

FACES OF ENGLISH



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Volume 5

FACES OF ENGLISH

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PREFACE

*Kathleen E. Dubs, Katalin Balogné Bérces, Kinga Földváry and
Veronika Schandl*

The publication of this volume of essays revives the *Pázmány Papers in English and American Studies* series launched by the Institute of English Studies in 2001.

The profile for this issue, *Faces of English*, was chosen because it lent itself to all the specialties represented by the members of the Institute, providing a snapshot not only of the specific fields of the faculty, but the wide-ranging investigations included within those rather traditional disciplines. Thus the articles include analyses in linguistics, literature, methodology, and culture studies. During the editing process, all the papers underwent two rounds of serious and thorough reviewing both in content and language.

The arrangement of the essays reflects partly their common roots in a discipline, partly the topical connections between them that the peer-reviewing process further enhanced. Therefore studies in linguistics have been grouped in the first chapter (entitled *Faces of a Language*), together with an essay on translation theory and another one on methodology, the wide scope of these being held together by their shared interest in the ways language users draw portraits of the language and themselves at the same time.

The second group of writings (*Meditation and Discourse – Early Profiles*) represents Mediaeval and Renaissance/Early Modern studies, offering the reader glimpses of the complex textual portraits that are also bound together by their connections to the pragmatic aspects of writing, as seen in rhetoric and theology.

The third group of essays (*Theatrical Masks and Disguises*), comprising portraits of drama on the page and the stage, offer a particularly straightforward interpretation of the volume's thematic interests, as the dramatic representation is concerned, probably more than any other branch of art, with presenting faces, masks, personae that can be taken up and discarded by actor and director, and also by the reader or researcher, as the occasion necessitates.

Preface

After theatre and drama, where masks serve the purpose of hiding the original and personal faces of actors and participants, the next group of essays focuses on the more intimate and subjective but also inward-looking genre of literature, that is poetry (*Poetic Physiognomies*). As opposed to putting on masks, these essays shed light on how the poetic persona is suggested by the contours on the portraits drawn by lyric poetry.

The final chapter (*Glimpses at Overseas – Genres Face to Face*) represents the work done in the field of American studies, together with interdisciplinary research in probably the most dynamically developing field, film and media studies. Moreover, the very last essay in this group and the volume as well may also be interpreted as a prophetic portrait, giving a glimpse of the next generation of English studies: the winner of the Ruttkay essay prize, offered for the best student writing in the year 2009.

The closing section of the book introduces the authors of the papers, that is, the “faces” who contributed to the volume.

The editors hope that you find the selections included in the volume informative, provocative, and enjoyable. And, of course, attractive, as we all intend to appear when showing our faces to the public.

Piliscsaba, August 2010

FACES OF A LANGUAGE

1 ACROSS DISCIPLINES

TRANSLATION AS KNOWLEDGE CROSSING BORDERS

Ágnes Somló

“By sharing knowledge, we create a supportive environment.” – anonymous ¹

Nothing moves without translation.’ (Bates 1943:7) But what is translation? There are different meanings of it in different fields but basically all these meanings go back to the concept of some kind of change from one form or medium into another; they also *carry* the notion of moving from one point to another. For example, in Euclidean geometry² to translate is to move every point a constant distance in a specified direction; or in mechanics: a motion in which all particles of a body move with the same velocity along parallel paths. In physics it is the movement that changes the position of an object, *as opposed to rotation*³. Genetics also employs it for ‘the process by which the messenger RNA molecule⁴ specifies the linear sequence of amino acids on a ribosome for protein synthesis’.⁵ Photography is yet another field where we use translation when we translate a four-dimensional scene (3 spatial dimensions + the temporal one) onto a two-dimensional surface. Although the phrase ‘broadcast translator’⁶ is rarely used outside North America, still it gives yet another meaning of translation: for re-broadcasting a signal on a different frequency. There is also ‘translation’ in architecture: according to Tania Sengupta (2007:45) ‘the formation of hybrid architectural and spatial landscapes’ of colonial India is the result of cross-cultural ‘translations of attributes in various aspects of building, building-practice and space’ (ibid: 44) that ‘often involved blurring of boundaries between the coloniser and the colonised. Instead of binaries like black town–white town, [...], dominant culture-dependent culture etc’ (ibid: 45); thus it is rather a kind of to and fro

¹ Motto found on the homepage of the International Medical Interpreters Association.

² By the way some parts of it are known to us via Arabic translations.

³ Note this, as the meaning of ‘rotation’ will be examined from a different point of view later.

⁴ Based on the coded information in it.

⁵ *Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, <http://dictionary.infoplease.com/translation> (22/06/2009).

⁶ It is ‘relay’ or ‘relay station’ that is generally used in British and other varieties of English.

movement between and across the cultures in question.⁷ Translation as a rhetorical device is defined in Webster's dictionary as 'A transfer of meaning in a word or phrase, a metaphor⁸; a tralation.'⁹ (Dictionary.com, 22/06/2009)

All these meanings have something to do with the elements comprised in the most common meaning of the word 'translation' that I will finally try to define by collecting and compiling different definitions of it found in different dictionaries. All of them seem to emphasize a combination of that uniform motion in a straight line – without rotation – with the notion of change, as words, sentences or texts (written or oral) are turned, rendered from one language into another – interpreting, conveying the sense of them in another form, denoting another language.

Hermes, the god of thieves and liars, is also the god of translation. At the same time he has a number of other tasks, such as being the god of roads, commerce and travel, as well as arts, magic and crafts – not to mention matrimonial matchmaking, all of which, by-and-large, can be connected to translation, for a translator's tasks and roles are at least as numerous as his. Thus Hermes is the god of translators and interpreters; as a translator he is a messenger from the gods to humans, and as an interpreter – a *hermêneus* – he bridges the boundaries with strangers. So the word 'hermeneutics', for the art of interpreting hidden meaning, can also be traced back to his name.¹⁰

Although in our Western Christian culture translation also has a patron saint, in the person of the translator of the Vulgate, Saint Jerome, when looking for a 'symbol' of translation the god Hermes might be a better choice, for 'in global terms Asians and others outside of Europe are more likely to respond to ancient Greek traditions than to Christian ones'. (Gross 2009) Some folklorists consider Hermes a deified trickster and connect him with trickster gods of other cultures. Thus

he can also be seen as the African Eshu, as any number of figures such as Coyote or Raven in Native American folklore, as Loki among the Norse, the child Krishna in Indian tradition, or even China's Monkey King, and in the latter case we have an example of a tale about a god being inspired by the travels of a real-life translator, the seventh century Xuanzang. In other words, Hermes in his various manifestations is truly worthy of being the god of translators on an international scale. (Gross: *ibid*)

⁷ The way in which different motives or symbols of folk art or human movement become manifested in the buildings of organic architecture seems to work along the same lines.

⁸ Metaphor: it is also a kind of transfer of meaning by association, as it is association of ideas

⁹ Tralation: the use of a word in a figurative or extended sense; a metaphor; a trope

¹⁰ A lucky find was also called *hermaion*; yet another meaning that can be traced back to the name of Hermes.

The overall role of translation can be further underlined by the words of Giordano Bruno quoted by his friend, John Florio (1553-1625) in the ‘Preface’ to his English translation of Montaigne: ‘... my olde fellow *Nolano*¹¹ tolde me, and taught publikely, that from translation all Science had it’s of-spring’. (Florio 2009) And this statement of Bruno, especially in Renaissance Europe, is not an exaggeration, because it was by the help of translation that the scientific results of the ancient world were rediscovered. Without the work of earlier centres of science and translation, such as the one at Jundishapur in Persia, all that knowledge might have disappeared. The Jundishapur academy was established around 560, where ‘Nestorian Christians speaking Greek, Jews who spoke Hebrew and Syriac, and Indian scholars working in Sanskrit all merged together in an environment where translators worked eagerly to translate their wisdom into Arabic.’ (Gross 2005) The next flourishing centre, in the 8th century, worked under Haroon al-Rashid in Baghdad. When the Caliph moved his capital there he also looked for a unifying force and he found that ‘[t]ranslating the learned texts of the Greeks, the Persians, the Syrians and the Indians gave the empire political and cultural unity and reflected the belief that with knowledge lay power and the power of any civilization lay in the written word, in its books’. (Kazi 2009) Later, when the Spanish Caliphate was established, the library in Cordoba rivalled the great library in Baghdad. Thus ancient knowledge was preserved and spread by the Arabic translations of these remarkable centres.

The statement that translation is a means of education seems to be proved also by the fact that it had already been present early in our human history. Besides the examples above we can also mention the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Jewish Scripture, as another famous example¹²; or let us take a Chinese one from the 1st century, when the emperor commissioned the translation of three tribal sung poems from a remote frontier region because he wanted to be able to understand minority culture in his empire¹³. Thus the constant movement of ideas and forms between cultures is primarily due to the work of translators. Also the rigid boundaries between East and West were undermined by translation for, as we have seen, one of the most important roots of Western culture, a great part of ancient Greek knowledge, reached us via Arabic translations that were later translated into Latin¹⁴, then in turn into modern languages during the Renaissance period.

Although we have seen how translation – by preserving and transmitting knowledge – acted as a catalyst for advancing culture, we still have to see how it works and try to define what it means when we say that translation is the conveying of meaning from one language to another. After all, how can we

¹¹ Giordano Bruno

¹² From the point of view of translation and translation techniques, see the work of Professor Emanuel Tov. (Especially *The Parallel Aligned Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Texts of Jewish Scripture* (Logos Bible Software).)

¹³ Cf. Lung (2007: 39).

¹⁴ See the work of translation schools at Toledo and in Sicily.

convey meaning? Would, for example, a word mean the same to different people even in the case of monolingual communication? Do the names of things carry the same notions in different languages, the same collocations? And so what happens when we try to convey meaning or a notion from one language to another? The most suitable example I will try to examine is the word ‘translation’ itself and will also see whether it is possible to convey the meaning of it into Hungarian.

The English word ‘translation’ comes from the Latin ‘trans’ (and the participle of *ferre*) ‘latus’ meaning ‘carrying across’ or ‘carrying over’, which gives the notion of a horizontal movement, while the origin of its most commonly used Hungarian counterpart ‘fordítás’ is possibly of Finno-Ugric origin with the notion of a turning, rotating movement.¹⁵ Thus the difference between the meanings, due to the difference between the two kinds of movement behind the English and the Hungarian words, is quite marked and will always be present in any interpretations of the words ‘translation’ or ‘fordítás’.¹⁶

At the same time, if we consider the meaning of the procedure called ‘translation’ in both languages, we will find many similar features and see that the Hungarian word might also imply the meaning of another verb, a bit old fashioned, but still used when describing how successful the translator was in conveying, that is ‘carrying across’ or transmitting (literally ‘transplanting’) the meaning of the source text into the target language. Now this verb ‘átültet’ seems to have been influenced by the particular Latin word¹⁷ that ‘translation’ goes back to (which might explain its being slightly old fashioned today), for the language used by the Medieval Hungarian intelligentsia, as in most parts of Christian Europe, was also Latin. Thus it seems, however hard we try, we will never be able to transmit i.e. ‘carry across’ the complete and entire meaning or concept of the English word ‘translation’ into Hungarian, and vice versa. This might be the reason for the extreme argument that translation, as such, from one language into another, is impossible. And still translators brave the impossible and have done it for quite a long time.

¹⁵ There is a cartoon by Tibor Kaján called ‘Literary Translator’; it shows a man typing on an old fashioned typewriter. We see the man’s profile and his brain, which is turned upside down. Now the humour can only be understood for Hungarian speakers because of this turning, rotating motion that the Hungarian word ‘fordítás’ contains. (Kaján 1980: ‘Műfordító’)

¹⁶ Especially with regards to the fact that the stem of the word *for* (in fact an onomatopoeic one) is present in many other Hungarian words. Although these might have different meanings still we are able to detect that original ‘motion of turning’ in them and see that they are more or less all derived from the same stem. At the same time I have to add that in his famous distinction between ‘word for word’ and ‘sense for sense’ translation Cicero uses another word for translation, namely ‘*convertere*’, which also carries the sense of turning. ... ‘*nec converti ut interpres, sed ut orator, sententiis isdem et earum formis tamquam figuris, verbis ad nostram consuetudinem aptis. In quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omne verborum vimque servavi*’. (Cicero: de Optimo Genere Oratorum, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/optgen.shtml> (05/08/2009).

¹⁷ Also see the literal meaning of German ‘übersetzen’, which, due to German linguistic influence, might have strengthened the position of the Hungarian version.

In addition to the different meanings of translation and the different forms meaning translation let us have a look at the English word ‘dragoman’, which means a special kind of translator: ‘an interpreter or guide in countries where Arabic, Turkish, or Persian is spoken’ (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/dragoman>)¹⁸. It shows that translators and interpreters have tried to make connections, convey meaning or mediate between people for a long time, and also how widespread the activity itself must have been. The word or at least a special form of it seems to appear in many different languages and is considered to be perhaps ‘one of the most ancient words we have in all the world’s languages.’ (Gross 2009) Gross has traced its different forms through many languages and found it present in Spanish as Trujamán; in French: Trucheman; in Latin: Dragumannus; in Greek: Dragoumanos; in Arabic: Targuman; in Aramaic: Turgemana; in Mishnaic Hebrew: Targûm¹⁹; in Akkadian: Targumanu. He also found that about 50% of its meaning is interpreter; 40% go-between, mediator, middle-man, broker; and 10% translator. (Cf. Gross: *ibid*)

As a translator of literature I certainly believe in the possibility of translation, just as a long line of translators did before me, in the history of humankind, even if they had to pay with their lives, as did Etienne Dolet, or Tyndale, or, more recently, ‘Hitoshi Igarashi, the Japanese translator of Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*.’ (Gross 2005) I believe in the mediating role of literary translators in cultural exchange, which is education in a broader sense. I also think that literary translation plays an important role in the formation of taste as well as in helping to recognize the importance of human imagination and empathy in mutual understanding. The last has an important task in overcoming all kinds of prejudices by the help of teaching readers the meaning and feeling of tolerance, as well as making them understand the importance of an open mind in dealing with other people who are different in one way or another.

Reading literature is a special way of educating people. By showing the reader ways of different human or social connections and problems, as well as their possible solutions or consequences, it also helps him to realize how our feelings and emotions work, or at least makes him conscious of their existence. Now reading a work of literature in translation will add to it all the excitement of venturing to an unknown world, interpreted and made ‘approachable’ by the

¹⁸ Origin: Middle English *dragman*, from Old French *drugeman*, from Mediaeval Latin *dragumannus*, from Mediaeval Greek *dragoumanos*, from Arabic *tarjumān*, from Aramaic *targōmānā*, from Akkadian *targumannu* ‘interpreter’; see *rgm* in Semitic roots (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/dragoman>).

¹⁹ The Mishnaic Hebrew word ‘targûm’ also appears in English (‘targum’) meaning ‘any of several Aramaic explanatory translations or paraphrase of the Hebrew Scriptures’ (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Targum>). I was interested in the use of the word or its forms in modern Hebrew and my colleague, Rachel Weissbrod from Bar Ilan University, was kind enough to help me in clearing this problem. She explained that the Hebrew word for translation is ‘tirgum’ while ‘meturmeganut’ means interpreting. She also told me that, accidentally, the word ‘tirgum’ sounds very much like ‘targima’, an archaic word for sweets, which is in fact the name of the journal of the Israeli Translators’ Association.

translator; and by entertaining the reader it will help him understand other peoples and their cultures, as well as overcome his fear of the unknown, of the different and the strange. We have already discussed that the word ‘translation’ comes from the Latin meaning ‘carrying across’, ‘carrying over’, and I think it works both ways: the translator transforms, transmits the foreign literary text and its overall cultural content for the reader, who in turn crosses borders, approaches the foreign and becomes familiar with it and with the imagination, traditions and ways of thinking of others. Thus, we might say, literary translation introduces other cultures into a nation’s culture by reconstructing them in the target system. Eventually, some of these ‘reconstructed cultures’ might also become incorporated into the target culture as ‘world literature’²⁰ and even canonized in a national curriculum.

When all is said and done we have to state that one of the most important tasks of the translator (his educational role) requires him to know how much of the foreign and unknown can be incorporated into the target text on all levels (be it words, phrases or sentences; text or ideological, historical or social context, or an overall cultural level). After all, each text requires a different method from the translator and each translation situation a different translation strategy to make the foreign, the unknown and the different or peculiar approachable for the target reader. In fact it is the state of the target cultural system that first determines what to translate and then, on the basis of the readers’ understanding, provides a selection of what and how much of translated literature should and could be incorporated into its literary tradition or its canon of world literature.

