her own. But she also explored as a theme the *women's search for selfhood and self-discovery, the mutiny against conformity*, against social norms and generally against prejudices that limit female's possibilities and opportunities dealing directly with their prohibited inner accomplishment – in this respect, we may refer to her last significant work, her novel *The Awakening*. The writer would see the issue of *freedom* as a strict matter of spirit

⁵ See Flora, Joseph M. and Mackethan, Lucinda H., *The Companion to Southern Literature: themes, genres, places, people, movements and motifs*, Louisiana State University Press, 2002.

and soul, a matter of choosing to live your life within constraints. She did center the figure and particularities of women in her texts⁶.

Kate Chopin would inspiringly use the so-called *natural images* as emotional correlatives, as symbols. In *Ripe Figs* natural images are paramount; the journeys are planned according to when figs ripen and chrysanthemums bloom and even places are defined by what they produce. The sketch is structured between these natural boundaries, both spatial and temporal. In this story there is not yet the rich symbolic imagery which structures Kate Chopin's third novel, *The Awakening*; nevertheless, it has the same unifying power, the mark of the author. In her childish exuberance and impatience, Babette studies the natural processes far more closely than Maman-Nainaine, so closely that for her the ripening of the figs seems to be quite a slow process. Babette is learning to watch and follow the seasons' and nature's changes. Babette is actually absorbed by the natural switches that will foreshadow the time of her visit to Bayou-Lafourche. The interplay between woman, child and nature would charm the casual reliance on natural patterns, not for any particular inherent meaning they may have, but simply because they are. The use of *cyclical pattern* is another specific mark of the author. Many of Kate Chopin's stories would end exactly where they began, not without significant change in the characters' behavior or in their situation. In her novels, *At Fault* and *The Awakening*, she would also use this particular technique. In *Ripe Figs* the change in Babette is much more subtle.

The critical success, although quite modest, encouraged Kate Chopin to drop the Southern local color and prefer a more direct examination of women's role and the price of their inner self-assertion. As a novelist, she evolved as well: her first novel, *At Fault*, was not a remarkable one – the use of the successive-marriage plot to explore the responsibilities of the sexes toward each other made no impact in transforming it into a success. Its main issue remains the social change; her second novel was *Young Dr. Gosse*, but it was never to be published because she destroyed the manuscript; her last and most famous novel, *The Awakening*, actually ended her career, because she dared to write about stuff that others wouldn't even dare to think about. But it was later discovered and nowadays it is considered a solid proof of Kate Chopin's literary gift. The novel starts with the funny curse of the parrot in its cage; we are also told that the parrot speaks a language nobody understands, with the exception maybe of the mocking bird hung on the other side of the door. The cursing parrot and the mocking bird are significant as far as the main

⁶ See Manning S. Carol, *The Female Tradition in Southern Literature*, Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, 1993, U.S.A.

character's awakening is concerned, a symbol for her desire for freedom; these two birds may as well represent the two strong women in the story – the parrot may symbolize Edna, while the mocking bird may stand for Mademoiselle Reisz. Edna is understood only by Mademoiselle Reisz. Like the birds, these women's flying is restricted by society, a society ruled by conventions, morals and precious appearances. The color differences are mapped out in the text as well as the social hierarchy. The novel attacks a quite modern thematic: a Southern woman (Creole) who is trapped in her marriage and whose husband is taking her as granted, transforming her in his personal property, making her to seek inner fulfillment, escaping thus from the gilded cage, from the *conventional society*. The novel exploits a variety of Southern topics: *ideal womanhood, recollections of war, tensions between American business men and Southern (Creole) culture*, but mostly it utters the depths of the *conflict between the individual and the society*. In this particular respect, *the clash between the modern and the traditional* is also very perceptible. *The Awakening* does not merely attack the institution of family, but it especially rejects the idea of family as the absolute equivalent of feminine self-fulfillment. According to the Southern traditional perspective, *the community* played a significant role and people were measured in accordance to their relation to their community: so, appearance was crucial. On the other hand, Sandra M. Gilbert sees *The Awakening* as: “a female fiction that both draws upon and revises fin de siecle hedonism to propose a feminist and matriarchal myth of Aphrodite/ Venus as an alternative to the masculinist and patriarchal myth of Jesus.”⁷

Solitude is one of the basic coordinates of the novel; it can be assessed as a consequence of independence, her independence in relation to her community, the very one that imposed strict norms of duty implying domestic restrictions. Edna's father, the Colonel, tells his son-in-law: “Authority, coercion is what is needed. Put your foot down good and hard; the only way to manage a wife... The Colonel was perhaps unaware that he had coerced his own wife into her grave”⁸

The author's ironic intrusion is quite dark, as it happens in her famous story, *Desiree's Baby*. Thus, she inspiringly notices how harmful the authority and coercion of husband can be, underlining the tragic consequences of taking away someone's free will. The Southern women era lacked not only in their freedom, but also in their personal identity given the reality that women had to accept their places within a restrictive society. Those who did break out were seen as

⁷ According to Bloom Harold, *Modern Critical Views...*, quoted edition, p. 91.

⁸ Chopin Kate, *The Awakening and Selected Stories of Kate Chopin*, Penguin Books Ltd., 1976, London, England, p. 84.

outsiders and they would end up completely alone. Kate Chopin would criticize the Southern women's practice of passivity. Edna is different in the sense that she is brave enough to acknowledge her feelings and to act according to her own will. Reading Edna's story is a path that leads to the revelation of a discrepancy: that between morals and woman's inner nature. Edna awakens gradually: first when she discovers her strength in swimming for the very first time; later she discovers the pleasure given by painting. When Edna is completely alone, she is indeed awakened and consequently she can face the unlimited. This novel is full of symbols which would unify the story: the sea, the sky, the sand, the sun actually may be taken as equivalents for the basic elements of universe – water, air, earth and fire. The sea, for instance, represents both freedom and escape; and also the symbolic and cathartic rebirth of the protagonist.

The inner and fascinating modernity of the novel also includes the dimension of apprenticeship, in its feminine connotation, meaning a novel of awakening, dealing with a heroine and her specific attempts to learn the nature of the world, to understand its significance and to acquire the philosophy of life, her life.

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Physical and Psychological Borders between Cultures in Petru Popescu's Novel *The Last Wave*

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to offer an analysis of Petru Popescu's novel *The Last Wave* from the perspective of a cultural Australian identity. The paper discusses the distinctiveness of the Aboriginal culture against the culturally dominant group of the Western society, and the main protagonist's experiences and transformations in the process of discovery of his original culture and heritage in his search for identity.

Keywords: *The Last Wave*, identity, Western society, heritage, distinctiveness

Narrative Construction

During a fierce rainstorm in Sydney, an altercation occurs among a group of Aboriginals in a pub, which results in the mysterious death of one of them. The unexplained death is ruled a homicide, and four men are accused of murder. Through the Australian Legal Aid system, a lawyer, David Burgess, is procured for their defence and he takes on the case.

Plagued by recurring bizarre dreams, the lawyer begins to sense an "otherworldly", mystical connection to one of the accused Chris Lee whom he invites for dinner. He is accompanied by Charlie, who turns out to be a shaman and who identifies David as being from an ancient Tribe from the West. Meanwhile, increasingly strange weather phenomena beset the city: large hail, mud, red and black rain falling from the sky.

David's dreams intensify along with his obsession with the murder case, which he comes to believe is an Aboriginal tribal killing by curse and subject to tribal law. But, as the government doesn't acknowledge that there are tribes in the city, defending the men appears to be impossible. Moreover, the defendants remain silent and refuse to cooperate. After he gathers information about Aboriginal practices, David realises that the disturbing, prophetic dreams and the worsening storms are connected: the weather is a sign of a coming Apocalypse predicted or created by the magic of the Aborigines.

The novel finally climaxes in a confrontation between the lawyer and the tribe's shaman in a subterranean sacred site beneath the city. Overcoming the shaman, the lawyer escapes to the surface to warn everyone about the 'Last Wave' (the Apocalypse), but realises it's too late when he sees the wave bearing down on the city.

Constructing David Burgess's identity

David's search for identity is not revealed from the very beginning of the novel; instead, it is gradually constructed by the author who uses various procedures. Initially, his identity is apparent to us all: David is an Australian, he is white, male, upper-middle class, married with two children (both girls), a solicitor specialising in corporate taxation, originally a migrant from the South America. His natural parents are both dead, but his stepfather, a minister, is still living. David is described as a person with a very pragmatic approach to life, "so civilized looking that he seemed incapable of being sensitive or even angry" (Popescu, p. 15). "His life was too perfect to need change" (Popescu, p. 15), as he believed he was totally normal and rather uninteresting. However, he is not an everyday person. At dinner, he suddenly looks up and dashes to the stairs, where there is a spreading puddle of water. Later he has strange dreams through which he moves from a position of sceptical ignorance to awareness that everything he thinks he knows about himself and about the world is wrong. His dreams offer revelations of future and force him to recognise buried knowledge of his own past, including a premonition of his mother's death: "Dreams are a way of knowing things" (Popescu, p.100). "He was going to learn something about himself" (Popescu, p.86).

Situations and experiences, at first random and unconnected, gradually gather meaning and occur in relation to a definite order and purpose. The search for identity has just begun. To render this idea, Petru Popescu chooses two different procedures: one has to do with how David *acts*; the other with what he *sees*. Very often the two are mixed together: what David sees has an effect on how he acts. For example, when he has strange dreams, he sits up in bed, gets out of bed, and goes away from his house and from his office; then, he sends his wife and children away, leaves his house and does not come back. He is going toward the Aboriginal people whom he has seen in his dreams and whom he is defending in court; he is leaving an everyday white world for a dream-like black one. He leaves the inside of the house, where there is light, warm, dry and secure, for the outside where there is dark, cold, wet and uncertainty prevails. The search has brought about visible changes: "he looked tired and seemed to have lost weight; his eyes had changed, they looked darker and burned feverishly staring inwards rather than outwards" (Popescu, p. 127).

David is finding his identity. If he is moving away from civilisation towards nature, it seems inescapable that his *identity* is to be found in nature. At one point he dreams that a young Aboriginal man is holding a stone out to him upon which a symbol of his, of David's identity is painted. This man has the secret of his identity and is trying to give it to him.

The meeting with Charlie, an Aboriginal mystic with extraordinary powers, has a paramount significance. 'Who are you?' (Popescu, p.149) Charlie asks over and over. David does not know who he really is. *Inside* him his true identity is still hiding.

Charlie asks him whether he is a stone, a snake or a star. These questions might be equivalent to asking him whether he is human, what his ancestors were. They might also tell us that Charlie knows David is not human and is quite literally asking him what non-human thing he is. There is not enough information to know for certain how to interpret what Charlie intends. However, the questions function to suggest to us, the readers, perhaps for the first time, that David may not be human. "Are you Mulkurul?" (Popescu, p.150), Charlie asks." Yes", David replies. David learns that he is and has always been the medium through which the spirit Mulkurul speaks, "a spirit of the Dreamtime" (Popescu, p. 160) "who came to the mainland from across the sea, bringing sacred stones (...) when the faith has to be protected, or reinforced" (Popescu, p.161).

David finds his cultural roots, he finds his identity, which *is* a cultural one. He is moving away from his family and towards the Aboriginal people because his identity is somehow to be found with them or through them. W. D. Rount (1994) states that this seems to fit the pattern of the conflict between "culture" and "nature" - between what we think of as civilised and, therefore, artificial, and what we think of as *pre* -civilised and therefore natural. He also adds that this conflict is often expressed in Australian cultural products, and very often 'the original inhabitants of the land' are constructed in such products as 'representatives' of what is natural and what, therefore, should not be disturbed by the process of history.

The Last Wave seems to be particularly harsh in condemning what white civilisation has done to black nature. The Aborigines' social perception is almost non-existent: they live underground secretly and their number has decreased dramatically. David's wife's family has been in Australia for generations, but she's never herself met one; the public defenders consider them hopeless in court, because they don't seem to recognize what's going on and fail to defend themselves; they're protected by paternalistic laws that treat them as if

they were not human beings, but endangered wildlife. White people say that the Aboriginal people are not supposed to have killed Billy in a traditional cultural way because they live in the city and are *therefore* 'not tribal' (Popescu, p.47). The white man's city, then, is presumed to have destroyed the tribal identity which is the whole cultural identity of Aboriginal people. This destruction is explicitly related to a historical process: our attention is drawn to a book with facing illustrations of Aboriginal men: "a proud, naked desert Aboriginal and an urban black, drunk, sleeping in a suburban railway station. The caption was: "The fatal impact" (Popescu, p. 60). These are the attitudes of the society which this novel is attacking. However, beneath the ugly surface of what is shown to have happened to Aboriginal people, the culture is more powerful than the white man's history and the white man's photographs. The Aborigines' myths survive, glimpses of spirituality penetrate from underneath: David's stepfather, a preacher, acknowledges the old records of the natives who once lived in Sydney, and the old shaman Charlie immediately recognizes an ancient water symbol on a stone in a picture from David's old photo album.

The civilisation/nature conflict is clearly shown right from the beginning. When a violent storm strikes in the outback, its target is the school. The next thing we see is the aurora australis over Sydney. Then a high, modern office building, with David in an office, interior corridors and a gate that rises. Over and over, signs of machines, of rigidity, of artificiality. Above these signs, grey storm clouds and rain - signs of violent weather that we suspect, from what has gone before, means danger to the city and its people.

The book begins in the outback, where weather is the enemy of (white) humanity: fire and flood, drought and wind. The story of people facing the elements is told again and again in Australian books, in the newspapers and on television. However, the story is told somewhat differently by David who can, in some ways, foretell the weather. He can do what everyone says the Department of Meteorology cannot. Indeed, his identity is all bound up with his ability to see what will happen. Not with any desire he might have to control the weather, nor with any particular opposition he has to the weather. David's identity has to do only with being able to see what will happen. W. D. Rount (1994) maintains that it is 'a passive identity', not an active one. David seeks his identity out in nature, but he does not become one with the active forces of nature when he has found it. When he is active, he leaves "civilisation" and his family and his house.

In the end, he stays passive as he kneels on the beach before the inevitable, having truly found himself at last. His back is to the city, to his house, to his family - but his back is also to Chris and to the other Aboriginal people. He is

facing away from all of that and facing towards what he has obsessively seen through what has gone before.

However, I do not think he is facing his "identity". That problem has been solved: now he knows who (or what) he is. He is, instead, facing his destiny. For that destiny he has given up all human contact. He has even killed for it.

The novel has an open ending: the reader wonders about the consequences of David's search for cultural identity, and if David has found what it means to be an Australian.

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Rezeptionsforschung – Aufgaben und Forschungsmodelle

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Abstract:: Based on Hannelore Link's introductory work upon reception study following paper tries to offer an overview of this rather new domain of literary theory. Reception theory called aesthetics of reception, as well studies the way literary works are received by their "consumers" having as important factors not only literary texts (work-focussed perspective) but in an equal measure readers, authors and their interaction, too. According to their focus there are more tendencies and reception models to distinguish within reception study such as the aesthetics of reception (Wolfgang Iser), history of reception (Hans Robert Jauß) interested in the interaction among literary works along their history of existence, their "producers" (authors) and "receivers" (readers) with their horizon of expectations, object- respectively subject-focussed models.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Rezeptionsforschung, Rezeptionsästhetik, Rezeptionsgeschichte, Autor- und Leserinstanz, Erwartungshorizont, Leerstellen

Einleitung

Die Rezeptionstheorie, oder Rezeptionsästhetik, wie sie von einer Gruppe von Wissenschaftlern genannt wurde, beschäftigt sich als Teil der Literaturwissenschaft damit, wie Kunstwerke von ihren Lesern, *Konsumenten*, rezipiert werden. Wichtige Faktoren sind dabei nicht nur literarische Texte (werkimmanente Perspektive), sondern auch Leser, Autoren und ihre Interaktion. Die Rezeption eines Textes ist sowohl von textexternen, objektiven Elementen, wie z.B. Geschichtsablauf als auch von anderen Aspekten, wie Autor- und Leserinstanz und ihre Interaktion bedingt. Im Folgenden werden diese Faktoren analysiert.

Zieht man die Autorinstanz unter die Lupe, so entdeckt man folgende Unterscheidung: Jedes literarische Werk setzt einen textexternen Autor voraus, er ist der sogenannte *reale Autor*, eine historische Person. Sehr oft wird er aber mit dem Erzähler aus dem Text verwechselt und gleichgesetzt, obwohl dieser eine textinterne Gestalt, ein Geschöpf des Autors, nicht der Autor selbst ist. Diesen Erzähler oder Sprecher nennen wir den *fiktiven* (expliziten) *Autor*.

Natürlich kann er Ähnlichkeiten mit dem realen Autor aufweisen, manche Ansichten des Autors vertreten, da literarische Werke oft biographische Elemente enthalten, also vom schriftstellerischen Subjektivismus geprägt sind, jedoch sind die zwei Instanzen nicht miteinander zu verwechseln.

Dem realen Autor gegenüber steht der *abstrakte* (implizite) *Autor*. Der ist das Bewusstsein, in dem alle Einzelheiten der Textgestalt ihren Sinn haben. Es ist ein abstraktes Gebilde, hat nie die Individualität einer textexternen Person, er ist der reale Autor befreit von all den Zufälligkeiten seiner empirischen Person.

Auf der Leserseite treffen wir dieselben Kategorien. Dem realen Autor entspricht der *reale Leser* mit seiner historischen Gestalt. Die textinternen Strategien des abstrakten Autors drücken eigentlich die Intentionen des realen Autors aus. Diese Strategien sollen auf den Leser wirken, Bedingung ist, dass dieser Letztere die Regeln des richtigen Rezipierens kennt. Das Leserbewusstsein, das mit den oben genannten Regeln vertraut, also den Strategien gewachsen ist, entspricht dem abstrakten Autor und heißt der *abstrakte* oder *implizite Leser*, wie ihn Wolfgang Iser nennt. Diese Instanz ist auch ein theoretisches Gebilde und bezieht sich auf den „im Text vorgezeichneten Charakter des Lesens“¹, von W. Iser als „Aktcharakter des Lesens“² gekennzeichnet; es ist ein „für das Verständnis notwendiger Leser“³.

Der Partner des fiktiven Erzählers (Autors) ist der *fiktive, explizite Leser*, ihn spricht der Ersterer im Text an. An einem konkreten Beispiel könnte man diese Instanzen folgenderweise beleuchten. In E.T.A. Hoffmanns *Ansichten des Katers Murr* ist der Kater der fiktive Autor, der Erzähler. Er wendet sich an den fiktiven Leser, der seine Vorbilder im realen empfindsamen Publikum der Zeit hat. Die bruchstückartige Aufzeichnung der Lebensgeschichte des Kapellmeisters Kreisler ist die Arbeit des abstrakten Autors, der ein anderes, um das Verständnis bemühtes Publikum hat als seine Katergestalt. Über die nötigen Verstehensfähigkeiten verfügt der implizite (abstrakte) Leser. Diese Instanzen stehen miteinander in Verbindung, so werden wir im Folgenden das Verhältnis zwischen dem realen und impliziten Leser, dem realen und abstrakten Autor und zwischen dem realen Autor und den realen Lesern analysieren.

¹ Wolfgang Iser: *Der implizite Leser. Kommunikationsformen des Romans von Bunyan bis Beckett*, 1972, zit. nach Hannelore Link: *Rezeptionsforschung. Eine Einführung in Methoden und Probleme*. Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1976, a.a.O.

² Ders., S. 8-9, zit. nach ebenda, S.23.

³ Wolfgang Iser, a.a.O.

1. Das Verhältnis zwischen dem realen Leser und dem impliziten Leser

Die Beziehung zwischen dem realen und dem abstrakten Autor finden wir nicht hundertprozentig auf der Leserseite wieder, denn der abstrakte Leser ist nicht aus dem realen Leser abstrahiert, sondern es werden durch die einzelnen realen Leseprozesse aus dem realen Publikum die ausgewählt, die sich dem impliziten Leser annähern. Die Beziehung zwischen den zwei Leserseiten hängt von der Kommunikation zwischen dem jeweiligen realen Leser und dem Autor ab, es geht hier eigentlich um die *adäquate Rezeption*. Beide Instanzen wirken aufeinander ein, nicht nur der reale Leser kann sich dem impliziten Leser annähern, sondern auch der Text kann vom Charakter des realen Publikums beeinflusst werden.

1.1. Das Verhältnis zwischen dem realen/abstrakten Autor

Es ist ziemlich schwer vom impliziten Autor auf den Realen schließen zu lassen. Wenn man aber mehrere Texte von demselben Autor vor sich hat, kann man aus diesen jeden einzelnen abstrakten Autor rekonstruieren und feststellen, auf welche Gemeinsamkeiten diese aufweisen – sie zeigen nämlich Vorliebe für bestimmte Themen oder Verfahrensweisen. Die Summe dieser abstrakten Autorinstanzen ermöglicht schon eine Annäherung an die empirische Gestalt des realen Autors. Das Vergehen der Zeit bewirkt aber Änderungen beim realen Autor und demgemäß auch bei der abstrakten Autorinstanz. Das ist die Erklärung für die Unvereinbarkeiten zwischen den einzelnen abstrakten Autoren in verschiedenen Texten.

1.2. Das Verhältnis zwischen dem realen Autor und den realen Lesern

Hier fungiert der Autor als Initiator, von ihm geht die Kommunikation aus, die auch in *Einweg-Kommunikation* enden kann. Wenn aber der Leser auf die Persönlichkeit des Autors rückwirkt und das in mehreren Texten geschieht, entsteht eine *Makro-Kommunikation*. Dadurch ist es zu erklären, wie Unterschiede zwischen dem abstrakten Autor im Text 1 und im Text 2 auftauchen; die Rezeption des Textes 1 hat nämlich die Produktion von Text 2 beeinflusst. In dieser *Makro-Kommunikation* können auch Missverständnisse auftreten, die zu Fehlrezeptionen führen. So ist die Rezeptionsgeschichte eines Textes oft eine Reihe von Fehlrezeptionen.

In diesem Sinne beschäftigt sich die Rezeptionsforschung mit zwei großen Fragen, und zwar: Wie sind literarische Texte von realen Lesern verstanden – also Bedingungen des Verstehens bei den Rezipienten – und wie sollen sie richtig verstanden werden – Bedingungen für das Verstandenwerden?

2. Rezeptionsästhetik gegen Rezeptionsgeschichte oder impliziter Leser gegen realen Leser

Die zwei Forschungsgebiete zeugen von unterschiedlichen Forschungsinteressen: die Rezeptionsästhetik wählt zu ihrem Gegenstand den impliziten Leser, während sich die Rezeptionsgeschichte mit dem realen Leser beschäftigt. Es ist eigentlich die alte Konkurrenz zwischen *ergozentrischer Interpretation* (werkimmanent) und sozialgeschichtlich, soziologisch orientierter Literaturwissenschaft. Gegenstand der Rezeptionsästhetik, programmatisch durch Wolfgang Iser und Victor Lange formuliert, ist das für das Verständnis des Textes notwendige Bewusstsein (L2). So ist die Rezeption des Textes eine adäquate Reaktion auf die Strategien des abstrakten Autors. Rezeptionsästhetik befasst sich mit dem abstrakten Autor (A2) und Leser, mit der textinternen Ebene also und gelangt dabei zu einer Textfixiertheit, einer übertriebenen Werkimmanenz. Sie arbeitet mit solchen abstrakten Wortgebilden wie *intentionale Leserstruktur* (L2), *Aktcharakter des Lesens* (W. Iser, 1972). Ein Text sollte aber kommunikative Intentionen haben, so setzt man ein Bewusstsein voraus, das Intentionen hat, Bedeutungen produziert und ein Bewusstsein, das diese Bedeutungen aufnimmt, reproduziert. Aus den programmatischen Formulierungen ergibt sich aber nicht, ob L2 und A2, die textinternen Gestalten, als Kommunikationspartner als personell denkende Instanzen betrachtet werden oder nicht.

Das Programm von Hans Robert Jauß, zum erstenmal 1967 aufgestellt,⁴ wird als „Literaturgeschichte des Lesers“⁵ konzipiert und es eröffnet vor der in den Hintergrund gedrängten Literaturgeschichte neue Möglichkeiten. Jauß betont das „dialogische Verhältnis von Werk und Publikum“⁶ und darin wird dem *Erwartungshorizont* eine bedeutende Rolle zugeschrieben, da er die Voraussetzungen benennt, anhand deren der reale Leser ein Werk rezipiert. Den Begriff *realer Leser* ersetzt er mit dem Allgemeineren - „bestimmten Publikum“⁷ und analysiert dessen „spezifische Disposition“⁸, die Erwartungen, die von solchen Kategorien abhängen, wie: „Vorverständnis der Gattungen“, „Form und Thematik zuvor bekannter Werke“, „Gegensatz von poetischer und praktischer Sprache“.⁹ Dieser Letztere soll aber einen Gegensatz zwischen Fiktion und Wirklichkeit implizieren, so kann der Leser ein neues Werk sowohl im engeren Horizont seiner literarischen Erwartungen als auch im weiteren Horizont seiner Lebenserfahrung wahrnehmen.

⁴ Hans Robert Jauß: *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft*. Konstanz, 1967.

⁵ Ders., *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft*. Frankfurt/M., 1970, a.a.O.

⁶ Ebenda, a.a.O.

⁷ Ebenda, a.a.O.

⁸ Ebenda, a.a.O.

⁹ Ebenda, zit. nach Hannelore Link, S. 45.

Da die Rezeptionsästhetik nur auf die Rekonstruktion des impliziten Lesers aus dem Text bedacht ist, sich nicht mit den realen Voraussetzungen und Folgen von Rezeption beschäftigt, kann sie nicht feststellen, wie angemessen ein Werk den Rezeptionsbedingungen ist und wie angemessen geschichtlich realisierte Rezeptionen diesem Werk sind. Indem Jauß ein Werk mit seinem Erwartungshorizont vergleicht, stellt er die wertende Bestimmung vom *Kunstcharakter* eines literarischen Werkes auf. Werke, die die Erwartungen füllen, gehören zur Unterhaltungsliteratur, solche, die diesen Erwartungen gegenüber eine „ästhetische Distanz“¹⁰ halten, verlangen vom Leser einen Horizontwandel. Ist der Leser dazu bereit, vollführt er eine adäquate Rezeption, wenn er aber ihn verweigert, führt das zu einer Fehlrezeption. Eine adäquate Rezeption ist von inner- und außerliterarischen Faktoren bedingt: Die *Konditionierung* des Publikums kann durch den Anspruch dieses und vergleichbarer Werke oder durch außerliterarische, historische Erfahrungen erfolgen, die es für Dinge im Text hellhörig machen, die ihm zum Zeitpunkt des Erscheinens des Werkes noch entgingen. Die Vermittlung zwischen Text und Realität kommt nur dann zustande, wenn sich die zwei Gebiete, Ästhetik und Geschichte, verbinden und nicht entgegensetzen.

Ein redendes Beispiel dafür ist Christelrose Rischers Rezeptionsanalyse anhand Ulrich Füetriers *Buch der Abenteuer*, für Herzog Albrecht IV. von Bayern verfasst. Dieses Buch ist für das höfische Lesepublikum des 13. Jahrhunderts bedacht und stellt eigentlich eine Neubearbeitung von Artus- und Gralsepen dar. Die Kommunikationssituation im *Buch der Abenteuer* wird von Rischer durch eine rezeptionsästhetische Analyse erschlossen. Diese Analyse entdeckt die kalkulierte Ausrichtung des Werkes auf ein bestimmtes Publikum; durch die historische Distanz zwischen den Vorlagen und der Neufassung bekommt man Information über die veränderte historische Situation der Rezipienten. Rezeptionsästhetik und -geschichte verbinden sich in diesem Werk, da das im Werk vorgezeichnete Publikumsverhalten mit den Erwartungen des tatsächlichen Publikums gleich ist, also $L2 = L1$. Das resultiert daraus, dass der Autor das Buch für ein identifizierbares Publikum gedacht hat, mit dessen Erwartungen er rechnen konnte. Literatur fungiert hier als Mittel der Selbstrepräsentation, Füetriers verkürzte Form *entindividualisiert* Vorgänge, die dadurch jederzeit aktuell wirken und das stets erwartete Leitbild ritterlichen Idealverhaltens zeigen.

Füetrier hat seine intendierten Leser erreicht, da sich seine Leseridee auf die Beschaffenheit des realen Publikums stützte. Die Frage der Leseridee gehört

¹⁰ Jauß, a.a.O.

nämlich nicht nur zum Wirkungsbereich der Soziologie. Wenn man das so betrachtet, fällt man in die Falle der Textimmanenz und Kommunikation kommt nicht zustande. Als kommunikativ Handelnde müssen Autoren stets mit dem Leser als Mithandelnden zusammenarbeiten. Eine solche Zusammenarbeit bildet die *Makro-Kommunikation* zwischen Autor und Leser. Verständnis oder Missverständnis vonseiten des Lesers ruft Reaktionen des Autors hervor, die wieder auf ein Publikum gezielt werden und so entsteht ein Dialog zwischen ihnen.

Wie diese *Makro-Kommunikation* funktioniert, können wir am Werk *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* betrachten, das seinerzeit einer Fehlrezeption begegnete. Die Reaktionen des Publikums aufs Werk haben die mangelnde Übereinstimmung zwischen der Leseridee des Autors und der wirklichen Beschaffenheit des Publikums zum Vorschein gebracht. Während sich Goethe durch die Verwandlung der Wirklichkeit in Poesie erleichtert hat, haben die Leser die Poesie in Wirklichkeit umgesetzt und glaubten, man sollte sich erschießen. Man könnte glauben, Goethe hat das Werk nur für sich selbst geschrieben und war auf das Publikum gar nicht bedacht. Dieser Vorstellung spricht aber rezeptionsästhetisch die Beschaffenheit des Werkes, rezeptionsgeschichtlich die Analyse der Kommunikationssituation und die Rückkoppelung des Autors auf die Reaktionen des Publikums wider. *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* war für die Öffentlichkeit geschrieben: der Briefschreiber wendet sich mitteilungsbedürftig an einen Adressaten – das setzt also einen Kommunikationspartner voraus –, die zahlreichen Formen der „Objektivierung“ sorgen für Distanz zwischen dem Brief- und dem Romanschreiber. In den Briefen wird ein Empfänger, ein fiktiver Leser (L3) projiziert, dessen Reaktionen für den realen Leser (L1) als Anweisung dienen. Man erwartet also vom intendierten Leser Sympathie, aber keine Teilung des Schicksals, die textgemäße Reaktion des Lesers (L2) ist Katharsis und nicht Mimesis.

Aus dem späteren Werk *Dichtung und Wahrheit* erfahren wir, wie sehr Goethe am Urteil seiner Freunde gelegen war. Da haben wir also die Kommunikationssituation, die Reaktion des kleinen Publikums nimmt die der großen Öffentlichkeit vorweg. Der dritte Beweis dafür, dass das Werk für ein Publikum gedacht war, ist Goethes Reaktion auf die Rezeption durch die Leser. Zuerst erwartete er einen Horizontwandel vonseiten des Publikums, gab aber später nach und machte einige Änderungen am Werk, die eine noch größere Distanz zwischen Fiktionalität und Wirklichkeit schafften.

Goethe selbst versucht Gründe für die Fehlrezeption zu finden, sucht die Schuld aber beim Publikum. Der eine Grund wäre die sozialpsychologische Disposition

(*unbefriedigte Leidenschaften*), der andere ein innerliterarischer, und zwar das aufklärerische Konzept der unmittelbaren Nützlichkeit von Literatur. So wird das innovative Werk am alten Literaturverständnis gemessen. Auf den soziologischen Grund reagiert Goethe mit der Umarbeitung des Werkes, auf den innerliterarischen mit der Auseinandersetzung mit den Aufklärern. Die Begegnung mit dem inkompetenten Publikum und der Unterschied zwischen *wirklichem* und *wahrem* Leser machten Goethe davon bewusst, dass dieses Publikum der Erziehung bedarf.

Zusammengefasst hat die Rückkoppelung folgende Resultate: Rezeptionserfolg, – was die Bestätigung der kommunikativen Strategien des Autors bedeutet – oder Fehlrezeption. Ihrerseits kann die Fehlrezeption folgende Reaktionen des Autors hervorrufen: Anerkennung der Ansprüche des Publikums und Anpassung der Autorintentionen daran oder Nichtanerkennung dieser Ansprüche. Diese Letztere endet meistens in einer Resignation des Autors, da das Publikum das *richtige* Lesen nicht lernt und in einer Hoffnung auf die Kommunikation mit wenigen Auserwählten. Die Nichtanerkennung weist auch zwei Arten auf: im Falle der esoterischen Nichtanerkennung der Ansprüche des Publikums beharrt der Autor sowohl auf seine Forderungen als auch auf seine kommunikativen Strategien, während die pädagogische Nichtanerkennung das Erziehen des Publikums erzielt. Der Autor gibt seine Forderungen nicht auf, versucht aber seine Kommunikationsstrategien zu ändern und sie der begrenzten rezeptiven Fähigkeit des Publikums anzupassen. Viele Autoren nehmen aber die Bedürfnisse der Leser in Betracht, sie machen L1 zur Norm für L2. Sie sind die Vertreter der sogenannten „Trivilliteratur“, „Unterhaltungsliteratur“, „Konsumliteratur“ (Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer).

Jurij M. Lotman hat beide Verhaltensweisen, also Anerkennung und Nichtanerkennung der Ansprüche des Publikums untersucht und nennt sie Ästhetik der Identität – der Autor erfüllt die Erwartungen des Lesers – und Ästhetik der Gegenüberstellung – der Autor stellt den Konventionen seine abweichende Auffassung gegenüber. Er kommt dabei auf die Idee, dass Automatisierung (Redundanz) und Innovation (Entropie) einander gegenseitig bedingen, denn Abweichungen können aufgrund von Bekanntem, Automatisiertem festgestellt werden und umgekehrt besteht die Ästhetik der Identität aus einer Variation von bekannten Elementen.

Bei der Produktion von nicht erwartungsgemäßen Texten muss der Rezipient durch die Lektüre selbst zur rechten Rezeption gelangen. Dieselbe ist die Situation mit den Texten historisch/geografisch entfernter Kulturen, da der Rezipient die Codes des Textes nicht kennt. Das richtige Rezeptionsverfahren

ist aber nicht dessen Umkodierung den eigenen Normen nach, sondern die Rekonstruktion der Codes, die auf dem Grund des Textes liegen.

2.1. Rezipiententypologie

Die von Otfried Ehrismann durchgeführte Typologisierung der Rezipienten wird von Hannelore Link in ihrem Werk (Hannelore Link, 1976) übernommen und verarbeitet. Diese Typologisierung ist aber nicht mit einer Lesertypologie zu verwechseln. Daraus ergibt sich eine dreifache Aufteilung der Rezeption in produktive, reproduzierende und passive.

Über produktive Rezeption kann man im Falle Füetters *Buch der Abenteuer* sprechen, sie ist nämlich eine Frage nach Einflüssen als Voraussetzung für die Entstehung eines literarischen Werkes. Hier benimmt sich der Autor wie ein Leser, er beurteilt Werke von anderen Autoren und setzt die Erfahrungen, Einflüsse in die eigene Produktion um. Dabei ist es interessant zu betrachten, wie dasselbe Motiv zu verschiedenen Zeitpunkten von verschiedenen Autoren behandelt wird.

Reproduzierende Rezeption ist durch Literaturwissenschaft, Literaturkritik, Inszenierungen, Bearbeitungen vertreten. Der Literaturwissenschaft geht es um Ermöglichung des Textverstehens, der Kritik um Vermittlung von Werturteilen. Dabei kann sie manchmal zum Sprachrohr deren Rezipienten werden, die ihr Rezeptionserlebnis nicht selber ausdrücken. Inszenierungen vermitteln einen primären Rezeptionsgegenstand und setzen dabei Rezeptionsvorgänge vonseiten der Theaterangestellten voraus. Meistens geht es dabei um die Produktion eines sekundären Rezeptionsgegenstandes, der schon eine Deutung des primären enthält. Bearbeitungen sind die Möglichkeiten audio-visueller Medien. Neubearbeitungen können aber als neue Kunstwerke eingeschätzt werden, dann zählen sie zur produktiven Rezeption. (Man siehe Füetters *Buch der Abenteuer*.)

Die passive Rezeption schafft weder neue Kunstwerke, noch stellt sie einen sekundären Rezeptionsgegenstand her, ihr Träger sind die *reinen Rezipienten*. Ihre Erforschung ist aber nicht so einfach, da sie ihre Rezeptionserlebnisse nicht publik machen. Erforscht man lebende Leser, so hat man mit empirischer Wirkungsforschung zu tun, wenn aber passive Rezeption in der Vergangenheit unter die Lupe gezogen wird, spricht man über historische Wirkungsforschung.

Eine ganz und gar subjektive Rezeption ist unmöglich, da Schreiben und Lesen von Texten anhand eines Zeichensystems geschieht und Zeichen sind intersubjektiv. Die Rezeption eines Textes ist ein ständiger Zweikampf zwischen Subjekt und Objekt. Die Zeichen werden von einzelnen Subjekten

verwendet, so sind die *subjektiven Ränder* bei jedem Verstehensvorgang unvermeidbar, andererseits verlangt aber die vom Text geforderte Kompetenz eine einigermaßen objektive Erkenntnis des Textes.

2.2. Rezeptionstheoretische Modelle

Aufgabe der verschiedenen rezeptionstheoretischen Modelle ist es zu erforschen, wie Texte von Subjekten objektiv erkannt werden können, so beschäftigen sie sich mit der Beziehung zwischen Objekt und Subjekt und betrachten dabei Rezeption entweder vom Standpunkt des einen oder des anderen her. Diese Modelle stützen sich auf bestimmte Erkenntnistheorien.

Grundlage für die objektive (materiale) Ästhetik als Rezeptionsmodell ist der Positivismus. Aufgrund des Positivismus verkündet sie, dass die Eigenschaften des Objekts unabhängig von der Subjektivität des Individuums gemessen werden. Das Modell verknüpft sich mit der informationstheoretischen Ästhetik und ihre Terminologie enthält rezeptionstheoretische Bezüge. Begriffe der Informationstheorie wie *Entropie*, *Information*, *Redundanz* kommen im Bereich der menschlichen Kommunikation mit der Produktion und Rezeption von Texten in Zusammenhang. Der Informationswert eines Wortes hängt von seiner Unerwartbarkeit ab, wenn man weiß, welches Wort an einer bestimmten Stelle auftaucht, hat es für einen keinen Informationswert mehr, es erweitert das Wissen nicht mehr. Demgemäß hat Redundanz ein hohes Maß an Vorhersehbarkeit und ihr Gegenteil, Entropie, bedeutet einen hohen Informationsgehalt. Das erreicht man durch geringe Vorhersehbarkeit, d. h. unter vielen Wörtern ist für jedes gleich wahrscheinlich, dass es an einer bestimmten Stelle vorkommt. So werden also Kriterien wie Erwartbarkeit, Vorhersehbarkeit, Information, Wahrscheinlichkeit *rezipientenrelevant* und man sollte den Beitrag dieses Modells zur Rezeptionsforschung in diesen universalen, abstrakten Kriterien sehen.

Das phänomenologische Modell ist insofern objektorientiert, als es sich mit „Phänomenen“ befasst. Diese sind aber auf ein Subjekt angewiesen, dem sie erscheinen. Der Schwerpunkt fällt hier nicht aufs empirische Subjekt (Gegenübersetzung zur Psychologie), sondern auf die apriorischen Bedingungen der Erkenntnis von Objekten durch Subjekte. Die Übertragung dieser philosophischen Gedanken auf literarische Texte verdanken wir dem polnischen Philosophen Roman Ingarden (*Das literarische Kunstwerk*, 1960). Seiner Meinung nach ist das Kunstwerk ein „polyphones Schichtengefüge“¹¹. Diese Schichten entsprechen den verschiedenen Phänomenen, die in einem literarischen Werk zu beobachten sind: Lautung, Bedeutung, dargestellter

¹¹ Roman Ingarden, 1960, zit. nach Hannelore Link, S. 118.

Gegenstand, schematisierte Ansichten und nur die „polyphone Harmonie“¹² all dieser Schichten ergibt die Kunsthaftigkeit eines Werkes. Wichtig für die Rezeptionstheorie scheinen die schematisierten Ansichten zu sein. Dieser These nach kann Wirklichkeit im Kunstwerk nur schematisiert, in ausgewählten Ausschnitten repräsentiert werden, d. h. der Autor stellt einiges, was seinen Zwecken am meisten dient, vor, anderes lässt er aber im Dunkeln und das ist auf die ideelle Ergänzung durch den Leser angewiesen. Ingardens Rezeptionstheorie geht von zwei universalen Annahmen aus. Die wahrnehmungspsychologische meint, Husserls Wahrnehmungstheorie entsprechend, dass Aufmerksamkeit bei der Wahrnehmung nur auf gewisse Gegenstände, auf dessen Eigenschaften konzentriert, anderes wird außer Acht gelassen. Der kommunikationstheoretischen Annahme nach kann Sprache Realität nur ausschnittsweise repräsentieren, daher die Nötigkeit des Ergänzens durch den Rezipienten. Es gibt im Text solche Unbestimmtheitsstellen, die bei der Konkretisation, der Ergänzung, Änderung durch den Rezipienten, ausgefüllt werden müssen und solche, die eine Ergänzung sogar verbieten. Ingarden kritisiert moderne Lyrik, die auf volle, korrekte Sätze verzichtet hat, um dem Leser die Freiheit einer beliebigen Ergänzung zu überlassen.

Was versteht er aber unter adäquater Konkretisation? Die objektive Gegebenheit des Textes hat hier eine bedeutende Rolle. Ein nur in der Rezeption gestellter ästhetischer Wert, der aber keine Grundlage im Text hat, ist „reine Schöpfung des Betrachters“, also „nicht, objektiv“¹³ und in diesem Falle kann über adäquate Konkretisation keine Rede sein. Sie wird durch die Einhaltung folgender Regulative ermöglicht: Der Leser muss sich „in ästhetischer Einstellung“¹⁴ (psychologische Voraussetzung) befinden, das bedeutet, sein Verständnis wird von den vorher gelesenen Teilen geleitet und zweitens muss der Text dem Leser zu einem gewissen Grad diejenigen Ausfüllungen der Unbestimmtheitsstellen suggerieren, deren Aktualisierung wahrscheinlicher ist. Kein Leser ist imstande, die Komplexität eines Werkes nur durch eine Lektüre zu umfassen, aber durch mehrmalige Lektüre kann er sich der adäquaten Konkretisation annähern, wobei hinter den subjektiven, situationsbedingten Variationen die objektive Beschaffenheit des Textes steht.

In Weiterführung dieser These macht E. D. Hirsch¹⁵ einen Unterschied zwischen konvergierender und divergierender Interpretation. In der Ersteren wird trotz der verschiedenen Interpretationen der gleiche *Sinntyp* intendiert –

¹² Ders., a.a.O.

¹³ Ingarden, 1960, S. 307, zit. nach Link, S. 121.

¹⁴ Ders., S. 302, zit. nach Link, ebenda.

¹⁵ E. D. Hirsch: *Prinzipien der Interpretation*. München: Fink, 1972.

diese Verschiedenheit der Interpretationen ist nur Oberflächenphänomen, in der Tiefe liegt der gleiche Sinn –, in der Letzteren führen aber die unbestimmten Signale des Textes zu unterschiedlichen Interpretationen. Diese beziehen sich auf unterschiedliche Sinne, die dem Text als Hypothesen unterliegen und man soll von den Interpretationen durch die Beurteilung ihrer Wahrscheinlichkeit die Treffendste finden.

Zusammengefasst ist das Erkenntnisobjekt der phänomenologisch orientierten Literaturwissenschaft der Sinn eines Textes, der bei historisch entfernten Texten rekonstruiert werden muss.

Innerhalb des hermeneutischen Modells findet man zwei Richtungen: Die traditionelle Hermeneutik will das historische Objekt *Textsinn* erkennen, während die andere Richtung, von Hans-Georg Gadamer vertreten, sieht den Sinn eines Textes in seiner jeweiligen Aktualisierung, die das Verstehen des Textes ermöglicht. E. D. Hirsch schafft eine gelungene Synthese zwischen dem phänomenologischen Ansatz und der traditionellen Hermeneutik, der nach bei der Erkenntnis des *Sinntyps* eines Textes der *hermeneutische Zirkel* eine zentrale Rolle spielt. Dieses Modell untersucht das Verhältnis zwischen dem Ganzen und den Teilen und kommt zur Folgerung: das Lesen beginnt man an einer Stelle aber, um den ganzen Sinn erschließen zu können, macht man sich eine Vorstellung über das Ganze, zu dem dieser Teil gehört. Das bedeutet, man baut sich von einer Textstelle aus einen solchen Kontext auf, in dem diese Stelle sinnvoll wirkt. Indem man weiter liest, wird einem die Hypothese übers Ganze entweder bestätigt oder in Frage gestellt. Diese Hypothese über die Bedeutung des Textes soll aber alle Einzelteile in Betracht nehmen und es ist weitaus nicht sicher, dass sie die *richtige Hypothese* ist, da wir uns auf unsere Erkenntnisse stützen und dabei für den Sinn des Textes relevante Daten außer Acht lassen können. Folgendes steht aber fest, wir versuchen das Ganze aus den Teilen herauszubekommen und die Bedeutung, die den einzelnen Teilen zugeschrieben wird, ist in einem großen Maße von unseren Vorerwartungen dem Ganzen gegenüber geprägt. Das bildet den sogenannten *hermeneutischen Zirkel* und er kann als erkenntnistheoretisch schädlich (*Circulus vitiosus*) verworfen oder angenommen werden, da er nicht hintergebar ist.

Hans-Georg Gadamer's „philosophische Hermeneutik“¹⁶ geht von Martin Heideggers Daseins-Theorie aus. So sieht Gadamer im Verstehen ein Sich-Verstehen. Da alles in der Zeitlichkeit verwurzelt ist, vergegenwärtigt sich das Subjekt Vergangenes im Hinblick auf die eigene Zukunft und so ist

¹⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Wahrheit und Methode – Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: Mohr, 2. Aufl., 1965.

Wirkungsgeschichte eines Textes eigentlich ein Überlieferungsgeschehen. Das Subjekt aktualisiert sich Vergangenes im Einklang mit den historischen Bedingungen, in denen es sich befindet, das soll aber nicht als ein schrankenloser Subjektivismus aufgefasst werden, das Verstehen ist eigentlich ein Einrücken in ein Überlieferungsgeschehen. Vergangenes wird als Überliefertes aktuell, so vermittelt die Überlieferung zwischen Vergangenen und der Gegenwart, die selbst zu weiteren Überlieferungen beiträgt.

Das Verstehen der Texte wird dann durch ihre Wirkungsgeschichte vermittelt. Der ursprüngliche Leser und Sinn des Verfassers dürfen den Sinnhorizont von Texten nicht begrenzen, die Wahrheit eines Textes erweist sich außerhalb der ursprünglichen Situation. Der spätere Leser wird zum „Anwalt seines Wahrheitsanspruchs“¹⁷, da er die Forderung hat, in der Überlieferung eine für sich selbst gültige Wahrheit zu finden. Gadamer meint, die Wahrheit des Textes ist, was bisher als sein Sinn verstanden war und auch noch künftig verstanden wird, also seine Geschichte. Er stellt die Frage nach der adäquaten Konkretisation nicht, was sich historisch durchgesetzt hat, ist wahr. Beim Verstehen von Texten geht es nicht um den „Sinn des Verfassers“¹⁸, „lesendes Verstehen ist nicht ein Wiederholen von etwas Vergangenen, sondern Teilhabe an einem gegenwärtigen Sinn“¹⁹.

Dank Hans Robert Jauß' Theorien gelangt man von der Wirkungsgeschichte zur Rezeptionsgeschichte. Er meint, allen Transformationen der Bedeutung liege „die anfängliche Bedeutung oder Problemstruktur des Werkes“²⁰ voraus, die alle später erfüllten Bedeutungen bedinge. Diese anfängliche Bedeutung ist gleich mit der „vom Autor geschaffenen [...] Form und Bedeutung“²¹. Jauß spricht über die Rezeptionsgeschichte eines Textes im Zusammenhang mit den wechselnden Erwartungshorizonten und den von ihnen abhängigen einzelnen Rezeptionsereignissen. Sein fundamentales Problem ist das Verhältnis von Werkstruktur (textinterne Instanzen A2/L2) und Rezeptionsgeschichte (die historisch stets zu erweiternde textexterne Leserinstanz L1) und findet dabei eine subjekt- und eine objektorientierte Erklärung. Die Erstere führt zum Verständnis des Textes als Antwort auf Fragen, die lange nach seiner Entstehung gestellt werden. Die Letztere erhellt das „Urteil der Jahrhunderte“²² über ein literarisches Werk als sukzessive Entfaltung des im Werk angelegten

¹⁷ Gadamer, 1965, S. 372, zit. nach Link, S. 125.

¹⁸ Ebd., S. 373, zit. nach Link, S. 128.

¹⁹ Ebd., S. 370, zit. nach Link, S. 129.

²⁰ Jauß, 1970, S. 243, zit. nach ebenda.

²¹ Ebd., S. 217, zit. nach ebenda.

²² Jauß, a.a.O..

Sinnpotentials, es ist also die Konkretisation der im Objekt vorhandenen Möglichkeiten.

Subjektorientiert ist auch die Semiotik. Vertreter der subjektorientierten Literaturbetrachtung sind Roland Barthes, Wolfgang Iser, S. J. Schmidt und mit seiner strukturalen Semiotik Jan Mukařovský. Barthes interessiert die Bedeutung, die moderne Menschen vergangenen Werken geben und stellt sich dabei die Frage „Welche Eigenschaft des Werkes <existiert außerhalb von uns>?“²³ Er untersucht die Literaturkritik und die Lektüre als sinnstiftende Aktivitäten. Während die Lektüre ein Geheimnis des lesenden Subjekts bleibt, also einen das Objekt für sich behaltenden Subjektivismus aufweist, taucht in der Literaturkritik ein sich selbst meinender Subjektivismus auf.

Wolfgang Iser führt die Termini *Leerstellen* und *Unbestimmtheit* in die Rezeptionsforschung ein. Diese ermöglichen die Adaptierbarkeit der Texte an höchstindividuelle Leserdispositionen. Bei Jauß ist das Werk für die Entfaltung seines Sinnpotentials offen, bei Iser verwandeln die Leerstellen die Fremderfahrung der Texte zu einer privaten Erfahrung und schließen den Text an die eigenen Erfahrungen an. Sein theoretischer Subjektivismus ist aber in der Praxis einigermaßen eingeschränkt. Die Leerstellen sind nicht einfach da, um beliebig ausgefüllt zu werden, sondern bilden etwas, was aus dem Kontext ausgespart bleibt und durch die Aktivität des Lesers, aber bestimmten Hinweisen nach im Text zu realisieren ist (Systemreferenz). Iser meint, dass der Text seine Intention meistens nicht ausformuliere, so befinde sie sich „in der Einbildungskraft des Lesers“²⁴. Diese Folgerung war aber sehr oft missverstanden. Indem der Rezipient im Leseakt eine Bedeutung realisiert, entsteht für den Text eine individuelle Situation und so wird die Unbestimmtheit auf subjektiver Weise verringert.

S. J. Schmidts Ansatz ist mit dem Iserns einigermaßen vergleichbar. Zur Klärung des Verhältnisses zwischen Werkstruktur und Rezeption unterscheidet er zwischen einer semantischen – als semantische Bedeutungsanalyse des Textes objektorientiert – und einer semiotischen, subjektorientierten Bedeutungskonstitution. Die semantische Bedeutungsanalyse belässt dem Text seine textimmanente Abstraktheit (Situationslosigkeit), seine Situation erhält der Text nur, wenn er subjektiv (semiotisch) rezipiert wird. Da bildet der Rezipient die *semantischen Bestände* auf seine sprachlichen Interpretationsschemata ab. Die Unbestimmtheit der Texte hat auch zwei

²³ Roland Barthes: *Kritik und Wahrheit*. Frankfurt/M., 1967, S. 27, zit. nach Link, S. 131.

²⁴ Wolfgang Iser: *Die Appellstruktur der Texte. Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Prosa*, 1975a, S. 248, zit. nach Link, S. 133.

Spielarten: Texte können *polyfunktional* konstruiert werden, demgemäß haben einzelne Elemente innerhalb des Textes mehrere Funktionen oder sie können *mehrdeutig* sein, wenn sie in unterschiedlichen textexternen *Kontexten* erscheinen. Die Polyfunktionalität der Texte als Bedingung für ihre Zeit überdauernde Wirkung wird zu einem Wertkriterium.

Die subjektivistischen Theorien lassen den Autor als *Zeichengeber* und seine mit dem Text verbundene Intention außer Acht, sie scheinen die Rezeptionsbedingungen ausschließlich von der Textseite her zu betrachten (werkimmanente Rezeptionsästhetik) und reduzieren dabei den Text auf seine *leere Bedeutung* (Barthes), *Leerstellenstruktur* (Iser) oder *Polyfunktionalität* (Schmidt).

Jan Mukařovskýs strukturelle Semiotik reflektiert die Rolle der kollektiven Muster und Normen bei der Rezeption. Er beschäftigt sich mit dem Bezug des Zeichens zur Wirklichkeit (Referenz) und seinem Bezug zu den Zeichenbenützern, so ist seine Ästhetik Teil der Semiologie, der Wissenschaft vom Zeichen. Seiner Meinung nach ist auch das Kunstwerk „ein Zeichen, also die Angelegenheit eines überindividuellen Einverständnisses“²⁵. Das literarische Zeichen hat die Rolle, zwischen seinem Urheber und dem gesellschaftlichen Kollektiv zu vermitteln. So unterscheidet Mukařovský zwischen zwei „semiologischen Funktionen“. Denen nach kann bei jedem Zeichen der Signifikant (wie es beschaffen ist) oder das Signifikat (was es bedeutet) wichtig sein. Das Signifikat hat eine mitteilende Funktion, ist kommunikativ, darin dominiert der Bezug zur Wirklichkeit. Der Signifikant hat eine „autonome Funktion“, bezeichnet die Unabhängigkeit des Zeichens von anderen Bezügen. Da sprechen wir über einen Selbstbezug. Je komplexer ein Zeichen ist, desto größer ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass die Aufmerksamkeit bei seiner Beschaffenheit verstockt und nicht weiter zu seiner Referenz gelangt.

So entsteht beim literarischen Zeichen ein spezifischer Wirklichkeitsbezug, die einzelnen Elemente werden stark an den Kontext gebunden, so können sie aus der Gesamtstruktur des Werkes nicht isoliert werden. Als Ganzes hat aber auch die Werkstruktur einen Wirklichkeitsbezug, sie bezieht sich auf soziale Phänomene in einer bestimmten Umwelt, und dieser Bezug, bzw. seine Wirkung auf den Leser ist für Mukařovský wichtiger als der Selbstbezug des Zeichens. Die unmittelbare Beziehung des Textes zur Realität wird abgeschwächt, aber das scheint zu kompensieren, dass er mit dem Gesamtkomplex der Lebenserfahrung des Subjekts (des schaffenden und des

²⁵ Jan Mukařovský: *Kapitel aus der Ästhetik*. Frankfurt/M. 1970 (=ES 428), S. 128-129, zit. nach Link, S. 136.

aufnehmenden) in Beziehung tritt. Mukařovský behandelt, Schmidt gleich, die These von der Anschließbarkeit des Textes an die Lebenserfahrung des Subjekts und die individuelle, semiotische Tätigkeit des Rezipierenden, aber dieses Subjekt ist bei ihm nicht das Individuum, sondern die Menschheit, der Mensch als solcher.

Der Rezeptionsvorgang sieht bei ihm so aus: das materielle Zeichengebilde wird in der Konkretisation durch das rezipierende Subjekt zum *ästhetischen Objekt*, es erhält einen ästhetischen Wert. Ingarden verstand unter adäquater Konkretisation die völlige Realisierung der Werkstruktur, dagegen betont Mukařovský deren Abhängigkeit von kollektiven Normen und deren historischer Veränderlichkeit. Der Leser verfügt über konventionsgebundene literarische Codes und bezieht sich mit seinem Werturteil aufs Normensystem der Zeit. Die verschiedenen Signifikate, die in der Konkretisation einem gleichbleibenden Signifikanten (Artefakt) zugeordnet werden, sind keine Willkür der Subjekte, sondern sind objektiv im Artefakt vorausgesetzt. Wenn es im Laufe der Geschichte einen immer aktuellen Wert erhalten will, muss die Möglichkeit dazu in ihm enthalten werden. Das nennt Mukařovský „allgemeinen ästhetischen Wert“²⁶ und dadurch wird das Artefakt „zum potentiellen Träger einer Reihe veränderlicher ästhetischer Objekte“²⁷.

Weiterhin analysiert Mukařovský den Aufbau voller Spannungen und Widersprüche des Artefakts. Diese Spannungen bestehen zwischen den konstitutiven Faktoren: Zwischen den nicht-aktualisierten, also dem Gewohnten folgenden, und den aktualisierten Faktoren, aber auch unter den einzelnen aktualisierten Komponenten, denn jeder will die Dominante der ästhetischen Struktur sein und allen anderen ihre Stellung darin zuordnen. Da die künstlerische Struktur wandelnd ist, sind auch die Konkretisationen eines und desselben Artefakts veränderlich und die Erklärung dafür findet man im Dominantenwechsel. Wenn sich diese wechseln, verändert sich auch das Verhältnis der aktualisierten Komponenten zueinander und zu den nicht-aktualisierten, das führt aber zur Änderung der ganzen ästhetischen Struktur. So können einem gleichbleibenden Artefakt (Werkstruktur) verschiedene ästhetische Objekte (Konkretisationen) zugeordnet werden. Den individualistischen Modellen gegenüber bindet Mukařovský die wechselnden Konkretisationen an kollektive Bezugssysteme zurück und betont die Fülle der Möglichkeiten eines Werkes, von ihm nicht zur Leerstellenstruktur degradiert.

²⁶ Herta Schmid: *Zum Begriff der ästhetischen Konkretisation im tschechischen Strukturalismus*, in: *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter*, H. 36, 1970, S. 308, zit. nach Link, S. 139.

²⁷ Ebenda, S. 309, zit. nach ebenda.

Die dargestellten Rezeptionsmodelle enthalten Versuche, den Zusammenhang zwischen Werkstruktur und Rezeption zu erklären. So betonen Ingarden und Jauf das sich allmählich entfaltende Sinnpotential einer Werkstruktur, Mukařovský sucht die Erklärung für verschiedene Konkretisationen in den wechselnden textexternen Kontexten, während die subjektivistischen Modelle die Anschließbarkeit von Texten an subjektive Erfahrungen der Rezipienten erforschen. In diesem Sinne kann man über verschiedene Rezeptionstypen, wie *adäquate Konkretisation im engeren Sinn*, *adäquate Konkretisation im weiteren Sinn* und über *Anschließung* sprechen.

Adäquate Konkretisation im engeren Sinn bedeutet Rekonstruktion der Autorintention (L2 = A2). Dem materiellen Artefakt entspricht ein unstoffliches, ideales Korrelat, das kann aber von keiner Konkretisation voll realisiert werden. So ist die adäquate Konkretisation nur ein Leitbild für die einzelnen empirischen Konkretisationen. Eine Annäherung zu dieser idealen Konkretisation ist aber durch je umfassendere Textkenntnis, durch wiederholte Lektüre möglich. Das Subjekt muss aber an einem angemessenen Textverständnis und nicht an der Anschließung an seine subjektiven Erfahrungen interessiert sein.

Adäquate Konkretisation im weiteren Sinn entsteht durch historische Distanz. Spätere Konkretisationen können aufgrund der historisch motivierten Dominantenverschiebung solche Aspekte der Werkstruktur bloßlegen, die dem Autor selbst nicht bewusst waren. Keine dieser Konkretisationen ist die einzig richtige, sie sind gleichberechtigte Realisierungen des komplexen Bedeutungspotentials. Der erstellte ästhetische Wert muss nicht unbedingt mit dem vom Autor gemeinten übereinstimmen, es geht hier nicht um die Erkenntnis der Autorintention, sondern um die Erkenntnis der komplexen Struktur des Zeichens. Alle Konkretisationen, die sich auf die komplexe Werkstruktur beziehen, sind gleichberechtigt, denn der Text ist in unterschiedlichen historischen *Kontexten* verschieden zu lesen, einziges Kriterium für die Adäquatheit ist die Beschaffenheit, die Lesbarkeit des Textes.

Bei der Anschließung reagiert das Subjekt statt zu reflektieren. Wenn dem Text gegenüber eine Konsumhaltung möglich ist, schließt sich der Rezipient den Text an. Das ermöglichen vor allem die viel Leerstellenstrukturen und der einfache Aufbau (Trivilliteratur). Eine Konkretisation im engeren Sinn erfordert die Anerkennung der Norm, an der sich der Autor orientiert. Diese Norm kann aber mit der des Lesers unvereinbar sein, das führt zu einem Normenkonflikt, was die adäquate Konkretisation ausschließt. Die Begegnung mit der fremden Ideologie stellt aber das Verhältnis des Lesers zur eigenen

Wirklichkeit in Frage und diese Ästhetik der Gegenüberstellung, das Durchbrechen der gültigen ästhetischen Normen gehört zu den wesentlichen Leistungen eines Kunstwerkes.

Den drei vorher aufgezählten Rezeptionstypen kann man eine vierte hinzufügen, und zwar die synthetische Konkretisation. Im Hintergrund einer synthetischen Konkretisation steht die Kenntnis mehrerer Konkretisationen und das nähert sie zu einer adäquaten Konkretisation. Interessanterweise bringt sie einen Informationszuwachs der adäquaten Konkretisation gegenüber, denn durch die Kenntnis von Dominantenverschiebungen wird die komplexe Werkstruktur erkannt und mehr Komponenten gelangen zur Aktualisierung als sie dem Autor bewusst waren. Diese Aktualisierungen sollen aber mit der Autorintention wenigstens vereinbar sein. Weiterhin führt der historische Abstand zwischen Subjekt und Autor zu einer symptomatischen Interpretation, d. h. man betrachtet das Kommunikationsangebot eher als Symptom eines historischen Zustands und ist nicht so sehr um sein Verstehen bemüht. Kennt man mehrere Rezeptionen, also die Wirkungsgeschichte eines Textes, versucht man den Zusammenhang von Konkretisation und dem jeweiligen werkexternen Kontext zu finden, man hat dem Autor und dem ursprünglichen Publikum gegenüber einen Zuwachs an historischen Informationen. So will man nicht nur den Sinn des Textes, sondern auch dessen Verhältnis zu seiner Rezeptionsgeschichte verstehen. Natürlich hat auch das ursprüngliche Publikum einen Vorteil, und zwar dass ihm der Code des Autors leichter zugänglich ist, sie haben ja dasselbe Bezugssystem, während dieser Code von der späteren Rezeption erst rekonstruiert werden.

Weiterhin stellt sich die Frage, warum synthetische Konkretisation mehr als adäquate Konkretisation ist? Sie verbindet ein Verstehen des Kommunikationsangebots mit einer Reflexion über den Text und seine Geschichte, also bedeutet sich reflektierend aufs Kommunikationsangebot einzulassen. Das gängige Rezeptionsverhalten verzichtet aber auf diese Reflexion und führt alle Abweichungen von der eigenen Norm auf diese zurück, *normalisiert* sie. Bedeutet diese Normalisierung eine Reduktion auf „die privaten Normen des Lesers“²⁸, so hat man den Fall von Anschließung. Die kann nicht mehr als kommunikatives Handeln angesehen werden.

Folgendes steht fest, am einzelnen Rezeptionsakt sind möglicherweise alle Rezeptionstypen beteiligt und Rezeption eines künstlerischen Textes ist immer ein Kampf zwischen Autor und Leser, zwischen reflektivem Sich-Einlassen auf die Botschaft und aus Selbstbehauptung entstammendem Anschließen. Nicht zu

²⁸ Wolfgang Iser, 1975a, S. 233, zit. nach Link, S. 161.

vergessen ist aber, was Jurij M. Lotman gesagt hat: „In jedem konkreten Autor und in jedem konkreten Leser ist im jeweils wieder verschiedenen Anteil sowohl ‚der Autor‘ wie auch ‚der Leser‘ vorhanden.“²⁹

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Déracinement et nostalgie dans L'Ignorance de Milan Kundera

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Abstract : Exiled in France after the Prague spring, Milan Kundera has discreetly transferred into *Ignorance* his own disillusion and scars of the exile, the relation with his adoptive country. Uprootedness results always in a displacement, a series of fractures which become manifest on different levels: psychological, identity and cultural. Leaving one's native country whether voluntarily or because of obligation leads to subjective attitudes, among which nostalgia seems to be the natural outcome of an inner break.

It is our purpose to reveal the facets of this condition experienced by the protagonists, two Czech emigrants who return, after twenty years, to Bohemia of the 1990s. Is this the grand return? The history of the characters is related to that of Ulysses, whose nostalgic desire he questions. Since nostalgia betrays the pain of uprootedness and the memory of past happiness, Heimweh and Sehnsucht, the paper looks at the various avatars of such a condition that the writer is concerned with.

Key words : uprootedness, nostalgia, exile, emigrant (emigration), return, native country/adoptive country, pain, ignorance

Introduction

Déracinement et nostalgie sont deux concepts qui vont de pair. Les dictionnaires décrètent que le mot « déracinement » a un sens propre désignant « l'action de déraciner (un arbre, une plante); résultat de cette action » et un sens figuré faisant référence à « l'action d'arracher des groupes de personnes à leur pays ou milieu d'origine; résultat de cette action ou à la situation d'une personne arrachée à son pays et à son milieu d'origine ». (*Trésor de la langue française*, tome VI:1139). Quitter son pays, partir pour vivre ailleurs, c'est changer de monde. On comprend par « monde » un environnement au sens banal mais aussi une façon d'être en relation avec ce qui nous entoure. Cette manière d'être se comprend à partir d'un langage, une langue maternelle, d'un sol, une terre, d'un climat, une qualité du ciel. Voilà ce qui manque à tous les déracinés, voilà ce qu'ils pleurent. Il y a encore la famille, les amis et ce sentiment d'appartenir à un groupe, d'être reconnu, accepté, compris.

Dès l'arrivée dans l'espace étranger, ils constatent que la terre tellement convoitée ne ressemble pas du tout à leurs attentes. Il y a un grand décalage

entre leurs rêves et le « monde » réel devant eux. Ce sont alors le regret d'être parti, les reproches, les pourquoi qui s'emparent d'eux et qui font disloquer leur vie intérieure. Désorientés, déçus, ils ont un comportement bizarre, des troubles de toute sorte, des états dépressifs, des débordements d'angoisse ou des expériences de dépersonnalisation – une véritable psychopathologie du déracinement.

Quels sont les sentiments qu'éprouve un homme coupé de ses racines ? Déchirement, incertitude, révolte, renoncement, espoir et désespoir, amour et haine, toutes les contradictions, les tempêtes et les vagues qui agitent le monde tumultueux que tout déraciné emporte à la semelle de ses souliers. C'est encore le mal du pays qui fait revenir obsessivement, dans sa mémoire, l'image du lieu nourricier.

Avançant l'hypothèse que le déracinement déclenche toujours la nostalgie comme affection, nous nous proposons de voir de quelle manière et à quel degré l'éprouvent les protagonistes du roman. Comme la nostalgie peut désigner la douleur de l'arrachement au pays natal et l'aspiration au bonheur du temps passé, à savoir la « Heimveh » ou la « Sehnsucht », nous allons identifier et analyser ces aspects du sentiment pour établir ensuite des différences et des rapprochements d'un personnage à l'autre.

Le déracinement

Le cas de Kundera

La vie de Milan Kundera a été fortement empreinte par l'Histoire de son pays, la Tchécoslovaquie. Notre but n'est pas de retracer la biographie de l'écrivain mais d'en relever quelques aspects, ce qui nous semble très utile pour mieux comprendre l'attitude de l'auteur. Il fait de brillantes études à Prague où il se remarque par son opposition contre le régime communiste installé là-bas en 1948. Pendant une décennie (1959-1969) il travaille comme professeur à l'Académie de musique et d'art dramatique et à l'Institut des hautes études cinématographiques à Prague où il enseigne l'histoire du cinéma.

En pleine époque staliniste, en 1957, il publie ses premiers poèmes où il attaque le gouvernement au pouvoir. Il enchaîne avec des romans (*Risibles amours* et *La Plaisanterie*) où les opinions politiques se mêlent au sujet de l'amour. Par son attitude, Kundera se situe auprès d'autres personnalités tchèques qui ont essayé de réformer le communisme. C'est pourquoi, en 1968, lorsque les troupes soviétiques envahissent la capitale, ses ouvrages sont retirés des librairies et son activité d'enseignement est interdite par les autorités. Comme le montre Arnault Marechal, «Kundera a été un militant communiste induit en erreur ; une grande partie de son oeuvre en français y revient et explique, avec

sincérité et de manière touchante, combien il était facile, dans les années cinquante, de se tromper et de croire au stalinisme ».¹

Dans ces conditions, Kundera s'exile en France, étant déchu de sa nationalité tchèque en 1980. En France, il réussit à travailler comme professeur, d'abord à Rennes et puis à l'École des Hautes Etudes à Paris. Ses derniers ouvrages écrits après l'invasion soviétique sont interdits à la publication par la censure communiste. Dans ces circonstances, il continue à écrire et à publier en France, devenant citoyen français en 1981. Après quelque romans écrits encore en tchèque et traduits en français (*Le livre du rire et de l'oubli* (1978), *L'Insoutenable légèreté de l'Être* (1984) et *L'Immortalité* (1990), Kundera choisit le français comme langue d'écriture, à partir de l'année 1990. Comme il a constaté que ses oeuvres ont été mal traduites en tchèque, il n'a plus autorisé aucune traduction, ce qui l'a fait rompre avec les lecteurs de son pays.

Le roman *L'Ignorance* est le troisième de son « cycle » français après *La lenteur* (1995) et *L'Identité* (1997). Par l'atmosphère, par les protagonistes et, d'ailleurs, par sa problématique, ce roman a de fortes nuances autobiographiques : on perçoit les épreuves de Kundera qui souffre comme tout autre déraciné des maladies de l'exil et de ses ruptures. Quoique écrit en français, Kundera choisit de le publier d'abord en traduction, en Espagne et deux ans plus tard, en Amérique latine, en Italie, en Angleterre et aux États-Unis. Ce n'est qu'en 2003 que son roman a paru en France chez Gallimard. La lecture de *L'ignorance* dévoile les relations ambivalentes, de passion-répulsion qui unissent Kundera à son pays d'adoption. Son geste a provoqué un grand nombre de réactions dans le monde littéraire français qui a essayé de deviner la motivation de son choix. Dominique Fernandez dévoile deux possibles raisons de l'écrivain : la critique française peu favorable aux premiers deux romans en français et ensuite son hésitation de dévoiler aux Français la blessure de son âme d'écrivain exilé.² Toujours bien accueilli lorsqu'il était un « courageux opposant politique en exil », il a dû affronter l'hostilité croissante de l'intelligentsia française lorsque la dictature soviétique s'est effondrée à l'Est. Elle s'attendait qu'il rentre dans son pays, se demandant pourquoi il a abandonné sa langue maternelle et se moquant à la fois de son français « dépouillé ». En effet, les épreuves vécues par l'auteur dans son exil ont été transférées dans le roman : on ressent la douleur de Kundera, ses propres désillusions et les blessures du déracinement, sa relation avec son pays d'adoption.