At the same time we must not forget about the fact that due to modern and fast means of communication (as well as to ‘supranational’ formations such as the EU or simply globalisation as a common phenomenon) now even peripheral national cultures tend to become more and more multicultural, which in due time might cause some major changes in the educational role of translation, too. Also, there have been great changes concerning the speed of the work of translators due to word-processors, on-line dictionaries or research tools, as well as translation memory, in short, CAT (Computer aided/assisted translation). And quite a lot of money is spent on developing machine translation. But I firmly believe that we still need the linguistic imagination and artistic creativity of the members of this ancient profession called translation. It is especially true in the case of literary translation, for a translator of literature, as defined by Pushkin, is the ‘courier of the human spirit’, while according to Goethe, literary translation is ‘one of the most important and dignified enterprises in the general commerce of the world.’ (Cf. Wechsler 2009) Thus knowledge, information, human experience, as well as the special knowledge and feelings comprised in literature, will always need the work of translators to make possible the crossing of borders for, as Mihály Babits held, we should be

²⁰ I define it as a national selection of foreign literature representing different cultures and different strata of a given culture in a particular nation’s culture.

able to share cultural values, for these values should not be locked in the language in which they were created; beauty is universal.

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2 FACTORS AFFECTING THE PRONUNCIATION OF LETTER <S> A STUDY OF HUNGARIAN ESL LEARNERS

Ildikó Tóth

Only a small body of research exists that goes below the word level and investigates the role of orthography at the phonemic level. Research in this area has shown that orthography has a role in the perception and production of phonemes (among others Landerl 1996, Treiman and Cassar 1997, Ziegler et. al. 2004, Erdener and Burnham 2005, Bassetti 2008). As Treiman and Cassar (1997) argue, the complete separation of sounds and spelling is no longer possible once an individual learns to read using the alphabetic system of a given language and consequently applies letter-to-sound rules when reading. Using production tests on a carefully selected wordlist, this paper* investigates the factors that can influence Hungarian ESL learners' pronunciations of the letter <s> in certain orthographic and phonetic environments. To my knowledge, such effects have not been studied in connection with Hungarian students who study English as a foreign language.

The research questions are the following: to what extent do the following factors influence the pronunciation of the letter <s> in Hungarian ESL students?

1. the orthographic environment of the letter <s>
2. the existence of a corresponding Hungarian loanword with different pronunciation
3. the possible application of Hungarian voicing assimilation

In addition, I also investigate whether

4. the erroneous production of the sound corresponding to the letter <s> has any significant influence on the perception of the correct sound in question. In other words, whether the perception of the target phoneme /s/ or /z/ is influenced by the participants' non-targetlike L2 phonological representations of the words.

* I wish to express my gratitude to Katalin Balogné Bérces, who listened to all the perception data and acted as one of the judges. I also want to thank Sam Hellmuth, who recorded the wordlist for me. I am thankful to those students and friends who volunteered to be subjects in my experiments.

1 The role of orthography: letter-to-sound rules

When studying the effects of orthography on the pronunciation of the grapheme <s> in Hungarian ESL learners, the following letter-to-sound rules applicable to <s> must be taken into consideration (Nádasdy 2006).

1. The prefixes *dis-* and *mis-* and the endings *-sis*, *-sity*, *-sy* and *-sive* are always pronounced /s/ in English, irrespective of the following or preceding sounds¹.
2. The grapheme <ss> is generally pronounced as /s/, but there are four irregular words: *possess*, *dissolve*, *scissors* and *dessert*.
3. Identifiable prefixes not integrated into the word do not count and thus the morpheme initial <s> is pronounced /s/ in words like *resit*, *reset*. However, if the prefix has become integrated in the word, <s> is treated as intervocalic and is pronounced as /z/ (e.g. *reside*, *resemble*).
4. Between vowel-letters <s> is usually pronounced as /z/, e.g. *rise*, but there are several exceptions e.g. *base*, *house (v)*, *loose*.
5. In the orthographic environments <nsV>, <lsV>, and <rsV> (where “V” stands for any vowel letter) the letter <s> is pronounced /s/ e.g. *dense*, *else*, *morsel*. However, the sonorant /m/ is not part of this general rule, as we have words like *crimson* and *damsel* in which the <s> is regularly pronounced /z/.

The wordlist used in both the production and the perception test was compiled on the basis of these letter-to-sound rules. Accordingly, I collected words that belong to one of the following categories:²

1. words containing the prefixes *dis-* and *mis-* or the suffixes *-sis*, *-sity*, *-sy* and *-sive*
2. words containing the grapheme <ss>
3. words containing the prefix *re-*, which is integrated into the word to varying degrees
4. words where <s> is between two letters representing vowels, so <s> is in intervocalic position (<VsV>).
5. words where <s> is between a letter representing a vowel and a silent <e> (<Vse>).
6. words where the letter <s> occurs between one of the sonorants /r/ or /n/ and a vowel-letter.

2 L1 Interference

2.1 Corresponding Hungarian loanwords

The property whether Hungarian has a corresponding word borrowed from Latin cuts across these groups of words. In Hungarian /ns/, /nz/, /rs/, /rz/ can all occur as word-internal consonant clusters (*unszol*, *kínzás*, *ország*, *érzés*). In loanwords

¹ In the case of the ending *-sis* only the first occurrence of <s> is relevant in this study.

² I did not investigate word initial <s>, which is always pronounced as /s/ and which causes no problem for Hungarian ESL speakers.

of Latin origin, however, both intervocalic <s> and the <s> following a nasal or a liquid consonant are invariably pronounced as /z/. Since from around the beginning of the Renaissance period onwards, with Latin being used as an international language among intellectuals, numerous Latin words entered the Hungarian language as loanwords. In these words either the medieval pronunciation of Latin used in Hungary was adopted or, in some cases, the pronunciation of the transmitting language, which was German³. Thus Latin words like *insultus*, *consul*, *censura*, *conservare*, *perversita*, *dosis*, *crisis*, *basilica*, *phantasia* etc. entered Hungarian and the letter <s> standing in the original Latin words was pronounced /z/. (C.f. *inzultus*, *konzul*, *cenzúra*, *konzervál*, *perverzitás*, *dózis*, *krízis*, *bazilika*, *fantázia* where the letter <z> stands for the phoneme /z/.) In the corresponding English words, however, <s> is pronounced as /s/. This distinction between Hungarian and English pronunciation may give rise to L1 interference for Hungarian ESL students. The question is to what extent such an interference occurs and how the existence of such Hungarian loanwords interacts with the influence of orthographic environment.

2.2 Hungarian regressive assimilation

The prefixes *dis-* and *mis-* are always pronounced with /s/ in English, irrespective of whether the letter <s> is followed by a voiced or a voiceless sound. According to the Hungarian regressive assimilation rule, however, a voiced obstruent makes the preceding voiceless obstruent voiced (except the voiced fricative /v/). Such regressive assimilation is not present in English. Consequently, if <s> is followed by a voiced obstruent in English, the regressive voicing assimilation rule of Hungarian becomes applicable for Hungarian ESL students and L1 interference can occur.

3 Experiment set-up

Subjects

30 native speakers of Hungarian participated in the study. All participants study English as a foreign language and none of them lived more than 1 year in an English speaking country. The participants have studied English for at least 7 years, and the majority of them for more than 10 years. They are all advanced students of English, most of them studying in the English Department of PPKE.

Stimuli and method of the production test

The production test consisted of a list of 79 words containing the letter <s> or the grapheme <ss> in different positions. Both regular members and exceptions (if they exist) of the above listed letter-to-sound rules appear in the wordlist. The subgroups determined by the orthographic environment of <s> each contain

³ Etymological information about the studied words was obtained from Zaicz (2006).

items which have corresponding Hungarian loanwords and items which do not. In addition, the sample included words where the Hungarian regressive assimilation rule could be applied and words where it was excluded.

The different types were evenly distributed in the printed wordlist in order to avoid the subject focusing on a certain subgroup of words. The participants were given 2 minutes to familiarize themselves with the words before the experiment started and they were also asked to mark in the list those words whose pronunciation they were unfamiliar with. The subjects started with the production test so that the listening task did not influence their pronunciation.

For the recordings I used the Wavepad Sound Editor software at a sampling rate of 44.1 KHz and 16-bit digitalization and a Sony microphone. The recordings obtained from the participants were transcribed by listening to each token at least twice and transcribing only the sounds corresponding to the letter <s>. Two judges trained in standard IPA transcribed the entire sample. Initially, there was a 92% inter-rater agreement between the transcriptions. Those words that the transcribers did not agree upon were listened to again and a common decision was made⁴.

Stimuli and method of the perception test

The perception test involved the same 79 items. The stimuli for the perception test were recorded by a female native speaker of British English (using Received Pronunciation) directly to mp3 format on a Marantz PMD660 digital recorder at 44.1KHz and 16bit using a Shure headset condenser microphone. The native speaker who read the sample was asked to pronounce each word slowly, clearly and carefully, leaving a brief pause between the different words. The duration of the perception test was 5 minutes and 20 seconds. For the perception test the stimuli were presented on a laptop over Sony headphones using the Wavepad Sound Editor software. Listeners performed the task of judging whether the sound corresponding to the underlined letter <s> was /s/ or /z/ and indicated their choice in a box next to the word.

Accuracy with perceiving /s/ and /z/ was calculated by counting what percent of sounds were identified correctly in the wordlist. Scores for accuracy with producing /s/ or /z/ were obtained by taking the percentage of correctly pronounced sounds, as determined by the phonetic transcription of the two judges. The obtained data were entered into regression analyses or two-sample t-tests where the dependent variable was the percent of accuracy of production, and the independent variables were the years of studying English, the orthographic environment of the letter <s> and the existence of corresponding Hungarian loanwords.

⁴ The majority of disagreements stemmed from items containing the *s* and followed by a voiced obstruent, where the participants tended to pronounce a voiced /z/, but the degree of voicing was not always agreed. The most controversial items were *misgiving* and *misdirect, disbelieve*.

4 Results of production test

Years of study

The first variable, the number of years of studying English, does not have any significant effect on the error rate of the participants. The regression analysis indicates that there is no correlation between this variable and the percentage of errors in production ($R^2=0.03$, $F(1,28)=0.858$, not significant at $p=0.36$). The figure below demonstrates the lack of any visible trend as a result of increasing years of study.

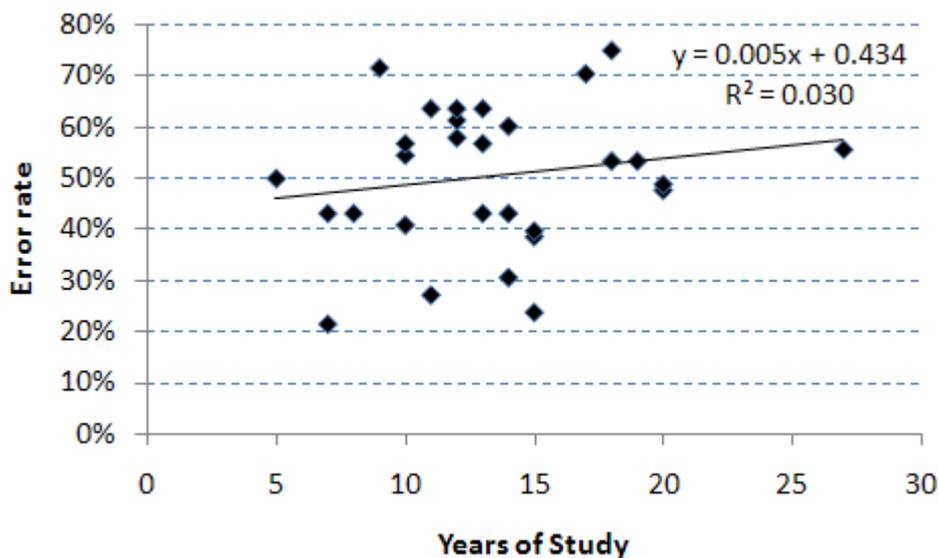


Figure 1. Error rates in production and years of study

Influence of orthographic environment

Figure 2 illustrates the error rates in the production test with the different groups of words concerning the orthographic environment of the letter <s> and the presence of prefixes or suffixes.^{5 6}

⁵ In this classification, each word belongs to one subgroup only. If one of the suffixes *-sity*, *-sis*, *-sive* or prefixes *dis-* or *mis-* is present in a given word, it belongs to the category determined by the affix, irrespective of the orthographic environment of <s>. The fact that these affixed words belong at the same time to the <VsV> group is considered later.

⁶ It should be taken into account that these non-targetlike pronunciations appear in the L2 spoken input of the Hungarian students as part of their instruction. The main source is that other learners produce the same incorrect pronunciations and these constitute part of the acoustic input in the classroom. There is of course also the possibility that language teachers produce some of the mistakes identified in this research.

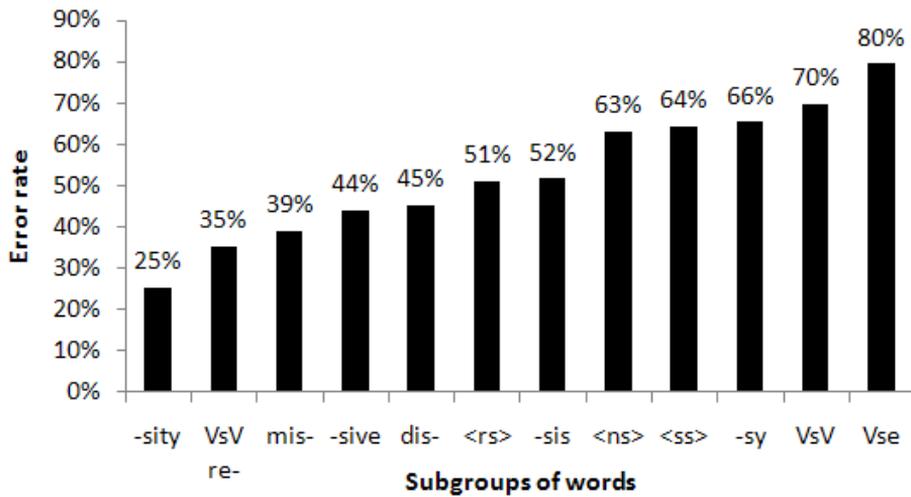


Figure 2. Error rates in the different subgroups

The grapheme <ss>

The wordlist included three items with the grapheme <ss>: *dessert*, *possess*, *dissolve*. These words represent the exceptions to the letter-to-sound rule: <ss> is pronounced /s/. Hungarians do not have any problem with the regular members of this group. The 64% average error rate for the three exceptions, however, shows that the participants over-generalize the orthographic rule and produce /s/ instead of /z/ in the case of these three words as well.

Words starting with the prefix re-

We can observe an interesting tendency in this group of words: speakers who otherwise over-generalize the rule of intervocalic voicing do the opposite in the case of words containing the prefix *re-*. Participants tend to treat *re-* as a prefix even in words where it has been integrated and consequently consider the <s> morpheme initial. In this context the nature of the mistake is pronouncing voiceless /s/ in intervocalic position instead of the target /z/. In no other intervocalic occurrences of <s> is such a tendency observed. The six representative members of this subgroup show the following distribution of error rates:

Words	Average error rate
<i>reserve</i> , <i>resemble</i> (high frequency words)	5.0%
<i>resurrect</i> , <i>resolute</i> , <i>resumption</i> , <i>reside</i> (low frequency words)	62%

Table 1.

Jared et al. (1990) shows that consistency effects are dependent on the frequency of words and at the same time on the frequency of its inconsistent neighbours

(enemies). The important fact is that research results indicate that high frequency words are hardly affected by consistency effects, as the enemy influence is cancelled out due to the high degree of exposure to the target word. Low frequency words, however, are highly susceptible to negative influence, especially if the rival pronunciation has a high frequency.

Considering the results of our research, we can see that the pronunciation of <s> in low frequency words with the prefix *re-* is highly affected by the existence of the rival pronunciation of prefixed words where *re-* is not integrated (e.g. *reset, research, reseal, resettle*, etc.). The non-targetlike pronunciation of <s> in high frequency words, however, is negligible.

Words with dis- and mis-

The prefixes *dis-* and *mis-* are followed by a voiced sound in all the words of this subgroup. The error rate of the whole group is 42%. However, in words where <s> is followed by a voiced sonorant the average error rate is 5.5%, and in words where <s> is followed by a voiced obstruent, the average error rate is 77%. In the latter cases the subjects apply the regressive voicing assimilation rule of Hungarian and consequently produce the non-target phoneme /z/.

Word-group	Average error rate
<s> of the prefix is followed by a voiced sonorant e.g. <i>disloyal, disrespect, mislead, misrepresent</i>	5.5%
<s> of the prefix is followed by a voiced obstruent e.g. <i>disbelieve, disdain, misgiving, misdirect</i>	77%

Table 2.

These results show that Hungarian ESL learners produce strong interference effects in context where the assimilation rule is applicable.