¹ <http://www.alalettre.com/kundera.php> [référence du 10. 04. 2010]

² Dominique Fernandez, « L'Ignorance de Milan Kundera », in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, n° 1996/2003.

Les émigrants tchèques

L'*Ignorance* commence dans la même tonalité par les questions de Sylvie, l'amie française d'Iréna, émigrée tchèque en France : « Qu'est-ce que tu fais encore ici ? Sa voix n'était pas méchante, mais elle n'était pas gentille non plus ; Sylvie se fâchait. « Et où devais-je être ? demanda Irena. - Chez toi ! – Tu veux dire qu'ici je ne suis plus chez moi ? »³ (Kundera: 9). Le statut de l'émigrant est dévoilé dès le début du roman ; le rejet de la part des natifs, en apparence discret et voilé est bien présent. Il paraît que cette attitude est très évidente dans le cas des Français, comme le montre Julia Kristeva (émigrante elle aussi) dans son essai *Etrangers à nous-mêmes*.⁴ (Kristeva : 39) En France la société est cloisonnée, les étrangers sont difficilement acceptés et s'ils le sont, surtout dans le cas des grands écrivains, ils deviennent une « exception culturelle ». Quoiqu'acceptés légalement et administrativement, les exilés se sentent toujours étrangers par l'emploi maladroit du français. Ils se voient discrédités dans les yeux des Français qui s'identifient plus que d'autres peuples avec leur langue soignée. C'est aussi, croyons nous, l'attitude que la critique française a eu envers Kundera et son français « dépouillé ».

Le roman raconte l'histoire d'Iréna et de Josef, deux émigrants tchèques qui reviennent dans leur pays natal, la Bohême des années 1990, après plus de vingt ans d'absence. Tous les deux sont veufs et vivent en Occident, Iréna en France, Josef au Danemark. Iréna est une jolie femme d'une quarantaine d'années, très fragile et très sensible qui vit avec Gustaf, un Suédois émigré lui aussi en France mais qui ouvre un bureau de sa compagnie à Prague. Josef est un vétérinaire, plus âgé qu'elle qui revient dans le pays pour tenir la promesse envers sa femme décédée de revenir dans le lieu natal après la chute du mur de Berlin. Les deux personnages sont d'anciens amis de jeunesse qui auraient pu vivre une histoire d'amour mais Iréna était déjà fiancée à Martin à l'époque. Cependant, elle ne l'a jamais oublié et le hasard fait que les deux se croisent dans l'aéroport lors de leur retour à Prague. Iréna le reconnaît et lui parle mais Josef l'a complètement oubliée. Ils se donnent rendez-vous à Prague et compriment pendant un après-midi toute une histoire d'amour, intense et dramatique. On dirait deux inconnus qui arrivent à peine à se connaître et qui se quittent à jamais. Leur rencontre occupe les dernières pages du roman.

³ M. Kundera, *L'Ignorance*, Paris, Ed. Gallimard, 2003.

⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Etrangers à nous-mêmes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1991, p. 39. Elle souligne que la France ne possède ni la tolérance du protestantisme anglo-américain, ni la capacité d'assimilation des Latino-Américains. Les Français possèdent une fierté nationale qui exclut les étrangers et tout cela provient d'un type de civilisation qui croit aux valeurs créées le long du temps, à l'abri des grandes invasions et mélanges des peuples, renforcées par l'absolutisme monarchique et, plus tard, par le centralisme républicain.

Tous les deux ont quitté leur pays surtout pour des raisons historiques, pour le manque total d'espoir après le Printemps de Prague, en 1968. Josef haïssait le nouveau régime et ne pouvait pas comprendre comment sa propre famille, surtout son frère médecin l'acceptait. Sa décision de s'en aller a été prise pendant un jour de fête imposée par les Soviétiques, voire le 52-e anniversaire de la Révolution russe d'octobre. Déçu, tout seul, sans horizon, il se sentait étranger dans son propre pays :

...il était curieux de voir combien de fenêtres seraient ornées de drapeaux rouges qui, en cette année de défaite, n'étaient que des aveux de soumission. Il y en avait plus qu'il ne s'y attendait...Il s'était arrêté devant sa maison natale. Au deuxième étage où habitait son frère, un grand drapeau, affreusement rouge resplendissait. Une longue minute, sans sortir de voiture, il l'avait contemplé ; puis il avait démarré. Pendant le voyage de retour, il avait décidé de quitter le pays...Il était seul, divorcé, sans enfants, libre. Il s'était dit qu'il n'avait qu'une seule vie et qu'il voulait la vivre ailleurs. (Kundera : 67)

Il faut souligner que Josef ne parle du tout de son exil au Danemark, de ses possibles épreuves. Tout ce qu'on apprend de sa vie de là-bas c'est qu'il a épousé une Danoise, qu'ils avaient une belle maison, un « chez-soi » dont il parle souvent et qu'ils ont mené une vie tranquille jusqu'à la mort de sa femme.

Quant à Iréna, elle dévoile beaucoup plus de son identité : venue d'une famille pauvre, elle s'est mariée à Martin, un garçon riche qui a cru d'abord au communisme pour devenir ensuite dissident. Elle partageait les mêmes idées et c'est pourquoi elle a suivi son mari lorsqu'il a pris la voie de l'exil ; en plus, elle a essayé de se libérer de l'emprise de sa mère qui, par sa vitalité et par sa nature lui avait créé un complexe d'infériorité au point d'écraser sa personnalité par sa simple présence. Elle raconte à son amie Milada les difficultés de l'exil que les compatriotes demeurés dans le pays ne peuvent pas imaginer. On apprend qu'elle était partie avec un bébé et un autre dans le ventre, qu'elle avait perdu son mari en France et qu'elle avait accepté au début des jobs humiliants pour gagner sa vie et élever ses deux filles. Son émigration s'avère être d'abord un trauma si l'on croit à ses rêves d'émigration.

En effet, dès les premières semaines Irena faisait des rêves étranges : elle était dans un avion qui changeait de direction et atterrissait sur un aéroport inconnu où elle voyait des hommes en uniforme, armés, qui l'attendaient ; c'était la police tchèque. La crainte et la sensation de sueur froide qu'elle éprouve semblent être des manifestations de « l'inquiétante étrangeté », une affection psychique assez fréquente chez les déracinés.⁵ Ce sentiment proche de l'effroi

⁵ «L'inquiétante étrangeté» est l'équivalent français de l'allemand « unheimliche » dont Freud fait l'analyse dans son essai *Das Unheimliche*. Il définit le concept faisant appel aux

et de l'angoisse est commun à tous ceux qui ont subi la terreur et la torture. Dans un autre rêve, elle se balade dans une petite ville française où elle croise un groupe de femmes étranges, chacune une chope de bière à la main, qui courent vers elle, l'apostrophent en tchèque et s'amuse avec une cordialité perfide. Epouvantée, Iréna se rend compte qu'elle se trouve à Prague et se met à crier, après quoi, elle se réveille. Martin, son mari, faisait les mêmes rêves de sorte que tous les matins ils se racontaient l'horreur de leur retour au pays natal. Après des discussions avec d'autres émigrants, Iréna se rend compte que tous les émigrés faisaient ces rêves, ce qui lui provoque une réaction ambivalente d'étonnement et d'agacement. Dans la conception de Kundera, c'est un phénomène commun à tous les déracinés, qu'il appelle génériquement « le rêve d'émigration » :

« comment l'expérience si intime d'un rêve peut-elle être vécue collectivement? qu'est donc son âme unique? Mais à quoi bon des questions sans réponses ? Une chose était sûre: des milliers d'émigrés, pendant la même nuit, en d'innombrables variantes, rêvaient tous le même rêve. Le rêve d'émigration: l'un des phénomènes les plus étranges de la seconde moitié du XXe siècle ». (Kundera : 21)

Tous ces rêves sont des cauchemars car les gens qui y apparaissent sont méprisants, agressifs et méchants. C'étaient des gens de leur pays natal qui les jugeaient et les condamnaient pour leur fuite. A Paris, la ville d'exil d'Iréna, les émigrants étaient d'abord acceptés pour leur souffrance et pour leur condition misérable. Ils devaient se soumettre aux règles de vie imposées par le pays d'accueil et continuer de vivre avec le complexe de l'étranger, avec une identité brisée, très difficile ou impossible à réparer. Les Français se sont formés des stéréotypes qu'ils véhiculent lorsqu'il s'agit des déracinés : ils doivent être un objet qui leur éveille l'intérêt par leur différence. Lorsque l'Histoire a changé et leur pays est devenu libre, ils ne sont plus aimables et tolérants. Leur attitude change comme celle de Sylvie, l'amie d'Iréna qui la condamne pour ne pas être rentrée à Prague au moment de la Révolution, devenant une traîtresse à ses

significations du mot antonyme « heimliche ». Ainsi fait-il une double découverte : d'un côté, « heimliche » renvoyant d'abord à ce qui appartient à la maison (« heim ») et, ayant en plus la connotation affective de l'intime, le familier étant parfois synonyme de son antonyme (le familier peut donc signifier ce qui inquiète). De l'autre côté, ce qui devient source d'inquiétude, a été à l'origine familier. Une partie importante de cet essai est consacrée à expliquer ce qui rend possible la transformation du familier en inquiétant. Ce sentiment proche de l'effroi et de l'angoisse est commun à ceux qui ont subi la terreur et la torture.

yeux ; elle ne joue plus le rôle d'un émigrant-type. C'est toujours son amie qui la pousse à faire le voyage à Prague, tout en lui parlant du Grand Retour. Le cas d'Iréna, en tant que déracinée, s'avère être très particulier. Malgré les épreuves dures du début de son exil, elle arrive, paradoxalement, à ressentir l'émigration comme « une issue », comme une libération des contraintes subies dans sa jeunesse :

Elle avait toujours considéré comme une évidence que son émigration était un malheur. Mais, se demande-t-elle en cet instant, n'était-ce pas plutôt une illusion de malheur, une illusion suggérée par la façon dont tout le monde percevait un émigré? Ne lisait-elle pas sa propre vie d'après un mode d'emploi que les autres lui avaient glissé entre les mains? Et elle se dit que son émigration, bien qu'imposée de l'extérieur, contre sa volonté, était peut-être, à son insu, la meilleure issue à sa vie. (Kundera : 153)

A Paris, elle se sent libre, indépendante, elle a regagné des appartenances identitaires perdues et, surtout, elle a un chez-soi, ce qui lui assure la stabilité. En fait, ce ne sont pas seulement les choses pratiques, le travail, l'appartement, les enfants qui la retiennent à Paris mais sa vie passée là-bas pendant vingt ans. Elle se plaît à présenter ces arguments devant son amie française, Sylvie mais aussi pour répondre aux questions de sa meilleure amie tchèque, Milada : « Mais, Sylvie ! Je vis ici depuis vingt ans. Ma vie est ici. » (Kundera : 10) ; « Comme si elle voulait esquiver ce sujet, Milada dit : - Alors est-ce que tu finiras par te décider un jour ? ...Qu'est-ce qui te retient à Paris ?...Mon appartement à moi, mon indépendance. » (Kundera : 151)

Il faut admettre que les deux protagonistes de même que d'autres émigrés vivent dans un entre-deux permanent :deux espaces - ici /la bas (le pays d'accueil/la terre natale)- et deux segments temporels – avant /maintenant. Ce va-et-vient imaginaire caractérise la vie psychique de tout déraciné. Iréna vit elle aussi une sorte de schizophrénie lorsque des paysages antinomiques de son pays apparaissent d'une façon mystérieuse devant ses yeux . Pendant le jour, de petits coins de Prague, calmes et beaux, alternent avec des scènes de son quotidien parisien. La nuit, ce sont des images de cauchemar de la même ville qui font peur et qui rendent impossible le retour :

Le même cinéaste du subconscient qui, le jour, lui envoyait des morceaux du paysage natal telles des images de bonheur, organisait, la nuit, des retours effrayants dans ce même pays. Le jour était illuminé par la beauté du pays abandonné, la nuit par l'horreur d'y retourner. Le jour lui montrait le paradis qu'elle avait perdu, la nuit l'enfer qu'elle avait fui. (Kundera : 22)

Les personnages principaux sont scindés entre l'envie de retrouver leurs pays d'origine et la peur du Grand Retour ; l'entre-deux devient ainsi un catalyseur de nostalgie.

La nostalgie

Quelles que soient les raisons du déracinement, il peut générer un déséquilibre émotionnel et mental ; la perte de la patrie est pareille à la perte de l'être le plus cher, la mère et elle postule un long, interminable « travail de deuil ». C'est Freud qui dans « *Deuil et mélancolie* » accorde une place importante à la perte de la patrie dans la définition du deuil.⁶ L'emploi en psychanalyse du mot « nostalgie » fixant une équivalence entre le regret pour l'absence, la perte ou le manque de l'objet aimé et le désir obsédant au retour dans le pays d'origine constitue une source de douleur psychique et de maux corporels. Même si au début la terre natale est porteuse de danger, de menace ou de destruction, elle devient un point d'appui et commence progressivement à faire figure de paradis perdu dans l'imagination de tous les exilés. Étudiée sous différentes approches –médicale, psychanalytique, philosophique-la nostalgie a donné naissance à de nombreuses formes lexicales, désignant le concept même ou les états qu'elle provoque. « Le mal du pays », le mot allemand « Heimweh », ou le mélodieux portugais « saudade », voilà toute une série synonymique qui désigne le sentiment douloureux de l'arrachement au pays natal.⁷ (Tourn : 52-53) On parle aussi de « position nostalgique », « état nostalgique », « objet nostalgique », « regret nostalgique », « travail de la nostalgie », « espace nostalgique », « temps nostalgique » - voilà autant de syntagmes qui montrent la variété des concepts que la nostalgie met en jeu. Nous rappelons ici tout cet « arsenal » parce qu'il peut être identifié chez les héros du roman.

⁶ Selon Freud, la mort d'un être cher, l'abandon dont on est l'objet lorsqu'on est quitté par la personne aimée provoque un travail de deuil chez le sujet. Pour l'exilé, l'impossibilité de retour dans le pays, que ce soit temporaire ou définitif, la privation plus ou moins durable de liberté, constituent des situations de perte. Mais le travail de deuil qu'elle déclenche n'est pas valable pour tous les types de perte; la mort de l'être cher correspond à la perte irréversible de l'objet aimé. A la place de la personne aimée, Freud propose trois variantes- patrie, liberté, idéal; par ce choix, il suggère le rôle qu'ont certaines valeurs dans le processus identificatoire du déraciné.

⁷ Comme le montre Lya Tourn dans *Chemins de l'exil. Vers une identité ouverte*, le terme « nostalgie », tel qu'il est connu aujourd'hui date précisément de 1688 lorsque le médecin suisse Johannes Hofer de Mulhouse l'a employé et décrit dans sa thèse *Dissertatia medica de nostalgia*. Pour conférer un air scientifique à la maladie étudiée, il combine deux mots grecs: « nostos » (« retour ») et « algos » (« souffrance »). Il la définit comme maladie avec un syndrome clinique déterminé: des troubles somatiques graves, associés à la dépression et liés à l'obsession douloureuse de retourner au pays natal. Les cliniciens de l'époque ont apporté des contributions à l'étude de la maladie et se sont accordés d'établir que, par rapport à la mélancolie, elle avait un objet défini: le pays natal et qu'il était possible d'en guérir grâce au retour à ce lieu quitté.

Il faut signaler aussi l'existence d'un autre terme synonyme à la nostalgie, la « Sehnsucht » qui définit toujours un sentiment, à savoir, l'aspiration douloureuse du retour au passé.⁸ Même si la nostalgie peut être provoquée et entretenue par des souvenirs, à l'aide de la mémoire, elle n'est pas du tout un souvenir mais un désir du passé. C'est par cela même qu'elle ressemble à la mélancolie qui à l'origine désignait la souffrance des amoureux pour l'objet de leur amour ; mais dans le cas de la nostalgie, ce « desiderium amore » est remplacé par « desiderium patriae » (Starobinsky : 52)

Dans le deuxième chapitre de son roman, Kundera présente lui aussi une véritable histoire de la nostalgie. En dehors d'une étude étymologique du mot, il fait une incursion dans plusieurs langues européennes pour éclaircir le concept. Par ce bréviaire sémantique, l'écrivain se montre un spécialiste de ce sentiment qu'il associe avec Ulysse, le Nostalgique de l'humanité. D'ailleurs, son histoire et même des passages de l'*Odysée* alternent avec l'histoire des personnages. Ceux-ci peuvent feuilleter le livre dans divers endroits comme dans l'hôtel où se rencontrent les deux anciens amis, Irena et Josef.

Mais le grand aventurier est aussi le héros du retour ; il souffre d'être loin de son Ithaque et veut à tout prix revenir même s'il était heureux dans les bras de Calypso. Et puis il y avait Pénélope qui l'attendait. L'écrivain le considère comme un repère auquel il fait souvent appel pour comparer l'évolution de ses héros. Il se pose la question si Iréna, bien qu'accablée par la douleur nostalgique pourra échapper à « la hiérarchie morale des sentiments » pour être capable du retour définitif. Dans le cas de Josef, ce sentiment est complètement absent mais dans son cas, le retour devient-il moins douloureux ?

Kundera surprend chez Irena et Josef les différentes formes de manifestation du sentiment dans sa double expression « Heimweh » ou « Sehnsucht. L'émergence de la douleur nostalgique se produit graduellement ou bien elle peut éclater subitement avec violence. Il convient d'accentuer que la nostalgie s'accroche d'abord au paysage ; quand il est question de nostalgie, il est

⁸ Vers la fin du XIX-e siècle, la nostalgie disparaît de la nosologie psychiatrique et entre dans la langue courante pour désigner un sentiment . Le terme se confond avec la "Sehnsucht" (de "sehnen" qui signifie "aspirer à", "soupirer après", "regretter") de la pensée et de la littérature romantique allemandes, où il désigne un état d'âme qui se manifeste par une quête incessante d'un passé regretté, porteur imaginaire de toutes les vertus de bonheur et de consolation. Il y a des écrits romantiques allemands où le thème du paysage et du corps se répondent, en parfait écho, à travers des équivalences signifiantes. A la différence de la "Sehnsucht" romantique, la nostalgie de l'exilé n'est pas une fuite imaginaire dans un espace-temps idéalisé comme alternative au présent hostile mais elle surgit suite à la disparition brutale d'un paysage quotidien et qui était le support du familier dans le passé.

toujours question de géographie. Et nous pouvons ajouter qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un site ordinaire, mais d'un paysage sacré, « d'une géographie pathétique, d'une topographie mystique dont la seule toponymie, par sa force évocatrice, met déjà en branle le travail de la réminiscence et de l'imagination. » (Jankélévitch :277) A n'importe quel détour du chemin, une perception sensorielle du présent convoque d'un coup une certaine image d'un lieu passé. Il faut d'ailleurs accentuer que la nostalgie est étroitement liée à la « sensorialité ». Comme le remarque Lya Tourn « l'exilé languit après la couleur du ciel de son enfance, après les images du paysage familier gardées au fond des yeux, après les recoins bien-aimés et mille fois parcourus..., après les sons et les musiques, les odeurs et les parfums évocateurs, les goûts propres à la nourriture du pays natal ». (Tourn : 49)

Mais le retour ne le guérit pas, au contraire sa nostalgie s'intensifie car il a du mal à reconnaître l'image transformée de l'endroit. Ce sont alors les souvenirs qui s'emparent de lui et l'aident à retrouver le lieu paradisiaque. Quels en sont les attractions ? Si l'on réfléchit bien, le lieu natal n'a rien d'abstrait, au contraire, il est bourré de réalités, c'est un univers totalement concret. Comme Iréna n'a pas eu le temps de faire ses adieux à sa ville chère avant le départ en émigration, elle veut la re-découvrir pour s'y réconcilier. Prague se présente à ses yeux comme un espace idyllique avec ses quartiers, ses ruelles, ses couleurs et ses parfums :

Sur le trottoir, elle s'arrête, ensorcelée. Sous le soleil de l'automne, ce quartier de jardins parsemés de petites villas révèle une beauté discrète qui lui serre le coeur et l'invite à une longue promenade...Vue de là où elle déambule, Prague est une large écharpe verte de quartiers paisibles, avec de petites rues jalonnées d'arbres. C'est à cette Prague qu'elle est attachée...à cette Prague née vers la fin du siècle passée, la Prague de la petite bourgeoisie tchèque, la Prague de son enfance où, en hiver, elle faisait du ski dans ces ruelles qui montaient et descendaient, la Prague où les forêts d'alentour, à l'heure du crépuscule, entraient en secret répandre leur parfum ». (Kundera : 125)

Pendant les vingt ans d'absence, elle a gardé dans sa mémoire cette facette de sa ville, la Prague éternelle que sa mémoire relie aux noms illustres d'écrivains comme Kafka, Macha ou Skvorecky ; c'est ce « parfum incommunicable », cette « essence immatérielle » de son pays qu'elle a emporté en France. Paradoxalement, en comparaison avec Prague, Paris lui semble hostile, dominé par l'esprit géométrique.

A cette image de sa ville natale s'oppose celle de la Prague fragile : la ville-kitsch des cartes postales, envahie par les touristes, la Prague des réclames en anglais, des commerçants, des restaurants chers inaccessibles au Tchèque ordinaire, la Prague de son ami suédois Gustaf. D'ailleurs il a ouvert un bureau

de sa firme dans cette ville cosmopolite qui souffre d'anglomanie comme le montre parmi d'autres son propre tee-shirt portant l'inscription « Kafka was born in Prague ». (Kundera : 128). Le désir nostalgique d'Iréna répète et, en même temps, met en question celui d'Ulysse qui est profané.

Josef rentre dans le pays natal pour garder la promesse faite à sa femme, d'y revenir après la chute du communisme. Il n'y retrouve rien de ce qu'il a connu, tout a changé car « le balai invisible du temps » a uniformisé son visage : « pendant son absence, un balai invisible était passé sur le paysage de sa jeunesse, effaçant tout ce qui lui était familier ; le face-à-face auquel il s'était attendu n'avait pas eu lieu. » (Kundera : 53) Le temps a mis son empreinte partout dans sa ville de province où il retrouve à peine le cimetière avec la tombe de sa mère. Tout en lisant les noms des morts de sa famille sur la stèle du caveau, il se rend compte qu'il n'a jamais reçu un faire-part ; il revit le complexe du déraciné, il n'existe plus pour les siens. D'ailleurs, dans la maison paternelle habitée à présent par son frère il revoit son ancien tableau fauviste et observe ses vêtements et sa montre chez son frère. Il éprouve un certain malaise se rendant compte que le retour définitif ne serait plus possible. Si, depuis toujours, il avait une nature différente de celle de son frère, étant le rebelle de la famille, cette différence s'est approfondie pendant son absence, le rendant étranger à tous. Ni la famille ni son ancien ami de jeunesse ne lui posent aucune question sur sa vie au Danemark, sur sa femme, sur rien.

Iréna se trouve dans la même situation lorsqu'elle rencontre ses anciennes amies ; elles refusent le bordeaux qu'elle leur offre pour fêter leur rencontre et préfèrent boire de la bière. Aucune question sur sa vie à Paris, sur la mort de son mari, sur ses enfants, sur rien de ce qui est liée à sa vie d'exil. Cette indifférence renforce sa conviction que le Grand retour ne peut pas avoir lieu. Dans le cas des deux protagonistes, on peut parler d'un sentiment nostalgique particulier, à savoir, la souffrance de l'ignorance que l'écrivain essaie de définir à l'aide de l'équivalent espagnol de la nostalgie, « anoranza », et du verbe latin « ignorare » : « sous cet éclairage étymologique, la nostalgie apparaît comme la souffrance de l'ignorance. Tu es loin et je ne sais pas ce que tu deviens. Mon pays est loin et je ne sais pas ce qui s'y passe. » (Kundera : 12). Cette ignorance est due surtout à la mauvaise relation entre la nostalgie et la mémoire : plus on est nostalgique, plus la mémoire est faible. Plus le désir du retour est fort, plus la mémoire se vide de souvenirs de sorte que la nostalgie « suffit à elle-même, à sa propre émotion, toute absorbée qu'elle est par sa seule souffrance. » (Kundera : 13)

Iréna ressemble à Ulysse par le fait qu'elle ne fréquente pas ses compatriotes à l'étranger. Josef souffre lui aussi de cette amnésie mais l'écrivain lui donne un autre diagnostic : « déformation masochiste de la mémoire » (Kundera : 73). Il

ne se rappelle que des choses dégoûtantes et des scènes humiliantes de son passé.

Les héros de Kundera souffrent aussi de l'impossibilité de revivre les beaux moments de leur passé. L'irréversibilité du temps constitue aussi une source de la nostalgie comme le croit le philosophe Vladimir Jankélévitch. La mobilité dans l'espace est possible puisqu'il est homogène et isotrope, la mobilité dans le temps, l'ubiquité est impossible, « c'est la plus folle chimère de l'être fini. » (Jankélévitch : 300). En outre, le philosophe souligne le rôle de la conscience lucide de la séparation et de l'absence, faisant en même temps des références au cas de l'exilé. L'homme a le pouvoir de s'absenter sur place, d'être présent physiquement dans un certain endroit mais très loin par son imagination. Cet ailleurs de la nostalgie est un ailleurs natal qui a été autrefois un ici. L'exilé, « il a une double vie, et sa deuxième vie, qui fut un jour la première et peut-être le reviendra un jour, est comme inscrite en surimpression sur la grosse vie banale et tumultueuse de l'action quotidienne. L'exilé tend l'oreille pour percevoir le pianissimo des voix intérieures à travers le vacarme tonitruant de la rue, de la Bourse et du marché ; ces voix intérieures, ce sont les voix du passé et de la ville lointaine et elles chuchotent leur secret nostalgique dans la langue de la musique et de la poésie. » (Jankélévitch : 281)

S'il existe un espace nostalgique, il y a aussi un temps nostalgique car, comme le soutient Jankélévitch, tout le passé, tout ce qui fit partie de notre temps vital forme l'objet « d'un attachement infini ». L'enfance et la jeunesse constituent les segments temporels les plus heureux de la vie humaine et c'est pourquoi le regret nostalgique de ces âges est fréquent chez Irena mais aussi chez Milada, son amie. Même si elle n'a pas quitté le pays, elle éprouve la nostalgie du bon vieux temps, la béatitude de ses amours de jadis, de sa beauté de jeune fille. C'est la temporalité irréversible qui provoque cette irrémédiable séparation entre les moments de la vie.

Même si au début de leur retour, les déracinés de Kundera n'excluaient pas la possibilité de demeurer dans leur pays libre, son nouveau visage et les expériences vécues pendant leur séjour les déterminent à rentrer dans leur pays d'adoption.

Conclusion

Dans *L'ignorance*, l'histoire des personnages déracinés se croisent à celle d'Ulysse et aux réflexions personnelles de l'écrivain. Les deux protagonistes reviennent en Bohême mais, à la différence du Grand Nostalgique rentrant à Ithaque, il n'arrive rien de magique. Personne ne les attend. Tout a changé. Leur pays est devenu un parmi d'autres, n'ayant rien gardé de sa singularité. Josef ne

retrouve plus les paysages ni la topographie de son cher village que sa mémoire avait momifié. A son tour, Irena recherche en vain sa Prague de jadis et la complicité de ses amies restées au pays. Les deux émigrés découvrent une réalité plus cruelle : les repères sont devenus flous, ils errent comme des intrus dans leur propre pays, les conversations auxquelles ils participent sont pleines de souvenirs insignifiantes et de mensonges. Ils n'existent plus pour leurs compatriotes, on ne les comprend pas car « les gens ne s'intéressent pas les uns aux autres, et c'est normal » (Kundera : 47). En exil, ils sont des étrangers, de retour au pays ils se rendent compte qu'ils ont le même statut ; dans leur cas, il s'agit d'une double étrangeté. Leur rapport au temps est quand même différent : Iréna magnifie son passé et souffre de nostalgie tandis que Josef tue son passé (la destruction de son journal de lycéen pourrait en témoigner) et n'éprouve pas de douleur nostalgique. Mais tous les deux, de même que les autres personnages du roman représentent une forme d'ignorance. Sylvie, l'amie française d'Iréna possède un discours dur, Iréna, vivant en France ne connaît plus la réalité de son pays, Josef, au Danemark a oublié le bon vieux temps de sa jeunesse. C'est une nouvelle approche sur la nostalgie que l'écrivain a définie et expérimentée dans son livre. Ses émigrants n'éveillent pas la pitié, ils ont gardé la dignité malgré les vicissitudes endurées le long du temps. Ils se différencient non seulement par la présence/absence du sentiment nostalgique mais aussi par la relation avec les autres. Iréna veut faire partie de la lignée des émigrés illustres, victime du discours dominant, tandis que Josef est victime de lui-même.

Roman de la nostalgie, de la solitude et de l'incompréhension, *L'Ignorance* trahit aussi le rapport de Kundera avec son pays d'adoption et avec sa langue. En même temps, par cette histoire, il revient sur son expérience de la chute du communisme dans son pays natal et se pose la question d'y revenir. Il s'interroge aussi sur la vision homérique de l'exil, prenant comme repère Ulysse ; si le déracinement a toujours impliqué le désir nostalgique du retour au pays, il est fort possible que l'homme européen puisse explorer sa condition d'apatride spirituel sans retour et sans ailleurs.

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Meaning and Significance. Notes on Henry James' *The Aspern Papers*

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Abstract: Henry James novella invites a reading that highlights many controversies among latter-day literary theorists concerned with such issues as the availability of textual meaning or the validity of interpretation(s). The deliberate ambiguity underlying the text deconstructs the consecrated categories of critical interpretation and is responsible for the relativization of meaning, the unreliability of the narrator or the open ending- all of them markers of the modernist fiction that James illustrates *avant la lettre*.

Key-Words: culture, experience, fiction, meaning, ambiguity, interpretation, credibility

The work of Henry James, the American who chose to live in England (and who aspired “to write in such a way that it would be impossible to the outsider to say whether I am...an American writing about England or an Englishman writing about America”, James, 1920: 72) is conventionally thought to illustrate, at least partially, the encounter between two cultural spaces: the presumed innocence of the New World and the tradition-sanctioned experience of the Old. However, such a statement has to be further qualified since the thematic complexity of the work, notwithstanding its stylistic sophistication, forecloses any hasty appraisal which is, ultimately, simplistic and reductionist. Be it only because the afore-mentioned spaces were not on an equal cultural footing at the time. Young, puritan America, with its excess of geography and deficit of history, still in search for a culturally usable past was, ironically, too small for ‘the passionate pilgrim’ whose condition the young writer assumed in the title of an early collection of short prose (*The Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales*, 1875). For his interest lies not in landscapes, factual history or social issues. What his heroes finally learn through their literal expatriation in Europe is the accompanying sense of a metaphysical exile, the strong sense of human loneliness together with the idea that knowledge of self and of the others is never complete.

To the tradition of the English novel of manners- Jane Austen is one of his favourite authors-, James brings an international, cosmopolitan outlook and a

temperament that has been educated to take an aesthetic view at reality and experience. His spiritual mentors were John Ruskin, Mathew Arnold and Walter Pater who elevated high culture into a new religion. Likewise, James and his heroes will look for “an ideal city of art”, whether it be Rome, Paris or, eventually, London. They all follow the path of emotional and cultural initiation, an idea symbolically suggested by the image of the boy thirstily drinking from the fountain of experience in his *Roderick Hudson* (1876), set in Rome. In this respect, Jonathan Friedman is right to affirm that the Jamesian heroes in their peregrinations through Europe cover a space “where national and cultural identity exists[...] as something to be made, not something given, in a world where no possibilities of identity-formation are being conjured forth by an internationalizing economy organized by leisure, travel and mass culture” (Friedman: 11)

Like his brother William’s philosophy, James’s work is essentially a search for knowledge in an increasingly complex reality that requires an increasingly intense self-awareness and concentration from the observer. In the words of Malcolm Bradbury, James has always held

the pragmatist’s presumption that perception and experience are not commonsense matters but formative crises of consciousness, an idealist belief that knowing reality is always a pursuit, an endless aesthetic and social quest [...]. That American quest for reality among the murky depths of Europe, its buildings, social practices, ancestries and hieroglyphs would drive his fiction persistently toward new types of inquiry, so that his work as a whole becomes an elaborate search for the sufficient impression and the significant form- an essential foundation of all modernist fiction. (Bradbury: 214)

The knowledge of Europe requires a certain shift of sensibility from a pragmatic morality and a direct, “familial-paternal” type of intergenerational relations to a social model patterned on more or less transparent hierarchies, “rites of passage, mundanity and frivolity of urban life” (Jucan: 112-113). Social reality, then cannot be apprehended directly since it is culturally and behaviourally encoded and thus escapes interpretation. Hence, the crisis of communication and the arduous search for meaning in the hair-splitting, circular, slow, digressive and convoluted conversations that the Jamesian heroes have. As a result, the authorial construction and the critical reconfiguration of meaning is one of the most serious challenges that James’ fiction presents to the reader.

In hindsight, the deliberate ambiguity of such shorter pieces as the *Turn of the Screw*, *The Figure in the Carpet* or *The Aspern Papers* is particularly relevant for the latter-day critical debates on the relation between the (implied)author, narrator, text and (implied) reader, on the availability of meaning and on the

validity of interpretation(s). Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1960) suggests the general framework for modern hermeneutics after having rejected both the quest for objectivity, characteristic of the Enlightenment and the subjectivity of the Romantics. In trying to articulate, dialogically, the ways in which *subject* and *object* are in continuous interplay, he coins the term of *horizon* to indicate the circumstances under which human *understanding* (grounded in *history* and *language*) exists. Moreover, he holds that any interpretation begins in *pre-understanding* constituted by the received prejudgments from our tradition. This means that one cannot speak of a right or unique interpretation: since our historical horizons change continuously, so will our understanding of the text produced by an author from within his historical horizon reflected in the text. Consequently, understanding is the event whereby we bring the prejudgments of our tradition onto the historical horizon of the text, through interpretation, making possible "a fusion of horizons" (Gadamer: 9) and, in so doing, bridging the text and our own prejudices. The desired outcome of such a process is a heightened cultural sensitivity, an opportunity to expand the boundaries of human self-awareness. As a consequence, one has to reject, equally, the tendency to equate meaning with either the subjectivity of the interpreter (the affective fallacy), or with the author's intentions (the intentional fallacy).

The various contemporary orientations in the field of modern literary theory regarding the idea of meaning and its availability through interpretation tend to follow either an essentialist, anti-historical type of criticism, or an approach that sees meaning as context-related. The first type is text-centered and tends to be elitist, even reactionary in its extreme stances, the latest stage in liberal scepticism. It abhors contamination and goes by such names as New Criticism, formalism, semiotics, (post) structuralism or deconstruction. It proclaims, with Roland Barthes, "the death of the author", reduces reality to a "hypertext" or speaks, in the voice of Derrida, of "dissemination" and "undecidability" of meaning.

The second type, on the contrary, continues to believe that meaning is still a valid category of interpretation, that in a literary text "something" is being communicated to "someone", in such a way as to trigger a particular reaction. The defense of meaning is undertaken by different critical voices that may vary in their doctrinary positions from, say, the hermeneutic stances of E. D. Hirsch or the Constance School of reception aesthetics, to Bakhtin's dialogism or Foucault's "genealogy" or "archeology". According to Umberto Eco, all important critical theories of the last decades start from or tend to some revisions of the New Criticism and they can be either semiotic or hermeneutical.

The first trend, grounded in the Saussurean linguistics, draws attention to language as a text-making force at the expense of the subject. Barthes, before proclaiming ‘the death of the author’, stripped him of all metaphysical status and reduced him to a crossroads of linguistic utterances. He denies the notion of authorial intention and substitutes for it that of a textual “Scriptor” who exists only in the time of the text and its reading. Post-structuralist theories reconsider the status of the subject and that of language from various perspectives: Foucault blurs the distinction between author and discourse and speaks of a “fundamental author”; Lacan’s psychoanalysis attributes to the unconscious the structure and character of language; Derrida’s deconstruction challenges the very metaphysical bias of Western philosophy that valued such notions as truth, reality, speech and subjectivity.

The second critical trend takes as a model Roman Jakobson’s structure of linguistic communication based on the triad *addresser-message-addressee* and the focus on one of the terms helps to define various types of critical ‘schools’: biographical and psychological criticism is concerned with the first; (post) structuralist and semiotic approaches deal with the second, while the reader-response criticism focuses on the relation between the work and the reader, giving it different degrees of centrality.

A more balanced position is that of E. D. Hirsch who reconsiders the issue of authorial intention and defends the idea of a stable textual meaning. His first distinction, in *Validity of Interpretation* (1967) is that between *description*, addressing the author’s intention, and *evaluation*, which proceeds from the context of the work and that of the reader. The dichotomy is further refined in his subsequent critical study, *The Aims of Interpretation* (1976) in terms of *meaning*, i.e., that which is in the text and *significance*, i.e., that which is supplied by the reader, concluding that “while meaning is a principle of stability in any interpretation, significance embraces a principle of change” (Hirsch: 2-3) Much in the same vein is Umberto Eco’s position which holds that the aim of interpretation is to look for what the text says in accordance with its own contextual coherence and accompanying cultural codes, without taking it as the expression of the author’s intention. In other words, “it is necessary that any discussion about the freedom of interpretation should start with defending the literal sense” (Eco: 26). For Robert Scholes, too, meaning is “the shared experience of the reader and writer...our experience of content”(17), while for David Lodge, literary meaning and artistic value are the result of associating “the subjective reaction and the objective text, aiming at exhaustive explanations and a consensus of judgements”(75).

Henry James's *The Aspern Papers*, first published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 1888 can be taken as illustrative for the interplay between subjectivity and objectivity, not only in what concerns the relation between authorial intentionality and the response of the reader/critic, but also in what concerns the relation between fact and fiction in the genesis of the novella. Or of the "tale", as James would describe his fictional narratives which present a single incident and which, because of their length, stand halfway between the novel and the short story. Or of the "moral fable for historians and biographers" (7) as Leon Edel, the editor of the complete, American edition of James's works preferred to call it.

Both personal experience and social gossip contributed to the birth of the story and James' translation of fact into fiction recalls the distinction that Margolis operates between something "true" and something "plausible"(Margolis: 49) In this respect, the opposition between the factual and the fictional is helpful at this point. In a notebook entry, dated June, 12th, 1887, James reveals that the source of the story was an incident mentioned to him by the British poet Eugene Jacob Lee-Hamilton about a cerThe work of Henry James, the American who chose to live in England (and who aspired "to write in such a way that it would be impossible to the outsider to say whether I am...an American writing about England or an Englishman writing about America, James, 1920: 72) is conventionally thought to illustrate, at least partially, the encounter between two cultural spaces: the presumed innocence of the New World and the tradition-sanctioned experience of the Old. However, such a statement has to be further qualified since the thematic complexity of the work, notwithstanding its stylistic sophistication, forecloses any hasty appraisal which is, ultimately, simplistic and reductionist. Be it only because the afore-mentioned spaces were not on an equal cultural footing at the time. Young, puritan America, with its excess of geography and deficit of history, still in search for a culturally usable past was, ironically, too small for 'the passionate pilgrim' whose condition the young writer assumed in the title of an early collection of short prose (*The Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales*, 1875). For his interest lies not in landscapes, factual history or social issues. What his heroes finally learn through their literal expatriation in Europe is the accompanying sense of a metaphysical exile, the strong sense of human loneliness together with the idea that knowledge of self and of the others is never complete.

To the tradition of the English novel of manners- Jane Austen is one of his favourite authors-, James brings an international, cosmopolitan outlook and a temperament that has been educated to take an aesthetic view at reality and experience. His spiritual mentors were John Ruskin, Mathew Arnold and Walter Pater who elevated high culture into a new religion. Likewise, James

and his heroes will look for “an ideal city of art”, whether it be Rome, Paris or, eventually, London. They all follow the path of emotional and cultural initiation, an idea symbolically suggested by the image of the boy thirstily drinking from the fountain of experience in his *Roderick Hudson* (1876), set in Rome. In this respect, Jonathan Freedman is right to affirm that the Jamesian heroes in their peregrinations through Europe cover a space “where national and cultural identity exists[...] as something to be made, not something given, in a world where no possibilities of identity-formation are being conjured forth by an internationalizing economy organized by leisure, travel and mass culture” (Friedman: 11)

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Both personal experience and social gossip contributed to the birth of the stork-tail Captain. [Edward] Silsbee, an art critic from Boston, who found out that Clare Clairmont, Shelley’s sister-in-law and also Byron’s mistress (the mother of Allegra), now extremely old, was still living in Florence with her niece, younger Miss Claremont of about 50. Silsbee knew they had important letters the two poets had exchanged and, in order to get hold of them, he planned to come to Florence and lodge with the two ladies. When the old one dies, the young one is willing to give him the letters if he will marry her. (An echo here of Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun* and of the fate of the American art lover abroad).

Later, in the *Preface* to Volume XII of the American edition of his works, the writer expresses his surprise at learning that Miss Clairmont had been living in Florence “up to our own days” but also his wish not to have seen her in person, but instead to let “the minimum of valid suggestion” challenge his imagination, together with his intention “to alter the Florentine legend considerably”. Dismissing the rumoured facts somewhat hurriedly, James states that for the writer “the interest would be in some price that the man has to pay” (Curtis, 11; 42).

To pursue such an “interest” James changes some of the details of the tale: the setting shifts from Florence to Venice and the palace where the two old ladies live- with “the air of a Protestant Sunday”- is the fictionalized house of his friend, Katherine De Kay Bronson, Mrs. Bronson (the Mrs. Prest of the novella), a distinguished socialite and hostess from New York who would repeatedly entertain the writer in her house during his visits to Venice. (Gale: 93-94). Further on, the two ladies are Americanized, the poet is not a Romantic anymore but a contemporary. Finally, the name of the niece is Miss Tita, in the original version, but Miss Tina in the American edition. In all other respects, Henry James’ tale respects the general frame of the anecdote that he had heard and indeed, focuses on the “price” that the protagonist has “to pay”, a statement that has to be taken both literally and figuratively.

The anonymous narrator is an American literary scholar who comes to Venice in the hope of taking possession of the papers of the deceased American poet,

Jeffrey Aspern, “one of the most brilliant minds of his day” and also “one of the most genial men and one of the handsomest”. The documents he covets are, presumably, in the hands of his former mistress, the aged Juliana Bordereau who now lives in Venice, with her shy niece Tina, on a small amount of money regularly sent to her from America. At the suggestion of his friend, Mrs. Prest, the narrator rents rooms from her, undeterred by the shameless price of one thousand francs per month, since this would be “the compensation of extracting the papers from her”, an urge that he feels with the intensity of an almost erotic desire. The greedy old aunt, who seems to possess a sort of “esoteric knowledge” encourages the two young people to spend time together, whether in the garden he has grown or on the channels of Venice and even offers to sell the man a portrait of Aspern for, again, an inflated price. When Juliana gets sick, the narrator sneaks into her room and tries to purloin the letters. The climactic moment of the narrative occurs when the man is caught red-handed by the watchful old lady: she shames him terribly, calls him a “publishing scoundrel” and then collapses. He flees and when he returns to the place in a few days, he learns that Juliana is dead and buried. In a final conversation, Tina hints that, now, she could let him have the papers if only he were a member of the family: “If you were a relation it would be different”. Taken unawares, the narrator runs away and when he returns, practically decided to propose to her, i.e., pay the price, Tina informs him that she has burnt all the papers, one by one.

The difficulty of eliciting a stable meaning from the text, or of disambiguating the deliberate ambiguities is the result of the narrator’s unclear position and equally of Tina’s qualities and mixed motives. The narrator appears as a skillful mixture of professional ruthlessness and personal obtuseness and, yet, he is not without the reader’s sympathy. As a co-editor of Jeffrey Aspern’s work (together with John Cumnor, “my English fellow worshipper”), he seems to be pushed by the ardent desire to come into possession of the documents and transacts his way at whatever price, be it the price for the rent or that for the portrait. To the same purpose, he goes to pains to grow flowers in the garden of the rented house, or takes Tina for a day out on the canals. His intellectual commitment seems to be total as long as it does not engage his emotional self. We are on quicksand here and James does not help much. The last marriage transaction is but a suggestion which he hesitates to follow. Is he really prepared to propose to Tina and would the ‘transaction’ be worthwhile?

Similar questions occur in the case of the niece (Is she really Juliana’s niece or, maybe, her daughter by the deceased Jeffrey Aspern?). One may wonder whether she is the repressed Victorian spinster, faithful to the aunt and to the memory of the great poet, or simply a woman emotionally, if rather late,

aroused to the possibility of love and marriage. Or is the whole novella a huge mystification, based on the false assumption that the papers do exist? The supposition is not entirely unfounded. (Did Miles and Flora of *The Turn of the Screw* really see ghosts, one cannot help wondering?)

If that be the case, then the novella is yet another *tour de force* on the part of James and an exemplary illustration of the modernist writer's relativization of truth through the ongoing transactions between the meaning of the text and the significance that the reader gives it.

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Impressionist Autobiographies: Henry James, Joseph Conrad and Ford Maddox Ford

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Abstract: The impressions of perceiving consciousness in literature must be rendered uniquely. Literature is not painting. The techniques of impressionist painting and literature bear some similarities, but even greater differences exist. Some of the techniques of painting may occasionally translate into writing, especially when representing visual perception (for instance presenting physical objects from limited viewpoints), but the difficulty lies in seeing impressionism's techniques determining its underlying philosophical concerns rather than impressionism's underlying philosophical concerns determining its techniques.

Key words: impressionist, techniques, perception, consciousness

Although impressionist art and literature share similar philosophical concerns, their techniques for representing those concerns usually differ considerably because of the differing media they employ. In *Characteristics of French Art*, Roger Fry associates atmosphere and point of view with impressionist painting. Others also identify sharp juxtaposition of colors, innovative use of light, and the use of “empathetic and evocative brushwork” as common techniques in impressionist painting. Furthermore, some commentators have also linked the fragment, or fleeting moment, to impressionist painting. Because impressionism originated in the visual arts and because of the movement's importance in the history of the visual arts, most critics of impressionist literature have looked at it in the light of techniques of impressionist visual arts. James Kirschke, for instance, defines literary impressionism in a fashion “that accords more precisely with the techniques as derived from Impressionism in painting.” (Kirschke 1981: 15) Problems arise, however, when critics identify the techniques of impressionist painting and then insist on transferring them to impressionist writing. For example, Beverly Jean Gibbs writes, “[T]he impressionistic writers tried to do with color what the impressionistic painters did with the effects of light and shade.” (Gibbs 1952: 177). Ferdinand Brunetiere remarks of Daudet's writing that “you will find that [it] is the method of procedure of none but a painter. The imperfect tense, here, serves to prolong

the duration of the action expressed by the verb and stops it - makes it stand motionless - after a fashion, before the very eyes of the reader. ”(Brunetiere 1972: 223)

Similarly, some critics see representation of light, juxtaposition of colors for emphasis, and hazy atmospheric conditions as characteristics of impressionist writing. The impressions of perceiving consciousness in literature must be rendered uniquely. Literature is not painting. The techniques of impressionist painting and literature bear some similarities, but even greater differences exist. Some of the techniques of painting may occasionally translate into writing, especially when representing visual perception (for instance presenting physical objects from limited viewpoints), but the difficulty lies in seeing impressionism's techniques determining its underlying philosophical concerns rather than impressionism's underlying philosophical concerns determining its techniques.

More important than clarifying the relationship between impressionist painting and literature, though, is the problem of denning impressionist epistemology itself. In short, impressionists - whether in the literary or visual arts - sought to represent the interaction between human consciousness and the objects of that consciousness. Much of this interaction appears as sensory perception, particularly visual perception, but this process should not be limited solely to visual perception or even to sensory perception in general. For example, in Stephen Crane's “The Open Boat”, the characters' confusion over whether the man on shore is waving a coat or a flag, Joseph Conrad's various narrators' views of Jim in *Lord Jim*, the irregular movement of time in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*, the variety of views of the revolutionary idea in Conrad's *Nostromo*, and the contrasting perceptions of the space of Russia in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* are all examples of impressionist renderings of objects of consciousness. Regardless of the particular object of consciousness, though, impressionists represent an individual human consciousness interacting with phenomena at a fixed point in space and time.

In addition to recognizing the nature of objects of consciousness, identifying the relationship between subject and object is also important. For many critics, this has proven elusive; some see impressionism as essentially object-oriented, while others see it as subject-oriented. In other words, an object-oriented, or objective, view sees impressionists presenting an object as it projects itself onto human consciousness; while the subject-oriented, or subjective, view sees impressionists rendering only idiosyncratic, emotional responses to the object. Both objective and subjective views have also influenced more recent critics, and both are only partly correct. Laforgue suggests that impressionists eliminate

cultural influence (particularly artistic conventions), but that is not wholly possible since no one can completely escape cultural influences. More important, though, the objective view excludes the subject's personal experience from the process, and so a physical object, for instance, may be perceived (to a certain extent) divorced from cultural influences but still appear the same to any observer who can forget conventional thinking about visual perception. As a result, the objective view eliminates part of the subject's subjectivity and does not posit an individual epistemological experience. Nevertheless, Laforgue correctly asserts that impressionists do not allow cultural conventions to rule their art and those they make a conscious effort to set aside outside influences and render the object as it actually appears at a specific moment.

The divergence of objective and subjective views partly explains why one critic may see Howells and Bennett as impressionists (because of their objectivity), while another may see Woolf and Joyce as impressionists (because of their subjectivity.) This dualist perspective is further problematized because it works from a Cartesian subject/object split. In fact, impressionist representation lies neither solely with the subject nor solely with the object but rather in the space between the two. In this way, impressionism diverges from both positivism and idealism. Positivism saw reality in the object - the external world. Idealism saw reality in the subject - the internal world. Impressionism mediates these extremes and posits the necessary existence of both subject and object - but not from a dualist position; rather, the two merge such that their outlines blur. In Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" for example, Marlow transforms the space of the African wilderness into a dark and brooding expanse that holds the secret to the nature of human existence. At the same time, though, Marlow himself is transformed by his experience with that wilderness, and in this epistemological encounter it is impossible to tell for certain where Marlow's outlines end and those of the wilderness begin.

Positivism, idealism, and impressionism all represent change occurring in the interaction between subject and object. But while positivism and idealism render a one-sided change, impressionism renders a two-sided exchange. For positivism, since reality exists outside the subject, objects may change subjects, but the objects themselves remain the same regardless of who experiences them. On the other hand, for idealism, since reality exists within the subject, subjects may change objects, but the subjects themselves do not change because all objects are part of the subject. However, neither impressionism, neither positivism (which minimizes subjectivity) nor idealism (which minimizes objectivity) accurately represents the epistemological process. In contrast to these polarized views, impressionism presents subject and object in constant change through their mutual influence.

As a result of impressionist epistemology, an object of consciousness is different for different subjects. Conrad's *The Shadow Line* provides a good example of this contrast. When the narrator first sees his new command, he says: "I knew that, like some rare women, she was one of those creatures whose mere existence is enough to awaken an unselfish delight. One feels that it is good to be in the world in which she has her being". (Conrad 1993: 101) Others may see simply a mode of transportation, but for the new captain the ship is much more: the culmination of many years' work - a reward and emblem of his professional success. The narrator then goes on to say: "An enormous baulk of teak-wood timber swung over her hatchway... When they started lowering it the surge of the tackle sent a quiver through her from water-line to the trucks up the fine nerves of her rigging, as though she had shuddered at the weight. It seemed cruel to load her so". To those loading the ship, it is like any other - no more than a receptacle for cargo. As a result of their shared cultural past, the dock workers and the new captain perceive this physical object to be a ship, but because of different personal pasts, they perceive that same object very differently. Nor does an object necessarily remain the same for a particular subject at different moments in time and different locations in space.

Despite the fact that almost exclusively subject-oriented movements such as surrealism and subject-oriented techniques such as stream of consciousness appeared primarily after impressionism, their presuppositions already existed in nineteenth-century idealist thought. Impressionism rejected idealism's attempt to produce objects - particularly external objects - solely from the workings of human consciousness. Idealism emphasized the subject over the object. But for impressionism, although subjectivity may alter an object, that object is also altered by its physical surroundings, and so subjectivity may influence but cannot single-handedly produce an object. Otherwise, no consensus could exist concerning the nature of a particular object. For impressionism, a ship, for instance, would appear differently to different people, but all would agree it is a ship.

When impressionists represented what they actually experienced as opposed to what cultural conventions told them they should experience, the objects of consciousness they rendered became individual rather than universal.

In order to represent this individual point of view through which objects of consciousness filter (the crux of all impressionist theory), impressionist writers have employed a variety of narrative techniques. Some of these techniques include achronology, *in medias res*, central consciousness, limited point of view, and multiple narrators.

Achronological narrative is perhaps best represented in the works of Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford. Ford argues that a novel “is not a sort of rounded, annotated record of a set of circumstances... This is the impression, not the corrected chronicle.” (Ford 1964:122) Elsewhere, he outlines this theory more fully, suggesting that the problem with the English novel was that it went straight forward, whereas in your gradual making acquaintanceship with your fellows you never do go straight forward. You meet an English gentleman at your golf club. He is beefy, full of health, the moral of the boy from an English Public School of the finest type. You discover, gradually, that he is hopelessly neurasthenic, dishonest in matters of small change, but unexpectedly self-sacrificing, a dreadful liar, but a most painfully careful student of Lepidoptera and, finally, from the public prints, a bigamist who was once, under another name, hammered on the Stock Exchange... To get such a man in fiction you could not begin at his beginning and work his life chronologically to the end. You must first get him in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past.

According to Ford then, historically, the novel - even the realist novel - had been guilty of unreality; it was a “corrected chronicle” that transformed the immediate epistemological experience into an organized account, taking unorganized incidents projected onto human consciousness at different times and places and organizing them into an ordered, chronological narrative. However, Ford believes human beings do not experience phenomena in such an ordered fashion: “[W]e saw that Life did not narrate, but made impressions on our brains.” (Ford 1964: 134) Human beings piece together experience from one place and another, from one time and another. Through his use of impressionist techniques, Ford consistently demonstrates his desire to accurately represent human consciousness interacting with its objects, to keep the author from getting “between the reader's legs” and to draw the reader into the novel's world. In *The Good Soldier*, Ford's narrator Dowell explains this technique:

[W]hen one discusses an affair - a long, sad affair - one goes back, one goes forward. One remembers points that one has forgotten and one explains them all the more minutely since one recognizes that one has forgotten to mention them in their proper places and that one may have given, by omitting them, a false impression. I console myself with thinking that this is a real story and that, after all, real stories are probably told best in the way a person telling a story would tell them. They will then seem most real. (Ford 1999: 254)

This passage explains why Dowell narrates achronologically: both to represent the manner in which a storyteller sometimes introduces details out of sequence

and to make the story real for the reader. Conrad takes achronology to an even higher level in such works as *Nostramo*, *Lord Jim*, and *Chance*. In these novels, time sequences are radically dislocated and force the reader to put together the events achronologically.

In contrast to impressionist narratives, the ordered narration of pre-impressionist novels presents the world of a universal observer. Whether omniscient or non-omniscient, these narrators organize phenomena so that the reader experiences an ordered existence. Omniscient narrators organize phenomena and provide the reader with a breadth of information that is inaccessible in reality. Similarly, the non-omniscient narrators also mediate the epistemological process. Even though they are not omniscient, first-person or limited third person narrators still employ organizing techniques - that is, rather than presenting phenomena as the subject actually experiences them, they organize that information into a coherent chronicle through the narrator's reflections. Even such first-person narratives as *Jane Eyre* (which includes scenes dealing with the narrator as a child and actually captures the flavor of that earlier time) are still mediated by the later narrator's reflection and by the ordered nature of the narration itself. For impressionism, traditional narrators do not present phenomena the way human beings experience them. The temporal distance such narrators evoke necessarily alters the initial experience, and they lose the immediate workings of consciousness. In contrast, the impressionist novel tries to represent the immediate epistemological experience, so the reader almost becomes the one encountering phenomena, just as the characters do, but not in the after-the-fact reflection of traditional narrators; rather the impressionist novel tries to place the reader into the scene at the actual moment of experience. In so doing, impressionists "invite and control the reader's identifications and so subject him to an intense rather than passive experience." (Ford 1964: 1400). As Ford explains, "We in turn, if we wished to produce on you an effect of life, must not narrate but render impressions." Similarly, Stephen Crane argues, "You must render: never report." (Crane 1871: 133) In "Heart of Darkness" Conrad creates just such a rendered scene when Marlow overhears a conversation between the Central Station manager and his uncle in which they "made several bizarre remarks: "Make rain and fine weather - one man - the Council - by the nose - bits of absurd sentences that got the better of my drowsiness" (Conrad 1990:89). The conversation does not make sense because of Marlow's drowsiness, as only disconnected phrases impinge upon his consciousness. Shortly afterwards, Marlow loses other parts of the conversation: "They moved off and whispered" (Conrad 1990:91). Only afterwards can Marlow partly piece together the meaning of the conversation. In fact, not until he reaches the Inner Station several months later does he fully understand certain parts of the conversation. Consequently, just as Marlow must

piece together the meaning of the conversation from the snatches he hears, so also must the reader.

Impressionist *in medias res* narrative techniques are a variation on a-chronological narration, and again their purpose is to demonstrate that phenomena filter through a single consciousness. Such narratives place the reader in the position of the narrator, and hence the reader encounters phenomena as present occurrences - not the narrator's past experiences of events. For example, in Conrad's "The Brute" as the story opens, the narrator enters a tavern while a conversation is in progress and hears one man say, That fellow Wilmot fairly dashed her brains out, and a good job, too!... I was glad when I heard she got the knock from somebody at last. Sorry enough for poor Wilmot, though. That man and I used to be chums at one time. Of course that was the end of him. A clear case if there ever was one. No way out of it. (Conrad 2010: 10)

Not until several pages later do both the narrator and reader learn that Wilmot dashed the brains out of a ship - not a woman. In this instance, Conrad represents the way a listener must piece together a story from an unorganized narration. This technique also differs from more traditional *in medias res* techniques in which the fictional characters have knowledge of prior events while the reader does not; instead, in impressionist *in medias res* both the characters and the reader are ignorant of prior events. In "The Brute" the narrator's experience of the events is altered by the fact that the information is gathered without the benefit of encountering the events from their beginning. And so, like the narrator, the reader enters the conversation *in medias res* and must experience phenomena piecemeal, without the aid of a narrator's after-the-fact organizing of the experience. This technique's advantage is its immediacy, as the reader discovers information at the same moment the narrator does.

Central consciousness is other technique literary impressionists sometimes employ and is most closely associated with the later fiction of Henry James. In his works, James employs what may initially appear to be an omniscient narrator; however, it soon becomes apparent that the narration is not omniscient but rather a rendering of the workings of a single or central consciousness. This main character then becomes the medium through which the reader also encounters the events of the narrative. Often, a disparity results between the central character's perception of a situation and that of other characters. For example, in "The Tree of Knowledge" Peter Brench sees actions and events in a particular way. He believes he possesses knowledge that no one else does: that his friend Morgan Mallow is a terrible artist. Brench also feels he makes a great sacrifice by protecting Mallow's wife and son from this knowledge, believing that such knowledge would devastate them. He even thinks Mallow's wife

would leave him if she realized how bad an artist he is. Only at the end of the story does Brench discover that Mrs. Mallow has always known that her husband is a terrible artist. With this discovery, it becomes clear that all of the phenomena in the story first filter through Brench's consciousness before the readers encounter them.

Closely related to central consciousness is limited point of view. In fact, the two techniques sometimes overlap. Their difference typically lies, though, in the fact that central consciousness appears only in third person narratives and usually (if not always) employs a single consciousness to filter phenomena. In contrast, limited point of view can appear as either first- or third-person narration, and when it appears as a third person narrative it usually does not single out a particular individual's consciousness to filter phenomena, but rather moves from one consciousness to another, as for instance occurs in *Nostramo*. Limited point of view is similar to traditional first-person and limited third-person narratives, except that while traditional narrators emphasize more what the narrator knows, limited point of view narrators emphasize what the narrator does not know. Ford's narrator Dowell in *The Good Soldier* is a good example: "But, looking over what I have written, I see that I have unintentionally misled you when I said that Florence was never out of my sight. Yet that was the impression that I really had until just now. When I come to think of it she was out of my sight most of the time. " (Ford 1999:98) Dowell's limited understanding of the novel's events, as well as his biased interpretation of them, reveal that he is the medium through which the information in the novel passes and is altered as a result.

Finally, the multiple narrators' technique is similar to first-person limited point of view narration. Multiple narrators were a significant departure from traditional narration in which a single narrator guided the reader through the course of events. In a sense, employing multiple narrators is simply limited point of view multiplied. Instead of a single narrator who relates his or her own individual experience of phenomena, multiple narrators each experience phenomena differently and thus emphatically show that subject and object alter each other and are affected by the context in which they occur. Conrad employed this technique to good effect in such works as *Heart of Darkness*, *Chance*, and *Lord Jim*. In *Lord Jim*, for instance, many narrators appear in the novel, and the physical context together with the narrator's subjectivity circumscribes their perceptual experience. Marlow tells us this when he says that Jim "existed for me, and after all it is only through me that he exists for you. I've led him out by the hand; I have paraded him before you" (*Lord Jim*: 224). Even more explicitly, Marlow remarks to his privileged listener, "It is impossible to see him [Jim] clearly - especially as it is through the eyes of

others that we take our last look at him” (Lord Jim: 339). Conrad demonstrates that each narrator perceives Jim differently and then interprets that information differently. As a result, none has a complete picture of Jim. For example, Stein says Jim is a romantic (Lord Jim: 216). Cornelius says he is a fool (Lord Jim: 397). Jewel says Jim is false (Lord Jim: 350). These narrators (as well as others) assume they accurately perceive Jim, and in a sense they do in that Jim conforms to their perception. In other words, Jim acts the romantic Stein perceives him to be. He acts the fool Cornelius perceives him to be. He acts falsely as Jewel perceives him to be. However, Jim is not necessarily each of these in essence, but rather the other characters' points of view present different perceptions of Jim. Jewel already perceives Jim to be false when she first meets him because all western men are false. Similarly, Jim acts like a fool, not necessarily because he is one but because Cornelius thinks Jim's code of honor is foolish. As a result of the blurred distinctions between perceiver and perceived, the perceiver's own subjective characteristics and physical point of view, as much as Jim's essential characteristics themselves, present Jim in the light they do. Each is a different Jim, as his outlines blur with those of the perceiver. Both multiple and limited point of view narrators dramatize the limitations of a single consciousness to comprehend phenomena other than individually, and thus knowledge itself is revealed to be limited as well.

All of these narrative techniques depend upon the limitations of the characters' knowledge and understanding for their effect. However, even when impressionists do employ omniscient narrators, either these narrators contrast with other human narrators and thus emphasize the limited nature of human consciousness, or the narrative takes on characteristics of a non-omniscient narrative and presents phenomena in an achronological, piecemeal manner. Such narrators also often withhold information from the reader, so their effect is much like that of any other limited narrator. Watts argues of *Lord Jim* that “Conrad's omniscient narrator here [during the *Patna* incident] pretends to be strictly limited to the point of view of an actual observer at the time of the occurrence.” (Watts 1988: 5) Conrad achieves this effect throughout the opening chapters of *Lord Jim*. Even though an omniscient narrator relates this part of the novel, the reader still remains in the dark about a number of important issues - not the least of which is whether the *Patna* sank (which the reader does not learn until much later) and what caused the accident in the first place (which the reader never does learn for certain). The omniscient narrator also presents information piece by piece in a non-chronological time line, emphasizing human narrative limitations by presenting information that the other narrators cannot know. In fact, this omniscient narrator is as important to the novel in its contrast with the limited point of view of the other narrators as it is in revealing information that is unavailable through the other narrators.

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The Fear of the Feminine in Alfred Tennyson's *Maud*

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Abstract: The present paper makes a text-based analysis of the poem *Maud*, one of the masterpieces of Victorian poetry, reinterpreting its protagonist from a modern perspective, taking into account definitions of some psychiatric disorders and focusing analysis on the fear the protagonist experiments in front of the woman.

Key Words: Emotional instability, fragmented ego, paranoia, schizophrenia, fear.

1. Starting Point. Qualities.

When Tennyson published *Maud* in 1855, critics responded with quite a lot of hostility, one of them saying that the title contained too many vowels and the removal of either one would be equally satisfactory. The starting point of the poem was a lyric, "*Oh! That 'twere Possible*", composed in 1833-1834, soon after the death of his close friend Arthur Hallam and published in a book, *The Tribute*, in 1837. The poem is narrated by its protagonist, a highly sensitive young man whose father has committed suicide after the failure of a financial speculation. He loves Maud, the daughter of the man responsible for his father's ruin, but her family wants to marry her to a young aristocrat. After a violent culmination in which the narrator kills Maud's brother and possibly Maud too, the protagonist seeks to solve his personal dilemma by enlisting in the Crimean War. It was a work close to Tennyson's heart. Robert Browning read *Maud* four times and declared it a great poem. The qualities that alienated the reviewers and that appealed to Browning - the subjective viewpoint, the oblique and fragmentary approach to narrative, and the exploration of morbid self-consciousness - mark it as one of Tennyson's most advanced productions.

2. Mistakes in the Critical Reception of The Poem

Although the Victorian audience did not receive the poem positively, *Maud* sold quite well. Neither the literary audience, nor the critics were ready to understand the poem first of all because they committed the same mistake as in Byron's case: identifying the poem's protagonist with its author. This identification was possible because of several reasons:

- The initial title of the poem was *Maud or the Madness*.
- Tennyson had a family history of abuse, paranoia, violence and alcohol consumption. His father and brother Arthur made their cases worse by excessive drinking. His brother Edward had to be confined in a mental institution after 1833.
- He had a lifelong fear of mental illness, for several men in his family had a mild form of epilepsy, considered then a shameful disease.
- As a young man, he was lonely and depressed, experienced religious doubts and feared for his sanity.
- In 1843, Tennyson's emotional difficulties, aggravated by financial ruin and increasing hypochondria, led him to voluntarily commit himself to a sanatorium run by Dr. Matthew Allen in which he underwent the water cure, a then-popular treatment which involved avoidance of smoking, drinking, and medication, and the drinking of copious amounts of water to cleanse the system.

3. Material and Method

Using the text of the poem we will apply the definitions of several psychiatric disorders in order to demonstrate that the unnamed protagonist of *Maud* cannot be labelled as normal, suffers from emotional instability and has a fragmented self.

4. Definitions

According to <http://www.thefreedictionary.com>, paranoia is:

- a mental disorder characterized by systematized delusions ascribing hostile intentions to other persons, often linked with a sense of mission.
- extreme, irrational distrust of others.
- a psychotic disorder characterized by delusions of persecution with or without grandeur, often strenuously defended with apparent logic and reason.

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fourth edition (*DSM-IV*), the diagnostic standard for mental health professionals in the United States, lists the following symptoms for paranoid personality disorder:

- suspicious; unfounded suspicions; believes others are plotting against him/her
- preoccupied with unsupported doubts about friends or associates
- reluctant to confide in others due to a fear that information may be used against him/her
- reads negative meanings into innocuous remarks
- bears grudges

- perceives attacks on his/her reputation that are not clear to others, and is quick to counterattack
- maintains unfounded suspicions regarding the fidelity of a spouse or significant other.

According to <http://www.answers.com> schizophrenia is a collection of related psychiatric disorders of unknown aetiology that follow a specific pattern of behaviour. Typical behaviour seen in schizophrenia includes psychotic episodes in which there is a severe mental disturbance and perceptions of reality are distorted. Psychotic episodes may also involve hallucinations. Schizophrenics often have delusions about personal identity, immediate surroundings or society, and paranoia. Schizophrenia has a component of heredity, but many factors other than genetics are involved.

5. The Fear of the Feminine and Psychiatric Issues

We will also analyse the text having in mind the process of separation that our protagonist applies to himself and to everybody else.

From the very first stanza of the poem the protagonist can be described as at least *interesting*, as he declares himself to be fascinated by *hatred, blood, horror and death*:

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribbed ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is asked her, answers Death.

In the second stanza we are given details of his father's death, but he proves to be more interested in the details of his father's dead body than shocked by the news, at the same time demonstrating a passion for morbidity and an emotional distance from his parent:

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life. O father! O God! was it well?
Mangled, and flattened, and crushed, and dented into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

The fourth stanza comes with another interesting detail: our protagonist was shocked by his mother's reaction, not by his father's death:

And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

The fifth stanza witnesses the beginning of the process of separation, the personal pronoun *we* (you +I) gradually being transformed into *you* (*villains*), and *we* consisting now of *he+I* (*pure*):

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drained.

The next stanzas carry on the opposition (by now) between *we* and *they*, our protagonist demonstrating symptoms of paranoia, fearing the public evil influence upon the pure private self

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age why not? (Maud, VIII)

and declaring himself publicly in favour of war rather than commercial peace

Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones. (Maud XII)

Stanza XIV, in which our protagonist fears a similar fate to that of his father,

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die

comes to evidence another paranoid symptom in the lines

Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shattered limbs and a wretched swindlers lie?

A process of total rejection, fear and separation from society comes in stanza XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?

Maud enters the narrative of the monodrama bringing a multiple threat, a multiple *curse* (Maud XIX) to the protagonist:

- Maud is beautiful.
- Maud is a representative of *them*; thus posing a threat to his pure, superior self.

- Maud may bring him the *curse of love*: love means involvement, action and presence, things he is incapable of.

In the following stanzas our protagonist is busy deconstructing Maud's beauty, following the principle: a perfect beauty means a perfect threat; if he is able to find a flaw in her, the threat she poses is not perfect anymore. And, lucky him, he is able to find some flaws:

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
 Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hours defect of the rose,
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen. (Maud II)

Our protagonist continues the processes of separation he started in the first part, following the paranoid logic: if Maud is to become his beloved, she will have to fulfil his standards, his *laws*, his conditions, and the first condition is that Maud has to be separated completely from her father (who is responsible in his mind for his father's death) and from her brother

When have I bowd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bowd: (Maud III)

The young decentered protagonist continues building his own pure universe away from society, denying involvement in and responsibility for public life:

I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.
 Be mine a philosophers life in the quiet woodland ways,
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot, (Maud VIII, IX)

The most dangerous threat posed to his pure, private self is love:

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
 The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill. (Maud X)

because love means action and involvement, things he is incapable of.