It is important to note here that the non-targetlike pronunciation /z/ cannot be traced back to universals of phonological acquisition since voiced consonants are universally more marked than voiceless ones. It is difficult to explain why Hungarian learners of English should replace the less marked voiceless /s/ with the more marked voiced /z/, unless this is due to the influence of orthographic input and L1 negative transfer.

Orthographic environments: <VsV> <Vse>

The 37-element subsample of <VsV> and <Vse> type words were divided into two groups: (i) words where the target pronunciation of <s> is /s/ (e.g. *isolate, paradise*) and (ii) words where the target pronunciation is /z/ (e.g. *gymnasium, pose*). Words belonging to group (ii) are the regular examples of the letter-to-sound rule applying to <s> between vowel letters, while group (i) contains the “test-cases”, where the letter-to-sound rule can be erroneously over-generalized. The error rate of group (i) is 66% and that of group (ii) is 9%, as summarized in the table below:

Word-group according to orthography	Average error rate
<VsV> or <Vse> and target pronunciation is /s/ e.g. <i>isolate, desolate, paradise</i>	66%
<VsV> or <Vse> and target pronunciation is /z/ e.g. <i>gymnasium, designate, pose</i>	9%

Table 3.

A two-sample t-test assuming unequal variances was carried out in order to test whether the observed correlation between the orthographic environment and the pronounced sound value is statistically significant. The t-test confirms the significance of the difference between the error rates of the two groups. In addition, a t-test for a hypothesized mean difference of 40% is also strongly significant ($t(31,6)=3.49$, $p=0.0009$).

There are several complicating factors. First, although words ending in *-sity*, *-sis*, and *-sive* are consistent in the sense that the <s> of these suffixes always corresponds to the phoneme /s/, the orthographic environment of the letter <s> can be intervocalic, a fact that can exert an additional influence on the decision of the Hungarian speakers.

In order to show this effect, the error rates of two subsamples were compared again. This time group (i) was defined as <VsV>-type words also containing a suffix (12 items), while the control group (ii) contained other <VsV> or <Vse>-type words (21 items). The average error rate of group (i) was 50% as opposed to mean error rate of 69% in group (ii). A two-sample t-test assuming unequal variances confirmed that the difference in error rates is significant ($t(12,21)=2.43$, $p=0.011$). This shows that the presence of one of the suffixes with a regular letter-to-sound rule (always pronounced /s/) significantly reduces the frequency of non-targetlike realizations of the letter <s> in intervocalic position.

Hungarian corresponding word

The hypothesis that the existence of a Hungarian corresponding word with different pronunciation increases the error rate was also examined. A t-test for paired two-sample means was construed. I calculated the average error rate for each participant when (i) pronouncing a word of the 27 items with a Hungarian corresponding word and also when (ii) pronouncing a word of the 39 items in the sample lacking corresponding Hungarian words. The t-test carried out on the paired sample showed that participants made errors significantly more frequently in case of (i) ($t(29,29)=4.50$, $p\approx 0$). However, the difference in the error rates is rather small, as signalled by a t-test for hypothesized mean difference of 10% ($t(29,29)=0.19$, $p=0.42$).

5 Results of perception test

Given the results in the literature about the influence of orthography on phoneme perception, a relevant question in this research is whether orthography interferes with perception when words are presented in print to the subjects in the perception task.

The thirty subjects gave us 2640 items in the perception test. From these items altogether 47 were perceived erroneously. From these 47 mistakes two are of the type where the pronounced value is /z/ but the participant perceived an /s/ sound (in the words *please* and *resurrect*, once in each case). The other type of mistake was more common, but statistically insignificant. 45 mistakenly perceived sounds, which is 1.7% of the whole database. In this case /z/ was perceived instead of the correct /s/. Words involved in this kind of mistake are the following (the number of mistakes from among the thirty subjects is indicated in brackets after the word): *courtesy* (1), *perversity* (1), *disdain* (1), *misbehave* (1), *misrepresent* (4), *increase* (1), *decease* (1), *consultation* (3), *sensitive* (2), *masochist* (3), *paradise* (6), *fantasy* (18). From the percentage of these mistakes we can safely conclude that participants' non-targetlike phonological representations of these words do not exert any significant influence on the perception of the phonemes under investigation. It appears that subjects have no difficulty in accurately perceiving the two distinct phonemes /s/ and /z/.

The lack of such a correlation between the perception and the production results is an interesting finding, in view of the great number of studies which report a correlation between L2 learners' non-targetlike phonological representations and the perception of L2 acoustic input. It could be expected that Hungarian ESL learners who produce erroneous realizations of the letter <s> actually perceive in the L2 acoustic input the same incorrect voiced sound. This expectation, however, is not borne out by the results of this research.

6 Summary

In the case of Hungarian ESL students the most important factors that influence pronunciation turned out to be the regressive voicing assimilation rule of Hungarian and the letter-to-sound rule applying to intervocalic occurrences of the letter <s>. The results of our experiments have shown that the associations between orthography and phonology may automatically influence production tasks even if these associations remain subconscious.

I believe that it is important both for applied linguists and for practicing teachers to see that orthographic input may have a significant impact on the phonological representation of certain words. Why Hungarian ESL speakers should be so strongly influenced by orthography is an interesting question. It has been claimed by Erdener and Burnham (2005) that L2 learners whose L1 orthography is phonologically transparent make stronger use of L2 orthographic input than those whose writing system is phonologically opaque. There are of course other factors that may modulate the influence of orthographic input.

Further material for investigation is how these words are pronounced by beginners and low-intermediate level of students.

Appendix – List of words for production test⁷

Word	Type_I	Type_II	Word	Type_I	Type_II	Word	Type_I	Type_II
disorder	dis	vsv	morsel	rs		decease	vse	
disdain	dis		inverse	rs		paradise	vse	
dismember	dis		analysis	sis	vsv	morose	vse	
disbelieve	dis		crisis	sis	vsv	crease	vse	
disrespect	dis		basis	sis	vsv	concise	vse	
disloyal	dis		hypnosis	sis	vsv	loose	vse	
disgust	dis		perversity	sity	rs	pose	vse	
misrepresent	mis		curiosity	sity	vsv	philosophy	vsv	
misbehave	mis		generosity	sity	vsv	isolate	vsv	
misdirect	mis		offensive	sive	ns	basic	vsv	
misgiving	mis		explosive	sive	vsv	designate	vsv	
mismanage	mis		decisive	sive	vsv	desolate	vsv	
mislead	mis		dessert	ss		masochist	vsv	
expensive	ns	sive	dissolve	ss		episode	vsv	
sensible	ns		possess	ss		parasite	vsv	
conserve	ns		greasy	sy	vsv	diagnose	vsv	
consequence	ns		courtesy	sy	vsv	basin	vsv	
consistent	ns		fantasy	sy	vsv	desert	vsv	
sensor	ns		abuse	vse		reserve	vsv re	
consultation	ns		gymnasium	vse		research	vsv re	
insult	ns		excuse	vse		reset	vsv re	
conservative	ns		obtuse	vse		resurrect	vsv re	
sensitive	ns		increase	vse		resolute	vsv re	
university	rs	sity	dose	vse		resumption	vsv re	
rehearse	rs		please	vse		reside	vsv re	
conversation	rs		base	vse		resemble	vsv re	
persist	rs		grease	vse				

⁷ The table shows the words used in the research grouped according to their types used in the article (indicated in columns Type I and Type II). During the production, test subjects received a list of these words in random order.

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3 THE LEXICON AS A FACE OF THE LANGUAGE THE STORY OF LATIN LOANWORDS IN ENGLISH AND THE REACTION AGAINST THEM

András Cser

It is a well known fact that the percentage of Latin and Latinate borrowings in English is extremely high, much higher than in the rest of the Germanic languages. It is also well known that this is partly — but only partly — due to the fact that after the Norman Conquest French (in its different variants) was the language of prestige until the second half of the fourteenth century and Latin was the language of all serious writing until much later. The other reason is that, as opposed to much of Central, Eastern and Northern Europe, the purist opposition to borrowings in Britain was feeble and ineffective. In this paper we look at these two related aspects of the history of the English word stock: the incorporation of Latin loans into the English lexicon over a span of nearly two thousand years (section 1), and the less well-known story of the reaction against them (section 2).¹

1 Latin loanwords in the history of the English language

1.1 Continental borrowings

The borrowings that belong to this period are common to the Germanic languages. Some of these words are absent from Gothic, which is explained by the fact that the Goths were in the orbit of Byzantium rather than of Rome. As is well known, many of the Germanic tribes came into contact with the Roman and Mediterranean world during Imperial times, and incorporated into their dialects many Latin words that referred to objects, civilisational goods, and agricultural products previously unknown to them. Since after a while both speakers of Latin also settled in Germanic-speaking territories, and speakers of Germanic settled

¹ We treated these two topics independently in Cser (2001) and (2009), respectively, and some of the examples of the present discussion will be found in those two papers too. The best general discussions of the history of the English word stock to date are found in Hogg (gen. ed. 1992–99), in particular Kastovsky (1992), Burnley (1992), Algeo (1998) and Nevalainen (1999), on which we have relied greatly, especially in the first half of this paper. For the Early Modern English period, Görlach (1991) is still an indispensable classic, though Nevalainen (2006) is now likely to replace it as a more accessible textbook. On purism in general the most important works are Thomas (1991) and Bartsch (1987).

within the territory of what was (by then mostly nominally) the Roman Empire, the Latin terminology of construction/building also began to make inroads into Germanic (thus the interaction was not unlike that between Slavonic and Hungarian in the Middle Ages). English words dating from this period include:

(1) Latin	→	Old English	>	Modern English
<i>pisum</i>		<i>pise</i>		<i>peas</i>
<i>vinum</i>		<i>win</i>		<i>wine</i>
<i>pavo</i>		<i>pea</i>		<i>pea(cock)</i>
<i>discus</i>		<i>disc</i>		<i>dish</i>
<i>molinus</i>		<i>mylen</i>		<i>mill</i>
<i>tegula</i>		<i>tigle</i>		<i>tile</i>
<i>uncia</i>		<i>ynce</i>		<i>inch</i>
<i>coquina</i>		<i>cycene</i>		<i>kitchen</i>

1.2 Early mediaeval borrowings

It is generally believed that some Latin borrowings were acquired by the Germanic population of Britain, following their settlement there, with the mediation of the Celtic inhabitants. Although the population of Britain was not heavily Romanised, it is conceivable that there could indeed be some such form of indirect contact between Latin and (Pre-)Old English, because the lag between the end of the Roman presence (410) and the traditional date for the arrival of Angles, Saxons and Jutes (449) spans only a generation or so. It is nevertheless problematic that the impact of the Celtic languages themselves on English is almost nil — how could a language transmit foreign words to another language but not transmit any element of its own vocabulary, at least to a comparable extent? At any rate, at least a handful of Latin borrowings are generally regarded by historians of English as belonging to this category.²

In the north of Britain, Irish missionaries were active in converting the English already in the sixth century. The large-scale conversion of the English by the Romans began around 600, the church organisation was established, Latin-based literacy developed, and Latin borrowings began to appear in larger numbers. The major vehicle of Latin was now the Church, as opposed to earlier contact, which was through spoken language. As a consequence, borrowings of this period are more learned, with many of them probably confined to the written medium at that time. They typically concern the institutions and life of the Church (but not notions of faith or doctrine — these were translated into Old English and as calques they constitute a separate chapter of the history of the English lexicon). This is a sample list of early mediaeval borrowings:

² Note further Vennemann's (2001) suggestion that certain syntactic features were transmitted by Celtic from Semitic.

(2)	Latin	→	Old English	>	Modern English
	<i>cista</i>		<i>cest</i>		<i>chest</i>
	<i>nonna</i>		<i>nunne</i>		<i>nun</i>
	<i>praepositus</i>		<i>prafost</i> ‘officer’		<i>provost</i>
	<i>altar</i>		<i>alter</i>		<i>altar</i>
	<i>missa</i>		<i>messe/mæsse</i>		<i>mass</i>
	<i>offerre</i>		<i>offrian</i>		<i>offer</i>
	<i>rosa</i>		<i>rose</i>		<i>rose</i>
	<i>picus</i>		<i>pic</i>		<i>pike</i>

1.3 Later mediaeval borrowings

While in the later Anglo-Saxon period English was the *de facto* official language of England, with Latin losing ground to it to a considerable extent by the eleventh century, after the Norman conquest English ceased to function as the official language of the kingdom and as the language of scholarship. Latin was reinstated as the language of all serious literacy and writing; and as the language of the internal organisation of the Church as well as of its liturgy and also of scholarship, law and administration, it again exercised a continuous and growing influence on Middle English, as indeed on all languages of Europe. This influence becomes even stronger in the second half of the Middle English period due to an increasing preoccupation with Antiquity, ideals of elevated diction and a fresh impetus in the investigation of nature, with these tendencies achieving their peak in the Renaissance period. As was pointed out above, only the earliest Latin loans belonged to the spoken medium; and in the second half of the Middle Ages, Latin borrowings are typically confined to the more learned, clerical (professional) circles, since the language itself was not known by the population at large except for a small literate élite. In this there is a marked contrast between Latin loans and Scandinavian or Norman French loans.

In the fields of administration and law, there appear words such as those in (3):³

(3)	Latin	→	ME (=MoE)	First attested
	<i>executor</i>		<i>executor</i>	(1290)
	<i>cliens</i>		<i>client</i>	(1320)
	<i>arbitrator</i>		<i>arbitrator</i>	(1424)
	<i>convictio</i>		<i>conviction</i>	(1437)
	<i>implementa</i>		<i>implement</i>	(1445)
	<i>legitimus</i>		<i>legitimate</i>	(1464)

In education, learning and religion words such as those in (4) appear:

³ Data from Burnley (1992). Throughout the paper, the abbreviations are as usual, i.e. (L)ME = (Late) Middle English, (E)MoE= (Early) Modern English

(4)	Latin	→	ME (=MoE)	First attested
	<i>scriba</i>		<i>scribe</i>	(1200)
	<i>causa</i>		<i>cause</i>	(1225)
	<i>desca</i>		<i>desk</i>	(1363, ultimately based on <i>discus</i>)
	<i>contradictio</i>		<i>contradiction</i>	(1382)
	<i>maior</i>		<i>major</i>	(1390)
	<i>formalis</i>		<i>formal</i>	(1393)
	<i>redemptor</i>		<i>redemptor</i>	(1483)

Since French also contributed a huge number of loanwords to English, and French itself had a fair number of Latin borrowings (reshaped slightly in accordance with French morphology), it comes as no surprise that in many cases it is impossible to tell whether the English word was actually borrowed from French or from mediaeval Latin (e.g. *abstract*, *interpret*, both fourteenth century).

1.4 Renaissance and Early Modern borrowings

It is pointed out by historians of the language that the first part of the early modern period (especially 1530–1660) saw the most rapid increase in the English word stock in the history of the language (see e.g. Görlach 1991:136). There are several factors that explain this enlargement. English was used in more and more functions and it gradually encroached upon territories earlier reserved for or dominated by Latin (theology, philosophy, natural sciences). The sciences themselves, as well as crafts and technology, that is, much of the referential sphere of educated discourse, underwent significant expansion and development, and this made it urgent to create the necessary specialised vocabulary. Add to this the growing awareness of the vernacular languages and the more and more energetic drive to replace Latin with them — a feature of Humanism and of the Reformation in various parts of Europe. At the same time, this tendency was accompanied by a deeper knowledge of Classical Latin itself.

There are literally thousands of Latin (and Greek) borrowings in the Early Modern English period. Among those that have proved a permanent part of the English language, one may cite the nouns *allusion*, *anachronism*, *antipathy*, *atmosphere*, *capsule*, *chaos*, *denunciation*, *dexterity*, *disrespect*, *emanation*, *excrescence*, *excursion*, *expectation*, *halo*, *inclemency*, *jurisprudence*, *system*; the adjectives *abject*, *agile*, *appropriate*, *conspicuous*, *dexterous*, *expensive*, *habitual*, *impersonal*, *insane*, *jocular*, *malignant*; the verbs *adapt*, *alienate*, *consolidate*, *emancipate*, *eradicate*, *erupt*, *excavate*, *exist*, *meditate*, *recollect*.