Maud starts fulfilling his conditions as he sees her alone singing of war, Death and Honour (Maud, V - I, II) all of them things very close to his heart. But in order for her to be perfectly acceptable to him, Maud has to undergo a process of complete depersonalization, to be totally *separated from herself*:

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice. (Maud V- III)

In order for him to be completely fit for Maud, he also has to undergo a process of separation from masculinity which he perceives as animal, evil, sexual and aggressive

What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oild and curld Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof (Maud VI-VI)

Another paranoid symptom surfaces when our protagonist suspects that everybody is plotting against him:

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool. (Maud VI-VII)

Now his perception of femininity is completely changed. We could say that our protagonist is suffering from *a complex of the mother*, as the mother image(s), both Maud's mother and his, are associated with goodness, perfection and delicacy. Their perfection might also be a direct result of the fact that both mothers are dead. Let us not forget at the same time that, in his opinion, Maud as a woman is a pitiful thing:

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good? (Maud VI-VIII)

Maud VI-X comes with another paranoid symptom, as the protagonist is suspicious about Maud's intentions:

Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seemd,
And her smile had all that I dreamd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

Although love is unknown to him

Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet (Maud XI-I)

by now Maud started becoming acceptable to him and he continues the process of separation, this time separating her and himself in a private universe constructed out of his personal fantasies, a private universe governed by his own laws:

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her, (Maud XII-I).

The young protagonist completes the process of separation, making a clear-cut distinction between Maud, her mother, her father and her brother. In his mind Maud has inherited only the perfection of her mother

And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:
Tho I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Her mother has been a thing complete, (Maud XIII-III)

at the same time not being related at all with her father (responsible for his father's death) or with her brother, who has inherited the whole sin of the murder from his father

However she came to be so allied.
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin:
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heaped the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,

All, all upon the brother. (Maud XIII-III)

Our protagonist becomes aware of the fact that there is something wrong with him, revealing at the same time that he is not only incapable of claiming a woman as his own in love, of loving somebody, but also of loving himself. He is an emotional vampire who needs to feed from somebody else's love so that he could be able to project some of that love on himself:

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if I be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much to fear;
But if I be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea even of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else. (Maud XV)

The first part of Maud ends with our protagonist inviting Maud to come into his own private but dead universe, a garden full of roses and lilies.

In an unnarrated duel that takes place between the first and the second part, the young protagonist kills Maud's brother putting an end to his Hamlet-like paranoid logic of revenge. Killing Maud's brother (who inherited the whole sin of the race) he is actually striking at her father whom he holds responsible for his father's death. Much to his surprise, he finds out that Maud cries for her brother just as his mother cried for his father:

And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood:
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die. (Maud II-I-I)

Symptoms of schizophrenia, mainly delusions, with distorted perceptions of reality, surface in the second part of the poem:

Is it gone? my pulses beat
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land. (Maud II-II)

The above mentioned lines are also pointing to the fact that he might have killed Maud too. The stanza goes on with his invocation of divine, public punishment for personal guilt:

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust;
We are not worthy to live. (Maud II-II)

There are several other lines in the second part pointing to the fact that he might have killed Maud too during the duel: the mentioning of the pure lovely shell which stands now as a very powerful symbol for Maud. Both of them are pure, lovely, delicate, fragile and dead.

Our protagonist does not even remember what he did and questions himself

Am I guilty of blood? (Maud II-IX),

darkly suspecting that a severe punishment is awaiting him, something more horrible than death:

She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

an obvious reference to the Life-in-Death motif in ST Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

The most obvious schizophrenic symptoms surface in the fifth part of the second part in which our protagonist has delusions about being buried a yard beneath the street, belonging neither to the world of the living, nor to the world of the dead, but being accused by both, just like the Ancient Mariner:

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,

Clamour and rumble, and ringing and clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so;
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad. (Maud II-V-I).

This episode also comes with a highly ironical connotation. In the first part he isolated his father and himself in a sphere superior to all humankind who was considered to be lowly and murderous. The irony is even more powerful when we think that he has become exactly what he despised (a murderer) and is now situated in a position inferior to that of the humankind he hated and despised so much.

As James R. Kincaid (2002) states: “The poem ends with the hero about to begin his growth. But no destination is given in Maud, only a vision of a world and a self in motion. It is a motion that implies a definite but unclearly defined unity.”

The third part of the poem comes with a realization

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing:
My mood is changed. (Maud III-VI-I)

Our protagonist is not yet ready to accept the world as it is, but he has found a solution for himself to be able to cope with the world. Until now he has directed his violent impulses towards himself and sadly towards other people, now he is able to direct his violence towards others in organized, socially accepted patterns: he goes to the Crimean war.

The narrator can finally go

to a cause that I felt to be pure and true (Maud III-VI-III)

to the war he so much loved and admired in the first part in order to find himself and to be reintegrated in the world. He has to undergo the *Trial by war*, to immerse himself in the world so that he can come out anew, not ready to accept life as it is, but to live it.

Roy P. Basler (1944:154) argues that “He is not completely cured of psychic illness, but has merely exchanged one obsession, self-destruction, for another, self-sacrifice in a noble cause.”

We would have agreed with Basler, had it not been for the last line in *Maud* in which our protagonist tries to find a religious significance and justification for his deeds, thus proving that he is not yet cured.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assignd. (Maud III-VI-V)

6. Conclusion

Our protagonist is a walking bomb of psychiatric disorders, ready to explode at any minute, most of them caused by the trauma he suffered as a child, by his obsession with the mother image and by his fear of any other significant female presence. Although he is not yet completely cured, and we think he never will be, at least he has found a viable solution for himself to be able to be part of the world he so much despised in the beginning. He has found a partial curing solution for his wounded self by enlisting a socially accepted form of violence and killing: the Crimean War.

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Survival and Cognition in Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*

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Abstract: The paper is a Darwinian reading of Susanna Moodie's 19th century unconventional emigrant's guide: *Roughing It in the Bush*. It discusses the adaptive strategies that the author made use of in her struggle for survival in the Canadian backwoods and the way(s) in which her emigration narrative helped her fight her dismay with Canada and control the painful feeling of uprootedness.

Keywords: emigration, Canada, survival, literary Darwinism, Susanna Moodie

1. Introduction

Susanna Moodie (1803-1885), considered by many the grandmother of Canadian literature written in English, was a British born author, who gained world fame chiefly because of her autobiographical writings¹ that describe her experiences as a settler in Canada. Susanna Moodie came from an impoverished gentry family from Suffolk. Like many other creative, genteel but poor women of the day, she supplied her income by writing stories and poems for publication. In 1831 she married John Wedderburn Dunbar Moodie, an officer on half-pay, and together with her husband immigrated to Canada in 1832. By this move the Moodies hoped to improve their financial and social status, but the experience of pioneer life thwarted their hopes. Within four years they lost almost all the money they brought from England and were struggling for mere survival in the Canadian backwoods.

Roughing It in the Bush, a detailed account of the first seven years they spent in Canada, is an eccentric emigrant's guide, a veritable "oughtabiography" (Smith 199), a discourse of regret and discontent aimed to discourage middleclass English would-be-immigrants from settling in Canada. At the same time the book is a survival tale (The Moodies did not perish in the Canadian wilderness.) and the recount of a cultural shock and the ensuing effort of acculturation.

¹ *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852), *Life in the Clearings Versus the Bush* (1853), *Flora Lyndsay* (1854)

Henceforth I shall focus on these two aspects of the narrative, which I'm going to discuss from the point of view of Darwinian literary theory.

2. Literary Darwinism

Literary Darwinism is a new (about two decades old) departure in literary criticism, a resolute attempt to transform our whole way of thinking about literature. It is the study of literature that is informed by the findings of evolutionary social sciences, such as Darwinian psychology, Darwinian sociology, sociobiology etc. According to evolutionary or adaptationist social scientists, and literary Darwinists agree with them, the foundation of human culture is the *adapted mind*. Accordingly, culture is not causeless and disembodied, but generated in rich and intricate ways by information processing mechanisms situated in human minds, mechanisms which evolved in response to the demands of the Pleistocene hunting and gathering way of life².

Adapts of literary Darwinism believe that there is *a universal human nature*, that this human nature is the equivalent of evolved human psychology, that literary characters are representations of this evolved psychology, and that literary analysis should therefore be founded on an understanding of the evolutionary social sciences, especially of evolutionary or Darwinian psychology. They also believe that the function of literature and the arts is to facilitate the adaptation of humans to their environment.

In her essay entitled "Narrative Theory and Function: Why Evolution Matters" evolutionary psychologist Michelle Sugiyama observed that all cultures, irrespectively of their level of development, had narratives, and that these had the same basic form in all cultures, a form involving characters, goal-oriented action and resolution. Narratives, therefore, are human universals³. Now the question is why do we need narratives? What are the functions of narratives? In

²What we think of as human civilization -- something that started with the rise of, let's say of the Summerian, Indian, Egyptian etc. kingdoms -- and many things that we consider as part of normal life -- things such as government, education, health care, commerce etc. -- are just a few thousand years old. Our ancestors spent the last two million years as hunter-gatherers in a Pleistocene environment, and therefore, we may contend that the set of environment and conditions that defined the adaptive problems our mind was built to cope with was that of the Pleistocene environment and not modern conditions. This conclusion stems from the fact that the evolution of complex design (such as that of the human mind) is a slow process when compared with historical time. (Cosmides, Tooby and Barcow 3)

³ "Human universals--of which hundreds have been identified--consist of those features of culture, society, language, behavior, and mind that, so far as the record has been examined, are found among all peoples known to ethnography and history." (Brown: 47+)

other words, what is the adaptive function of artistic constructs such as literature?

According to American sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson, what differentiates humans from instinct-driven animals is “high intelligence, language, culture, and reliance on long term social contracts” (245). The unparalleled flexibility of response to variable environmental conditions of the human mind differentiate men from animals, which, though capable of some degree of specialized learning, are basically instinct-driven. Flexibility and intelligence, however, come at high costs, among which are “the shocking recognition of the self, of the finiteness of personal existence, and of the chaos of the environment” (Wilson 245). In a dangerous and challenging world that demands decisive action oriented to adaptively functional goals, confusion and uncertainty are potentially fatal disabilities. It is in order to cope with this challenge, Wilson argues, that human beings have created religion and the arts:

There was not enough time for human heredity to cope with the vastness of new contingent possibilities revealed by high intelligence. ...The arts filled the gap. Early humans invented them in an attempt to express and control through magic the abundance of the environment, the power of solidarity, and other forces in their lives that mattered most to survival and reproduction. The arts were the means by which these forces could be ritualized and expressed in a new, simulated reality. They drew consistency from their faithfulness to human nature, to the emotion-guided epigenetic rules-the algorithms-of mental development. (Wilson 225).

Literature and the other arts are indispensable for personal development, for the coherent internal organization of ideas and feelings, and for the organization of shared experience that makes collective cultural life possible. As Joseph Carroll explains,

In art, music, and literature, people make the forms of experience available to their own conscious minds and to those of others. When we speak of the literary or artistic ‘imagination,’ we mean to signify the complex, integrated set of cognitive, perceptual, and emotional faculties through which we articulate and communicate the felt quality of life. Imaginative constructs are both organized in conceptually intelligible patterns and also weighted with qualitative, subjective affects. The arts make a psychologically indispensable link between conceptual models of experience and the biologically constrained and emotionally mediated dispositions that in common usage we call ‘human nature’. (xx)

2.1. Joseph Carroll’s Model of Human Nature

The concept of human nature is central both to Darwinian social science and to Darwinian literary study. Adaptationist literary theorists argue that literature is produced by human nature, is shaped by human nature, and takes human nature as its primary subject.

According to evolutionary psychologists and Joseph Carroll, human nature is organized in structured sets of behavioral systems⁴ (see Fig. 1), and these systems are instrumental in promoting the largest life history goals, such as surviving, acquiring resources (both physical and social), acquiring mates, having sex, producing and tending children, helping kin. The behavioral systems identified by Carroll -- survival, technology, mating, parenting, kin relations, social interaction and cognition -- are built into the human organism.

Within each system, one can identify particular goals and directives called “evolved motive dispositions” (MacDonald qtd. in Carroll 200). Under survival, for example, we can identify evolved motive dispositions for avoiding predators, obtaining food, seeking shelter and defeating enemies; under parenting for nurturing, teaching and protecting children; under cognition for telling stories, painting pictures, forming beliefs and acquiring knowledge.

Each behaviour system is mediated by innate structures in the genetically conditioned features of anatomy, physiology, hormones, and neurochemistry. All of these mediating forces manifest themselves psychologically as emotions, the basic emotions, such as joy, sadness, fear, anger, contempt, disgust and surprise, being universal motivating forces in human psychology (see Fig. 1).

The main behavioral systems that subserve the largest life history goals are sensitive to the appropriate stimuli, but they are latent in all conditions of life. In most cases people accede to the psychological force of the total set of motivational systems that have been implanted in them by the logic of human life history. More often than not, people have a compelling need to give full and integrated play to the whole suite of their behavioral systems. Exceptions and special cases abound (for instance, not everyone wants to have children), but it is a general truth about human nature that people have a need to activate the latent capacities of the behavioral systems that have shaped the largest features of their bodies and their minds.

For most people, achieving satisfaction in life depends on the fulfilment of the emotional needs built into those systems. The mate selection system arouses

⁴ Behaviour systems are “functionally and causally related behaviour patterns and the systems responsible for them” (McGuire and Troisi 60).

desire and fulfils it in successful coupling. The parenting system arouses concern for children and achieves fulfillment in the successful rearing of children. The social interaction system arouses desire for forming coalitions and finding a place within a status hierarchy, and achieving those goals offers pleasure and provides a sensation of satisfaction. The cognitive behavioural system arouses a need for conceptual and imaginative order, and that need fulfils itself and provides satisfaction to the mind through the formulation of concepts, the construction of religious, philosophical, or ideological beliefs, the development of scientific knowledge, and the fabrication of aesthetic and imaginative artefacts etc.

Inclusive Fitness

Organization of Life Effort

Somatic		Reproductive				
Motivationally and Emotionally Active Field						
BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS						
Survival	Technology	Mating	Parenting	Kin	Social	Cognition
Avoid predators	Shape cutters	Assess and allure sexual partners	Nurse	Distinguish kin	Build coalitions	Tell stories
Obtain food	Shape pounders	Overcome competitors	Protect	Favor kin	Achieve status	Paint pictures
Seek shelter	Use levers	Avoid incest	Provision	Maintain kin network	Monitor reciprocity	Form beliefs
Defeat enemies	Attach objects		Nurture			Acquire knowledge
	Use fire		Teach			

Fear	Joy	Sadness	Anger	Disgust	Contempt	Surprise
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Fig. 1. Joseph Carroll’s Model of Human Nature

3. Survival vs. Cognition in *Roughing It in the Bush*

Roughing It in the Bush is an autobiographical writing, which retells the author-narrator-protagonist Susanna Moodie’s mortifying experiences of immigrant life in Canada. The book is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the arrival to Canada and the settling of the Moodies on Melsetter farm in Douro township; the second part is a description of their move to the Canadian backwoods and the hardships and misfortunes they had to endure on an uncleared farm on the banks of the Otonabee river. The account of events is often interrupted by various character sketches coloured by ethnic prejudices⁵, poems about Canada, and descriptions of local customs such as the Charivari or the logging bee. The Moodies failed as settlers and therefore *Roughing It in the Bush*, which was supposed to serve as an emigrant’s guide, contains little practical advice. Instead, the pages of the book are filled with descriptions of the disasters and misfortunes (diseases, severe winters, burning houses, failed crops, thieving neighbours etc.) that prey upon the unknowing immigrants, doing them out of the money they brought over from their native country. The book closes with the Moodies’ departure from the backwoods and moving into the town of Bellville, where Susanna Moodie’s husband was appointed sheriff in recognition of his military services during the Upper Canada Rebellion from 1837.

The central behaviour system activated in *Roughing It in the Bush* is the survival system which is most appropriate for a narrative on pioneer life. Indeed, one of the chief attractions of the book is the description of the various perils (social, spiritual, material etc.) that the Moodies struggle to survive. The basic tension in the novel, however, is not provided by the various hardships the Moodies encountered during their struggle for survival but by the struggle within the author’s point of view between the highest level of conscious human organization – the recognition of the primary need to survive, acquire material resources and nurture the young – and the cognitive behavioural system. This is but natural if we take into account the huge difference between the kind of life our authoress led before she immigrated to Canada and the kind of life she had to lead ever after.

⁵ Britons, such as Tom Wilson and Brian B. are sympathetic but fail as settlers, Canadian Yankees as Old Satan and Uncle Joe are rapacious and repulsive, the Indians are noble savages etc.

Susanna Strickland Moodie was born into a gentry family and spent her early youth in relative wealth at the family's substantial residence: Reydon Hall, near Southwold, Suffolk. Her father's, Thomas Strickland's, failure in business and subsequent death in 1818 left the family, mother and eight children, impoverished. They did the utmost to keep their house and social appearances, yet their poverty was all too obvious to their well-to-do neighbors (Moodie & Balstadt 3-4), with whom they could not afford to socialize. Susanna and three of her sisters tried to earn money through writing. At the beginning of her career, Susanna Moodie wrote stories for children but, later on, she published poems and sketches for adults in fashionable magazines and annuals. She knew how to cater for the tastes of the middleclass reading public, and her conventional, romantic stories made her name popular. A religious crisis (she left the Anglican Church and became member of the Congregationalist Church), her marriage to John Wedderburn Dunbar Moodie and their subsequent immigration to Canada played havoc with the deterministic, predictable and romanticized worldview of the slightly snobbish literary spinster.

Instead of the expected social and financial ascent, she had to face social isolation and a life of privation. The new country served "the wild Suffolk girl so full of romance" (Moodie and Balstadt 2) a veritable cultural shock⁶. Susanna Moodie was proud of her accomplishments as a writer, of her education, and of being an English gentlewoman. It was a shock for her to discover that in Canada none of her neighbours cherished these values. No wonder then that she disliked Canada almost from the first moment she set her feet on it

The evolved motive dispositions that determined the Moodies's move to Canada were the desire to improve their social status and the wish to provide for their children⁷. They believed that life in Canada was cheaper, and thought that the income that could barely keep their heads above the water in England, would secure them a comfortable life in Canada. They also believed that the

⁶ "The culture shock 'hypothesis' or 'concept' implies that the experience of visiting or living in a new culture is an unpleasant surprise or shock, partly because it is unexpected, and partly because it may lead to a negative evaluation of one's own and/or the other culture (Furnham 18).

⁷ "The ordinary motives for ... emigration ... may be summed up in a few brief words;— the emigrant's hope of bettering his condition, and of escaping from the vulgar sarcasms too often hurled at the less wealthy by the purse-proud, common-place people of the world. (...) They [the immigrants] go forth to make for themselves a new name and to find another country, to forget the past and to live in the future, to exult in the prospect of their children being free and the land of their adoption great." (Moodie 1856: 6)

improvement of their financial situation will bring about their ascent on the social ladder. On both accounts experience proved them otherwise.

The first hardship that they encountered was of a social nature. Melsetter farm (their first farm) was set amidst a hostile Yankee⁸ neighborhood. In vain did Susanna Moodie try to befriend the wives and daughters of their farmer neighbours, and build, as she was accustomed to, a supporting social network. It did not matter how friendly or serviceable she was, her kindness was constantly interpreted as act of superiority and none of her services (She lent quite a number of household objects to her insolent neighbours who never returned the “borrowed” items and refused to give her the minimal support that would have assisted her in the process of acculturation.) were reciprocated. Ethnic conflict – Canadian Yankees were prejudiced against English settlers⁹ – is a feasible explanation, but the roots of the problem ran deeper than that. The Moodies were conspicuously ill-fitted for the type of life they chose to lead in Canada. Their neighbours knew they would not last long¹⁰, and refused to invest into a short-time relationship with them¹¹. The clumsiness of the Moodies -- in the beginning Susanna Moodie could not milk (she was afraid of cows), could not bake a bread, could not wash or knit and her husband did not know how to work the land – convinced the neighbours of the imminence of their failure as farmers. Furthermore, Susanna Moodie’s helplessness and often apathetic behaviour – a natural reaction of someone experiencing cultural shock – was interpreted as an “invitation” to appropriate her household possessions¹². The following scene (The authoress recounts dozens of similar scenes.) is illustrative in this sense:

⁸ “Yankee: term used by Americans generally in reference to a native of New England and by non-Americans, especially the British, in reference to an American of any section. (...) By 1765 it was in use as a term of contempt or derision, but by the opening of the American Revolution, New Englanders were proud to be called Yankees.” (The Columbia Encyclopedia 2009: 52851)

⁹ ““Now, don’t go to call me ‘gall’ — and pass off your English airs on us. We are GENUINE Yankees, and think ourselves as good — yes, a great deal better than you. I am a young lady.”” (Moodie 46)

¹⁰ ““it is not long that you will remain here. I have seen a good deal in my time; but I never saw a gentleman from the old country make a good Canadian farmer. The work is rough and hard, and they get out of humour with it, and leave it to their hired helps, and then all goes wrong. They are cheated on all sides, and in despair take to the whiskey bottle, and that fixes them. I tell you what it is, mister—I give you just three years to spend your money and ruin yourself.” (Moodie 66)

¹¹ “People cooperate more when they believe their interactions will be repeated and exhibit ‘end game’ effects ... when the end of the game looms” (Kurzban and Neuberg 656).

¹² “Unconditional helpers [in our case the Moodies] will increase the fitness of any nonreciprocating design [their rapacious Yankee neighbours] they meet in the population. ... As a result, a population of unconditional helpers is easily invaded and outcompeted by designs that accept the benefits helpers bestow without reciprocating them” (Cosmides and Tooby 592).

"I guess you told me a tarnation big lie the other day."

Unaccustomed to such language, I rose from my seat, and pointing to the door, told her to walk out, as I did not choose to be insulted in my own house.

"Your house ! I'm sure it's father's," returned the incorrigible wretch." You told me that you had no *fine slack*, and you have *stacks* of it."

"What is fine slack?" said I, very pettishly.

"The stuff that's wound upon these 'ere pieces of wood," pouncing as she spoke upon one of my most serviceable spools.

"I cannot give you that; I want it myself."

"I didn't ask you to give it. I only wants to borrow it till father goes to the creek."

"I wish he would make haste, then, as I want a number of things which you have borrowed of me, and which I cannot longer do without."

She gave me a knowing look, and carried off my spool in triumph. (*Roughing It in the Bush* 48-49)

Eventually Susanna Moodie acquired the proper skills, usually a witty, brisk rebuff, that helped her deal with her nasty, insolent neighbours, but both she and her husband became so disgusted with them that when they inherited seven hundred pounds from one of Susanna's relatives, they decided to leave the hostile neighborhood and buy some uncleared land in the Canadian backwoods. The move benefited their social life – they lived next to Susanna Moodie's sister: Catherine Parr Trail, and the other neighbours (most of them middle-class English settlers) were also congenial – but proved fatal from a financial point of view. Unable to clear the land by themselves, they had to rely on hired help, and the costs of clearing the land exceeded their finances by far. This coupled with an imprudent investment of the rest of their small capital in some steamboat stocks that failed to pay, reduced the Moodies to poverty. They accrued considerable debts as well.

No longer interested in social ascent, wife and husband worked the land side by side to feed the growing family and to pay off their debts. Susanna became extremely resourceful: she made tea from the root of the dandelion as a substitute for coffee, learned to fish and to make sugar etc. When her husband joined the militia against William Lyon Mackenzie she managed to run the farm all by herself and made a success of it. Moreover she was invited to contribute articles to magazines such as *The Literary Garland* and *The North American Review* and started to earn money by her pen once again.

For all her success in farming, Susanna Moodie could never give up cognition, and financial reasons were the least of her reasons for keeping on writing. Writing had a therapeutic role in her life. It assisted her in making sense of the seemingly chaotic world in which she was plunged, of her failure as immigrant.

It also helped her to deal with the chronic bouts of homesickness that she suffered from for years.

An involuntary immigrant (it was her husband who decided that they should emigrate), Moodie found it extremely difficult to attach herself to her new environment. While she did not mention any somatic reactions to the new place (She did not lose her appetite, nor did she fall sick.), she suffered on a cognitive level: she missed her former home, her family, and her friends and had difficulties with adjusting to the routines and lifestyle of Canada. In *Roughing It in the Bush* she obsessively idealized “dear old England” and seemed to forget about the problems and hardships that made her leave it in the first place. On the other hand, she showed extreme aversion to Canada. Throughout the book she made use of the conventions of Gothic literature to describe the country, its inhabitants and the privations and hardships that she and her family had to endure. Thus in the book Canada is a “grave”, a “prison house”, her fear inspiring Canadian neighbours are “apparitions”¹³, “savages”¹⁴, and “creatures” and there seems to be no end to the disasters that pry on the unknowing immigrants.

Throughout the book Moodie, who was deeply religious, tried to invest the painful experience of her relocation to Canada with a metaphysical meaning. The fact that she and her family managed to survive various disasters, she attributed to a mysterious Providence that seemed to have brought the Moodies to Canada so as to enable the authoress to prevent, through her writing, other British families from immigrating to this land. Hence her concluding remarks:

If these sketches should prove the means of deterring one family from sinking their property, and shipwrecking all their hopes, by going to reside in the backwoods of Canada, I shall consider myself amply repaid for revealing the secrets of the prison-house, and feel that I have not toiled and suffered in the wilderness in vain. (*Roughing It in the Bush* 247)

Fear, contempt and disgust are the emotions that predominate in *Roughing It in the Bush*. Yet, there are instances of joy and contentment as well, as the author protagonist tried to attach herself to the natural environment, the only aspect she cherished about Canada. Susanna Moodie’s effort to adapt to her new home (She knew she could not return to England.) painful as it was, eventually

¹³ “the door was suddenly pushed open, and **the apparition** of a woman squeezed itself into the crowded room.” (*Roughing It in the Bush* 45)

¹⁴ “being ignorant of the country, and residing in such a lonely, out-of-the-way place, surrounded by these **savages**, I was really afraid” (*Roughing It in the Bush* 48)

resulted in cognitive development, i.e. personal growth. She became practical, resourceful, self-reliant. And above all, her experience as Canadian immigrant changed her perspective on writing. Thus, the woman who back in England cherished her art mainly as a source of funds became Canada's first vocational writer.

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**CULTURAL-ISMS/
KULTURWISSENSCHAFTLICHE
STUDIEN/ ÉTUDES CULTURELLES**





Cultural Shopping

There's More to It than Meets the Eye: Consumer Cornucopia and Shopaholism as Spectatorship

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Abstract: This paper looks at the interplay of Protestant modes of production and consumption pertaining to modernism on the one hand and the surface-informed paradigms of postmodernism on the other hand; more specifically, it sets out to analyse ocularcentrism and image saturation in the postmodern world as reflected in chick lit, i.e. literature for young ladies.

Keywords: modernism; postmodernism; ocularcentrism; image saturation; shopaholism; chick lit.

1. Introduction.

In an age of ocular-centrism, as Jacobs (2001) calls the postmodern era, image overrides content; indeed, the medium *is* the message. It is the contention of this paper that the visual experience of (window)-shopping in malls, a postmodern *modus vivendi*, supersedes the more solid, content-driven public experiences of modernism.

My analysis draws on theoretical frameworks proposed by Andrews (1999), Bakhtin (1981), Crawford (1992), Jacobs (2001) and Langman (2001), whilst the data for analysis is constituted by samples from two chick lit novels, namely Kinsella's *Shopaholic Abroad* (2001) and Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003).

2. A new grammar and ethics of seeing¹(see footnote). Peruse and appropriate!

In *Shopaholic Abroad*, Kinsella (2001) has her main character Samantha, plus a host of other sales-hungry peers, invade a store on D-Day, sales-day:

'Twelfth floor, he says in a bored voice. 'Elevators are in the rear.' I hurry towards the back of the foyer, summon one of the rather elderly lifts and press 12. Slowly and creakily the lift rises – and I begin to hear a kind of faint babble, rising in volume as I get nearer.

The lift pings and the doors open and ...Oh my God. Is this the *queue*?

A line of girls is snaking back from a door at the end of a corridor. They're pressing forwards, and all have the same urgent look in their eyes. Every so often somebody pushes their way out of the door, holding a carrier bag – and about three girls push their way in.

Then just as I join the end of the line, there's a rattling sound, and a woman opens up a door, a few yards behind me.

'Another entrance this way,' she calls. 'Come this way!'

In front of me, a whole line of heads whips round. There's a collective intake of breath – and then it's like a tidal wave of girls, all heading towards me. I find myself running towards the door, just to avoid being knocked down – and suddenly I'm in the middle of the room, slightly shaken, as everybody peels off and heads for the rails. (Kinsella 2001: 168-9; all italics mine)

The urgency, the non-discriminate consumer urge is rendered here by a plethora of verbs of action (and – significantly – not reflection) and by nouns denoting objects of (consumer) desire: to hurry, to snake, to press, to push their way out, to push their way in, to hold, to join, to open, to whip round, to head, to run, to avoid, to be knocked down, to peel off – in point of verbs; and nouns: queue, (urgent) look (in their eyes), carrier bag, entrance, (a whole line of) heads, tidal wave of girls, rails. An abundance of objects on the shop stalls and rails, and the appropriating actions to match. There is what I term 'object bulimia' at work here, in the *queue scene*, consumerism gone bad.

A close reading of the text reveals a pseudo-existentialist overtone that has large, amorphous crowds, indeed masses of, say, passers-by on the streets of the megalopolis – here, the mall, as the new site-for-consumer-power, act in a seemingly chaotic way. But in fact, there *is* a certain coherence in their drive, in the urge to buy, to possess, hence consistency in terms of shopaholism as enacted behaviour – and, yes, to appropriate the paradigms of consumerism.

Equally saliently, it's the a-symmetry of quantity that is apparent here; three girls pushing their way in for every one person pushing their way out – there's no escape, there's but the illusion of escape. The elevator lady performs a simulacrum of Ariadne's thread, seemingly leading the customers out of the maze, whereas her act represents but further ingress into the intricacy of the shop(ping experience): "Another entrance this way" – that is, another way into the display of abundance. As stated above, there's no escape, no alternative. It's a case of "Abandon all Hope / Ye who enter here!", the Dante-an adage relegated to a position of consumer Hell. Or is it Paradise?

Sheer quantity, a plethora of fashion items emerges as our heroine is trying "to get her bearings." But this is obviously quite a feat in the midst of such cornucopia: "rails and rails of clothes, tables covered in bags and shoes and scarves", all is indicative of *surface* overriding *essence*, as objects are

displayed, covered in; all this, redolent of a game of surfaces rather than essences. Indeed this is part and parcel of consumerism (but also, postmodernism), i.e. luring the eye with the brilliance of surfaces, enticing the mind with a game of – evanescent – contours, whilst obscuring the true nature of things, which in the case of shopaholism, would be the utilitarian nature of objects.

3. Taxonomic identification and peer pressure.

Identification with her taxonomic peers follows as Samantha feels very much at ease in the midst of consumer chaos:

I look around, trying to get my bearings. There are *rails and rails* of clothes, tables *covered in* bags and shoes and scarves and girls sorting through them. I can spot Ralph Lauren knitwear (...) a *rail full of* fabulous coats (...) there's a *stack of* Prada bags (...) I mean, this is like *a dream come true!* Conversation is high-pitched and excited, and as I look around, I can hear snippets floating around.

'I have to have it,' a girl is saying, holding up a coat against herself. *'I just have to have it.'*

'OK, what I'm going to do is, I'm just going to put the \$450 I spent today on to my mortgage,' another girl is saying to her friend as they walk out, *laden with bags.* *'I mean, what's \$450 over thirty years?'*

'One hundred per cent cashmere!' someone else is exclaiming. *'Did you see this? It's only \$50! I'm going to take three!'*

I look around the bright, buzzing room, at the girls milling about, grabbing at merchandise, trying on scarves, piling their arms full of glossy new stuff. And I feel a sudden warmth; an overwhelming realization. These are my people. This is where I belong. I've found my HOMELAND. (Kinsella 2001: 169; all italics mine)

The surplus of goods that 'paralyzes' the shoppers along the supermarket aisles is referred to here: 'rails and rails' (Kinsella 2001: 169). Lavish quantity is appropriately coupled with number-quantification, i.e. prices are postulated that would nauseate a more Protestant mind: e.g., \$450 for an item etc. Object bulimia is at work here: "I'm going to take three!" (Kinsella 2001: 169).

A new agora ("bright, buzzing room") is thus created for these shopaholics, a topography of excess and indiscriminate consumerism, where our narrator feels at large, paradigmatically:

I look around the bright, buzzing room, at the girls milling about, grabbing at merchandise, trying on scarves, piling their arms full of glossy new stuff. And

I feel a sudden warmth; an overwhelming realization. These are my people. This is where I belong. I've found my HOMELAND. (Kinsella 2001: 169)

4. Neither a yuppie nor a shopaholic be.

It is not only the – hedonism-ridden - space of the mall that this new breed of contemporary heroine observes, takes in and indeed appropriates, but the City at large as well (the City here standing for a space of utilitarianism). The cinematic quality of her trajectories in the city is apparent in the following excerpt, where Andrea – who can be said to embody Becky's cultural avatar in yet another chick lit novel, as she is a y.u.p.p.ie, a workaholic - is trying to negotiate her life on the go, replete with instances of shopaholic hedonism on the one hand (the expensive Manolo Blahnik shoes she wears to work, but which she ruins in the frenzy of driving her car *and* handling work tasks at the same time) and with her professional self on the other hand, all whilst driving through New York City:

My hands were moist again with sweat, evidenced by the matches that kept slipping to the floor. The light turned green just as I managed to touch the fire to the end of the cigarette, and *I was forced to leave it hanging between my lips as I negotiated the intricacies of clutch, gas, shift (neutral to first? OR first to second), release clutch, the smoke wafting in and out of my mouth with each and every breath.*

It was another three blocks before the car moved smoothly enough for me to remove the cigarette, but it was already too late; the precariously long line of spent ash had found its way directly to the sweat stain on the pants. Awesome. But before I could consider that, counting the Manolos, *I's wrecked \$3,100 worth of merchandise under three minutes,* my cell phone bleated loudly. And as if the very essence of life didn't suck enough at that particular moment, the caller ID confirmed my worst fear: it was HER. Miranda Priestly. My boss.

"Ahn-dre-ah! Ahn-dre-ah! Can you hear me, Ahn-dre-ah?" she trilled the moment I snapped my Motorola open – *no small feat considering both of my (bare) feet and hands were already contending with various obligations. I propped the phone between my ear and shoulder and tossed the cigarette out the window, where it narrowly missed hitting a bike messenger. (...)*

"Yes, Miranda. Hi, I can hear you perfectly." (Weisberger 2003: 2-3; all italics mine)

Note how this zombified workaholic moves mechanically (and thus, comically, since one definition of the comical is "(...) le mecanique plaque sur le vivant" according to Bergson) in her attempt at negotiating driving a car in the metropolis, smoking and then talking on the phone; the enumeration 'clutch, gas, shift' is redolent of screen-play speak, yielding connotations of brief, fragmented, transitory scenes, fleeting images that are to be later edited. It all stands for – beyond the technicalities of screen-play writing and subsequently,

film-making – the ‘cyborgness’ (see Haraway 1989) of the character, mechanically entrapped in the rapid mobility of yuppie New York. Indeed New York, the stereotypical metropolis, becomes a battleground for power struggles – yuppie-ism versus shopaholism. The mechanist iconography here is further instantiated when the protagonist is left numb by the overwhelming tasks she has to perform and hence defers engaging in the normal, biological acts: breathing, smoking, which itself is intake of breath / inhaling: “I was forced to leave it (i.e. the cigarette) hanging between my lips”, “the smoke wafting in and out of my mouth with each and every breath”. The implication here is that the modern paraphernalia of corporate power – the car, the gadgets, the communication devices - the mobile phone, etc) override all. Andrea looks like this – failing, incompetent, flawed – modern goddess Shiva, with multiple necessary limbs to engage in yuppie acts of power – driving and giving and receiving work-related orders on the phone: “(...) no small feat considering both of my (bare) feet and hands were already contending with various obligations.”

5. The shopping mall – locus of power.

If the consummate shopaholic – and her avatar, the yuppie – is the protagonist, then the antagonist – as it does connote resistance and paradigmatic imposition – is the shopping mall, the space the yuppie-turned-shopaholic treads on, visits, occupies and observes. In this section I look at the epistemological implications of the shopping mall as postmodern site for consumer hedonism, in its pseudo-replication of, and – as some theorists argue – deconstruction of the ‘old’ city of modernity. Indeed the modernist project of, say, 19th century utopian design (see Charles Fourier and Robert Owen) is re-instantiated now, in postmodernity in the apparent placelessness, de-centredness of the mall. Malls are universal and universally present, one might say, ubiquitously present and their architectural style follows the lines of the New International Style that itself is the cultural spin-off of the Bauhaus style. As Andrews (1999) notes,

This place-less-ness (sic!) is not a mere cartographic hiccup. It pervades the site. The Trafford Centre delights in unsettling ways any sense of place and this, I will argue, has important consequences (...). I contend that the Centre is in fact de-centred. While it presents itself as a whole, it is very much a referencing and blurring of image, architecture and design. As I will go on to explain, place is performed through metonym and the Centre embraces an infinite variety of locations and styles. However, this variety is firmly situated within the perspective of consumerism, with particular effect. (Andrews 1999: 1-2)

A perusal of the text above yields epistemologies of surfaces, blurred images / imagologies, free-floating landmarks rather than stability and centredness,

indeed of simulacra. What is there to be seen, observed – in the ‘scopic drive’ (de Certeau 1984) of the shopper/maller, is in fact obscure/d, peripatetic (it moves here and there and everywhere, as in the permanently re-located shops cropping up at different sites *in* the mall), indeed unstable.

The seduction strategies of consumerism are referred to in what follows, in that:

- (i) The mall is furnished along the lines of classical sumptuousness – to connote high quality, blue-ribbon excellence – but thus engendering confusion in terms of form (is it New International Style (on the outside) or is it Old Baroque (in its interior decorating)?) – all meant to dazzle, disorient, enthrall and hence seduce and lure the shopper into buying, acquiring;
- (ii) The promise of the deferral of credit card accountability– the credit card that you can use *now* and effectively pay for *later* –indeed in what Andrews (1999) calls the *never never* of credit card culture – a reference to Peter Pan’s Neverland (indeed the mall itself is a Neverland), an almost infantile realm of infinite consumer desire – and gratification thereof:

The site is splendidly grand. Walls and pillars of marble and granite add sumptuousness to Trafford. Sturdy wooden benches and white marble seating are accessorized with large very Grecian sprays of greenery. If, as I argue, consumerism is so *de rigueur* here then it is celebrated by the splendor of the design at Trafford. Fundamentally, this paper will argue that the Trafford Centre is a never never land both because of this grandeur and the mixed metonymy of place – and because it epitomizes the current state of late capitalism through the *never never* of credit card culture. (Andrews 1999: 2)

Indeed this juxtaposition of ‘old’ and ‘new’, of classicism versus postmodernism in terms of the image of a shopping arcade yields a rather more complex configuration of conflicting paradigms, indeed there’s more to it than meets the eye: the *stability* of modernism versus *fantasy* – as Andrews (1999) calls it, or *carnival and spectacle* – as Langman (1992), quoted in Andrews (1999) labels these novel, multiple facets of post-industrialism /postmodernity. As Andrews (1999) puts it,

In her article, ‘The World in a Shopping Mall’, Margaret Crawford links the modern shopping arcade to nineteenth century utopian design, following Charles Fourier and Robert Owen. The parallel is particularly strong for Crawford as she sees in the present day mall the possibility for re-establishing ‘the unified world of pre-modern times’ (Crawford 1992: 6). In contrast, the present contains only ‘fragmented forms and functions of modern living’ (Crawford 1992: 6), re-ordered by regular visits to the mall. (Andrews 1999: 2)

Langman goes beyond this, noting the development of an entirely new public sphere with its own 'distinct ways of organizing time, space, behavior and subjectivity' (Langman 1992: 41). In this new state of order, fantasy is central: "{Malls} stand as symbols of and monuments to an entire amusement order in which carnivals and spectacles of consumption gratify desires and sustain images of self." (Langman 1992: 48)

Langman's 'amusement society' is a response to what she perceives as the transformation of everyday life into an extension of consumer capitalism. "It is", Langman reflects, "the end of the ordinary: Ordinariness has been transformed into an unending series of mass-mediated fragmented 'spectacles' and carnivals that celebrate the universalization of consumption." (Langman 1992: 48; quoted in Andrews 1999: 3)

Indeed the salience of the two concepts put across by Langman (1992) is self-evident: the shopping experience in postmodern times is similar to that of spectatorship, namely the spectatorship of yore whereby the on-lookers had the privilege of taking part in carnivals, public square spectacles etc. In the Bakhtin-ean vein, indeed the *carnival/esque* provides – beyond its visual, chromatic lavishness the *feasting* after the *fasting* – in the case of the shopping mall, the gratification of consumer desire after the restraint of the Protestant modes of production – i.e. after modernism, that ensured the smooth transition from the economic abundance generated by the diligent Protestant work ethics, into post-industrial, hedonist postmodernity, indeed into what Langman (2001) calls 'amusement society'.

Paradoxically so, what Langman (2001) calls 'the end of the ordinary' – no doubt, emulating Fukuyama's coinage 'the end of history' – is instantiated here, in the mall, in the very locus of ordinariness, as the trading stuff of malls are – seemingly mere – objects. Or are they? Some might argue that beyond objects, malls trade concepts.

Instances of *trompe-l'oeil*, surface-informed distortion of the real image can be detected in the following quote, in that the mall displays in/finite sites of in/finite possibility; the variety is limited notwithstanding, to underline the limits of the postmodern project. Indeed, "the limitless perspective of the boulevard is boxed in by the depths of the arcade", the boulevard standing for 'the outside' of the modern city, whilst the mall being a metonym of the postmodern city - to further disorient and dumbfound the shopper/spectator, and thus seduce and subjugate them:

Infinite variety is limited and the limitless perspective of the boulevard is boxed in by the depths of the arcade. My concern, though, is the effect on the

individual as spectator and as performer. This is an area touched on by Sennett in his discussion of possessions as social markers and by Langman who considers the ‘mallers’. In her ‘amusement society’ she argues that the maller does not become the ‘other’ but acts as if a camera is upon one and the other is watching. (Andrews 1999: 5)

Seduce and abandon, I would argue, as the ephemeral, *ad hoc* benefits of shopping, of gratification by possession permeate the shopping experience. It is a case of what Jacobs (2001) labels ‘autonomy’ in her discussion of the products of mass culture, “(...) autonomy – that is, their ability to produce desires to which they remain indifferent.” (Jacobs 2001: 255)

6. Conclusion.

Overtones of what I term ‘social voyeurism’ are apparent here –as indeed, paradigmatically, everywhere - in the reference to the camera. Indeed the ubiquitous cctv cameras, as symbols of what Jacobs (2001) calls ‘ocular-centrism’, indeed of surveillance in the postmodern world, where *image* (as postmodern/postindustrial trope) equals the importance of *action / reality* (as modern trope). All this circumscribed to the generic ‘scopic drive’ – a syntagm coined by de Certeau (1984) that characterizes the postmodern wo/man. In the critique of subjectivity, the postmodern self indeed rather indulges in exterior images of himself, in being seen, watched, surveilled at the expense of genuinely exposing his innermost self. Issue of interiority and the exterior in the discursual configuration of self are alluded to here, in the insistence on the camera – and of the camera-eye onto shoppers/spectators. As Jacobs (2001) argues, “conceiving of subjectivity as permeable and fractured in ways that are distant from the rubric of depth models, (...) {it} renders questionable the very concept of interiority that is so crucial to modernist understandings of the subject.” (Jacobs 2001: 272) What Jacobs proposes here is the demise of (the interiority of) the subject. She further states, “paradigms of observation and spectatorship (of the subject) must break down. That is, there can be no “interior gaze” in this new, postmodern visual economy, for the simple reason that there is no longer any viable interior.” (Jacobs 2001: 272). Hence the fetishization of image, of seeing and being seen, that is prevalent in the postmodern act of treading the malls.

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Reflecting on Everydayness.

Investigating Alexander McCall Smith's *Sunday Philosophy Club*

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Abstract: The paper attempts to demonstrate the ways in which one's everyday practices foreground one's affiliation to a specific cultural group or community as well as the modalities through which they turn into carriers of national identities when perceived from the larger perspective of the globalizing processes that constantly shape them. We selected Alexander McCall Smith's book, *The Sunday Philosophy*, as a case to explore and prove the construction of the Caledonian identity today.

Key words: everydayness, globalization, national identity, Scottishness

Of ethnography of cultures

Tim Edensor states that nowadays, in this globalizing world, one's national identity can be best expressed and experienced in mundane, quotidian forms rather than in a spectacular, remarkable way (cf. Edensor, 2002: VI), as these are the very sites wherein people make and remake connections between the local and the national, the national and the global, so that the everyday and the extraordinary could generate the image of a culture in its dynamism, in its reaction and interference with universal forces, in its progress and advancement to an acknowledged uniqueness and specificity.

Theorists admit that traditions are to be read in terms of their manifestations in people's everyday life, in their leisure pursuits, in their work practices, their domestic routines and community involvement, in their general attempt to fashion a particular culture which is to become the repository and heritage for the generations to come through the values, myths, symbols they embody and which differentiate a certain people from others.

It is a common place that habits almost everywhere seem to organize people's lives and stand for accessible interlinks between groups of individuals that can thus establish particular cultural communities where they display routine social performances, consolidating a sense of „shared action and doxa” to constitute what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as being „a habitus” (cf. Edensor: 91), that is

„the practical basis for action”, the range of forms of competence and skill, and multitrack dispositions (see 92).

Lifestyles, everyday practices and national identity

In his study on modern social forms (1996), David Chaney demonstrates the way one’s lifestyle is constructed via language, taste, consumption, material culture, spatiality, social practices so that it could best feature the world the individual belongs to, his/her own actions within a differentiated social background, the reasons of his/her re/actions, and mostly, the belief that everyday life consisting of specific practices and attitudes can make sense when related to one’s identity. (cf. Chaney, 1996: 5)

National identity, the Caledonian one in our research, is apparently reproduced in ”the banal realm of the everyday as part of the ’endemic condition’ of nations” (Edensor, 2002: 12) whereby one can identify spaces, practices, routines that stand for signifiers and reminders of one’s national belonging, most oftenly supplemented and augmented by extra meanings, images, activities drawn from popular culture via the contemporary media, the intermediaries trained to conserve and disseminate group peculiarities. Therefore images, ideas, spaces, things, discourses, practices that form the constellations of a cultural matrix render that particular sense of national identity, dynamic, dialogic, creative (cf. Edensor, 2002: 17).

In this globalizing world it seems that any kind of identity goes through a process of reconstituting itself, reinventing itself by a constant „reterritorialization of spaces, cultural forms and cultural practices” (cf. Edensor, 2002: 33) and an increasing mobility in re/combining people, objects, places, discourses in a general attempt to establish „consistencies through time”, to become „embodied in habit’ and to „constellate in places” (34). An important concept to operate with is that of *home* which, in spite of its multiple connotation in terms of geography (e.g.village, city, country) or in terms of sensual meanings (a place of comfort, convenience, efficiency, leisure, ease, pleasure, domesticity, intimacy), becomes the perfect site of a „wealth of unreflexive, habitual practices”(58), encouraging the experience of home-making as one through which we make ourselves comfortable with the world we live in. Home is the micro-environment which facilitates a display and performance of objects and activities meant to foreground the link to the national constructions of one’s self, as home points to where and how we are located among objects, artefacts, rituals, practices that „configure who we are in our particularity’ and stand for a „form of identity sustenance and cultural resistance” (62).

They say that the process of globalization sets off a series of deglobalizing reactions and a retreat to various localisms, regionalisms, even nationalisms, generating a chain of fragmentations within the image of a national culture (cf. Mike Featherstone, 1995: 82) when contrasted with other national cultures in a permanent attempt of individualization as demonstrated in Alexander McCall Smith's *The Sunday Philosophy Club* (2004) in an instance of foregrounding Scottishness versus Englishness,

This was the Scottish financial community, with all its reputation for uprightness and integrity. These people played golf; they frequented the New Club; they were elders – some of them – of the Church of Scotland (...) These people did not engage in the sort of practices which had been associated with some of those Italian banks or even with the more freewheeling end of the City of London. And they did not commit murder (McCall Smith, 2004:134),

or Scottishness versus traditional continental habits,

Isabel took up a bread roll and broke it on her side plate. She would not use a knife on a roll, of course, although Jamie did. In Germany it once was considered inappropriate to use a knife on a potato, a curious custom which she had never understood ... A nineteenth-century custom... Perhaps the emperor had a face like a potato, and it was considered disrespectful (175),

or simply by a display of a highly acknowledged mark of differentiation,

There was a whisky nosing at their Scotch Malt Whisky Society. 'Whisky nosers' eschewed what they saw as the pretentiousness of wine vocabulary. While oenophiles resorted to recondite adjectives, whisky nosers spoke the language of everyday life, detecting hints of *stale seaweed*, or even *diesel fuel*. Isabel saw the merit in this. The Island malts(...)reminded her of antiseptic and the smell of school swimming pool: and as for taste, 'diesel fuel' seemed to express it perfectly (224).

Despite a well-established tradition and beliefs in this tradition, global processes undoubtedly penetrate our everyday life through the objects we use, the activities and routines we enact, the places and non-places we inhabit, the relations we have or seek to have, leaving us a rather narrow space for embodying and materializing ostensibly specific practices, replacing most authentic, genuine forms with a creolised replica, that is an improvisation of local practices from re/collected past and foreign media, or foreign symbols, even languages in local, respectively national contexts (see Edensor, 2002: 102).

Mapping everydayness in *The Sunday Philosophy Club*

The everyday is seen in its tendency to be contrasted with the time of celebrity, holidays, exceptional or symbolic events, in its dynamism paralleled by enduring consistencies through which identity is grounded, in its display of details, habits, routines, practical knowledge that shape national, collective or individual identity when describing a particular way of life in which there are particular meanings and values to be conveyed. Thus the everyday becomes a polydimensional cultural site favouring the development of one's sense of identification and belonging through popular culture grounded in everyday life, everyday practices and habits, pointing to cultural similarities and differences generated by local/regional histories as detected in Alexander McCall Smith's aforementioned book.

When attending a concert of Reykjavik Symphony at the Usher Hall (Edinburgh), the protagonist of the series, Isabel Dalhousie, experiences a common event in a multiple way, that is, first as a joyful moment, then as a reflection on the state of music and concerts –

Did Reykjavik really have a professional symphony orchestra, she wondered, or were the players amateurs? Of course, even if they were, if they had come as far as Edinburgh to give a late spring concert, they deserved an audience; they could not be allowed to come all this way from iceland and then perform to an empty hall. And so she had gone to the concert and had sat through a first half which comprised a romantic combination of German and Scottish: Mahler, Schubert, and Hamish McCunn (McCall Smith, 2004: 2) ;

and then as a witness/observer of the social dimension of this musical evening in the Scottish capital city –

During the interval she had made her way downstairs and had enjoyed the relief of the cooler air outside, eschewing the crush of the bar with its cacophony of conversation. She would find people she knew there, of course; it was impossible to go out in Edinburgh and not see anybody, but she was not in the mood of conversation that evening (2),

which is cruelly interrupted by an accident – „a young man fell all the way from the edge of the upper circlem, from the gods...”(1) – in a suicidal flight that turned the hall into a crime scene and made the audience dash out whereas the accomplished philosopher Isabel now considers the situation in a local way:

People did not kill themselves that way; if you wanted to jump, then you went to the Forth Bridge, or the Dean Bridge: Ruthven Todd had written a poem about that... [he] was all but ignored in spite of his remarkable poetry; one line of his, she had once said, was worthy fifty lines of McDiarmid, with all his posturing; but nobody remebered Ruthven Todd any more” (13).

The domestic environment, imbued with semiotic meanings of space is experienced cognitively on the one hand, when linking generally valid issues to locally acknowledged truths even during a casual conversation as that between Isabel and her niece Cat:

What I [Isabel] mean is this. We can't have moral obligations to every single person in this world. We have moral obligations to those we come up against, who enter into our moral space, so to speak. That means neighbours, people we deal with, and so on'.

Who, then, is our neighbour? she would say to the Sunday Philosophy Club. And the members of the Sunday Philosophy Club would think very carefully about this and come to the conclusion, Isabel suspected, that the only real standard we can find for this is the concept of proximity. Our moral neighbours are those who are close to us, spatially or in some other recognised sense. Distant claims are simply not as powerful as those we can see before us. These close claims are more vivid and therefore more real (76).

On the other hand, the meanings of space are melted with sensual, practical, unreflexive knowledge providing a good sense of one's identity through the geography of communality:

There were things happening on one side of Edinburgh the other did not know a great deal about. Of course, Edinburgh, it was said, was built on hypocrisy. It was the city of Hume, the home of the Scottish Enlightenment, but then what had happened? Petty Calvinism had flourished in the nineteenth century and the light had gone elsewhere; back to Paris, to Berlin, or off to America, to Harvard and the like, where everything was now possible. And Edinburgh had become synonymous with respectability, and with doing things in the way in which they always had been done. Respectability was such an effort, though, and there were bars and clubs where people might go and behave as they really wanted to behave, but did not dare so publicly. The story of Jekyll and Hyde was conceived in Edinburgh, of course, and made perfect sense here. (59).

On the literary stage, authors employ multiple ways to represent the relations between people, practices and space to render and sustain, by their common denominator which is national identity (the Scottish national identity, in our example), those features and particularities that are worth being circulated in order to articulate the signification of the landscape, everyday places and objects, mundane rituals, habits, traditional events.

Space seems to be produced by its inhabitants through their habits and their „constant engagement with the world which relies on familiar matters and

constructs an ongoing spatial mapping through the enaction of everyday mobilities” (Edensor 2002: 56) thus strengthening the relationship between people and space, and foregrounding the power of that specific place, or in Isabel’s words,, „The reason why one went to Edinburgh in the first place was to get solidity and reliability. If Edinburgh started to look shaky, one might as well throw in one’s lot with the riskier side of things in London” (McCall Smith, 2004: 229 -230).

In rendering the particular sense of one’s belonging to a cultural group, the quotidian landscape, that is Edinburgh, respectively, Scotland, is associated with everyday spaces, like local pubs, restaurants, homes to provide the ontological framework within which „local differences are absorbed into a code of larger significance” (Edensor 2002: 66) in order to simultaneously foreground the national variety and its uniqueness: „Edinburgh was a village, was it not, and one always saw people one had seen somewhere or other before...” (McCall Smith 2004: 58) where one could come across fame and famous people in the very streets of the city,

She had seen McDiarmid once, when she was a school-girl, and had been walking with her father down Hanover Street, past Milnes Bar. The poet had come out of the bar in the company of a tall, distinguished-looking man, who had greeted her father. Her father had introduced her to both of them, and the tall man had shaken her hand courteously; McDiarmid had smiled, and nodded, and she had been struck by his eyes, which seemed to emit a piercing blue light. He was wearing a kilt, and carrying a small battered leather briefcase, which he hugged to his chest, as if using to protect himself against the cold.

Afterwards her father had said: 'The best poet and the wordiest poet in Scotland, both together'. (13-14).

The place and its constituents are both symbolically and semiotically loaded once they can complete the assignment of heightening their status of markers of national identity within an imaginary geography, and of re/producing meaning in a permanent intertextuality:

She was anxious in the pub, waiting for Jamie. It was a masculine place, at least at that hour [pm], and she felt ill at ease. Women could go to pubs by themselves, of course, but she nonetheless felt out of place. The bartender, who served her a glass of bitter lemon with ice, smiled at her in a friendly way and commented on the fine evening (161).

This geographical matrix is associated with public places as Isabel likes to make it public that she,, could treat herself to morning coffee in Jenners, and watch the high-heeled Edinburgh ladies engage in their gossip, a world which

she might so easily have slipped into and which she avoided by a deliberate act of self-determining choice „(236), and also with people, eager to share their their beliefs, as it goes with Grace, Isabel’s housemaid, whose world was a divided one:

there was Edinburgh, and the values which Edinburgh endorsed; and then there was the rest. It went without saying that Edinburgh was right, and that the best that could be hoped for was that those who looked at things differently would eventually come round to the right way of thinking. When Grace had first been employed – shortly after the onset of Isabel’s father’s illness – Isabel had been astonished to find that there was somebody who was still so firmly planted in a world that she had thought had larely disappeared: the world of douce Edinburgh, erected on rigid hierarchies and the deep convictions of Scotland Presbyterianism. Grace had proved her wrong (28).

Reflecting on one’s life was likely to happen in each moment of the day within one’s life, as Isabel happens to do

She finished the crosswords in the morning room, allowing her second cup of coffee to get too cool to drink. [...] She thought of the morning ahead. There was work to be done; at least three journal articles were waiting to be sent out to referees, and would have to despatch them that morning. Then there was an index to be prepared for a special issue that was due to appear later that year.[...] She looked at her watch. It was almost nine-thirty. If she worked for three hours she would get through most, if not all, of the index. And then she could go and have lunch with Cat, if she was free (68-69),

almost unaware that her thoughts become a substantialized part of a larger constellation of symbolic, practical and everyday space, organized in national contexts.

Space is thus organically connected to performing of one’s national or cultural identity by different modes including rituals, habits, everyday, mundane practices meant to legitimate the uniqueness of a particular group or individual. Isabel’s home becomes such a site of identification of one’s biases and personality through minor activities such as reading the morning papers and drinking freshly made coffee in the percolator, having breakfast, - „Her boiled egg placed on the table, she sat down with a copy of the *Scotsman* and a freshly brewed cup of coffee, while Grace went off to start the laundry”(67)-, or preparing dinner later in the afternoon, - „Cooking [for her niece Cat and her date, Toby) in a temper required caution with the pepper; one might put far too much in and ruin a risotto in sheer pique”(38).

This space is expanded and completed by the outer loci housing other ranges of activities such as a restaurant to meet friends and have a meal,

The evening had not been a conspicuous success. The conversation had picked up slightly over the dinner table, but Toby had gone on at great length about wine – his father was a successful wine importer and Toby worked in the family firm.... Toby thought she knew no better than to serve a supermarket red. In fact, she knew more than most about wine, and there was nothing wrong with what she had served (47),

or art exhibition halls, meeting an acquaintance, Paul Hogg, „at one of the gallery shows”(58), or the streets of Edinburgh dominated by ordinariness, recorded even by ordinary people such as Grace:

I was standing at the bus stop, waiting for a bus (...) There was a puddle of water on the road and a car went past, driven by a young man in a baseball cap, back to front, and he splashed this woman who was standing next to me. She was soaked through. Dripping. He saw it, you know. But did he stop to apologise? Of course not. (120).

These details of everyday life share the individual's practices and knowledge of his/her social and cultural environment and display those specific codes that guide him/her in life and societal performances, being important reference points expressed by Isabel in her endeavour to reflect upon events and ideas that link her to both her ancestors and her contemporaries:

The world, it seemed, was based on lies and half-truths of one sort or another, and one of the tasks of morality was to help us negotiate our way round these. Yes, there were so many lies: and yet the sheer power of truth was in no sense dimmed. Has Alexander Solzhenitsyn not said, in his Nobel address, 'One word of truth will conquer the whole world'? Was this wishful thinking on the part of the one who had lived in an entanglement of Orwellian state-sponsored lies, or was it a justifiable faith in the ability of truth to shine through the darkness? It had to be the latter; if it was the former, then life would be too bleak to continue. In this respect, Camus was right: the ultimate philosophical question was suicide. If there was no truth, then there would be no meaning, and our life was Sisyphean. And is life were Sisyphean, then what point in continuing with it?" (188).

She often dares considering fundamental issues of humankind such as love,

It might be simpler, she reflected, not to allow oneself to be in love with anybody; just to be oneself, immune to hurt from others. There were plenty of people like that who seemed content with their lives – or were they? She

wondered how many of these people were solitary by choice, and how many were alone because nobody had ever come into their lives and relieved them of loneliness. There was a difference between resignation, or acceptance, in the face of loneliness and choosing to be solitary.

The central mystery, of course, was why we needed to be in love at all. The reductionist answer was that it was simply a matter of biology, and that love provided the motivational force that encouraged people to stay together to raise children. Like all the arguments of evolutionary psychology, it looked so simple and so obvious, but if that was all that we were, then why did we fall in love with ideas, and things, and places? (48-49),

or emotions that people cease to exhibit for fear of allowing weakness to be shared, as „Our emotions allow us to empathise with others. If I love another, then I know what it is to be that other person. If I feel pity... then this helps me to understand the suffering of others. So our emotions make us grow morally. We develop a moral imagination....”(49).

She ponders on the issue of what is truth and where telling lies stands,

not all lies were wrong, which was another aspect, Isabel thought, in which Kant was mistaken (...). *Truthfulness in statements which cannot be avoided is the formal duty of an individual to everyone, however great may be the disadvantage accruing to himself or to another.* It was not surprising that Benjamin Constant should have been offended by this, although Kant responded – unconvincingly – and tried to point out that the murderer might be apprehended before he acted on the knowledge which he had gained from a truthful answer.

The answer, surely, is that lying *in general* is wrong, but that some lies, carefully identified as the exception, will be permissible. There were, therefore, good lies and bad lies, with good lies uttered for a benevolent reason (to protect the feeling of another, for example). If somebody asked one’s opinion of a newly acquired – but tasteless – possession, for instance, and one gave an honest answer, then that could hurt the feelings and deprive the other of the joy of ownership. So one lied, and praised it, which was surely the right thing to do. Or was it? ...If one became accustomed to lying in such circumstances, the line between truth and falsehood could become blurred” (66),

and realizes that there is such an easy shift to hypocrisy and its implications,

Hypocrisy was not only about telling lies, it was about saying one thing and doing quite the other. People who did that were usually roundly condemned for it, but again this might not be as simple as someone would suggest. Would it be hypocritical for an alcoholic to advise against drinking alcohol, or a glutton to recommend a diet? The recipient of the advice might well level charges of hypocrisy in such a case, but only if the person giving the advice claimed that he did not drink or eat too much himself. If he merely concealed his own vices,

then he might still be considered a hypocrite, but his hypocrisy might be no bad things. It certainly did not harm anybody, and indeed it might even help (provided that it remained undiscovered) (67),

Isabel feels bound to reflect on what doing good or wrong could mean, and concludes that „Wrongs are committed without thinking. The doing of wrong was not a hard thing, preceded by careful thought; it was a casual thing, done so easily. That was Hannah Arendt’s insight, was it not? The pure banality of evil. Only good is heroic.” (196).

The ways in which habits organize life for individuals is closely inspected in common situations such as making a telephone call which implies a certain etiquette,

a call before eight in the morning was an emergency; between eight and nine it was an intrusion; thereafter calls could be made until ten in the evening, although anything after nine-thirty required an apology for the disturbance. After ten one was into emergency time again. On answering the telephone one should, if at all possible, give one’s name, but only after saying good morning, good afternoon, or good evening. None of these conventions, she conceded, was observed to any great extent by others... (155-156),

or the missing daily graces such as apologizing or telling the right words in the right circumstances, acknowledged as lack of civility,

‘It’s the decline of civility.Or, should I say, it’s the absence of civility.’

‘Decline, absence, same thing,’ Grace retorted.

‘Not quite,’ aid Isabel.’Decline means less than before. Absence means not there – maybe never was.’

‘Are you telling me that people used not to apologise for splashing other people?, Grace’s indignation showed through’ (121).

The aforementioned example point to the way in which everydayness embedded in the local narratives and images heightens the power of identity and imagination discursively constructed, facilitating the discovery and use of those representations of Scottishness that disclose the stuff of heritage industry which opens ways to its very exploration within contemporary contexts and circumstances. National identity can thus be scaled by the personal, local histories and narratives emerging from everyday familiar landscapes and activities constantly performed against this background that eventually render the features and particularities of a people through their discursive practices and cultural resources (cf. Edensor 2002: 168).

Discussions

Everydayness, the quotidian rituals and routines foreground the specific ways in which the construction of identity can be carried out in a constant demonstration of how essential repetition is to one's sense of identity and belonging since „without recurrent experiences and unreflexive habits there would be no temporal framework within which to make sense of the world”(Edensor 2002: 96). Any daily experiences, whether in the field of work, study, leisure, or re/production comprise specific performances and cultural rhythms meant to foreground the links that exist between the national public and the private lives of individuals through the thus created patterns, routines, events circumscribed temporally and spatially, and continually enacted in an attempt to preserve and value that commonality's uniqueness, as is the case when reflecting on the future of Scottish culturescape:

NEW CONCERN FOR COD STOCKS, she read on the front page of the *Scotsman*, and saw the picture of idle fishing boats tied up at Peterhead; further gloom for Scotland and for a way of life that had produced such a strong culture. Fishermen had composed their songs; but what culture would a generation of computer operators leave behind them? (...) an electronic culture of e-mail tales and computer-generated images, fleeting and derivative, but a culture nonetheless (McCall Smith 2004: 236-237).

Within the general tendency displayed by the globalizing processes to diminish the sense of national identity, the Caledonian example is meant to slighen the shift towards a multiplication of one's cultural affiliations by reiterating valuable avenues of traditions and heritage repositories in a more generous offer of hybridization and creolization effects of postmodernism at a global level, indeed.

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*Sequela Christi*¹ in European Literature

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Abstract: The absolute expression of following God is the renunciation of the world and of all that is ephemeral, the choice of voluntary poverty. But this voluntary poverty, which the monks choose to live in a monastery, is not a condition that lacks means or goods. For some, the monastic option is yet an option of culture and knowledge. For others, the monastic option is but a means of escape some crimes or sins. There is yet another category: those for whom becoming a monk is not even a choice.

Key words: monks, nuns, seclusion, novitiate, monastic orders, military orders

During the second half of the III c. it was observed that a growing number of Christians leave their communities to live in the desert, and to begin a new life exclusively consecrated to asceticism.

The coenobites' way of living can be traced back in the period of the apostolic preaching. The perfection of the church as imposed by the austere laws of asceticism seems to be contaminated by the large number of newcomers, reaching a period of downfall. This is the moment in which those in whom the apostolic fever is still alive, settle down in more secluded places trying to keep alive the roles established by the apostles.

In time, the monastery becomes a kind of a "state within a state", an island within a society that prefers to ignore it, except for the cases when it can satisfy its material and spiritual needs; from these, exaggerate hospitality towards the visitors of the monasteries and the assistance granted to the poor.

At the beginning, monasticism appeared as a separation from the world: the monk gives up all the activities of a man living in society, to consecrate himself to a contemplative life. They will seclude themselves in wilderness, to find the loneliness with God. The anahoreza is, without any doubt, the most spectacular phenomenon of monasticism, and its aim to lead towards the thing that

¹ Following God

monastic literature calls *peace*. Renunciation targets first and foremost all the owned goods, then the family and the country.

The monk is the man, who separates himself from the rest of the world to live a privileged relation with God, who prays for the sins of the people and help the sick and poor, but in the meanwhile, he is a scholar, a man who keeps culture alive.

The absolute expression of following God is the renunciation of the world and of all that is ephemeral, the choice of voluntary poverty. But this voluntary poverty, which the monks choose to live in a monastery, is not a condition that lacks means or goods. For some, the monastic option is yet an option of culture and knowledge; for the nobles' sons, for example, being a monk was the only alternative to joining the military service. In the monastery, the young nobles get a special education over a long period. For others, the monastic option is but a means of escape some crimes or sins. There is yet another category: those for whom becoming a monk is not even a choice. Orphans or unwanted children in those times were sent or simply left at the front door of the monasteries.

Ludovico, Father Cristoforo, from Alessandro Manzoni's novel *The Betrothed*, is the son of a pretty rich merchant, used to aristocratic habits, surrounded by adulators and treated with respect, who encountered some problems when he wanted to be accepted among the high class of the society. He needed another school: that of "patience and obedience, always second to everybody and always accepting any offence in every moment." (Manzoni, 1971: 73) After killing a noble in a fight, he takes refuge in a monastery of Capuchin monks, who heal him. Considering this a sign from God, he decides to become a monk, thus giving satisfaction to the relatives of the man he had killed. In the memory of the dead noble, he receives his name, Cristoforo. "Thus, at the age of thirty, Ludovico took the monastic habit, and being required, according to custom, to change his name, he chose one that would continually remind him of the fault he had to atone for – the name of Friar Cristoforo." (Manzoni, 1971: 70)

Friar Cristoforo, is later presented as opposed to what he used to be. He was now:

a man nearer sixty than fifty years of age. His shaven head, circled with a narrow line of hair, like a crown, according to the fashion of the Capuchin tonsure, was raised from time to time with a movement that betrayed somewhat of disdain and disquietude, and then quickly sank again in thoughts of lowliness and humility. His long, grey beard covering his cheeks and chin, contrasted markedly with the prominent features of the upper part of his face, to which a long and habitual abstinence had rather given an air of gravity, than

effaced the natural expression. His sunken eyes usually bent on the ground, sometimes brightened up with a momentary fire, like two spirited horses, under the hand of a driver whom they know by experience they cannot overcome; yet occasionally, they indulge in a few gambols and prancings... (Manzoni, 1971: 70)

Father Zosima, from Dostoevski's *Karamazov Brothers*, becomes a monk as a result of a similar episode. He was born in the village V. His father who was a noble, died when Zosima was only two years old, leaving his mother with a little house and some money, enough not to live in poverty. At the age of eight, listening to the liturgy, he understands for the first time the word of God, which gets into his soul. After his brother's death, he is taken to Petersburg to attend the military school, in order to get in the Royal Guard after graduation. He falls in love with a young girl whom he didn't know was engaged with another man, he demands satisfaction from her fiancé. Realizing the sin that he was about to commit, he bids for forgiveness. It is the moment that he quits the army and decides to take the vows of monasticism. Later he becomes the abbot of the monastery.

Alexei Karamazov, Alyosha, from the same novel, the youngest in the family, has a very special feeling for the human kind and at the age of twenty, decides to enter a monastery, offering his stormy heart an ideal, "that of getting out of the darkness of human hatred into the light of love." (Dostoevski, 2004: 39)

In the same category may be included the monks belonging to the military orders of, the crusaders on the war path to get The Holy Land free.

The Middle East had been, from the beginning of our era, the scenery of some bloody conflicts and of a great number of wars, having their hay days in the Middle Ages. Besides kings and nobles, an important role was that of the three military- religious orders of knights which were born in the period of the Crusades. Knights Hospitalers, members of the military and religious Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, sometimes called the Knights of St. John and the Knights of Jerusalem, the Knights Templars, the Poor Knights of Christ, called the Knights of the Temple of Solomon from their house in Jerusalem, who joined together to protect pilgrims, and the Teutonic Knights or The Order of Brothers of the German House Saint Mary in Jerusalem, also formed to aid Christians on their pilgrimages to the Holy Land and to establish hospitals to care for the sick and injured. A number of other minor orders existed at various times and places as well. Notable examples of smaller orders included the Spanish orders of Santiago, Alcantara and Calatrava; the short-lived Baltic orders of the Sword and of Dobrin; the English order of St. Thomas

of Acre; and the Syrian Order of St. Lazarus, apparently reserved for leper knights.