Note that many of the verbs borrowed in the Early Modern English period were in fact not verbs but passive participles in Latin. Since in the Middle English period there had been a clear tendency to borrow Latin verbs (or their French adaptations, it is often difficult to tell) in their imperfective forms, there is a typical contrast between forms such as the following:

(5) Late ME	Early Modern English
<i>calcule</i> (← La <i>calcula[re]</i>)	<i>calculate</i> (← La <i>calculatus</i>)
<i>dissimule</i> (← La <i>dissimula[re]</i>)	<i>dissimulate</i> (← La <i>dissimulatus</i>)
<i>encorpore</i> (← La <i>incorpora[re]</i>)	<i>incorporate</i> (← La <i>incorporatus</i>)

This regularity, however, is not absolute for two reasons. One is that borrowings based on Latin participles existed in LME too, but were used mainly as adjectives and not verbs. However, Chaucer himself shows some variety in this: he used words like *determinate* and *preparate* both as verbs and as adjectives. The other is that a distinction between a verb form based on the present stem vs. the participial stem often indicated French vs. Latin as the source of the borrowing, as is evident in the case of LME and EMoE pairs of coexisting variants: *corrige*–*correct*, *possede*–*possess*. In EMoE the form based on the present stem was usually dispensed with for the sake of the participial form (see *correct* and *possess*), but in some cases both forms survived with a difference in their meanings, see the Modern English pairs *conduce*–*conduct*, *confound*–*confuse*, *convince*–*convict*, *esteem*–*estimate*, *repel*–*repulse*.

2 The reaction against Latin borrowings

2.1 Purist attitudes in general

The following citation is from the *Art of English Poesie* (1589; uncertain ascription to George Puttenham):⁴

“[there are] many polysyllables euen to sixe and seauen in one word, which we at this day vse in our most ordinarie language: and which corruption hath bene occasioned cheefly by the peeuish affectation not of the Normans them selues, but of clerks and scholers or secretaries long since, who not content with the vsual Normane or Saxon word, would conuert the very Latine and Greeke word into vulgar French, as to say innumerable for innombrable, reuocable, irreuocable, irradiation, depopulation & such like, which are not naturall Normans nor yet French, but altered Latines... which therefore were long time despised for inkehorne termes, and now be reputed the best and most delicat of any other.” (Chapter 12)

This shows a tendency that can be referred to as puristic, an attitude that stigmatises Latin borrowings (or at least some of them). This (selectively)

⁴ We used the facsimile made accessible in the Early English Books Online database (<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>).

puristic attitude was by no means unique to Britain; it prevailed in many parts of Europe in different periods mainly beginning with the 16th century.

Probably the best definition of purism comes from Thomas (1991), the seminal work on the topic:

“Purism is the manifestation of a desire on the part of a speech community (or some section of it) to preserve language from, or rid it of, putative foreign elements or other elements held to be undesirable (including those originating in dialects, sociolects and styles of the same language). It may be directed at all linguistic levels but primarily the lexicon. Above all, purism is an aspect of the codification, cultivation and planning of standard languages.”
(Thomas 1991:12)

The same work also gives an excellent typology of puristic attitudes (Thomas 1991:76–82). It distinguishes five basic types or, one could rather say, attitudinal components, which can appear in various combinations in specific speech communities in specific periods, though one or two traits tend to be dominant. These components are the following:

- archaising, which relies on linguistic material from the past
- ethnographic, which relies on rural dialects as main source
- élitist, which focuses on the aesthetic, prestige side of language and is characterised by a negative attitude to substandard and regional varieties
- reformist, which is concerned with coming to terms with resources accrued in earlier periods, adapting language to modern needs, forward-looking
- xenophobic, whose goal is the eradication of foreign elements or, perhaps it is more accurate to say, the eradication of what are perceived to be foreign elements, since, as is well known, the two are not the same.

Besides their typology, one can also consider the historical transformations of puristic attitudes. These have been documented in the relevant literature, and the many forms and variants of purism have been shown to be proper to certain periods of (especially European) history, see again Thomas (1991:188 sqq, esp. 209–214) for an excellent summary regarding post-mediaeval times.

Actually, the earliest forms of purism manifest themselves in Britain in the mediaeval tendency for nativising the Latin word stock as done by Alfred and Ælfric (*astronomia* → *tungolcraft* etc.). This was driven by a practical necessity that seems to have been dictated by the generally insufficient knowledge of Latin in Anglo-Saxon England, and in this it differs fundamentally from the ideologically oriented puristic attitudes that began to prevail between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

As we see it, in early modern and modern times there are basically only two different types of purism (among the many forms it took over the centuries), and the main difference lies in the extent to which the instigators of the puristic ideas were isolated versus to what extent their efforts were channelled into, and propagated through, institutional forms. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the typical form of purism in the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries was that of solitary heroes, i.e. teachers, educators, Bible translators and the like, who were not necessarily *socially* isolated — often just the opposite — but their relevant activities did remain isolated. The typical English examples are John Cheke, Roger Ascham and George Puttenham (if he was the author of *The Arte of English Poesie*); the typical East European (in this case Hungarian) example is János Apáczai Csere, a Transylvanian protestant teacher, who lived in the mid-seventeenth century, and who wrote an encyclopaedia, completely in Hungarian, in which he translated the entire terminology of most of the sciences (especially natural sciences and philosophy), or János Sylvester, who wrote the first grammar of Hungarian (printed in 1539), in which he created the first set of grammatical terms that we know of (e.g. *másvalzengő* ‘consonant’, *névörtvaló* ‘pronoun’ etc.).

This early form of purism contrasts with the more organised, institutionalised forms of eighteenth–nineteenth century purism as represented by, among others, Otto Sarrazin (1842–1921) who, as a high-ranking government official responsible for the construction and management of the railway system, created or commissioned the creation of the German railway vocabulary in the nineteenth-century. The words he proposed to replace the original French expressions include:

- (6) *Abteil* ‘compartment’ (for *coupé*)
Bahnsteig ‘platform’ (for *perron*)
Fahrgast ‘passenger’ (for *passagier*)

The educational system was another, even more important institutional channel. As Comrie says in his review of Thomas (1991), “it is perhaps not surprising that the successful instances of linguistic purism in the nineteenth century coincide with the development of mass education” (Comrie 1994:845). It is clear, however, that this explanation cannot be restricted to the nineteenth century. The tendency is evident already in the eighteenth century, although for different reasons in different places. In Hungary, for instance, the first really successful wave of nativising the scientific vocabulary was in fact instigated and carried out by the Society of Jesus, which had many schools in the country, and worked with a relatively uniform syllabus and set of textbooks, so when it decided to use Hungarian in teaching and wrote Hungarian textbooks accordingly, the first really significant battle was essentially won within a matter of decades (e.g. *hullám* ‘wave’ from *hull* ‘to fall’, *ásvány* ‘mineral’ from *ás* ‘to dig’, mid-eighteenth century).

The question of the role of institutions in purism naturally brings to mind the famous academies, beginning with the Accademia della Crusca (1572, Florence) and the Académie française (1635), up to the nineteenth-century academies established in Eastern Europe, or even the Persian academy (1935). In England no such academy came into being; it appears that the idea was not considered very seriously and no sufficient momentum gathered for the establishment of anything comparable to the continental academies, an institution specifically dedicated to the cultivation of “letters”. (The Royal Society was, of course, dedicated to natural sciences.) The French academy acquired fame and prestige, but its impact on the development of the French vocabulary has been minimal. The Hungarian academy was established in 1830, ten years after the most intensive period of the puristic movement was over, although its role in the codification of spelling and certain matters of technical vocabulary was not insignificant. But what mattered more was the increasing reach of mass education with centrally organised curricula also involving the newly established literary canons, which in turn included many puristic and reformist poets and writers who had assumed an important role in lexical innovation.

2.2 Purists in England

It is, we think, fairly clear where the English purists stand in this broad diachronic typology. Those representing the first kind (non-institutionalised purism, sixteenth–seventeenth centuries) are more or less like their counterparts all over Europe, though details differ from country to country. Moore characterises this period with the following words: “As a matter of fact there were no purists — only Latinists of varying degrees of purism” (Moore 1910:46) — and this is underscored by the fact that next to *bitter taunt* for *sarcasmus*, *dry mock* for *ironia* and similar items, *The Arte of English Poesie* includes translations like *qualifier* for *epithet*, apparently without reservations about translating a Greek term with a word of Latin origin, or *redouble* for *anadiplosis*, where a Greek term is rendered with a French expression.

These highly educated men, dedicated to various humanistic ideas, were experimenting with the possibilities of their native language and attempted to adapt them to the new demands of the classical arts (like George Puttenham and Thomas Wilson for rhetoric) or of the emerging and rapidly developing natural sciences (like Arthur Golding for medicine). Examples of their neologisms include *moond* ‘lunatic’, *gainrising* ‘resurrection’ by John Cheke, *fleshstrings* ‘muscles’ by Golding, *witcraft* ‘logic’ by Ralph Lever. The more modern forms of purism, however, are simply not found in England in any significant form, and this is the important point. The eighteenth–nineteenth century purists are mavericks, outside of the mainstream of the intellectual climate, so to say, such as the Dorset poet and cleric William Barnes (1801–1886), whose innovations include such gems as *fireghost* ‘electricity’, *earthtillage* ‘agriculture’ and *gleemote* ‘concert’, and were seen as mavericks by society in general. Their

activities simply had no consequences for the later history of the English language.

It seems to us that there are several reasons for the ineffectiveness of the English puristic efforts and the reaction against mainly Latin (or Romance) loanwords in comparison to many continental variants of purism. In the most general terms, the difference is explained by what is called in a different context the climate of opinion: as is well known, the great 19th century continental purist movements were intimately linked to the nationalist movements, which did not appear in England. This is distantly related to another general point here: the full functionality of the English language was no longer an issue in the 18–19th centuries, whereas on much of the continent (especially in the East and North) vernacular languages were still hardly used in administration, legislation, education, science, journalism and most forms of serious writing.

But it appears to us that the most important and perhaps most immediate reason lies rather in the presence of an institutional background to purism on much of the continent versus the lack of anything comparable in Britain. By institutions we do not primarily mean the academies; as was hinted at above, their significance is less than one would assume. We mean institutions like the organisation and the schools of the Society of Jesus in many parts of Europe (absent in England for obvious reasons, but playing a very important role e.g. in the puristic nativisation of the Hungarian scientific vocabulary) or like the German Ministry of Public Works (the institution responsible for the railway system, where Otto Sarrazin worked in the late 19th century, see above). It goes without saying that some — especially educational — institutions did have puristic traits in a very general (stylistic or sociolinguistic) sense of the word in England too; there were, however, no institutions that were dedicated specifically to lexical purism in the same sense or to the same extent as those continental ones mentioned above.

3 Conclusion

In this paper we have briefly surveyed the story of Latin loanwords in English. We have looked at the efforts to eradicate them that appeared already in the sixteenth century and surfaced even in the 1800's. We have suggested that the ineffectiveness of these efforts is largely explained by the lack of institutions that had the specific goal of reforming, codifying or “cultivating” language, which constitutes a major contrast in terms of cultural history between Britain and much of Europe.

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4 FILLING THE HIATUS: A CHANGING FACE OF ENGLISH

Katalin Balogné Bérces

The paper* discusses the phonological phenomenon of cross-morpheme hiatus-filling, that is, the breaking up of vowel-vowel sequences (called hiatuses) across (strong) morpheme boundaries by inserting a consonant or consonant-like segment inbetween. Besides the semivowels (or glides) **j** and **w**, and the glottal stop **ʔ**, generally fulfilling the role of hiatus-breaker in English, some of the other consonants also emerge in the same function in certain accents. Namely, in most present-day non-rhotic accents of English, like non-conservative Received Pronunciation (Standard British English pronunciation, henceforth RP) or Eastern Massachusetts English, the liquid **r**, whereas in a number of rhotic (mostly American) varieties, like that of southern Pennsylvania, the liquid **l** is able to exhibit a similar behaviour. Crucially, while the glottal stop is a very general, phonologically unrestricted hiatus-filler, the others are inserted into specific positions only, in such a way that the environments for the two liquids overlap. This means that within a given hiatus-filling system, there is a maximum of one unrestricted and three phonologically controlled participants.

The phenomenon of liquid hiatus-filling in English seems to be in constant change. *First*, it has been established in the relevant literature that its appearance, triggered by the introduction of the mirror-image process of liquid deletion, is gradual, involving a step-by-step spread or generalization – attestable even today in the case of **l** (see below for more detail). *Second*, recent studies have shown that there are two opposite trends observable in the accents of English with a liquid hiatus-filler: either the status of the liquid is further strengthened by the extension of its application to additional environments (as was the case historically, too), or the use of the liquid in that role is altogether abandoned, with the glottal stop taking over. Interestingly enough, the choice

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between the two tendencies seems to hinge on the degree of urbanization of the given speech community and the ensuing amount of language contact.

The paper is structured as follows. First, Section 1 sketches out a little bit of background to set the scene for the discussion of hiatus-filling strategies in English, both general (in Section 2) and accent-specific (Section 3). The latter type can be divided into what happens in most non-rhotic accents (Section 3.1) and in certain rhotic accents (Section 3.2). Then Section 3.3 draws the necessary conclusions from the comparison of the two cases, subsuming them under the category of the “third glide”. Finally, Section 4 concludes the paper and addresses a few issues concerning current developments in hiatus resolution in non-rhotic accents.

1 A little bit of background

The situation when two separately pronounced vowel sounds are adjacent is generally referred to as hiatus, cf. the term *hiatus* itself. As the name suggests, the universal (human) intuition in connection with that case is that there is a yawning gap between the two vowels, since in the normal, unmarked sequence of segments a consonant is sandwiched between them. Therefore hiatus is dispreferred in languages, and various repair strategies exist to avoid it, including vowel elision¹, hiatus-filling by a consonant², or vowel coalescence³.

Out of these cases, the present discussion is concerned with that hiatus resolution strategy which inserts a consonant or consonant-like element between the vowels, that is, hiatus-filling, in present-day English. The location where the process is the most evident as well as the most productive is across strong morpheme boundaries: when free word stems⁴ are followed by some other morpheme, either a suffix (e.g., *being*) or another word (e.g., *be in*). In such cases a variety of consonants can be inserted between the two terms, mostly depending on the identity of the first vowel, as we will see below. Note, however, that hiatus-filling in English is always optional, so all the examples cited have an alternative pronunciation in which the hiatus is tolerated.

2 General hiatus-filling strategies in English

First, let us look at the hiatus-filling strategies which are attested in all the accents of English. Here we have to draw a distinction between two types. On the one hand, the glottal stop ʔ can be considered as a default hiatus-breaker: irrespective of the phonological context, it may always pop up to fill the hiatus,

¹ E.g., Hu *augusztus* ‘August’ is normally pronounced as if it was *agusztus*; or cf. Hu *kész* ‘ready, prepared’ – *kész-ít* ‘to prepare’ but *laza* ‘lax, loose’ – [*laza+ít ->*] *laz-ít* ‘to loosen, to relax’.

² E.g., Hu *fű* ‘boy’ is normally pronounced *f[i]jú*; or cf. Hu *Ádám-é* ‘Adam’s’ but *Évá[j]é* ‘Eve’s’.

³ E.g., Hu *autó* ‘car’ pronounced *oto*: by children (as if it was *ótó*).

⁴ A free stem is one that can be used in isolation. In *pronouncing*, for instance, the stem is free (*pronounce* is a “full-grown” verb on its own), as opposed to, say, *pronunciation*, in which *pronunci-* is more like a degenerate object whose existence hinges on its being attached to *-ation*.

although it mostly characterizes slow, (over)careful or emphatic speech (but see Section 4). On the other hand, the glides (or semivowels – called so exactly because phonetically they are intermediate between consonants and vowels) **j** and **w** are more restricted in this function. Namely, if the first of the two vowels straddling the hiatus is high and front, e.g., **i:** **eɪ** **aɪ** **ɔɪ** in RP, it is the yod that turns up, as in *me and you* **mɪːənju:**; if the first vowel is high and back, e.g., **əʊ** **aʊ** **u:** in RP, it is **w**, as in *you and me* **ju:ˈwənmi:**. The choice of the glide is not at all random: **j** is coronal, that is, produced by the front surface of the tongue (just like **i:** and the second halves of the diphthongs listed), while **w** is formed in the back of the oral cavity, being velar (just like **u:** and the second halves of the diphthongs listed). Further examples are adduced in (1).

(a) hiatus potentially filled by j		(b) hiatus potentially filled by w	
<i>ski_ing</i>	<i>boy_ish</i>	<i>so_exciting</i>	<i>too_old</i>
<i>play_a_tune</i>	<i>my_idea</i> <i>Woody_</i>	<i>allow_ing</i>	<i>go_away</i>
<i>fly_ing</i>	<i>Allen</i>	<i>Jew_ish</i>	<i>New_England</i>

Bear in mind that (i) hiatus resolution is never obligatory and (ii) at least in certain speech styles, the glottal stop is also always an option (especially in the cases with **i:** and **u:**), which leave us with not fewer than three possible pronunciations for most of the examples in (1).