The Templars were a unique combination of knight and monk; to later historians, they were the first military order, soon imitated by the Hospital, by specifically Spanish orders and, at the end of the twelfth century, by the Teutonic Knights. They originated in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, probably in 1119, when two French knights, Hugh of Payns and Godfrey of St. Omer, responded to a perceived need to protect pilgrims travelling from the port of Jaffa to the shrines in and around Jerusalem.

In literature, such a character that would be worth mentioning is the Templar knight (half monk and half soldier) Brian de Bois- Guilbert, from Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe*,

...a man past forty, thin, strong, tall and muscular... His strong features had been burnt almost into Negro blackness by the tropical sun. In every glance his piercing, dark eyes told a history of past dangers and seemed to challenge opposition to his wishes for the pleasure of sweeping it from his path. A deep scar on his brow gave a sinister expression to one of his eyes. His upper dress was a long scarlet mantle, with a white cross on the right shoulder. (Scott, 1993: 17)

He had a strange half monastic, half military appearance and he was said to be the bravest of all Templars, but too affected by their sins; he was an arrogant, cruel, immoral, heartless man, who wasn't afraid of anything on Earth, not even of Heaven. After years spent abroad, he returns to England to take part in a tournament organized by King John. He manages to win all the fights, but is finally beaten because of his sins.

The Teutonic Order (or the Hospital of St. Mary of the Germans of Jerusalem) was another one of the three major knightly or military orders that originated and evolved during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. During the siege of Acre during the Third Crusade (probably 1190), Germans from Lübeck and Bremen established a field hospital for German soldiers reportedly using ships' sails as cover from the elements. Duke Frederick of Swabia placed his chaplain Conrad in charge of the hospital and soon transformed the organization into a religious order responsible to the local Latin bishop. By 1221 the German Order was given the same privileges as the Templars and Hospitallers by Pope Honorius III (1216--1227). Both senior orders fought the autonomy of the Teutonic Order until about 1240. The German Order may not have quite equalled in wealth and possessions the other two military orders which were

more than 80 years older, but it became the only other order to rival them in international influence and activity.

One of the reference books for learning about the Teutonic Knights is the historical novel written by the Polish writer Henryk Sienkiewicz, *The Knights of the Cross*. The Teutonic Knights are so well described by the author:

The Knights of the Cross have a wonderful nature... When a Knight of the Cross is in trouble, he is as reasonable as a Franciscan, as mild as a lamb, and as sweet as honey so that there wasn't a better man in the whole world; but let him once feel strength behind him, none is more swollen with pride, and you won't find less mercy in anyone. It is evident that Lord Jesus gave them flint instead of hearts. (Sienkiewicz, 2008: 74)

Their merciless character of the Teutons is also caught by Sienkiewicz in the XXX Chapter when Zbyszko meets the Polish Knight Powąła de Taczew again:

An insatiable race, worse than Turks and Tartars. In their souls they dread the king and us; still they cannot hold back from robbery and murder. They attack villages, slaughter land-tillers, drown fishermen; they seize children as wolves might. What would they do did they not fear us? (Sienkiewicz, 2008: 684)

The book tells the story of a young poor nobleman Zbyszko of Bogdaniec who, together with his uncle Maćko of Bogdaniec is returning from a war against the order of the Teutonic Knights ("Knights of the Cross") in Lithuania. On their way they meet the court of Duchess Anna and Zbyszko falls in love with Danusia, whom he swears his knight's oath and promises to bring her "three trophies" from the Teutonic Knights. During the novel, the series of small conflicts continue, Zbyszko having the chance to meet several Teutonic knights. On his way to the royal city of Cracow, Zbyszko attacks Kuno von Liechtenstein, who is an official diplomatic delegate of the Teutonic Knights, "a knight in complete shining armour, and a white mantle, on which was a black cross; on his head was a steel helmet with a splendid peacock-plume on the crest of it." (Sienkiewicz, 2008: 67)

Even the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Konrad von Jungingen, is one of the characters of Sienkiewicz' book. He was not a wicked, depraved person, but he was often forced to act unjustly and to lie, because the whole Order was founded on injustice and on lies, considering calumny a diplomatic skill. Yet, he wasn't a tyrant and he feared the judgment of God. Instead, he tried hard to restrain the pride and insolence of some dignitaries.

He was a weak man, however. The Order had been accustomed for generations to prey on the property of others, to plunder, to take adjoining lands by force or treachery; since Conrad not only was unable to restrain that predatory hunger, but in spite of himself, by force of acquired impetus, he yielded to it and strove to satisfy this craving... So Conrad von Jungingen felt like a charioteer who is driving maddened horses and has dropped the reins from his hands, abandoning his chariot to the will of fate. (Sienkiewicz, 2008: 703-704)

The novel ends with the long awaited war. The combined forces of Poland and Lithuania under the command of Polish King Ladislaus Jagiello destroys the Teutonic Order in the monumental 1410 Battle of Grunwald. This battle signals the true terminal decline of the Teutonic Order.

Another example of characters that had fallowed Christ is Ambrosio, the monk of the novel's title by M. G. Lewis, and a foundling of mysterious past and parentage, who has risen to the position of abbot of the Capuchins, becoming a well-respected figure in medieval Madrid, revered by the populace.

The late superior of the Capuchins found him while yet an infant at the abbey door. All attempts to discover who had left him there were vain, and the child himself could give no account of his parents. He was educated in the monastery, where he has remained ever since. He early showed a strong inclination for study and retirement; and as soon as he was of a proper age he pronounced his vows. No one has ever appeared to claim him, or clear up the mystery which conceals his birth; and the monks, who find their account in the favour which is shown to their establishment from respect to him, have not hesitated to publish that he is a present to them from the Virgin. In truth, the singular austerity of his life gives some countenance to the report. He is now thirty years old, every hour of which period has been passed in study, total seclusion from the world, and mortification of the flesh. Till these last three weeks, when he was chosen superior of the society to which he belongs, he had never been on the outside of the abbey walls. (Lewis, 1987: 15)

The physical description of Ambrosio shows him as being a handsome man, with an aquiline nose and large, black eyes, with a face reigned by tranquillity and content, but with a certain severity in his look. He is educated by the monks but while they " were busied in rooting out his virtues, and narrowing his sentiments, they allowed every vice which had fallen to his share to arrive at full perfection." (Lewis, 1987: 238) The result of this instruction is that he is acutely at odds with himself, subject to an unsettling, ongoing "contest for superiority between his real and acquired character" (Lewis, 1987: 239), his virtues untested and fragile, and his vices only undiscovered because of his strict observance of a self-imposed penitential seclusion. The public reveres him

as a "Man of Holiness," and his charismatic manner and eloquence have made him the darling of "the chief families in Madrid."

Another character who chooses to follow God compelled by circumstances is Nicodim, the pious hieromonk, aka Nicoară Jder, from Mihail Sadoveanu's novel *Jderi Brothers*. After a fight in which he almost kills his brother, being in love with the same woman, he decides that the best thing for him would be to go to a monastery, where, through prayer and study he could forget what happened. "Because of such a devil he (his brother) is still a bachelor, and I live in wilderness." (Sadoveanu, 1975: 47) This monk that was now living in great humility had travelled to the Holy Mountain, where he learned a lot of things about visions and can now understand the Apocalypse.

Victor Moldovan, a young man from Basarabia, got in Romania in 1940, and took an important decision, which astonishes his colleagues, merry theology students, and some of his teachers: that of becoming a monk. Certain profound antecedents of this athletic act of will, seems like a sign of some kind of sickness for some (of madness, to be more specific) were deeply rooted into his childhood and adolescence (pity for the sick, impossibility to lie, avoidance of porn literature and so on).

The most important thing that counts for his decision is the reading of Dostoevski's *The Karamazov Brothers*, while he was a student in the sixth grade at the Theological Seminar. The character of Zosima, the abbot of the monastery, is the one who catches his permanent attention, giving him the necessary impulse to become a monk. Without too much thinking, without the certainty of succeeding and beside the fact that almost everywhere he is welcomed with scepticism, the young man takes the path of hermitage. Although all these seem to him at the beginning like a kind of prison and some monks much under their renown, the miracle happens after a while: through living prayers and flushes of ardent tears, within the walls of the cell or in the middle of the woods, where he often takes refuge, through unspoiled listening, by accepting the hardest and most humble duties, through foreseeing dreams and other signs, the young man is filled by spirit, by the incommensurable happiness of the achieved faith. Not even the earthquake in November 1940 can remove him from the church in which, together with other weaker friars, were bowing.

Until the moment he is arrested, Victor Moldovanu is spreading God's word, as a missionary, first in the snowy and frosty Transnistria, which he crosses on foot, hungry and almost naked, and then in the schools in Odessa. He mostly addresses to the children, be them Romanian, Russian or Ukrainian, to them

first of all because, as he explains at one point, on one hand not even ten Stalins could turn off the elder from their beliefs, and on the other hand, not even the second coming of Christ could make some young or adult people give up to the atheism they were indoctrinated with; therefore, only the children remained, the most receptive, the most pure hearted, the most worth saving. The religion classes of the friar of Frăsinei, is turned into an apostolic evangelistic masterpiece. The missionary has a remarkable pedagogical talent, which keeps him from making a fool of himself even with the higher school classes, which are more reckless.

Victor Moldovanu refuses to join the army because, he says, “I don’t want to kill people, I don’t want to kill my brothers in the Lord.” (Lecca, 1975: 127) The fisherman who fishes people, doesn’t want to become a hunter who hunts people.

Not only the monks choose to follow God. There are certain examples of nuns in literature who, from different reasons choose to become Christ’s brides. Some of them feel the real call, others are sent by their parents and others, being orphans, simply don’t have other choice.

Once in a monastery from a very early age, the young girls hope that at the end of the novitiate their parents will take them back home; that is why, most of the times they are humble and docile. The already consecrated nuns, are trying hard through any means to convince the young novices to join their monastery for all the rest of their lives, for the simple reason that to become a nun, the accept of the novice was needed.

Such a bride of Christ is Seniora, Gertruda on her real name, from Manzoni’s novel *The Betrothed*, a young aristocrat who was forced to become a nun. She is very different from the rest of the nuns in the monastery. Although too young, she is the abbess of the monastery because of the family that she comes from. Looking at her face, one could give her twenty-five years. One the first sight she looked beautiful, but her beauty was a sere one even decomposed. Her black eyes had an unusual expressivity, and she used to stare at the people she was talking with. Sometimes her eyes looked as if they were begging for mercy, love or understanding, but other times, they looked like they were expressing the deadliest animosity. Her cheeks were very pale but with a delicate, gracious shape and some pale, pink but very lively lips, full of expression and mystery. Because of her elaborate stature and of some impulsive moves, too determined for a nun, no one could really tell her height. Besides all these, her clothes betrayed a kind of negligence or carelessness towards the monastic rules.

Another bride of Christ, with a similar story is Suzanne Simonin from Diderot's novel *The Nun*. She seems to be the more evolved intellectual product of her mother who, although the wife of a lawyer, has an independent, modern life. Persecuted by her family, as the result of an unfaithful love of her mother, Suzanne, a pleasant, spiritual, talented young girl, is sent to a monastery by her parents who simply want to escape the care of her dot. Once forced into the bleak, mad life of the nunnery, she gets in three monasteries: Sainte-Marie, Longchamp and Arpajon. These are the places where she makes acquaintance with humiliation and terror, hypocrisy and penitence, the corruption of the morals and the alienation of all the human values, madness and lying, the tears and loneliness that kills the soul ...

A monastery was a farm, an inn, a hospital, a school and a library. It is clear that life in a monastery appealed to many different kinds of people in Medieval Times. Those of a spiritual turn of mind found in the monastic life the opportunity of giving themselves wholly to God as monks. Studious and thoughtful persons, with no disposition for an active career in the world, naturally turned to the monastery as a secure retreat and joined the ranks of the monks. The friendless and the disgraced often took refuge within the walls of a monastery. Many sought to escape from the violent world of the Medieval Middle Ages by seeking the peaceful shelter of the monastery and leading the quiet life of a monk.

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Awareness of Genre in Translation

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to survey genre-related issues in two Lithuanian translations of popular fiction: John Grisham's legal thriller *Firm* (1991), which belongs to the subgenre of the detective novel and to examine if and how the characteristics of the legal thriller are rendered in two Lithuanian translations by Romualdas Petraitis (1997) and Jonas Čeponis (2008).

Keywords: thriller, translation, genre, popular fiction

Introduction

A genre of fiction guides readers and informs them about the category or type of the story, so that one would be able to choose what to read according to the features of the specific genres. A translator may also judge about the book by its genre and take certain features as guidelines for making decisions in the process of translation. Particular choices made by the author may become clear analyzing the genre that a book belongs to; however, the translator's responsibility lies in translating the source text (ST) within the boundaries of the same genre. The aim of this article is to survey genre-related issues in two Lithuanian translations of popular fiction: John Grisham's legal thriller *Firm* (1991), which belongs to the subgenre of the detective novel and to examine if and how the characteristics of the legal thriller are rendered in two Lithuanian translations by Romualdas Petraitis (1997) and Jonas Čeponis (2008). The features of a legal thriller as a subgenre of the detective novel are analyzed to determine the role of genre in the process of translation and to demonstrate how the qualities of the legal thriller are conveyed in both Lithuanian versions. Since the novel contains a great number of legal terms, the discussion of the translation of legal vocabulary has been a part of the research. However, the focus of the research is to discuss the awareness of genre during the process of translating contemporary fiction and to investigate the translator's role and attitude - sensitivity to or disregard of genre-related issues.

The Significance of Genre in Translation

John M. Swales (1990) places emphasis on the communicative aspect of genre and describes genre as a "class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" that are recognized by the discourse community (Swales 1990:58). Askehave and Swales (2001:212)

determine the importance of the relationship between the purpose accomplished by a genre and the structure of the genre. Askehave (1998, 1999) argues that if we want to discover and identify the purpose of a text, we cannot avoid investigating the context in which the text is used. Askehave and Swales (2001:201) propose procedures that “depend on whether the investigator follows a traditional text-first or ‘linguistic’ approach”, or an alternate context-first or ‘ethnographic’ one. These propositions suggest the importance of the “retention” of genre in translation. Askehave and Swales (2001: 201) suggest that purpose (the communicative purpose) “retains the status as a ‘privileged’ criterion” in determining the genre and proposing genre-based approach to the analysis of translation. A present-day reader’s (of the ST and the TT) choice is often determined by the genre or subgenres of popular fiction and the background knowledge of the historical development of the genre. Swales suggests that “appreciation of genre is a necessary if not sufficient condition for an appreciation of literature” (Swales 1990: 37). Thus, genre awareness is a significant factor determining the quality of translation.

Katharina Reiss (1977/1989: 108-9) discusses the text varieties or genres, outlining functional characteristics of text types and determining links to translation methods. Reiss (1977/1989: 109) states that “the transmission of the predominant function of the ST is the determining factor by which the TT is judged” and suggests “specific translation methods according to text type” (Reiss 1976:20). Jeremy Munday (2001:75) summarizes these methods and, following Reiss, states that (1) the TT of an informative text should transmit the full referential or conceptual content of the ST; (2) the TT of an expressive text should transmit the aesthetic and artistic form of the ST; (3) the translation should use the “identifying” method, with the translator adopting the standpoint of the ST author; (4) the TT of an operative text should produce the desired response in the TT receiver - the translation should employ the “adaptive” method, creating an equivalent effect among TT readers. Reiss (1971: 54-88) defines *intralinguistic* (semantic, lexical, grammatical, and stylistic features) and *extralinguistic* (situation, field, time, place, receiver, sender and “affective implications” (humour, irony, emotion, etc.)) instruction criteria by which adequacy of a TT may be assessed (Reiss in Munday 2001: 75). As Munday (2001:76) states, Reiss moved translation theory “beyond a consideration of lower linguistic levels” towards “a consideration of the communicative purpose of translation. Although Reiss’s theory was later criticized, for not describing the “translator’s own role and purpose” or for omitting socio-cultural factors, her ideas on the value of the text-type or genre do not lose significance today. The genre (the conventional text type that is associated with a specific communicative function) is conditioned by the sociocultural environment of both the ST and the TT.

Considering the qualitative aspect of the translation of a text, Andrew Chesterman (1997: 64-70) outlines two types of norms: product or expectancy norms and professional norms. The first ones “are established by the expectations of readers of a translation (of a given type) concerning what a translation (of this type) should be like” (Chesterman 1997: 64). On this Munday observes that “factors governing these norms include the predominant translation tradition in the target culture, the discourse conventions of the similar TL genre, and economic and ideological considerations. Professional norms “regulate the translation process itself” (Munday 2001: 118).

John Grisham’s Popular Fiction

John Grisham (b. 1955), a popular American author, is known for his legal thrillers that contain much information on the system of law in the United States in America. After graduating from a law school in 1981, John Grisham practiced law, specializing in criminal defense and personal injury litigation (*John Grisham: The Official Site* 1995-2010). His first novel, *A Time to Kill*, was published in 1988; however, after the success of *The Firm* (1991) John Grisham solely devoted himself to writing. At present John Grisham is considered to be the best-selling author of a legal thriller and one of the best-selling writers (Southwick 2008: 24). Often the author is referred to as “the master of legal thrillers” and “a master storyteller” whose legal thrillers are admired because he “knows how to tell a great story” (Kinsella 2001). Leslie H. Southwick describes Grisham’s style as fast-paced and extraordinary, and comments on a set of rules that can be distinguished in Grisham’s books (2008: 24). The popularity of John Grisham’s novels is determined by the main characters, idealistic lawyer heroes, who fight corrupt high-ranking officials or lawyer firms. Although, Mark Hemingway criticizes John Grisham’s fiction, describing it as “compulsively readable, preposterous and formulaic” and labeling his novels as “odious populist messages [that] commit the unforgivable sin of making heroes out of lawyers”, he [Mark Hemingway] acknowledges the remarkable success of Grisham’s novels among readers and film directors (Hemingway 2001). All of John Grisham’s novels have become international bestsellers, many of which have been filmed; his novels have been translated into more than thirty languages. *The Firm* was the first work by John Grisham published in Lithuanian: the first translation appeared in 1997. The novel was translated by two translators: Romualdas Petraitis in 1997 and by Jonas Čeponis in 2008. More than thirty Grisham’s novels have been translated into Lithuanian since 1997.

A legal thriller *The Firm* includes characteristic features of the detective novel and some of the *hard-boiled* detective novel, which can be identified as a branch or a subgenre of detective fiction. The analysis of two Lithuanian translations leads to the conclusion that the qualities of the hard-boiled

detective novel, “even though unfolds in Lithuanian texts, do not preserve the same degree of profoundness” (Stanevičiūtė 2011: 5). The comparative analysis of Lithuanian translations has revealed that TT1 (Petraitis’s translation, 1997) applies a greater number of translation strategies, in particular, generalization and the use of less expressive words, which results in the loss of the effect of the genre. In contrast, TT2 (Čeponis’s translation, 2008) retains a greater degree of precision with the help of direct Lithuanian equivalents and is more reader-friendly. On the other hand, the abundance of the footnotes with additional information puts the text (TT2) at a risk of overburdening the reader with information and hindering the reading process. The analysis of the translations proves the importance of the genre in the process of translation.

Development of the Contemporary Detective Novel

Crime fiction may be divided into two categories: *classic detective fiction* and *hard-boiled detective fiction*. Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, the pioneers of this genre, have introduced the understanding of this new detective story recognized for a sense of realism and have changed the picture of a detective as notably thoughtful and brilliant (High 1986: 238). According to Lee Horsley, a classic detective story focuses on “death-detection-explanation” and the process of crime solving usually includes “a brilliant or at least uncommonly perceptive detective [who] solves a case so intricate and puzzling that ordinary minds are baffled” (Horsley 2005: 12). Thus, traditional detective stories typically follow the same pattern: the exploration of death and an unusually insightful detective. The interwar period (1918-1939) marks a dramatic change in American detective fiction. As Andrew Pepper states, “crime was no longer seen as it had been in the ‘classic’ detective fiction“, but rather as an “offspring of an urban-fuelled modernity” (2000: 10). Detective fiction changed its focus from fostering of social morality (characteristic of the British society) to contemporary problems of the corrupted, modern, metropolitan society.

The term *thriller* tends to be employed interchangeably with “detective story and mystery”: the detective story “thrills the reader with mysterious crimes, usually of a violent nature, and puzzles his reason until their motivation and their perpetrator are, through some triumph of logic, uncovered” (“Detective, Mystery, Thriller” 2008). J. A. Cuddon explains that the detective story is “a form of fiction in which a mystery, often a murder, is solved by a detective” (Cuddon 1991: 229). A good detective story “displays impeccable logic and reasoning in its unraveling and [...] is a very sophisticated and intelligent type of entertainment” (Cuddon 1991: 229). In this aspect a detective story differs from its derivative – crime fiction, “concerned with crime in which police/detectives are likely to be involved” but in which “the emphasis is on the criminal and criminal psychology” (Cuddon 1991: 205). Moreover, often the

identity of the criminal in crime fiction “is known from the outset and the suspense and interest of the narrative depend on the psychological state of the criminal and what he or she does to evade the law or justice” (Cuddon 1991: 205). The detective story is “easily identifiable because [...] it has one plot, basically: the solution of a mystery, usually murder” (“The Thriller Mystery” 2006). The thriller has “a greater variety: on the one hand, it contains stories very similar to the detective novel, based on the solution of a mystery; at the other extreme, pure pursuit and evasion stories; and in between, the sequences of violent episodes with a little deduction” (“The Thriller Mystery” 2006). Thus, thrillers are “a more loosely organized body of literature than the detective story, with its golden rules and puzzle-like structure” (“The Thriller Mystery” 2006). The emphasis in the thriller story is not only “on the assessment of evidence and its interpretation in order to solve a mystery, but as much upon the actions taken” (“The Thriller Mystery” 2006). The category of fiction called thrillers means that they are “usually linked to the Mystery genre” and generally are “characterized by a high level of suspense and its ability to evoke an emotional rush of excitement in the reader” (“Thriller” 2008). Steve Bennett defines a thriller as being characterized by “the sudden rush of emotions, excitement, sense of suspense, apprehension, and exhilaration that drive the narrative, sometimes subtly with peaks and lulls, sometimes at a constant, breakneck pace” (Bennett 2008: 1). He also adds that a “thriller is a genre of fiction in which tough, resourceful, but essentially ordinary heroes are pitted against villains determined to destroy them, their country, or the stability of the free world” (Bennett 2008: 1). Bennett observes that “today, thriller novels provide a rich literary feast embracing a wide variety of worlds - the law, espionage, action-adventure, medicine, police and crime, romance, history, politics, high-tech, and religion; thrillers are usually about life and death situations” (Bennett 2008: 1). Characteristic details of thrillers make it similar to the genre of suspense fiction or detective story. The following sub-genres of a thriller can be enumerated: conspiracy thrillers, legal thrillers, psychological thrillers, spy thrillers, bio-thrillers or technothrillers (“Thriller” 2008: 2). Many of these sub-genres can be further subdivided into different groups.

The Genre of the Thriller

Ralph Willett describes one of the groups of the thriller, hard-boiled detective fiction, as the genre that depicts reality, stating that the quest of the detective is the “establishment of meaning and the re-ordering of the “real” world” (Willett 1992). The hard-boiled detective novel, closely related to the thriller emerged in America (Routledge 2002). It is exclusively an American genre which depicts complex modern American society and combines “all the elements that the outside world saw as American” (*Classic Crime Fiction* 2004). Similarly, Jason Madison Davis refers to the hard-boiled detective as realistic fiction because it depicts the world around (Davis 2004). However, real life stories do not always

have happy endings and the criminals are not always identified. Besides, the characters are represented with their flaws and they cannot be classified into purely good and extremely bad. Thus, the borderline between positive and negative characters or between the protagonist and the antagonist diminishes. John Michael Bumsted also emphasizes realism as the basis of the hard-boiled tradition, claiming that this tradition is important for contemporary crime fiction and for contemporary popular fiction in general (Bumsted 2009). Nowadays, the hard-boiled detective is known as a genre that depicts the contemporary American society, in which violence and rapid pace of action is the constituent part of the urban environment and where clear distinction between guilt and innocence does not exist. A hard-boiled detective novel immerses the reader in the brisk action of investigation. The problems of contemporary society are familiar for the reader; therefore, s/he gets easily involved into the plot, which describes the real present-day world, so that the reader recognizes the environment, the language and the major problems.

Different authors provide different features of hard-boiled fiction. Three essential characteristics of the hard-boiled detective can be determined: the mixture of action, deduction and explicit violence (“The Thriller Mystery” 2006). William Marling (2009) distinguishes five types of the plot that reappear in hard-boiled fiction: the search for a reputedly valuable object that turns out to be worthless; an apparent crime that the revealed plot shows to be a repetition of an earlier crime; the wealthy family with a problem or secret; the antagonist who is a double of the detective or the author; cleaning up a corrupt town (Marling 2009).

Although the novel *The Firm* is often ascribed to the group of legal thrillers, it reveals similarities to the hard-boiled detective novel: the action of the novel takes place in the urban area; the novel displays a sense of corrupted society; the main character can be viewed as the victim of circumstances; the language is marked by wisecracks and contemporary slang. Jerry Palmer asserts that a corpus of popular fiction which encompasses such titles as hard-boiled detective novel or crime fiction are unified by common pattern, namely the investigation of a criminal activity by a hero (Palmer 1991: 123). This procedure of an individual fighting an evil and striving to restore social order is found in any type of crime fiction. Two opposing forces are present in the thriller, one representing the criminal world and the other – the justice. Thus, the thriller excites the reader with the help of the plot which includes a combat between the assumed protagonist and the antagonist. Corruption in the thriller is usually associated with the wealthy: “an eel-skin attaché is more likely to be an icon of corruption than of innocence” (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). Thus, the antagonist(s) in the thriller come(s) from the higher levels of society and often belong(s) to the authorities. The fight with the corruption leads the protagonist

either to an escape or death. The thriller includes swift action, sharp emotions and fast development of the events. What is more, the protagonist of the thriller is an ordinary man who fights the powerful antagonists. Another essential feature of a thriller genre is the manner of how the story is told. The non-stop action, exciting and surprising twists of the plot, vibrant and exotic environment as well as frantic pace which brings the reader to the thrilling climax are intrinsic to a thriller genre (Bennett 2009). Accordingly, the thriller, same as the hard-boiled detective, is based on the rapid development of events. What is more, the thriller focuses on numerous action scenes rather than on character development. Regarding the main character of the thriller, Steve Bennett points out an ordinary, but clever, citizen who finds himself in dangerous circumstances beyond his control (Bennett 2009). Since the protagonist of the thriller is an ordinary person, he can be a representative of any profession.

The thriller fiction embraces a variety of subcategories that highlight vices and aspects of different areas of society. As possible categories can be given thrillers that embrace the world of the law, espionage, action or adventure, medicine, police and crime, romance, history, politics, high-technology and religion (Bennett 2009). Thus, thrillers can be assigned to different categories depending on which side of the society they pertain to. Nevertheless, the key features, namely fast-paced plot which includes the antagonist who creates obstacles for the protagonist, swift action that is crucial for success, changing environment and ordinary heroes, exist in all types of thriller novels. Similarly, the thriller offers a number of characteristics akin to the genre of hard-boiled detective. Thrillers are about criminal activity and violence; however, a crime is always mixed with a never-ending action and adventure. The protagonist of the thriller, same as of the hard-boiled detective novel, can be a representative of any profession depending on the type of the thriller. Furthermore, both, the thriller and the hard-boiled detective, include the vibrant setting as the driving force of an action. Thus, the thriller can be considered a sibling genre to the hard-boiled detective. Similar features indicate the close relationship between the hard-boiled detective and the thriller.

Legal Thriller as a Subgenre of Popular Fiction

The growth of the legal thriller as the genre has started in 1987 when Scott Turow's *Presumed Innocent* has been published ("Law's Labors Lost" 1994: 7). A legal thriller depicts uneasiness about the law practices and about the lawyers who oppose the overall system, "who stand outside the world of expensive suits and expensive cars and expensive politicians, and who try, often pathetically, to revel in renunciation" ("Law's Labors Lost" 1994: 7). The law in these novels is both, an apparatus and a pretext, "it's a rigid narrative frame, the exoskeleton of a plot" ("Law's Labors Lost" 1994: 7). *National Library Board* describes a legal thriller as a story "in which ordinary lawyers are forced

to do extraordinary tasks to combat enemies within and without the legal parameters” (“Thriller” 2008: 2). In other words the law is the essence of legal thrillers and is a cause of the conflict as well as a tool to extricate it.

The legal thriller can be considered as an American genre not only because it originated in the United States of America but also because it portrays the features of American society (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). Thus, the legal thriller accentuates the legal system of the United States of America and raises an issue of a legal system as a whole even though the story is usually about criminal law (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). In a legal thriller, the American legal system is equally important as the story of a person. Moreover, a legal thriller is referred to as a study in individualism where the system is never justified (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). In other words, individualism of the protagonist always prevails over the corrupt system of government.

A legal thriller depicts topicalities of the American society. The United States of America is often considered as the most litigious nation on earth with a great leap in the number of lawyers and distribution of law firms between 1965 and 1990 (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). Thus, the society and the characters portrayed in a legal thriller are purely American. The protagonist of a legal thriller, a lawyer, and depiction of the legal system, which constitutes the core of the novel, remind the readers of the prevailing culture and the relevant issues in the American society. The protagonist of a legal thriller is called a lawyer-opportunist rather than a lawyer-statesman (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). Accordingly, the lawyer of a legal thriller accommodates to the circumstances and takes advantages of the opportunities available at that time. In addition to this, the protagonist is usually a young idealist who succumbs to material gain. The protagonist is slowly involved into the conspiracy by the practice of law and by the hollow, material culture which is a reflection of the prevailing culture outside the law (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). A legal thriller focuses not only on legal issues. A system represented in a legal thriller is only partly legal, it is also partly political, partly cultural and partly racial (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). Accordingly, a legal thriller, same as the hard-boiled detective, embraces a variety of aspects of the contemporary American society, namely legal, political, cultural and racial. It can be stated that the society represented in a legal thriller is not homogeneous. However, the stress is put on “all-white, all-male, ‘gentlemanly’ undercut by success” (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). Hence, in the legal thriller, an ethnic group as well as gender become indicators of those who can be considered privileged.

A legal thriller *The Firm* (1991) focuses on legal concerns that form the core of the story about a young lawyer who is lured by the wealth and the promise of material gain, the Mob, the organized group of people who participate in illegal

activities, under the disguise of a legal firm, offers him. In a legal thriller social conditions of lawyers appear to be even more important than the nature of law (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). This is clearly illustrated in *The Firm* where a young law student submits to material flattery. Although the plot of the novel is quite complicated, the story is easy to follow because dialogues dominate *The Firm* (Wall 2006: 443-444). In other words, characters are described mostly through what they say. The novel focuses on legal issues: characters’ occupation with legal files is the core of the plot. To quote Wall, “finding, copying, and storing incriminating legal files pervade this book but in a way that makes sense and is exciting for readers” (2006: 444). The stamina to survive the harassing working hours that sometimes rise to paranoid levels when the author highlights “the specter of all that work, all that effort, being committed to the billable hour” (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). Long hours of tiring work at the office are conveyed in *The Firm*. The novel attracts the reader because legal concerns are provided in a suspenseful and credible manner.

Mitch McDeere, the protagonist, meets the requirements of the protagonist in a typical legal thriller or a hard-boiled detective novel, who often challenges moral norms. The protagonists of Grisham’s novels are “far from perfect; in fact, many give in to the temptation of marital infidelity or break the law in some way” (Wall 2006: 442). Mitch is seduced by another woman even though the readers know that this encounter was arranged by his employers, the mafia. Mitch steals money from the firm and escapes with the money without any consequences. The novel reveals how an individual breaks the law and escapes the judgment. However, the core of the novel is “a foundation of right and wrong that remains solid” (Wall 2006: 443). The protagonist of *The Firm* discovers the truth but this knowledge involves him into the perplexity between the FBI and professional criminals.

In the novel, Grisham offers a negative picture of institutional organizations. This negative view is revealed in the portrayal of the FBI, depicted as “well-meaning but rather incompetent, as McDeere runs for his life due to an FBI leak” (Wall 2006: 443). Similarly, the legal firm is depicted as an institution run by professional criminals where “the law forms a closed, anti-democratic society” (“Law’s Labors Lost” 1994: 7). Wall contends that “in Grisham’s novels, there is obvious criticism of the legal system and of government agencies that are supposed to protect law-abiding citizens” (2006: 443). Accordingly, legal system and governing bodies of the country are criticized in a legal thriller *The Firm*. The novel highlights “the moral distinction between the main characters and the numerous immoral figures who challenge them” (Wall 2006: 443). What is more, Grisham includes violent episodes in his fiction and *The Firm* is not exception (Wall 2006: 443). Even though

government agencies and individuals who enforce the law are represented from the negative perspective, the right and justice prevail.

A legal thriller *The Firm* includes a number of legal terms because the action of the novel develops around legal institutions and the protagonist is a lawyer. Therefore, legal language gains considerable importance in the novel, which describes corruption and incompetence of American legal institutions and discusses the problems of the contemporary American society. Legal terminology and words related to the legal system constitute a big part of the novel's language.

The Significance of Genre-Specific Issues in Translation

The translation of a literary text requires a considerable degree of accuracy and a good knowledge of both the source and the target languages. John Grisham's novel *The Firm*, abundant in legal terminology, requires special knowledge of the legal system in the United States of America. However, neither of the translators of the novel (Romualdas Petraitis and Jonas Čeponis) is a specialist in this field. The investigation into translation strategies that both Lithuanian translators use substantiates the significance of the genre in the process of translation. Mona Baker's (1992) classification of strategies has been applied in the research: "translation by a more general word (superordinate)", "translation by a more neutral/less expressive word", "translation by cultural substitution", "translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation", "translation by paraphrase using a related word", "translation by paraphrase using unrelated words", "translation by omission", "translation by illustration" (Baker 1992: 26-42). However, the focus of the study was to determine the translator's awareness of the genre and the genre-related issues in the novel. The genre, as an influential aspect in translation process, is also a factor that determines the expectations of the audience (Palmer 1991: 113). In other words, commonalities of the texts influence the reader's response to that text and lead to certain anticipations. Thus, genre becomes a part of the author's and reader's competence" (Palmer 1991: 116).

Lithuanian translators employ different strategies to translate the words that convey the message about corrupt practices. For example, the translation of "a cop" TT1 (Petraitis, 1997) uses a more neutral or less expressive word "policininkas" (policeman), while TT2 (Čeponis, 2008) retains colloquial register and translates it as "faras" (cop). Similarly, TT1 relies on a more neutral expression "savas žmogus" to translate "a mole". In comparison, TT2 translates directly - "kurmis" (mole). Even though both translators retain the original meaning of a person who secretly works for a certain organization or a group of people, TT2 uses a more suggestive word. In other words, a tinge of metaphorical meaning is added here, whereas TT1 in this case preserves a neutral tone. In general, the prevalent themes of the hard-boiled detective novel

or those of the legal thriller are present in both Lithuanian translations. However, Lithuanian translators employ different strategies to convey the original message. TT1 shows a tendency to deviate from the primary meaning by the means of generalization, omission or less expressive language. Meanwhile, the translator in TT2 is inclined to express the dominant themes with the help of direct Lithuanian equivalents even though they can appear less explicit than neutral words used in TT1. TT1 uses the strategy of omission when presenting the identity of the main character. The translator in TT1 (R. Petraitis) often changes the meaning of the original expression, meanwhile, J. Čeponis (TT2) translates much closer to the meaning of ST. The translation in TT1 more often strays from the original meaning. In some cases translation choices made in TT1 sound less precise and natural and, therefore, less acceptable for a Lithuanian reader. TT2, in contrast, relies on direct equivalence and established expressions to represent the identity of the protagonist. Although both translators omit certain information, the information omitted in TT1 is less important for the reader since it reiterates what has been said about the protagonist before. Besides, TT1 later compensates this by a more detailed description of the other qualities of the protagonist. Despite more accurate translation choices provided in TT2, the translator sometimes omits relevant information and the picture of the protagonist results in a lack of precision. It can also be noticed that the activity of the mafia depicted in TT1 excludes legal or financial terminology and instead uses more neutral expressions. Illegal activity related to financial operations, for example the expression “all money moved by wire transfer”, is translated as a paraphrase using related words in TT1, while TT2 retains legal vocabulary. TT1 sounds less expressive when the main activity of the Mob, money laundering, is introduced; TT2 retains a higher degree of colloquialism in the speech of one of the antagonists. For instance, the translation of “the feds”, which is another indication of the colloquial style, also shows that the translator in TT1 is inclined to neutralize the style of ST. In general, TT2 follows the style of ST, while TT1 uses less expressive words and, as a result, the description of illegitimate business as well as the speech of the antagonists appears more neutral than it is in the primary text.

The fact that the legal thriller or the hard-boiled detective novel reveals the negative aspects of American institutional structures and governmental agencies, where corrupt businessmen, politicians, judges, police departments, city administrators and other state officers take part in illegal activities has to be considered during the process of translation. Corruption in American institutional structures is conveyed in both Lithuanian translations. However, the translators employ different techniques to render the primary message and to inform the reader on corrupt higher institutions. Lithuanian texts employ different translation strategies to render involvement in criminal operations. The translation choices in TT1 show that the translator (R. Petraitis) tends to

represent untrustworthy American institutions and officials by generalization, less expressive expressions and paraphrases. As a result, TT1 in some cases does not convey fraudulent behavior intrinsic to the officials in the novel. In comparison, TT2 displays the tendency to rely on fewer translation strategies and uses direct Lithuanian equivalents. TT2 often adds a metaphorical meaning to enrich the text and to make it sound more natural.

Being the characteristic novel of popular fiction, the novel focuses on up-to-date times. This is revealed in the descriptions of the society in which technologies play an important role. What is more, in the novel the reader can recognize the names of famous people and real places as well as popular products - the determinant features of the contemporary society and, thus, familiar to the reader. Technological advancement serves as a feature of modern society where cell phones, electronic transactions and computerized technologies constitute a part of daily routine. For instance, the firm is supplied by heavy electronic equipment to facilitate the work of the lawyers. Furthermore, without the use of electronic devices the main character, Mitch, would not be able to get all the necessary documents to indict his former colleagues and employers. What is more, electronic devices improve illegal work of the mafia. Contemporary times are represented by references to extensive surveillance system, the use of credit cards, wire transfers and other technological advancement. Furthermore, the reader recognizes the names of well-known people. Other items of up-to-date world, such as popular stores, newspapers and magazines, also imply that the novel represents the present-day world. The matters depicted in the novel are of great relevance to the contemporary society. Therefore, the conveyance of the present-day realities gains considerable significance.

The translators of the novel employ distinct techniques to convey contemporary times; however, certain indications that the modern world has been treated with a different degree of relevance in the target texts have been determined. For example, TT2 gives more significance to conveyance of contemporary times, providing detailed explanations in footnotes, even though risking overloading the reader with too much additional information. Meanwhile, the translator in TT1 (R. Petraitis) avoids footnotes and, sometimes, even omits references to specific names and individuals, which leads to less accurate rendering of contemporary times. Consequently, the translator has to be conscious that the reader may be unfamiliar with certain names that serve as an indication of contemporary times.

Both in the legal thriller and in the hard-boiled detective novel the movement, physical and psychological, acquires considerable importance because the pace of the development of investigation is, usually, fast. The protagonist is depicted

as always engaged in action, either at work or violent acts of fighting the criminals. Moreover, the protagonist experiences psychological pressure as a result of overwhelming urge for quick decision-making and the fear of being killed. Physical and psychological movement (a specific feature of this novel) is conveyed differently in TT1 and TT2. Never-ending physical movement is conveyed in the verbs and expressions related to driving manner: “raced”, “sped away”, “made a sudden exit”, “darted in and out of traffic”, “making U-turns wherever possible”, “driving like a nut”, “turned quickly”, “ran”, “catch his breath”, “drove like an idiot”, “drove forty-five, then eighty-five”, “darted”, “made sudden exits”, “drove eighty at times, then fifty”, “abruptly turned east”, “lost in city traffic”. References to driving speed, maneuvers in the road, and even reckless driving indicate that Mitch is in a rush and time is of considerable importance to him. Consequently, the manner of physical movement contributes to the overall pace of the action in the novel, which develops very quickly - a feature of the genre of the legal thriller or the hard-boiled detective novel. The urgency of physical action is conveyed with references to exact time, description of moving on foot or driving. Lithuanian translators do not always retain the impression of rapid pace. For example, in TT1 “raced” is translated by a more general verb “išvažiavo” (drove), which does not connote fast driving. In TT2 it is translated by a paraphrase “greitai perkirto” (quickly crossed), which may be treated as a more suitable choice since the adverb “greitai” (quickly) suggests of the urgency of action. Both Lithuanian translators retain references to time which signals haste. However, time is conveyed with a lower degree of precision, for instance, “Seconds later” is paraphrased using unrelated words: “Kai tik tai padarė” (As soon as they did it) in TT1. In this case, the translator Romualdas Petraitis reduces the level of precision by the omission of the reference to seconds which is important in ST because it emphasizes urgency. In TT2 this phrase is translated directly “Keliomis sekundėmis vėliau” (Several seconds later). In some cases Lithuanian translations use even more verbs denoting speedy action, trying to achieve precision in the representation of the rapidity of action. The investigation has proved different translation strategies applied for the conveyance of the urgency of action.

The language of the novel has been examined with regard to the characteristics of the language of the legal thriller and the hard-boiled detective novel: specifically colloquial style, the use of contemporary slang and sarcastic remarks that denominate as wisecracks. Lithuanian translators face difficulties in translation of colloquialisms that do not have equivalents in Lithuanian: for instance “oughta”. Lithuanian translators translate it as “turiu” (have) (TT1) and “turėčiau” (should have) (TT2). Both of these translations neutralize the original. However, in many other cases TT2 preserves a greater degree of colloquial style. In the target texts wisecracks do not create the same impression

as in ST because Lithuanian translations lack casualness and sound too artificial. As a result, both target texts sound more formal than the ST. To sum up, Lithuanian translations do not preserve the same level of the colloquial style. Everyday words are often replaced by less expressive words. A tendency to neutralize the register can be noticed in both target texts. Furthermore, both translators use more redundant expressions than they are in the original. As a result, wisecracks lose sharpness and sound less natural. The translator in TT1 is more inclined to neutralize the ST, while the translator in TT2 provides an equivalent.

Translation of legal terms in a literary text evokes a number of questions because the language of law may be distinguished for its precision and high level of formality. From the linguistic aspect, the translator may refer to dictionaries of terms to translate legal terminology since the main aim is to find an equivalent and to convey the precise meaning. In a literary text, however, the translator has to look for equivalence and conveyance of the exact meaning and also to preserve the literary style of the ST and to incorporate legal terms used in the ST. Even though, in most cases there are equivalent legal terms in the Lithuanian language, translation of legal jargon requires an insight to convey the flavor of the source language. TT2 provides a more accurate translation of legal jargon than TT1, which neutralizes or even omits the original term or word. Although the novel encompasses a number of legal terms, Lithuanian translators do not use many footnotes to explain them, relying on the reader's sufficient legal knowledge.

Conclusions

The novel *The Firm* (1991) can be ascribed to the category of popular fiction and represents two genres – the legal thriller and the hard-boiled detective fiction. John Grisham has contributed to the popularity of the legal thriller in the United States of America and in other countries. The aim of the paper was to prove the significance of a literary genre in translation. The popular genre of the legal thriller and the hard-boiled detective novel puts certain demands on the translator. The understanding of the genre (the dominant themes, the character set, the representation of the society, the setting, depiction of action, and language) raises the quality of translation. The conclusion can be drawn that the translator of TT1 (1997), Romualdas Petraitis, employs a greater number of translation strategies, which in some cases results in the loss of precision. TT1 often deviates from the ST because of a higher level of elaboration and a tendency to generalize and even omit certain information. The translation by Jonas Čeponis in TT2 (2008) is more loyal to the ST since in most cases the translator attempts to find a direct Lithuanian equivalent and to retain accuracy. Nevertheless, the translated text sometimes becomes less natural due to the retention of precision. There is a danger of distracting the

reader's attention, as many footnotes with additional information are provided. Thus, TT2 relies on footnotes more than TT1. Interestingly, despite the abundance of legal terms, most of the footnotes are used when translating passages referring to contemporary times, namely names of famous people, places or everyday issues. In general, features common to the legal thriller and the hard-boiled detective novel are conveyed with a greater degree of precision and significance in TT2.

Considering the genre of the legal thriller, both texts convey the elements of this genre: in a majority of cases the Lithuanian language has equivalent legal terms and does not cause difficulties for the translators. However, the translation of legal jargon presents certain problems: the translator has, first, to recognize legal jargon, and, second, to interpret it correctly. Thus, the translator of a legal thriller has to be well-read in this field. The second most frequently met strategy in translation of legal vocabulary is a paraphrase using related words. These two techniques, direct equivalence and a paraphrase, are the most common methods to translate legal vocabulary in both target texts. However, TT1 often relies on a different strategy, generalization. As a result, translation of legal terminology, same as the conveyance of the features of the legal thriller or the hard-boiled detective novel, is marked by a slight deviation and inaccuracy in TT1. After the investigation of characteristic features of the legal thriller and the hard-boiled detective novel in *The Firm* and their Lithuanian translations, a conclusion can be drawn that in order to produce successful translation the translator has to consider the importance of the genre and to be aware of its features and elements. The analysis proves that the classification of literary texts into genres is a sensitive issue that has to be dealt with precision during the translation process.

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**BOOK REVIEWS/
BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN**



Mihaela Zaharia: <Je est un autre...> - Zur Metapher der Fremde in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts. București: Editura Economică, 2008.

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Dieses Buch verspricht eine rezeptionsästhetische Analyse jener Aspekte, die sich im Umkreis der Alteritätsmetaphorik bewegen und die einige Werke von Klaus Mann, Franz Kafka, Karl Löwith und Kurt Tucholsky kennzeichnen. Die Autorin geht von einer Fragestellung aus, die eher der modernen Forschung der Exotikspezifisch war, um bewusst argumentativ aufgebaut zu jener Problematik der Fremde zu kommen, die auch die Epoche und das Erwartungshorizont der heutigen Leser prägt.

Die grundlegende Motivation, die zu diesem Buch führte, fand Mihaela Zaharia in der Überzeugung, dass die Erfahrungen der Fremde die Einzelperspektive eines Schriftstellers überschreitet. Sie versteht die Rezeption der Literatur, die sich solcher Themen bedient, als dialogische Erfahrung und geht in der Darlegung ihrer Überlegungen von den Fiktionstheorien Wolfgang Iser und Hans Robert Jauss aus. Aus diesem Grund werden die dargebotenen Textanalysen zu gelungenen Lektüreschlüsseln zu den hier vorgeschlagenen literarischen Werken.

Als besonderen Anhaltspunkt formuliert die Autorin dieses Buchs die These, dass die hier neu gelesene Prosa die Erfahrung der Fremde in vielerlei Hinsicht inszeniert und dass sie *im Modus der Autoreferentialität als Fiktion* hinter sich die *echte Wirklichkeit* verschwinden lässt.

Auf diese Art werden beispielsweise Kafkas Romane *Der Verschollene* und *Wunsch, Indianer zu werden* als eine Sammlung vermittelter und unwirklicher Bilder von Amerika gedeutet. Zu dieser Überlegung kommt die Autorin durch die Augen von Klaus Manns Lektüre der Kafkaschen Romane. Sie übernimmt einigermaßen die Meinung des Ersten und führt sie als eigene Interpretation mit Hilfe der Fragestellung aus dem Bereich der Rezeptionsästhetik fort.

Besonderer Aufmerksamkeit sollte sich in diesem Buch das Kapitel über Klaus Mann erfreuen, denn damit betritt die Autorin auch das Feld der literarischen Utopieanalyse. Die Verbindung zwischen der ererbten „Sympathie mit dem Abgrund“ (Zaharia, 33) des Schriftstellers – so wie Klaus Mann selbst von sich

in dem hier zitierten Tagebuch bekennt – und dem Traum- und Utopiecharakter der Amerikaprojektionen aus seinem Werk *Distinguished Visitors. Der amerikanische Traum* ist bemerkenswert.

Amerika als Landschaft eines gelobten Landes erscheint auch im Kapitel über Peter Handke. Mihaela Zaharia liest Handkes Werke *Der kurze Brief zum langen Abschied*, *Die linkshändige Frau*, *Langsame Heimkehr* und *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire* als Rückkehr des Ich aus fremden doch familiären Territorien. Die räumliche Verankerung der Alteritätserfahrungen bei Handke ist als *mentales Konstrukt* zu verstehen.

Die anderen drei behandelten Autoren, Gerhard Nebel, Karl Löwith und Kurt Tucholsky schreiben Essays und Reisetagebücher, die mehr auf authentischen Erlebnissen fremder Landschaften oder der Andersartigkeit aufbauen. Nebels Werke *Orte und Feste zwischen Elm und Esterel* und *Feuer und Wasser* erklären die Alteritätserfahrungen des Reisenden als „Einbruch der Welt ins Ich hinein“ (Zaharia, 119).

Karl Löwiths Reisetagebücher *Reisetagebuch 1936 und 1941* schildern die Distanzierung von einem schwer ertragbaren Deutschland hin zu einer faszinierenden Fremde. Die Wahrnehmung des Anderen versteht Mihaela Zaharia hier als Spiegel des Eigenen darzulegen.

In der Interpretation Kurt Tucholskys *Geschichten aus zwei Städten* zieht die Autorin die Aufmerksamkeit auf den geschichtlichen Faktor, der die Wahrnehmung des Schriftstellers über Frankreich stark geprägt haben soll.

Zum Schluss sei nur noch behauptet, dass dieses sehr gut dokumentierte, leserfreundlich verfasste und geschriebene Buch einen breiten Leserkreis anspricht, der sowohl Germanistikstudierenden als auch Spezialisten einschließt.

Irina Chirica and Teodor Mateoc: *Regionally Reloading the American Literature.*

Editura Universitatii din Oradea, Oradea, 2006/ University of Oradea Publishing House, Oradea, 2006.

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Since the concept of *generation* as far as the literary movements are concerned has already raised so many furious debates and controversies among writers and specialists all around, the *regional dimension* in organizing a literary anthology comes not only in handy, but it also proves to be both necessary and trendy with its refreshing and substantial perspectives on the dynamics of the literature nowadays. That's why the volume *AMERICAN REGIONALISM. AN ANTHOLOGY* (Editura Universitatii din Oradea, Oradea, 2006/ University of Oradea Publishing House, Oradea, 2006), which is the vision of two articulate voices: Irina Chirica and Teodor Mateoc, ultimately represents a solid material in the seminars' activities for all the interested students, and above all an exigent and a consistent re-evaluation of both notorious and less notorious American writers and their works.

Structured in four major chapters, each of these summing up four authors belonging to the region in question: *The WEST, The MIDWEST, NEW ENGLAND and The SOUTH*, the book has a completely circular form and a rewarding proportion. The *Introduction* elaborates on the multiple connotations of the central term of the anthology, meaning *the region*; being the authors' inner strategy for their volume, the concept is clarified from the very beginning, starting with its primary, basic denotative sense and adding progressively new meanings to it, all of them permanently related to the essence of the volume: the literary phenomenon. Thus, from geography through history and finally to literature - the very object of the anthology -, we are given the impression that everything is mentioned for a reason, that the progression is fluent and believable for the reader. The *Introduction* is most definitely linking various collateral geographic, historical and aesthetic elements to the issue of *regionalism*, transcending the word far beyond its initially supposed pretext value into its rightful place, that of a living organism, applicable to the authors' strategy; it most definitely specifies the exact reasons for the present selection and it offers the background seen in its intrinsic dynamic and also the consequences of the stated generous approach.

America has always been a land of diverse regions. At first, these were defined by natural barriers and boundaries, particularly massive mountain chains in East and West and vast prairies in the midland. To a degree, natural history inevitably shapes human history. (...)

Undoubtedly, the greatest and most consequential regional conflict was the Civil War. (...)

Regional realism, as a literary movement, is sometimes designated “local color”. (...)

Regional realism in the post-Civil War era, though sectional in focus, not only reflected national reunification but also contributed to it. That is, it reshaped the image of national identity by engendering a pride in unity by emphasizing regional diversity. (p. 7; 8; 9; 14)

The pattern of introducing and presenting the chosen writer and his or her literary work is clearly-cut and only apparently obvious or soft, because under the umbrella of the so-called evident information regarding the writers and their stories it is well hidden the mixture of both scholar/ academic texture and personal, original touch given to the discourse. The departure in the selected writers’ portrayals would be either the irony of their situation, or the immediate well-known aesthetic detail, but their depictions are always pointing out the recurrent themes, the ups and downs and the paradoxes that involve their names and literary works. Both Irina Chirica and Teodor Mateoc seem to possess a certain taste for the controversial topics, for the misunderstandings implying the writers and their writings, both of them inspiringly trying to de-mystify, to re-invigorate, to re-dimension their figures in the fresh minds of their readers.

Aware as he was of his audience’s expectations and interests, he couldn’t help noticing, however, the evils that took root in the newly colonized territory. One constant theme is the denunciation of the influence civilization was having on the West. (...) [p. 17];

However, **Among the Corn Rows** is the most controversial story of Garland in the **Main- Travelled Roads** collection. It is an optimistic story with a happy ending (...) (p. 91)

Each story is accompanied by extended “hints” concerning its publication, its critical opinions through time, consequently resulting a coherent text-interpretation opened to further suggestions and future debates, in the fashionable post-modernism’s spirit. The literary analyses proceed from identifying the obvious and end up in revealing the hidden, the obscure. That’s why, once again, the anthology is a success and a valid construction. It’s a pity that the two authors of it have not signed their names on the exact pages they wrote, but we forgive them for their rare sense of modesty.

**Giulia Suciu - *Communicating Gender and Gender Differences*
Oradea, University of Oradea Publishing House, 2009**

Dana Sala
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Giulia Suciu's book shares to its readers the perspective of a young researcher and academic lecturer who wonders with honesty how we can keep at distance the effects of gender-imposed stereotypes.

The author is aware that the very act of communication is already a kind of Pandora's box, it is a way of producing new stereotypes through the language we use. We are exposed both to the perpetuation of the old forms inherited through education, and to the shaping of the language with our new ideas. We can definitely do something to diminish the psychological effect of stereotypes.

Women are more vulnerable to such stereotypes already latent in the language and released many times unconsciously through men's acts of speech. Undertaking a study on feminist approaches of linguistic theories, the author adopts a moderate position and brings arguments for all chosen examples and sometimes contradicts some aspects promoted by theorists. She does not blame all men for using a sexist language but instead tries to uncover many layers of added intentional elements at the level of speech.

Finally the best method for such an operation would be to see for herself, to go through all aspects of the interaction between language and the psychology of gender differences and to apply the conclusions on some vivid interactive contemporary contexts. The contextualization done in the last two chapters of the book is by far the most accomplished and flexible, these texts are the great attainment of her study.

Giulia Suciu dares to confront the mental constructions shaping the interaction between man's language and woman's language and she systematized an immense bibliography on this matter.

The author shows keen objectivity in presenting the dominance approach and the difference approach. The *dominance approach* views women as deprived of the power to dominate conversation, since the language is impregnated with values imposed by men, while the *difference approach* explains the differences

in intonation, choice of words, of grammatical structures through biological and psychological differences between men and women. In this perspective, every analysis should go back to the stage when boys and girls did create different worlds by employing some of the language choices and not others.

Giulia Suciú's book is a passionate research on genderlects. The author does not emphasize the differences, as much as the common grounds of speech between men and women. She also tries to explain how women became "the muted sex" due to a linguistic power imbalance, but she advocates the internalization of norms, of linguistic gains in communication, rather than blind statistics of factual theories.

The analyses of nowadays talk-shows reveal unexpected insights about the power of words and about the power of models we see on the screen. Of course, as the author exposes it with objectivity, not always screen models are good models. Sometimes they have their own hidden strategy to send out the vibration as they are the powerful ones. This is done at the price of embarrassing the guests of the talk show and it is a practice that puts in circulation a whole gush of gender-marked stereotypes.

Communicating Gender and Gender Differences is a book written with creative passion in an attractive sophisticated style. It opens our eyes on many apparently inoffensive topics and it brings a necessary touch of humor and of spontaneity, thus advocating itself as one the most enjoyable readings on this topic.

**William Dean. *The American Spiritual Culture: and the Invention of Jazz, Football, and the Movies.*
New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group,
2003.**

Dana Sala
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In the realm of culture and spiritual life, the questioning of values and the critique, when not done properly, is at an enormous risk – the risk of eluding the grasp of truth and of meaning-fullness, the annulment of the transcendent principle that urged the quest in the first sense.

William Dean's book, *The American Spiritual Culture: and the Invention of Jazz, Football, and the Movies*, is a brilliant example of how questioning human pursuance of spiritual values can interact with so many layers of the society and of human consciousness that gets to the vision which sustains American "spiritual culture" as a whole and as something distinctive.

American pragmatism is regarded by William Dean in connection with the specificity of the American spiritual culture and in connection with religious thinking, however strange this may be. The United States spiritual culture was build, even from its beginnings, "to fit the dimensions of a nation rather than of a person" (p. 12). Unlike in a past-owing country, a past including even religious wars and dissent, on their promised land the Americans could find a natural way for a public religiousness, which they even guaranteed from the very constituency of their states. The public religiousness does not refer to church organization, or its institutions; it refers to the sacredness of the principles shaping the public sphere. The lesser religious confusion is what defined the Americans centuries ago. Nowadays, even this aspect, functioning so well before, is in decline. On their settling, by being compelled to look forward not backward, the Americans did not let success and public domain at the randomness of individualistic arbitrarily chosen laws. The first generations "were not stupidly pragmatic, believing that any consequences whatsoever were equally good. They wanted to know whether a consequence was successful, and that required some standard of success that transcended the world of ordinary consequences. Thus, the question of a transcendent principle for pragmatic judgment was endemic to America" (p. 12). Religious truths were associated with pragmatism. The new-born people were active rather than contemplative, doers instead of deliberators.

The American spiritual culture is predominantly Christian, but it cannot be defined through that only, since there are so many non-Christian elements and its distinctiveness resides in something else than all these overtly religious aspects. The spiritual culture, in a slight decline nowadays, as the author senses, has the power to speak for a good greater than the country's good. The absence of a rich historical past created a void around which the new spiritual culture stayed more united by the necessity of wholeness and by a common shared vision.

Indeed, The United States are not a country with a syncretistic religion and when the presidents address the country they do not address different religious denominations as separate groups, as there would be too many such groups. It seems that what the Americans have, in terms of religiousness, transcends all these church organizational aspects. The famous theologian Paul Tillich is quoted with his statement that «religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion» (p. 22). Other names coined for this by other thinkers are “the religion of the Republic”, or “the civil religion”. Therefore, this “civil religion” pervaded all other cultural forms and has shaped them.

Another distinctive feature, apart from pragmatism, is skepticism. An expression of it is using reductionism in the apprehension of religion. Many scientists have developed models to assess aspects of religion just because their models make sense, are logical. Of course, religion cannot be appropriated by these means. An underlying general cause for that might be the “vivid feeling” of displacement. The “immigrant sensibility” makes room for a woundedness that is part of a new identity, and this is what unites people as they discover common “hidden histories of fled-from pain”, as Alice Walker expresses it.(p. 46). Puritanism added to that the vulnerability and nakedness of human soul. As the historian Page Smith stated (quoted on page 53), “...for the Puritan was the first man to stand alone before God and the world without the comfort of rituals, of forms and orders, traditions, customs and formalities, without, above all, any enrichment by the visual arts in the prolonged absence of which the soul withers”.

Americans managed to transmute plurality into pluralism, individuality into individualism and multicultural struggles into multiculturalism as a principle.(p. 47). These aspects oblige the Americans to keep up with a continuous reinvention of themselves.

The first part of the book, entitled “God the Opaque”, goes to the heart of the things and reveals the patterns. The second part entitled “America the Visible”

undertakes the analysis of some cultural forms, distinctively American, in which the author finds the expression of some underlying religious meanings. To analyze jazz, football and movies from this point of view is a unique spiritual enterprise, coming from a Professor of Theology who is not afraid to grasp the truth embedded in these secular activities. Jazz is the voice of improvisation, of displaced people and of the historical void above mentioned. Movies, as the enactment of a fantasy land, represent the Americans need to continuously reinvent themselves. Football is the release of the ritualized violence and the expression of wilderness.

By writing such a complex book, William Dean establishes new standards for the profession of religious critics, the critics who can challenge the ready-made truths peddled out by our contemporary society.

Brian Boyd. *On the Origin of Stories. Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction.*

The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009.

Éva Székely
University of Oradea

Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859. While the ideas expressed in it -- such as the concept of evolutionary adaptation through natural selection -- attracted much attention, for many decades they had little real impact on the development of life sciences and social sciences. Evolutionary biology and evolutionary psychology as academic disciplines emerged in the 1930s, and came to be generally accepted only 40 years later. The humanities fell in line much slower.

Literary Darwinism, the branch of literary criticism, which studies literature in the context of evolutionary ideas, came into being only about two decades ago. While it is far from being generally accepted, its most enthusiastic adepts: Joseph Carroll, Denis Dutton, Steven Pinker etc. aim to create a new paradigm for the study of literary works. They also aim to integrate literary studies with the social and natural sciences.

One of the most hotly debated topics of literary Darwinists is that of the adaptive function(s) of literature and the arts. Professor Brian Boyd from the University of Auckland, New Zealand, is the first scholar to offer a thorough explanation of the evolutionary origins of art and story-telling.

Art is "a specifically human adaptation" (1) argues Boyd in *On the Origin of Stories. Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction*. It offers tangible advantages for human survival. It is a kind of high play, play being an adaptation widespread among more intelligent animals. Unlike animals, humans depend not just on physical skills but even more on mental power. Humans have evolved to be ultra-social, far more cooperative than the most developed species of animals, and to be uniquely immersed in culture. Cultural evolution can respond to environmental challenges and changes much more rapidly than genetic evolution. People's fondness for storytelling has sharpened social cognition, encouraged cooperation and fostered creativity, skills that made it possible for us to adapt to a wide variety of environments.

Brian Boyd's study is divided into two parts, each illuminating the other. The first half is a fascinating and informative presentation of the tenets of evolutionary psychology. Boyd offers in it the explanation of his idea of art as a form of cognitive play as well.

We can define art as cognitive play with pattern. Just as play refined behavioral options over time by being self-rewarding, so art increases cognitive skills, repertoires and sensitivities. A work of art acts like a playground of the mind, a swing or a slide or a merry-go round of visual or aural or social pattern. Art's appeal to our preferences for pattern ensures that we expose ourselves to high concentrations of humanly appropriate information eagerly enough that over time we strengthen the neural pathways that process key pattern in open-ended ways". (15)

The second half of the study is an evolutionary appraisal of two timeless works of literature: Homer's *Odyssey* and Dr. Seuss's *Horton Hears a Who!* Boyd tries to find the answer to questions concerning our emotional engagement with these works and the age-old problem of storytellers: how to hold the interest of the audience. This part of the study, despite the pertinence of the problems it discusses, represents less interest than the first one. It actually repeats much of what had been said in the first one.

All in all, Brian Boyd's study, despite of the aforementioned shortcomings, is a worthy contribution to the burgeoning body of specialist literature that claims that far from being a mere cultural construct, literature is the creation of the adapted mind.

Next Issue's Topics:

**Crisis in Literature/
Culture & Authors Adopted
by Two Countries**

Thematik der nächsten Ausgabe:

**Literarisch veranschaulichte Krisen/
Kulturen und Autoren, die von zwei Ländern
adoptiert wurden**

Les sujets du prochain numéro:

**Crise en Littérature /
Culture et Auteurs Adoptés par Deux Pays**

Confluente, Annals of the University of Oradea, Modern Literature Fascicule is an academic, openly peer-reviewed journal that appears once a year. The 2010 TCR is issued before December 2011.

The executive editors and the advisory board shall decide on any change about the frequency of the journal.

TCR specializes in bridging the world of academic literary criticism and theories with the aliveness of everyday literary phenomenon as reflected in the cultural media and book-production.

The topics covered by our journal in its 2 generous sections – **Literary - Isms & Cultural - Isms** are as they follow:

The dynamics of literature, trends.

The interconnection of literature to culture.

Identity, otherness, anthropology and literature, cultural studies.

Identity and its expressions in literature.

Time and literary theory.

Myths and Post- modern authors.

Comparative literature & comparative studies.

Foundation:

As a research journal, the beginnings can be traced back to the academic year 1966- 1967, when, under the name *Lucrari stiintifice*, the section of academic research emerged at the University of Oradea. In 1991 the research journal changed its name and template, focusing on topics of immediate relevance and on thorough going studies, on cultural studies, research articles on Romanian literature, comparative literature. In 2006 emerged *Confluente*, a Modern Literature Fascicule including academic literary studies in English, French, German and Italian.

Submission:

The details about the submission of papers, instructions for the contributors and on the preparation of the manuscript are published online.

Peer review:

Our journal advocates open peer-review system, considering that the names of the authors of the articles should not be sent anonymously to the reviewers, since this fact has little impact on the quality of the paper submitted. The

quality of the research article is the single argument taken into account when operating the selection of articles.

The administration of the peer-review process is the attribution of the reviews editors. The sender of the manuscript does not know the names of the reviewers of his/her particular case, only the complete list of reviewers.

The complete list of reviewers will be included in every other issue .The general editor may supplement the initial list of reviewers, if necessary.

Konfluezen, Jahrbuch der Universität Oradea, Band für Neuere Literaturen und Fremdsprachen, ist eine wissenschaftlich begutachtete Fachzeitschrift, die ein Mal im Jahr erscheint. Das 2010 erschienene TCR Heft wurde vor Dezember 2011 herausgegeben.

Der Redaktionsbeirat und die wissenschaftlichen Begutachter sind befugt, über die Erscheinungsfrequenz der Zeitschrift zu entscheiden.

TCR setzt sich zum Ziel, die Welt der akademischen Literatur- und Kulturforschung mit dem dynamischen Alltag des literarischen Phänomens, so wie dieses von der Kulturmedia und der Buchproduktion widerspiegelt wird, in Einklang zu bringen.

Die in den zwei umfangreichen Sektionen dieser Zeitschrift behandelten Thematiken umfassen:

Die Dynamik des literarischen Phänomens
Die Interdisziplinarität von Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft
Identitäts- und Alteritätsstudien, Anthropologie- und Kulturtheorien anhand der Literatur
Literarische Identitätsmodelle
Zeit und die Literaturtheorie
Mythos in der postmodernen Literatur
Komparatistische Literaturstudien

Geschichte:

Als wissenschaftliche Fachzeitschrift wurde das Jahrbuch der Universität Oradea, im Universitätsjahrgang 1966-1967 zum ersten Mal unter dem Titel *Lucrări științifice* herausgegeben. 1991 änderten sich Titel und Format der Zeitschrift, während der Inhalt sich auf Forschungsthemen mit Aktualitätsbezug aus dem Bereich der rumänischen Literatur und der Komparatistik fokussierte. Im Jahr 2006 entstand *Confluențe*, ein Band für Neuere Literaturen in den Fremdsprachen Englisch, Französisch, Deutsch und Italienisch.

Hinweise zur Einreichung des Manuskripts:

Auskunft über die Einreichung des Manuskripts entnehmen Sie unserer Internetseite.

Begutachtungsverfahren:

Unsere Redaktion setzt ein offenes Begutachtungsverfahren ein, im Verlauf dessen die Beiträge nicht anonym den jeweiligen Begutachtern zukommen, da dieses Faktum einen geringen Impakt auf die Qualität der eingereichten

Beiträge haben kann. Allein die Qualität der Studien spielt eine Rolle für die Auswahl der zu veröffentlichenden Artikel.

Die Verwaltung des Peer-Review Verfahrens ist die Aufgabe des Redaktionsbeirates. Die Autoren der eingereichten Beiträge kennen nicht den Namen jener Begutachter, die über ihre Studie referieren.

Die vollständige Liste der Begutachter erscheint in jeder Nummer. Der Chefredakteur hat die Befugnis, diese Liste ergänzen.

Confluences, les Annales de l'Université d'Oradea, Fascicule Littérature moderne, est une revue académique évaluée qui paraît une fois par an. Le numéro pour 2010 - 2011 est sorti en décembre 2011. Les directeurs exécutifs et le comité scientifique vont décider tout changement concernant la fréquence de la revue.

TCR a le but de réunir le monde de la critique littéraire académique et des théories avec le phénomène vivant de la littérature d'aujourd'hui tel qu'il est reflété dans les médias culturels et dans la production du livre.

Les sujets contenus par notre revue dans ses deux sections généreuses – **Littéarismes** et **Culturalismes** sont les suivants :

- Les dynamiques de la littérature, tendances
- L'interconnexion de la littérature et de la culture
- Identité, altérité, anthropologie et littérature, études culturelles
- L'identité et son expression en littérature
- Temps et théorie littéraire
- Myths et auteurs postmodernes
- Littérature comparée et études comparées

Fondation : Comme revue de recherche, son commencement remonte loin, dans l'année académique 1966/1967, lorsque sous le nom de *Travaux scientifiques*, la section de la recherche académique a démarré à l'Université d'Oradea. En 1991, la revue a changé son nom et sa forme se fixant sur des sujets d'intérêt immédiat et sur des études approfondies, sur la culture, sur la littérature roumaine, sur la littérature comparée. En 2006 a paru *Confluences*, un Fascicule de littérature moderne incluant des recherches académiques littéraires en anglais, en français, en allemand et en italien.

Soumission

Les détails pour la soumission des articles, les instructions pour les contributeurs et pour la préparation du manuscrit sont publiés en ligne.

Evaluation

Notre revue soutient un système d'évaluation ouverte, considérant que les noms des auteurs des articles ne doivent pas être envoyés comme anonymes aux évaluateurs, parce que cela pourrait avoir un petit impact sur la qualité de l'article soumis. La qualité de l'article de recherche est le seul argument dont on tient compte lorsqu'on fait la sélection des articles.

L'administration du processus d'évaluation est la tâche des éditeurs évaluateurs. L'expéditeur du manuscrit ne connaît pas les noms des évaluateurs de son cas particulier mais seulement la liste complète des évaluateurs.

La liste complète des évaluateurs sera incluse dans un numéro sur deux. L'éditeur général peut augmenter la liste initiale des évaluateurs, si nécessaire.