As mentioned above, the two semivowels act as hiatus-breakers in all the accents of English. Crucially, however, their application is phonologically conditioned in such a way that a real gap is left: there is no specific filler for cases when the first term in the hiatus is a non-high vowel (i.e., e.g., **ɔ:** **ɑ:** **ɜ:** **ə** in RP). In many dialects of English, phrases like *vanilla ice* will have an unresolved hiatus or, alternatively, a glottal stop between the two vowels, but no third option is available. Other dialects have developed innovative methods to fill this gap, making use of the interplay of an apparently unrelated deletion process and the already existing distributional properties of the glides – this is what we turn to in the next section.

3 Accent-specific solutions

In what follows we discuss two additional hiatus-fillers which only characterize certain accents of English. In this sense, they are accent-specific solutions to the problem of the missing hiatus-filler, associated with the non-high vowels. However, the two consonants in question, **r** and **l**, are unable to have the hiatus-filling function in one and the same dialect: **r** is only possible in the so-called non-rhotic accents, whereas **l** has only been reported as a non-high hiatus-filler in certain rhotic accents (see below for clarification of the terms). What is common to the two liquids is that historically both have emerged in this role as an analogy-driven reaction to a vocalization/deletion process, which is accompanied by linking across morphemes. At some point the

vocalization/deletion rule gets reversed into its mirror-image rule of insertion, and then generalized to resolve hiatus in the relevant contexts.

3.1 Non-rhotic accents

Non-rhotic accents are called so because, as the result of the rule traditionally dubbed R-dropping, their speakers only pronounce **r** before vowels and delete any other, etymologically present occurrences thereof (reflected in spelling and pronounced by the speakers of the other accents called rhotic). So, while rhotic Englishes have pronounced **r** in all of *err*, *erred*, *error*, *error*, and *To err is human*, non-rhotic speakers drop the **r** in the first three and only sound it in the rest. Since the pronunciation of a morpheme-final **r** is determined by whether the following morpheme starts with a consonant or a vowel, these cases witness **r**~zero alternation, cf. *erred* and *To err is human*. Such pronounced **r**'s are called Linking-R's, as their primary function seems to be to link the two morphemes with a smooth transition from one vowel to the next. The non-rhotic accents, where all this takes place, are found in most of England (with the notable exception of the south-west) as well as in Wales, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and along the eastern coast of the US. Scotland, Ireland, Canada and most of the US (including its standard variety) are firmly rhotic, while the Englishes of the West Indies vary from island to island.

A consequence of the appearance of R-dropping and Linking-R's is that speakers of non-rhotic accents are now unable to tell apart the vowel-final words which have been produced by the deletion of an **r** from such words that have never contained a final **r**. This gives rise to so-called Intrusive-R's, **r**'s inserted at morpheme boundaries by analogy to Linking-R's. A few pairs of homophones illustrate this situation in (2).

(2)	<i>pore</i>	<i>paw</i>	<i>spar</i>	<i>spa</i>	<i>manner</i>	<i>manna</i>
before a pause	pɔ:	pɔ:	spɑ:	spɑ:	mænə	mænə
before a cons.	pɔ:	pɔ:	spɑ:	spɑ:	mænə	mænə
before a vowel	pɔ:r	pɔ:r	spɑ:r	spɑ:r	mænər	mænər

Intrusive-R, in exactly the same way as Linking-R, is possible across strong morpheme boundaries of all types, cf. *saw_ing*, *gnaw_ing*, *subpoena_ing*, *baah_ing*, *Kafka_esque*; *law_and (order)*, *visa_application*, *(the) idea_is*, *Gloria_Estefan*; *Try that sofa_It's softer*; *Call Maria_I need her*. In addition, Linking-R and Intrusive-R are phonetically identical and they appear in the same phonological context (e.g., both consistently follow non-high vowels). The difference between them justifying the distinction lies in that (i) Intrusive-R is only attested systematically in non-rhotic accents, and (ii) only Linking-R, being etymological, is present in standard spelling.

There is a long tradition of the description and analysis of (the connection between) R-dropping, Linking-R and Intrusive-R (i.e., the phenomenon technically referred to as R-sandhi), inspiring an almost

unmanageable amount of literature (e.g., Kahn 1976, Wells 1982, Broadbent 1991, McCarthy 1991, Harris 1994, Sebregts 2001, Bermúdez-Otero 2005, Uffmann 2008, to name but a few of the most influential and most recent contributions). The classical treatment of Intrusive-R given in, e.g., Wells (1982) analyzes its appearance as diachronic rule inversion⁵: the original R-dropping rule is replaced by R-insertion, subsuming both Linking-R and Intrusive-R. Whether or not this is in fact what happened, no doubt the process did not take place in one single step. There is evidence that Intrusive-R appeared soon after the establishment of R-dropping during the 18th century⁶, but it was used following schwa-final stems first. Such stems were all non-native borrowings, and perhaps having a schwa at the end was felt by the speakers to be foreign to the phonotactic system of the language.⁷ Even as late as the descriptions of RP by Jones and Gimson report a higher frequency of Intrusive-R after schwa than **ɑ:** or **ɔ:** (Jones 1956: 113-4, Gimson 1989 [1962]: 303-4). From the discussion in Wells (1982: 222ff) we learn that the next vowel “joining in” was **ɑ:**, while Intrusive-R after **ɔ:** is considered (recall, in the 1980s!) as a relatively recent development, so much so that even Professor Wells himself admittedly belongs to the group of speakers not using Intrusive-R with **ɔ:** (cf. *ibid*: 225). This process of gradual extension of the scope of hiatus-filling with **r** from schwa to **ɔ:**, eventually covering all the non-high vowels, is particularly intriguing, since a similar gradualness is witnessed in the ongoing spread of **l** as a hiatus-filler (to be discussed in the following section), only proceeding in the opposite direction, **ɔ:** being the very starting point.

Once **r** gets generalized as a hiatus-filler following non-high vowels, it is expected that it will be used so in all potential cases, even when, due to some change in the distribution or realization of vowels, a “new” non-high vowel pops up stem-finally, or when certain vowels have non-standard phonetic realizations not yet discussed. This seems to be corroborated by data from various non-rhotic accents. In East Anglia, Cockney or Australian and New Zealand English, for instance, the **əʊ** diphthong of RP is shifted and monophthongized to yield **æ:** or **ɛ:**, a non-high vowel, which systematically triggers R-insertion, e.g., *now_and (then), how_old (are you), how_interesting* (cf. e.g., Britain and Fox 2009: 180, Wells 1982: 227, 309; Hay 2001). The same applies to West Yorkshire English, discussed in some detail in Broadbent (1991), with stem-final **ɔ:** (e.g., *law_and order*), **ɒ** (e.g., *was_it wɒrit*, cf. *was_my wɒmi*) and **ɛ** (e.g., *ye(s) _it is*)⁸ (Broadbent 1991: 295), or to Norwich **ɛ:** as in *he have often said heɪr 'ɒfən 'sɛd* (Wells 1982: 227).

⁵ Criticized by, e.g., Bermúdez-Otero (2005).

⁶ Wells (1982: 227) regards T. Sheridan’s mention of Intrusive-R in 1762 as its earliest reference.

⁷ This is supported by the fact that even (present-day) rhotic speakers sometimes pronounce words like *comma* and *Cuba*, and the schwa-final versions of *window*, *fellow* (cf. *feller*), *yellow*, (*po*)*tato* (cf. *tater*), with a final **r**.

⁸ This truncated form of *yes* is also discussed in Wells (1982: 226) as generally inducing Intrusive-R in (non-rhotic) England.

At this point, however, we take a short detour as the question arises whether *non-high* is really the relevant feature to describe the third hiatus-filler. Although reaching a definitive conclusion in this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, it seems that a very important point made by Judith Broadbent almost 20 years ago has gone unnoticed in the literature. She (1991: 295-296) stated that the feature [-high] to describe the vowels which trigger R-insertion is not restrictive enough, at least in the West Yorkshire variety she was analyzing. She based her argumentation on the fact that in West Yorkshire English the vowels of words like *pay* and *go*, corresponding to RP **eɪ** and **əʊ**, respectively, are realized by the monophthongal reflexes **eː** and **oː**, which are *non-high* vowels. Now, if R-insertion takes place after *non-high* vowels, it is expected that it will do so in contexts like *pay as* and *going* in this accent, which is clearly not the case: the pronunciations documented are **peːjəz** (cf. *pay me peː mi*) and **goːwɪn** (cf. *go to goː tə*). She then concludes that the necessary trigger for R-formation is a non-high, *lax* vowel, whereas **j** and **w** insertion takes place after *non-low*, *tense* triggers, and she provides a (rather tentative) Government Phonology⁹ analysis, which should not concern us here. Although Broadbent's paper focusses on West Yorkshire only, intuitively it is not implausible that the same applies to all R-intruding accents with monophthongized *pay* and *go* vowels. All the more so since recent data from south-east England adduced by Uffmann (2008: 8), reproduced in (3) below, also support the *lax* analysis of R-insertion – in fact, as the data suggest, it may as well be the case that the reference to *high/low* is not needed at all: the **r** appears following *high*, *lax* vowels (**ɪ**, **ʊ(ɪ)**), too, even when the given trigger is a vocalized reflex of final **l** (cf. *tickle him*).¹⁰

(3) Triggers for epenthetic /r/ ([ɪ ~ ʊ]) in SE English (surface vowels)

[ɪ]	e.g. [nɪːrɪʔ]	'near it'
[eː]	e.g. [skweːrɪʔ]	'square it'
[ʊː ~ ow]	e.g. [sʊːrɪʔ]	'saw it'
[ʌ]	e.g. [vənɪlʌrɪs]	'vanilla ice'
[ɑː]	e.g. [ðə spɑːrɪz]	'the spa is'
[ɜː]	e.g. [mɪljɜːrəv]	'milieu of'
[l/→[ʊ]	e.g. [tʰɪkʊrɪm]	'tickle him')

(Uffmann 2008: 8)

However, the conclusion that follows from these observations, that **r** is inserted to break the hiatus after *lax* vowels¹¹, would lead us too far beyond the scope of the present paper, raising a number of questions concerning the status of the

⁹ Kaye et al. (1985), Harris (1994), etc.

¹⁰ It is clear, however, that if and only if we assume that R-sandhi is a uniform phenomenon (that is, Linking-R and Intrusive-R are phonologically indistinguishable – indeed a generally accepted view in current discussions) are all of the data equally relevant.

¹¹ For a similar view see Prescott (ms.:10).

tense/lax distinction in the phonology of English¹², the melodic representation of vowels as well as **r** itself, etc. Therefore it will not be entertained in the rest of the discussion, and we will concentrate on those accents of English in which the vowel system is such that the simplified structural description referring to *non-high* suffices.

We can conclude, then, that **r** is now used as a third hiatus-filler in most non-rhotic accents¹³. Keep in mind, though, that R-insertion, just like the other forms of hiatus-filling, is always optional; as Wells (1982: 224) puts it, “typically it is sometimes applied, sometimes not, depending on speech rate, contextual style, and no doubt also random factors”. To use his (ibid: 286) example from what he calls mainstream RP: a sentence like *The rota/rotor isn't ready* **ðə'rəʊtər 'ɪznt 'redɪ** has two further, less common alternative pronunciations, with **'rəʊtə 'ɪznt ~ 'rəʊtə 'ɪznt**. In addition, literacy enhanced with some degree of social stigma attached to Intrusive-R (which is, however, more and more in recession nowadays and only characterizes the most sophisticated/conservative layers of RP) may result in its artificial suppression, already noted by Wells (1982: 224) and discussed in detail in Broadbent (1991).

3.2 Rhotic accents

In some of the rhotic accents of English, a phenomenon of L-sandhi is attested, which shows spooky resemblance to the R-insertion process described above. All these varieties are characterized by a similar rule of L-deletion or vocalization, whereby the **l** is dropped or replaced by a (velar) vowel in non-prevocalic environments. Underlyingly morpheme-final **l**'s surface as Linking-L's when the following morpheme starts with a pronounced vowel: we witness L-dropping in examples like *drawl* **drɔː** (= *draw*), *cruel* **kruːə** or *Dahl* **dɑː**, but L-linking in *drawling* **drɔːlɪŋ**, *cruel act* **kruːəl ækt** or *Dahl is* **dɑːl ɪz**. Some of these L-vocalizing accents have, by analogy to Linking-L, introduced non-etymological occurrences of **l** called Intrusive-L, inserted between originally vowel-final words like *draw*, *paw*, *bra*, *saw*, *plethora*, etc. and a following vowel-initial morpheme, e.g., *draw[l]ing*, *(the) paw[l] is*, *(the) bra[l] is*, *I saw[l] it*, *my bra[l] is coming undone*, *a whole plethora[l] of*, etc. (cf. Wells 1982, Gick 1999, 2002, Sebregts 2001, Bermúdez-Otero 2005, etc.). Intrusive-L is much less well-documented than Intrusive-R, with data coming from (the northeast of) the US (primarily southern Pennsylvania¹⁴, but Intrusive-L has been reported from the Philadelphia area, coastal New Jersey, Newark, the Baltimore area, and

¹² For a rather sceptical discussion of whether the feature *tense/lax* (*ATR/RTR*), at least in the abstract phonological sense of the SPE (Chomsky and Halle 1968) tradition, is justifiable for English, see Durand (2005).

¹³ The non-rhotic accents *without* Intrusive-R are Conservative RP (which, if existent at all as a native tongue, suppresses it artificially – see the discussion below), and the accents belonging to Harris's (1994) Type D, e.g., African American Vernacular English (or Black English) and South African English, where Linking-R is not used, either, which suggests that the whole phenomenon of cross-morpheme linking applies differently.

¹⁴ See Bryan Gick's work.

from southern Ohio, north Texas, and southern central Oklahoma, too – cf. Gick 2002: 176) and from Bristol, England, only. Bristol-L has long been noted, giving rise to popular anecdotes and jokes¹⁵, but it is also found utterance-finally, and therefore it will be considered a different phenomenon not straightforwardly related to hiatus-filling, and ignored in the rest of the paper.

Intrusive-L in the US is, as Gick (2002: 167) puts it, “an instance of phonological change in progress”: it seems to follow the same route of development as undergone by **r** in non-rhotic accents (i.e., vocalization – linking – merger of the originally liquid-final words with certain vowel-final ones – reanalysis/rule inversion/intrusion – generalization to all non-high vowels), but, unlike **r**, it has been “caught in the act”, that is, described before its completion. According to Gick (2002), no L-inserting dialect in the US has reached full generalization. In most such accents Intrusive-L is firmly established after **ɔ(ɜ)**, which suggests that an interesting difference between the two intrusive liquids is that the vowel that first triggers Intrusive-R is the schwa, whereas the primary trigger for Intrusive-L is **ɔ(ɜ)**.¹⁶ However, no such dialect uses Intrusive-L following **ɑ(ɔ)** and schwa *systematically*. Some speakers do sporadically extend Intrusive-L to words ending in those vowels, as shown by the examples above, which is taken as evidence of the regularization process being in progress. Although apparently there are no L-vocalizing accents (as yet) which use Intrusive-L’s in all potential cases, clearly the target group of vowels is comprised by the non-high set **ɔ ɑ ə**, and the unetymological **ɪ**, as well as the Linking-L, is inserted to resolve the hiatus in situations when no other phonologically circumscribed hiatus-filler is available, i.e., when the only alternative is the glottal stop.

3.3 The “third glide”

As we have seen, both non-rhotic and (certain) rhotic accents attempt to introduce a third hiatus-filler into their hiatus resolution systems, so that besides **j** and **w**, there is a candidate to be inserted after non-high vowels (to simplify matters somewhat – cf. the discussion above). The fact that Intrusive-R is only found (systematically) in non-rhotic varieties while Intrusive-L is only found in L-vocalizing accents is indicative that the prerequisite for intrusion is the presence of the deletion/vocalization process within the system. This is not surprising if we accept the explanation making reference to analogical extension, outlined above (Section 3.1).

¹⁵ E.g., Bristol is the only city in Britain “to be able to turn ideas into ideals, areas into aerials, and Monicas into monocles”; where “a father had three lovely daughters, Idle, Evil, and Normal”; and where a local girl learning to dance was heard to say “I can rumble but I can’t tangle”. (Wells 1982: 344) Also notice the **l** at the end of the name of the city itself.

¹⁶ Gick (2002: 176-177) distinguishes this majority pattern, mostly found in the Mid-Atlantic states, from northern Texas and Oklahoma, where the starting point of intrusion is the schwa, rather resembling Bristol-L.

In addition, a direct link between deletion and hiatus-filling can be discovered if one considers the phonotactic constraints on liquids and glides in English. When a liquid is deleted non-prevocally, it yields limited distribution closely resembling that of the semivowels: no **j** or **w** is permitted in syllable-final consonantal positions, either (in words like *pay* and *loud*, they are offglides of diphthongs, i.e., members of complex vowels¹⁷). In R-dropping accents the same applies to **r**, in L-vocalizing systems the same applies to **l**. That is, the liquids take up a glide-like behaviour. No wonder one of the most widespread analyses of Linking/Intrusive-R is the so-called gliding analysis, claiming that across morphemes the **r** is inserted as a hiatus-filling *glide* (cf. Kahn 1976: 149-151, Harris 1994, etc.). Although this aspect of Linking/Intrusive-L has not been so extensively studied, on the basis of the parallelisms it shows with **r** it readily lends itself to the same treatment (cf. e.g., Sebregts 2001: 43-45). We can conclude then, that be it **r** or **l**, in either case the liquid becomes the “third glide” to act as a hiatus filler. This is a gradual process, the glide appears at some point of the vowel space (schwa for **r**, **ɔ**(**ɔ**) for **l**), and gradually spreads to the other non-high segments.

Crucially, however, accents seem to be “satisfied” with not more than three phonologically conditioned hiatus-filling elements – their vowel systems are analyzed into not more than three subsets. Interestingly enough, there *are* non-rhotic L-vocalizing accents of English (e.g., a number of non-standard English Englishes like Cockney), which exhibit Linking-L as expected. Still, they do not make use of two intrusive liquids, just one, which is always **r**, and as a result, Intrusive-L is only found in rhotic varieties. Although mixed systems are not that hard to imagine, after all, where different non-high vowels trigger different intrusion processes, yielding, say, *idea is* with **r** (**aɪdɪərɪz**) but *paw is* with **l** (**pɔ:lɪz**) – simply they do not exist. What happens in accents which are both non-rhotic and L-vocalizing is that historically, R-dropping (together with Linking/Intrusive-R) precedes L-vocalization, so the non-high area of the vowel space is already covered by **r** for hiatus-filling. There is no “room” for a fourth glide. This shows that the non-high area of the vowel space acts as a homogeneous territory: all non-high vowels follow the same pattern, and vowels are divided into not more than three fundamental types, viz. high front, high back, and non-high¹⁸ (for some of the theoretical repercussions of this observation, see Balogné Bérces 2009).

In sum, the choice of the hiatus-filler is determined by the first term of the hiatus, and in all accents of English, high vowels are taken care of in this respect by the lexically given semivowels (by the high front glide **j** and the high back glide **w**). In addition, in most non-rhotic accents **r** is used as the “third glide” after non-high vowels (= Linking/Intrusive-R), and in certain L-vocalizing rhotic accents **l** is used as the “third glide” in those cases (=

¹⁷ Whether such diphthongs are transcribed as **eɪ** or **ej**, **aʊ** or **aw**, etc. is a matter of notational taste.

¹⁸ Or: front tense, back tense, and lax – cf. the discussion of the *non-high* analysis above.

Linking/Intrusive-L). What connects the two intruding consonants is that the “third glide” is needed to fill the hiatus: the one between the two adjacent vowels as well as the one left in the hiatus-filling system by the missing non-high semivowel.

4 Conclusion

The paper has argued that the appearance of two intrusive liquids in different accents of English can be traced back to the urge to fill the hiatus in vowel sequences in which the first term is non-high. The liquids *r* and *l* are able to fulfill this task once their distribution becomes defective due to the introduction of a rule deleting all their non-prevocalic occurrences. The complementary relationship between the two processes of consonantal intrusion (i.e., the fact that either one or the other is attested in an accent and there are no mixed systems) falls out naturally from this analysis if we assume that the vowel space is divided into not more than three major regions. However, it has been left open for future research what exactly those three territories are since the classical *non-high* label for the “third glide” is clearly not restrictive enough.

Another important point to note is that the hiatus-filling systems of the dialects of English are constantly changing. This is evident in the case of Intrusive-L in the US, whose current description is but a snapshot of change in progress. Only time will tell whether the spread of Intrusive-L from *ɔ(ɜ)* to other vowels will follow the pattern envisaged based on the example of Intrusive-R, whether it will prove or disprove the emerging lax analysis.

But cross-morpheme hiatus-filling turns out to be a changing face of English in non-rhotic accents, too, being far from settled and well-established. In fact, in connection with R-sandhi, two opposite forces seem to be present in the accents of English: on the one hand, with the emergence of “new” final non-high vowels (cf. e.g., the data in (3) above) R-sandhi spreads to new environments; on the other hand, however, in certain accents/registers it is slowly receding, disappearing in favour of the (default) glottal hiatus marker. It is not only Intrusive-R that tends to be avoided that way (as in Conservative RP), but Linking-R, and, to a lesser degree, nonlexical *j* and *w* as well¹⁹. Britain and Fox (2009) claim that in England, the traditional complex hiatus-filling system is maintained in rural, ethnically rather homogeneous speech areas like the Fens, whereas in multicultural urban communities like London or Bedford language and sociocultural contact is driving it towards a regularized, “levelled” system with a dominant glottal stop. Whether the same trend is observable in rhotic accents and also perhaps for Linking/Intrusive-L is an issue for future research.

¹⁹ In fact, this applies to the whole hiatus resolution system of English, including non-productive cases realized by the allomorphy of *the*, *a(n)*, *o(f)* – for a detailed study, see Britain and Fox (2009).

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5 BUSINESS ENGLISH TEACHER COMPETENCIES

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As several multinational companies penetrated the Hungarian market during the 1990s the importance of the English language increased significantly. In any field of industry, a business professional applying for a position in a multinational firm had to know at least one foreign language and in most cases English was a dominant requirement for applicants (Major, 2002). Without a good command of English it was very difficult to obtain a senior position, and for managerial and higher executive positions fluent English competence was a must.

Since the 1990s this tendency has grown; and with Hungary's joining the EU the use of the English language in workplaces and business contexts has become even more frequent and significant. Furthermore, not only do employers require good general English knowledge, but they also expect their employees to master a higher level of Business English (Noble, 2002). These trends have resulted in the emergence of in-company English language training courses; and since the 1990s the number of such courses has increased. The larger number of Business English (BE) courses has placed a demand on the English Language Teaching (ELT) market for Business English language teachers who are able to accommodate the multinational company culture, fulfil the needs of such companies and their employees, and deliver specific, tailor-made Business English courses for business professionals. This presented general ELT teachers with great challenges, such as entering a new speciality area of language training, coping with business situations, written and oral business communication (e.g. presentations, negotiations, meetings), and developing the complete new vocabulary set that is heavily used in business contexts.

1 Aims

This study aims to investigate the corporate requirements imposed on Business English teachers, to examine how special these expectations are, and whether these corporate requirements envisage a certain set of skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities that are rather different from the competencies of general English teachers. As a general English teacher as well as a BE

practitioner myself, I have the impression that Business English teachers, beyond general teacher competencies, have to have certain special skills, knowledge, and personal qualities that contribute to their success in teaching Business English and are necessary for them to meet the requirements of companies. Therefore, I assume that higher expectations are often placed on Business English teachers working at multinational companies than on teachers running general English courses. I tend to agree with the notion that Business English teachers need to possess a certain level of expertise in basic business principles, terminology, functions and processes.

In recent years, no research has been done on the corporate requirements imposed on Business English teachers in Hungary, and thus no up-to-date assessment of Business English teacher competencies, as expected by business organisations, is currently available. Although previous research studies have been devoted to the language competence needs of employers and the language skills of business professionals (Teemant, Varga and Heltai, 1993; Feketéné Silye, 2002; Major, 2002; Noble, 2002), and to exploring the BE teacher identity (Bereczky, 2009), Business English teacher competencies, in the light of corporate requirements, have not been in focus. The present study is intended to contribute to the literature by filling this niche as it may yield significant results for the ELT community in Hungary.

2 Review of the Literature

This section presents a review of contemporary literature on the following topics: what roles BE teachers may take; what knowledge and skills may be required; and finally what personality traits BE teachers should have.

2.1 Business English Teacher Roles

Researchers seem to agree that BE teachers, like teachers of other areas of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), can take on several roles according to the activities and tasks performed during the whole life-cycle of a BE training course (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Frenco, 2005). In addition to regular classroom activities, the work of an ESP or BE teacher may include dealing with needs analysis, syllabus design, writing and adapting training materials, and evaluating courses and learners' performance. As BE teachers may carry out a wide range of tasks other than actual teaching, the word 'teacher' is not a preferred term to use in ESP or BE literature. In order to differentiate between the General English teacher and the ESP or BE teacher, and emphasise the wide-ranging nature of ESP or BE training, the term 'practitioner' is favoured by some authors (Swales, as cited in Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.157; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) identified five key roles of the 'ESP practitioner'. The first role is the *teacher*, which is often extended in BE teaching contexts to the function of a *consultant* or *advisor*. Unlike in General English teaching scenarios, where the teacher knows much more about the

subject he or she is teaching, in BE training “the teacher is not in the position of being the ‘primary knower’ of the carrier content of the material” (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 13). Due to the fact that BE students often know more about the business they are working in (e.g. business organisations, policies, functions, processes, products, markets, competitors, partners), BE teachers are required to work in partnership with the students. In this unique situation BE practitioners may provide one-to-one advice to students on BE language usage, fulfilling the role of a language consultant or advisor.

Course designer and materials provider is the second role of the ESP practitioner. Since ESP trainers teach English in special contexts, it is rarely possible to use published course books or ready-made syllabi for specialised courses. Therefore, ESP practitioners themselves may have to design the course, select and adapt materials to the students’ special needs, and provide supplementary materials. In some cases, when existing materials are not suitable and textbooks cannot be found to meet the requirements of a particular industry field, ESP teachers may need to write training materials for their courses. On the other hand, in the case of less specialised BE courses, BE teachers may need only to extend their chosen textbook with some extra materials, due to the great supply of high quality general BE course books and teaching resources.

The third role of the ESP practitioner is the *collaborator*. BE teachers could find themselves in a situation when they need to consult or even work with a subject expert or a business trainer during a BE training course. This could be the case when, for instance, business professionals are learning business negotiation skills in English, where both skills and language have to be improved. The BE teacher alone might not be able to provide training on the strategies and effective ways of business negotiation, so a trainer specialised in negotiation techniques might be of use.

The *researcher* role is an on-going engagement that teachers should take on in order to explore new language contexts, studying the language and the skills involved in the selected ESP area. Research and continuous self-development are highly demanded from ESP practitioners. Finally, teachers function as *evaluators* as they are involved in the evaluation of courses, students’ performance and teaching materials.

Frendo draws a comparison between *teacher* and *trainer*, stating that “Training is job-oriented, while teaching is person-oriented. Thus, whereas a language teacher is helping a student to learn a language for a variety of (often unspecified) purposes, a trainer is training them to behave – both linguistically and pragmatically – in a certain way”. (Frendo, 2005, p.5). Similarly to Dudley-Evans & St John (1998), Frendo also sees BE teachers as *coaches* or *consultants*. It is important to note that in this paper terms such as BE teacher, BE practitioner, BE consultant, BE advisor and BE trainer are used as synonyms and all refer to the BE teacher. Having identified the various BE teacher roles, we may now turn to the question of what knowledge BE teachers should possess.

2.2 Knowledge of the Business English Teacher

In addition to a high level of proficiency in English, it is likely that BE teachers should have a thorough knowledge of ELT methodology. However, a key question widely discussed by BE experts and teachers is whether BE teachers should know anything about the world of business. Assuming that any sort of business knowledge is required poses further questions: what depth of business knowledge is necessary and how can BE trainers acquire this expertise?

There seems to be a consensus among authors (Donna, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Ellis & Johnson, 1994; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Frendo, 2005) that BE teachers are not business professionals and they do not need to be one. Most BE trainers have a general language teaching background and do not have hands-on experience in any field of business. Seldom have teachers actually studied business disciplines or had a business career. Therefore, BE authors share the view that BE teachers do not have to be experts in any specific area of business; it is the BE learners who are in possession of the required content knowledge. In fact, this is the reason why Frendo (2005) talks about a *symbiotic relationship* between the teacher and the learner, where the teacher has the knowledge about language and communication, while the learner knows more about his or her job and business. Bell (2002) also maintains that the relationship between BE teacher and learners needs to be equally balanced, and both parties should have respect for the other: the trainer for the language mastery, and the learners for their business expertise. In these situations, teachers and learners rely on each other's knowledge to get the most out of their language training.

BE experts have concurred that some insight into business can be an advantage for anyone attempting to teach BE. According to Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) what BE teachers need is “to understand the interface between business principles and language” (p.70). Orientation in the business environment is a *challenging demand* for teachers who have never been trained in business studies or in teaching BE. Although it has been assumed that teachers do not need to acquire specific business knowledge, they may need to have the following three qualities in order to “ask intelligent questions”: “a positive attitude towards the ESP content; knowledge of the fundamental principles of the subject area; and awareness of how much they probably already know” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.163).

As Hutchinson & Waters (1987) argue, “the ESP teacher should not become a teacher of the subject matter, but rather an interested student of the subject matter” (p. 163). They claim that meaningful communication is an integral part of BE training, which cannot be achieved without the teacher's interest and some knowledge about the subject matter. Ellis & Johnson (1994) also place emphasis on the importance of effective business communication in the BE classroom, which they believe is easier for the BE trainer if he or she has a good understanding of business.

Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) made greater demands on ESP and BE teachers, proposing that BE practitioners should acquire knowledge and understanding in the following five areas:

- A knowledge of the communicative functioning of English in business contexts;
- An understanding of business people's expectations and learning strategies;
- An understanding of the psychology of personal and interpersonal interactions in cross-cultural settings;
- Some knowledge of management theories and practice;
- First-class training skills. (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, pp. 60-61)

It is apparent that teaching BE places extra requirements on BE trainers, which may only be fulfilled by continuous professional development. In order to ensure their credibility and professionalism, BE teachers need to show awareness and openness to the business world.

2.3 Skills of the Business English Teacher

This part is devoted to collecting some of the special skills that are considered by previous studies to be critical for any BE teacher to be successful in the BE classroom, and may not necessarily be vital for a general English teacher (Donna, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Ellis & Johnson, 1994; Frendo, 2005). BE authors argue that such skills may be of equal importance with business knowledge in BE teaching contexts. Since different sets of skills are suggested by the experts, only those particular skills that are solely specific to the BE trainer are being consolidated here.

Firstly, BE teachers should share interest in economics, management and business issues, and be willing to learn about the specific industry as well as the everyday professional activities of their BE learners (Bell, 2002; Donna, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Ellis & Johnson, 1994; Frendo, 2005). Dudley-Evans & St John (1998, p.17) claim that BE, as part of ESP, is a “multi-disciplinary activity” and as such challenges BE trainers to be ready to get involved in other disciplines through teaching. Not only should BE teachers be open to business topics and other disciplines, they need to be able to do so continuously day-by-day, as they train business professionals from various companies in different industries, performing a wide range of activities. This requires “the ability to adapt to a particular teaching context” (Frendo, 2005, p. 5) and the ability to change from one context to another.

Secondly, readiness to change is another key skill that BE trainers should possess (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Any time during a lesson or a course, changes may arise that can affect the training process, learning goals, teaching methods, topics, activities, materials or scheduling of the course. BE teachers need to be ready to respond to these changes quickly and effectively. This frequently involves on-the-spot decisions, which may require that teachers be flexible and take some risks in their teaching.

The next skill that BE teachers should have is “being a good negotiator” (Ellis & Johnson, 1994, p.27), which means having the ability to negotiate and come to an agreement with the learners on the teaching-learning principles, to establish the golden rules to be followed in the classroom. The acceptance of these terms by both parties is a guarantee of success.

Finally, BE trainers should be fully aware of cultural differences in the world of business; in other words they should build up *cultural awareness*. Cultural differences and cross-cultural communication may be sensitive issues and exert an influence over BE training. Teachers should take a delicate approach when experiencing cultural differences (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

The above sources do not seem to discuss in depth the general business skills that are inevitable within the business world. The term ‘*soft skills*’ is frequently used in business for the abilities that people need in order to communicate and work well with other people, e.g. communication skills, teamwork, creativity, problem-solving, time and task management (Oxford Business English Dictionary, 2005); and in the case of managers to manage people tactfully using management and leadership skills, e.g. team management, decision-making, motivating, stress management.

As BE teachers work with business professionals who are often masters of the above listed skills and abilities, BE trainers are advised to study these soft skills thoroughly. Not only should BE trainers know about these soft skills, but it may also be useful for them to apply some elements of them in the BE classroom, (e.g. manage groups, activities, time; build teams; motivate students), and eventually be able to perform some of these skills themselves (e.g. giving presentations, negotiating) (Hughes, 2005). As BE contexts are highly professional environments, having these skills is of much more importance than in general English contexts, and is greatly appreciated by the learners. Furthermore, BE teachers need to train learners on how to cope with business situations in English, utilising any of these soft skills. For this reason, BE teachers who acquire some knowledge of general business skills may be at an advantage.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning the computer or IT skills which have undoubtedly become an integral part of BE training. As large corporations and multinational companies tend to use state-of-the-art technologies in the workplace, business professionals expect BE trainers to utilise such technologies in the BE classroom.

2.4 Personality of the Business English Teacher

Every teacher has his or her own personality and it is rather difficult to provide a definite description of the ideal BE trainer. However, some significant personal qualities are emphasised by BE experts that may be beneficial to the teacher.

Most authors seem to agree that BE trainers need to be outgoing, open-minded, curious and genuinely interested in business issues (Dudley-Evans & St

John, 1998; Ellis & Johnson, 1994; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Furthermore, BE teachers should be tactful, sensitive to the learners' needs and be willing to listen to the learners. As personal contact is of considerable importance in the case of a one-to-one situation and in small groups, BE trainers are expected to have excellent communication skills, be capable of building good rapport with the learners, and like working with people (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Ellis & Johnson, 1994). Ellis & Johnson (1998) also point out that it is "invaluable (*for teachers*) to have a sense of humour, but it is also vital that the trainer should be seen to be taking the course seriously" (p.27).

Working in a professional environment, BE teachers have to demonstrate their professionalism themselves, for instance by being reliable and showing their accountability. Donna (2000) suggests that BE teachers should "provide a course outline or copies of syllabuses", "inform all parties about changes", "keep channels of communication open on a day-to-day basis" (pp. 318-319). The latter point is particularly relevant as learners appreciate when BE teachers can easily be contacted and addressed with questions and problems at all times.

Another important point is made by Heitler (2004), according to whom BE teachers tend to be shy and modest, and lack experience in using marketing and sales techniques so familiar to their clients. BE trainers need to feel more confident about themselves and their abilities; i.e. personal and professional experience, personal qualities, knowledge, attitudes, interests; and must be able to promote and sell their services to their clients on a daily basis. Heitler encourages BE teachers to take up a business-like attitude, which apparently is not as sophisticated as it may seem (referred to in Oliver, 2004).

Midgley (2003) seems to be of the same view when he argues that BE trainers should "go out and sell ... (*their*) skills more actively" (p. 2). He maintains that BE professionals should shift their focus from "learn English in order to do better business" to "learn to do better business, in English" (2003, p. 3). The author also admits that it would require a great amount of management training skills, sound business knowledge, and experience – which is unlikely to be gained without management and business education and relevant work experience. This idea may sound a little far-fetched, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility for specialized and devoted trainers of BE.

3 Research Method

The objectives of my research were to investigate and map the corporate requirements imposed on in-company BE courses and on BE teachers; and to acquire a list of teacher competencies that make BE teachers successful and competitive in teaching BE. Moreover, another purpose of this study was to test the validity of the claims presented in the literature. Table 1 gives an overview of the phases and the participants of the research project.

Research phases	Target group / Sources	Data collection instruments	Research type
Phase 1 – Part 1	Company management	Questionnaires	Quantitative
Phase 1 – Part 2	BE learners	Questionnaires	Quantitative
Phase 2	Private language school management	Interviews	Qualitative

Table 1: Research Project phases, participants and instruments

The research project was comprised of two phases according to the applied research methods and techniques, and the various sources that participated in the data collection processes. The first phase of the research project was further divided into two parts. The first part involved the management of private companies operating in the Hungarian market and providing BE courses for their employees. The second part of this first phase was centred on business professionals attending in-company BE courses. The second phase of the project was aimed at getting information from directors of private language schools who are service providers of in-company BE courses. Here individual opinions were to be explored through in-depth personal interviews.

As regards the structure of the questionnaires for company management and BE learners in Phase 1, the two sets of questionnaires were identical, with the exception of a few questions. The first parts of the questionnaires gathered information about the participants' company and personal profiles in order to get a wider view of their business background and experience as well as their use of English as the language of business communications. In the second parts of the questionnaires, the specific needs of the participating companies and business professionals for BE training were assessed with a primary focus on the BE teacher. The survey questions were then re-used and inserted as interview questions and prompts into the interview schedules of Phase 2. This corresponding structure of the data collection instruments helped make the results comparable for analysis and discussion.

3.1 Participants

Company management

The study involved 20 companies that are legal entities registered in Hungary and are operating in the Hungarian market. All companies have significant presence in the Hungarian and EU market with extensive contributions to the Hungarian economy. The questionnaires were filled in by top management members of the 20 companies: directors, department heads or

HR managers who were fully aware of the companies' needs and requirements in terms of staff training in Business English.

The participating companies showed a wide distribution in terms of industries, ownership structures, and the locations of parent corporations. In all organisations English is frequently used for their business communications either within their own companies or with their business partners. The English language seems to have a very important place in all selected companies, and therefore staff are required to have a good command of English in order to conduct successful and profitable business.

BE learners

There were 42 business professionals involved in the study who showed a great variation in positions, job titles, business experience, and the companies and departments they worked for. A considerable number of the respondents consisted of junior professionals and senior professionals, while the other part of the sample group represented either middle managers or top managers. English is currently used or will be used in the future by all participants in their everyday business life, and the English language is vital for them in order to succeed in their careers.

Private language school management

Two interviews were conducted with directors of two different private language schools. Both interviewees had extensive knowledge and experience in teaching BE, managing private language schools, organising and executing in-company BE training courses, and they also had excellent insight into the market of BE teaching, its changes and trends, the expectations of companies, as well as the needs and requirements of BE learners, and into the qualities, knowledge and experience of the BE teachers.

Both accredited language schools in question were significant participants in the BE training market, specialising in in-company BE courses, and provided high quality service to their customers, among which were large corporations from various industry sectors.

4 Results and discussion

My research attempted to assess the corporate requirements imposed on BE teachers in order to examine whether the study revealed important differences in knowledge, skills and personality traits between general and BE teachers, and to identify the key attributes that a good BE teacher should possess in order to satisfy the requirements of the business world.

The results support my initial position, which assumed that there is a significant difference between general and BE teachers, and these findings are in line with the literature. It is apparent that the BE teaching environment places extra requirements on BE teachers. As a consequence, in BE teaching contexts teachers are challenged to acquire special knowledge and skills, adopt certain

qualities that may not be of high importance or not required at all in the case of general English courses. Without these additional BE competencies it is unlikely that BE teachers will deliver successful BE courses and retain their customers, i.e. the BE learners.

The findings of this study seem to be consistent with previous studies with regard to the content requirements of companies (Ellis & Johnson, 1994; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Donna, 2000; Sneyd, 2004; Frendo, 2005). In-company BE courses are likely to be tailor-made to the language needs of the BE learners, in which special content (business topics and skills) is to be included and often taken from the learners' own business environment. This implies that BE teachers need to be familiar with special business topics, activities and communication skills.

In Phase 1 of the research, participants were asked to select the business activities for which their employees or they themselves need to use the English language. Members of company management marked eight types of business activities, while BE learners selected at least five on average out of the thirteen types of business skills and tasks suggested by the literature. These results show that business professionals need to perform several business activities in English on a regular basis for which they need to acquire business communication skills. Data obtained from the questionnaires yielded different results in the cases of the two target groups. While corporate managers stated that their employees mostly need the English language for attending business meetings, negotiating, and making business phone calls, several BE learners chose e-mailing, making phone calls, writing and reading business documentation, positioning business meetings and negotiation only in the fourth and fifth places. These variations can be explained by the fact that 64% of the BE learners are junior or senior professionals who may perform more administrative activities than managers, who are more involved in business meetings and negotiations. Surprisingly, oral communications and presentations were not selected by many business people of both groups. A possible explanation for this result might be that English speaking skills are still problematic for BE learners and they try to avoid situations in which they need to present or talk to speakers of English. It is also possible that only employees with a high level of English proficiency use spoken English, often helping out colleagues in such situations. It is important to highlight that the ranking does not express frequency, rather the total number of respondents who selected each activity. Based on the findings, it may be concluded that any of these activities and skills are likely to be part of the BE course content, which means that BE teachers need to be well acquainted with the use and techniques of these activities and skills. Having this competence is definitely one of the distinguishing characteristics of BE teachers.

As for the knowledge of the BE teacher, the comparison of the two target groups' opinions reveals that requirements of management and staff are remarkably close to one another. The real significance of this finding might be that corporate requirements are likely to be relatively homogenous, with little

variation in terms of general qualities of the BE teacher. These findings support the notion raised in other studies that some knowledge of essential business processes and functions is expected from the BE teacher in order to deliver professional BE courses (Donna, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Ellis & Johnson, 1994; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Frendo, 2005). Results showed that having a degree in English studies is much more important than having a degree in any business discipline. It is likely that teachers with a degree in management studies or economics can better handle business situations in the BE classroom; nevertheless it is vital to express the importance of ELT methodology, without which it is hardly possible to succeed in any teaching scenario. Therefore, having degrees in both subjects would be a competitive advantage; but it does not seem to be a possible alternative for many English teachers. The qualitative research of this study also confirmed these conclusions as both interviewees were of the same opinion.

As a conclusion, the results of the study validate the researcher's initial position. BE teachers need to possess a certain level of expertise in basic business principles, terminology, functions and processes in order to provide high-quality teaching services to their clients. Consequently, business knowledge is another key attribute of BE teachers, which general English teachers are not required to possess.

The term *service* plays a significant role in BE teaching in the case of in-company training courses. Teaching BE is a business process; in fact, BE teachers are service providers and as such are required to adopt a business-like attitude. As this study confirms, teachers still tend to be rather shy, modest and lacking in self-confidence. There are similarities between the behaviour and characters of BE teachers expressed by Heitler (as cited in Oliver, 2004, p. 22) and those described by Bereczky (2009). Surprisingly, among the definite requirements of the business community, the importance of a business-like attitude shows a variation. Members of corporate management appreciate a business-like attitude shown by BE teachers, while the learners themselves do not seem to expect it from the teachers. This result might be explained by the fact that top managers need to promote business-like attitude and behaviour, so they impose similar requirements on BE teachers.

Another interesting competence of BE teachers is the understanding and awareness of the business environment and multinational company culture. The literature only emphasises the importance of intercultural differences in business communication, but does not suggest that BE teachers should know anything about multinational company culture. Both interviewees participating in this study expressed the view that the multinational business world bears no resemblance to the educational environment of the general English teacher; hence awareness of multinational corporate culture is an essential quality of a good BE teacher. However, the results obtained from interviews and the questionnaires seem contradictory. Contrary to the interviewees' opinion, neither group of the business community expected BE teachers to be familiar with

multinational company culture. It is probable that among the BE teacher competencies, this feature may not be of higher importance compared to such others as business knowledge or skills.

Another characteristic of the BE teacher which requires closer attention is a business-like appearance. Similarly to the previous attribute, results obtained from the qualitative and quantitative data collection show opposing views. According to the experience of language school managers, it is necessary for the teachers' professionalism that BE teachers follow the same dress code that is expected from the employees of the corporations. Being or showing that the BE teacher is similar to the BE learners helps establish good rapport, which is vital for any language learning situation. On the contrary, company management and BE learners both believed that a business-like appearance is not expected from a BE teacher. Despite the differing opinions, a business-like attitude, appearance and awareness of multinational corporate culture are all defining characteristics of BE teachers, which supports the notion of differences between general and BE teachers.

The last group of BE teacher competencies comprises the personal characteristics that BE teachers should adopt in order to be successful in teaching BE. Having concluded in the literature review that the BE teacher cannot be "the primary knower of the carrier content" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 13), i.e. the business content, based on the research data it can be accepted that teaching BE involves working in partnership with the BE learners. The teacher's role as a consultant, built on this mutual collaboration, ensures the success of the BE course and produces the best performance of both the BE teacher and the learners. Taking a consultant role assumes that the BE teacher has the ability to allow the BE learner to manage classroom situations and to be involved in the decision-making processes. This cooperation and increased autonomy of the learners may be unusual for a general English teacher working solely in the state educational system; however, it is vital for the BE teachers to employ this method. Although these findings were supported by the in-depth interviews, it is important to acknowledge the deficiency of the questionnaires in this respect. The quantitative research was not extended to data collection regarding the nature of the partnership and relationship between the BE teacher and BE learners. Teacher-learner partnership in teaching BE may deserve more attention in future research.

What was included in the quantitative survey, however, is that the participants were asked to rate the importance of good communication and interpersonal skills of the BE teacher. This study does not question the fact that these teacher qualities are among the essential competencies of general English teachers. Nevertheless, the findings of this study confirmed that these skills are of much higher importance among business professionals. Furthermore, the interviews with private language school managers yielded the same results, as both interviewees referred to cases when BE teachers were replaced due to the lack of good interpersonal or communication skills. It has to be admitted that

good rapport always depends on the personality traits of the participants; hence the BE teacher and the BE learners have to be well matched. The interviewees highlighted the fact that a BE teacher may establish an excellent relationship with one group of learners, while struggle to realise the same with another group.

The next teacher quality investigated in the survey was the flexibility of the BE teacher. Similar to the previously discussed attributes, flexibility is an essential quality of English teachers of any kind. Based on the research data, the same flexibility is expected from BE teachers in BE teaching contexts as from business professionals. In the BE classroom, flexibility means the ability to cope with changes and provide immediate on-the-spot decisions. Based on the outcome of the research, it can be concluded that flexibility was highly rated by the business community: 90% of the companies and over 80% of the BE learners stated that flexibility is an absolutely required or important quality for the BE teacher. This extremely high importance of flexibility was also expressed by the private school managers, to whom these corporate requirements are often communicated.

The final sections of the questionnaires requested the participants to describe briefly why they were satisfied or dissatisfied with BE teachers, based on their own personal experience, in order to map other BE competencies not included in the questionnaire. Answers of the two target groups seem to be fairly consistent and correspond to the requirements assessed above. Interestingly, both groups itemised those characteristics that are closely related to BE competencies, such as having an overview of business processes and functions; focusing on improving business communication skills; or flexibility. Only a few general English teacher attributes were stated. Consequently, these findings may suggest that those attributes associated with the BE teachers only form the key characteristics of the good BE teacher. Another important point made by the target population was that the good BE teacher delivers tailor-made courses to meet the individual needs of the learners. This result supports the notion previously raised in the literature and in this section that BE teachers are service providers and are supposed to satisfy the needs of their clients, i.e. the company management and the BE learners.

5 Conclusion

This study attempted to find out whether BE teachers need specialised competencies compared to teachers of general English. It also attempted to assess the particular knowledge, skills and personality traits that the BE teacher needs to have in order to run successful BE courses and to be competitive in the BE teaching market. Furthermore, it was the aim of this study to explore the requirements the business community imposed on the BE teacher.

The findings of this study allow for the research to conclude with the assertion that there exists a significant difference between general and BE teacher competencies. Results obtained from the study indicate that BE content

knowledge, business communication skills and certain personal qualities are equally important attributes of the BE teacher. The fact that most of the in-company BE courses tend to be tailor-made to meet the specific needs of the BE learners suggests that the business community expects BE teachers to gain some knowledge of essential business terminology, functions and processes. Furthermore, BE teachers are likely to be required to master business communication skills.

Being a professional BE teacher means adopting a business-like attitude and providing high-quality teaching service for the companies and their employees; hence the BE teacher has to focus on customer satisfaction. In this respect, the requirements of the corporate management and the BE learners surveyed are of considerable significance in the BE teaching process. The findings of both quantitative and qualitative research revealed that the good BE teacher aims to comply with the requirements of their clients, i.e. corporate management and BE learners. The goal-oriented and results-oriented nature of teaching BE requires teachers to face the task of using methods that maximise performance and satisfy the immediate needs of the BE learners in every lesson.

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MEDITATION AND DISCOURSE – EARLY PROFILES

6 “IT IS TIME THAT BEGETS IUDGEMENT AND ASSURANCE”
FACES OF THE ENGLISH IN
JOHN FINET’S INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL TO HIS TRANSLATION OF R.
LUCINGE’S *THE BEGINNING CONTINUANCE AND DECAY OF ESTATES*

Zsolt Almási

John Finet – dedicating his translation of René de Lucinge’s *De la naissance, dvree, et chevte des estats* to the then acting Archbishop of Canterbury – claims that the original “[...] hath already put on the habit of three seuerall languages, and if my judgement erre not, our English fashion will not ill become it” (a2v)¹. The claim applies two reasons why the translation of the work is appropriate in its own time: the first argument rests on facts of the reception history of Lucinge’s work, while the second more on a personal observation, that the time is ripe enough in England for the publication of this book.

The contemporary fame of Lucinge’s work is aptly reflected in the case of translations as Finet refers to it. The French original, René de Lucinge *De la naissance, dvree, et chevte des estats*. (Paris: Chez Marc Orry) was published in 1588, the same year as the publication of Michel de Montaigne’s *Essais*². The Italian translation came off the press very soon, within two years: *Dell'origine, conservazione et decadenza degli Stati*³. The appearance of this fast Italian rendering of the work also corroborates the early intense interest in it. The fame is further confirmed by some parts of it appearing in the Italian *Tesoro politico*, a book of political thought widely read by that time. It makes the case more significant that earlier versions of the *Tesoro* inspired Lucinge to write his own book, and now his meditations found their way into a later edition.⁴ This latter *Tesoro* naturally gave a further boost to the dissemination of Lucinge’s ideas.

¹ All parenthesized references pertain to this edition. René de Lucinge (1606) *The Beginning, Continuance and Decay of Estates*. Wherein are handled many notable questions concerning the establishment of Empires and Monarchies. Trans. John Finet, London: John Bill.

² Montaigne, Michel de (1588) *Essais*. Paris: Abel L’Angelier.

³ Naselli, Girolamo (1590) trans. Ferrara: Mammarello. The Italian translation is mentioned by Sarton, George “Twenty-Ninth Critical Bibliography of the History and Philosophy of Science and of the History of Civilization. (May 1930)” 233 *Isis*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Feb., 1931), 197-319.

⁴ For the history of modifications in the different editions of the *Tesoro* see Testa, Simone “From the ‘Bibliographical Nightmare’ to a Critical Bibliography. *Tesori politici* in the British Library, and Elsewhere in Britain” <http://www.bl.uk/ebj/2008articles/pdf/ebjarticle12008.pdf> last accessed 30/07/2009.

The last twist in the relationship between the *De la naissance* and the *Tesoro* is that, because of the popularity of the *Tesoro*, “it was retranslated into French as an anonymous discourse”;⁵ thus Lucinge’s work, through Italian transmission, returned into its native soil and language. Although Finet talked about three languages, and so far two have been mentioned, still his claim that Lucinge’s work, because of its fame, was something to appear in English as well seems substantiated.

The second, more personal reason for the publication of Lucinge’s book—in contrast with the previous factual-rational claim – makes room for the ambiguity of concerns on four different levels. As is clear from Finet’s wording, this second argument is less strong than the previous one. First, he softens the claim that this is only his judgment, which personal tone was missing from the previous argument. Second, when talking about some possible mistake on his part, he introduces room for doubt. Thirdly, instead of the matter-of-fact tone of the previous argument, he makes use of a rather ambiguous word, i.e. “fashion”, which term does not rely either on the chivalric self of political decision-makers, or on the rational faculty of political thinkers, but rather appeals to the courtly culture of fashion and manners. Furthermore, instead of plainly asserting that the book will sell well on the book-market because it fits the contemporary climate of the English thought, he verbalizes this claim in an indirect manner, applying a double negative statement (“will not ill become it”).

The four different levels of softening the second reason why Lucinge’s treatise was to be translated into English can be read as a signal for problematizing the act of writing the nation, the act of creating and recreating Englishness in early Stuart England, the act of creatively delineating the Faces of the English. To explore this problematic I will look into the book to ferret out different faces of the English in Finet’s version of Lucinge’s work. More precisely I will enter into a dialogue with the introductory material Finet added to Lucinge’s book, i.e. with the dedication and the address to the Reader. First the dedication will be looked into, which analysis will be followed by the investigation of the chapter in which Finet addresses the reader.

Finet followed Lucinge in composing a dedicatory chapter to the work, but both the status of the person appealed to, moreover the rhetoric and thematic of the argumentation, are radically different in his case. These differences reveal much about the assumptions that influenced the ideas of a courtier, and are consequently revealing about the faces of the English as seen or imagined or fancied by Finet. To be able to see the differences between the two dedications, first Lucinge’s dedication to the Duke of Savoy will be discussed as a point of

⁵ Anglo, Sydney (2005) Machiavelli—the First Century: Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, and Irrelevance. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 550.

reference. Armoured with the consequences of that dedication, Finet's appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury will be accounted for.

The Duke of Savoy was an appropriate person for the dedication on three accounts: intimacy, political power and military leadership. René de Lucinge was the French ambassador to the Duke of Savoy, followed him to many military campaigns, and accompanied him in peace-time as well. This intimate relationship is reflected in his addressing the Duke in the dedication, e.g. knowing what the topics are that are discussed at his table during meals, what he is interested in most—"Estate affaires, or the atchieuement of deedes of armes" (b2r). The Duke of Savoy was an appropriate addressee not only owing to the seemingly intimate relationship, but because of being a politician and a military leader too. Who else would be a better person to whom to dedicate a work on how to overcome the Turks than a man of position and means?

In contrast with Lucinge, Finet dedicated his translation to Richard Bancroft, the 74th Archbishop of Canterbury, who is represented as a man of spirituality and power. The identity of Bancroft is created in the title of the dedication: "To the most reverend father in God, Richard, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his Grace, Primate and Metropolitane of all England, and one of his maiesties most honourable priuie counsell, &c" (a2r). If there is a pattern and meaning in the listing of the titles and the size of the letters, the dedication is pregnant with meaning. The first part, the largest letters, present Bancroft first and foremost as a man of spirituality, as a man whose duty is to love his people via offering them spiritual guidance. This man of spirituality is further qualified as one occupying the highest position in the Church of England after the monarch, "Archbishop of Canterbury", "Primate and Metropolitan of all England". The titles so far, however, sound odd, as a work on military analysis and strategy against the Turkish threat can hardly be reconciled with the fact that it is dedicated to a man of individual and institutional religiosity. The last part of the list re-establishes the harmony between addressee and content insofar as the reader learns that Richard Bancroft is also an important member of the worldly establishment as a privy councillor to James I. So the dedication goes to a person who has spiritual and political power at the same time, which results in a face of the English where religion and politics, spiritual and worldly power compliment each other, and where the two should cooperate.

Dedicating the book to Richard Bancroft reveals shrewdness on Finet's part, which shrewdness is corroborated by the circumstances in which the addressee was selected. Finet "served as a gentleman in Sir Robert Sydney's company in the 1590's, after which he entered the employment of Thomas Wilson, secretary to Sir Robert Cecil, the principal adviser of Elizabeth I and her successor James I."⁶ Having political power, serving successfully the most powerful people as a secretary, one would think that James I could have been influenced in a much more direct way through Robert Cecil. Instead of this

⁶ S.P. Cerasano, Marion Wynne-Davies "Notes" in S.P. Cerasano, Marion Wynne-Davies eds. (1996) *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents*. New York: Routledge, 220.

straightforward and simple way, Finet may have thought that European and English politics could well be influenced by someone other than having political power only. Bancroft furthermore, in contrast with James I, was also a man of action. He envisioned an England characterised by middle-way, institutionalised Protestantism: he fought against both Catholics and Puritans. In his struggle he appealed to James with an argument that rested on the maintenance of kingly authority, as MacGrath puts it:

Richard Bancroft and others set out to persuade James that his monarchy was dependent upon the episcopacy for its future. The ultimate goal of Puritanism, they argued, was to overthrow the monarchy altogether. Without the bishops of the Church of England, there was no future for the monarchy in England. The king's real enemies, the "Papists" and the "Puritans", had a vested interest in destroying his authority. Only a close working alliance with the bishops would preserve the status quo and allow James to exercise his (as he saw it) divinely ordained kingly role in state and church. It was a telling argument, and it hit home.⁷

Thus Finet chose an appropriate person for the project to fight with the Turks: someone who had a more penetrating influence on the world than James, and also someone who had a clear vision on how to preserve the state of England.

For choosing Bancroft, however, Finet had to pay the prize of the lack of intimacy. Whereas Lucinge could refer to the table-talk and the Duke's interests and customary reactions which he knew well, Finet mentions only an indirect sort of relationship with Richard Bancroft. Although Finet refers to Bancroft's love towards him, he rather writes about Bancroft's predecessor, the 73rd Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift. It was Whitgift who was interested in Finet's work, as the emphatic first sentence of the dedication claims: "Most reuerend Father, it pleased your Graces right woorthy predecessor, to vouchsafe my unwoorthy letters sent him in my trauailes, a gracious acceptance" (a2r). It is Whitgift's attraction to Finet's works that encouraged the latter's further activities, and it seems a historical chance that in 1604 Bancroft succeeded Whitgift; and now it is Bancroft, because of his position, who is to be addressed. The only knowledge about Bancroft that Finet acknowledges is the archbishop's anti-Catholic attitude and his occupation after perhaps the Gunpowder Plot. This information, however, does not rest on his closeness to Bancroft, but rather on his acquaintance with the archbishop's published works and public activities. The apparent lack of privacy thus does not prevent Finet from appealing to Bancroft's help assuming that good causes are worth the lack of privacy, and rather demand shrewd and objective sources.

⁷ Alister E. McGrath (2007) *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution—A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First*. New York: Harper Collins, 124-5.

Lucinge's dedication to the Duke of Savoy, a man of political power and military experience, is reflected in the rhetorical structure and the themes elaborated. The first structural unit exposes the problem and represents the insufficient solutions so far; the next unit exposes how the book intends to solve the problem; and the third and last part is the appeal to the Duke. Each and every part, however, is an appeal to the position and power of the Duke, keeping an eye on history, experience, straightforward and plain exposition of military, strategic and methodological issues so as to please the Duke. Rhetorical exaggeration and embellishment appear only in the third part, but there it has still the function of catching the attention of the addressee. All these together fit the purpose of convincing a military leader to act via historico-sociologico-strategic considerations and rational advice.

The first sentence of the dedication sets the tone for the exploration of the problem, i.e. the seemingly painfully unintelligible success of the Turks, which exploration avoids the application of clichés, and relies exclusively on rationality. Lucinge opens his dedication by claiming: "Of all we admire in these times there is nothing comparable to the fortune of the Ottomans, and the increase of their greatness" (b1r). This opening statement is not only a reference to the Turkish threat shaking all Europe, but it is also a foreshadowing of Lucinge's attitude and expertise. Instead of the conventional name "Turk", he applies the more historically and politically informed "Ottoman". Also at the first sight, rather shockingly, he does not use derogatory language to describe the Turks, but qualifies them with admiration and with the acceptance of the undeniable fact of "the increase of their greatness", both expressions ("fortune", "greatness") being more of a positive nature than negative.

The informed tone is an organic part of the agenda of the work. After painting the nature of the threat, claiming the insufficiency of the previous authors, Lucinge clearly and distinctly claims what he intends to do with the book.

The argument then of this book consisteth of three points, whereunto the order of the whole discourse hath reference: In the first place I summarily handle the meanes they [the Turks—Zs.A.] haue practiced for their aduancement and greatnesse; secondly with what cunning and deceit they maintaine what they haue gotten: and lastly hoe we may be able to assaile them, and turne the chance of their victories and powers. (b1v-b2r)

The partition of matters into "three points" provides a rhetorically clear structure for the reasoning, and caters for the impression that the forthcoming meditation is emotionlessly informed and rational. First, logically the book is to analyse the causes of the Turkish success. Being successful, however, is just the beginning of greatness, as it is also difficult to preserve success, preserve what has been gained; so the second part is to explore this theme. Thirdly, the Turkish

greatness is not only to be celebrated but is to be undone; so once having the relevant historical, strategic and sociological information about the Turks, one is in the position to provide advice about defeating them.

Relevant information and effective advice in themselves are nothing if these cannot be put into practice, which presupposes a mighty person; so the third thematic unit of the dedication consists in some lip-service to the Duke of Savoy. This lip-service includes the appraisal of the Duke's qualities and rhetorical exaggerations. The Duke's qualities are represented with phrases like "your Aighnesse as a generous Prince", "the excellency of your iudgement", "your noble and gentle disposition" (b2r). It also contains rhetorical exaggerations, especially when Lucinge writes about "the heat of the intention" (b2r), or when he uses such Biblical similes to represent the kindness of the Duke towards everybody as "the Sunne (common father of generation) doth on the earth, bestowing his beams indifferently as well on the low plants as high trees", or as he "excepteth the offering of the pour widow, as the presents of great Princes" (b2v).

Lucinge's military, historical, and sociological considerations cannot be deployed for the second time, so Finet uses a different method of reasoning in his own dedication. The difference in the addressee is reflected in the themes, and this fosters the religious and political identity and face of the English foreshadowed in the address to Bancroft. The main theme and focus of his much shorter argument is a religious one: Christian unity. This theme is divided and structured into two main units. First Finet writes about the circumstances of his choosing Bancroft as an addressee. Secondly he discusses the problem of divisions among Christians, and proposes channelling these destructive energies against the common enemy, the Turks.

Finet renders three circumstances of selecting Richard Bancroft as the person to whom he dedicates his translation. First, Finet describes his own relation to the former Archbishop of Canterbury, who was interested in his letters. Next, he praises the present Archbishop's qualities. These done, he proceeds to claim why he translated Lucinge's work into English. He mentions here his travels abroad, coming across this famous book, bringing it home, and rendering it into English, for his "priuate exercise of that tongue it first spake in" (a2v). What seems to be the underlying principle in these circumstances is their accidental nature: it is mere accident that Finet dedicated this work to Bancroft, as originally he chose Whitgift, he only bumped into this book when wandering abroad, and translated the book only to practice his French, as if there was a fortunate pattern in these accidents leading up to the publication of the book in English.

The three accidental circumstances line up into a meaningful pattern with a fourth historical coincidence in the second structural unit of the

dedication. First, without much further explanation Finet talks about “this late dangerous time, when the diuell (arch-enemie of trueth) and his execrable ministers held their generall counsaile how they might make but one fire-worke of our whole estate” (a2v). At this point the reader may not know what sort of devilish danger Finet’s England had to face. After this theologically ambiguous remark the curiosity of the reader is further aroused by the claim that this self-same foul power also aims to “out-strip former ages, or foreine countries in strange plots of ruining kingdoms and commonwealths” (a2v). Seemingly, this evil power of the devil not only threatens England but other countries as well; consequently what the reader gets in short is an apocalyptic vision of the destruction of law and order, of social constructions that are supposed to defend subjects and citizens.

The clue for understanding who this enemy can be arrives when Finet defines the English: we “that acknowledge with them [i.e. the enemy—Zs.A.] one Iesus, one Bible, one Baptisme” (a2v). Finally thus it turns out that the arch-enemy is within Christianity, followers of Jesus, readers of the Bible, people who are baptised, i.e. the Catholics in particular, but also movements within Protestantism as well who are against the establishment. The heavy fire-imagery is very much in harmony with the Catholic suspects and convicts of the Gunpowder Plot, and the post-Gunpowder-Plot mood of England. What is also significant is that nothing is named, only hints are made, nothing particular but the general threat of religious plots against England and Protestantism.

At this last reference does it become clear why the Archbishop of Canterbury and neither Robert Cecil, nor the Sidney circle, nor the monarch is addressed. Finet does not only want to mobilize the English against the Turks, but rather intends the English to function as the motivator of Christian unity. He draws conventionally the map of the world according to religious divisions, and wants a unified Christendom for at least a project with the English as inspiration. Consequently the focus is on Christianity and its fragmentation, and the dangerous energy that came into being with the fragmentation, which energy in turn should be used well, should be turned against the common enemy. This enemy is obviously the Turkish Empire, but the Turkishness of the enemy is not so important, because they remain unnamed. So, from the enemy, the attention is drawn towards another face or identity of the English, i.e. once there is a cooperative relationship between religion and politics, as is implied in the address to Bancroft, the English have—or should have—a missionary identity as well in fostering Christian unity.

After the religious and strategic dedications, Finet found it important to add a third introductory chapter, the “To the Reader” section, to create a further face of the English. This introduction classifies the books on the book-market and defines the ideal readership which is founded on his assumptions about the

English readers. These two general topics are arranged into a harmonious relationship with other layers of the text presenting the forthcoming book as a remedy against the Turkish threat.

The first part of this chapter provides a typology of books in a way which implicitly criticises contemporary shallow humanism. After the cynical remark about the contemporary book industry, “The World had neuer more Bookes” (b3r), Finet delineates what he finds the criterion of a good book. “But the true life of a worke, and the sound discretion of a writer, appeare not more in the well handling, then wise choice of subject” (b3r). His argument, thus, relies on the distinction between what may loosely be called the opposition between form and content. In this opposition, the content appears on top of the hierarchy while the form is presented as something essential but inferior in this comparative structure.

He explores further this hierarchical opposition when he claims that most of the published works “stand rather for ornaments or flourishing differences, then matters regardable or of consequence” (b3r). Thus form is essential, but if exaggerated, if it is nothing but ornamentation and draws fanciful distinctions, it is useless and even harmful. The form should never overshadow the matter discussed, while the latter should be noteworthy and seriously heavy on the one hand, and consequences, practical and useful consequences, should follow from them on the other. This distinction between form and content retrospectively sides with Francis Bacon’s ideas on the errors of learning, more precisely with the error that he terms “delicate learning”, which focuses more “on words than matter”.⁸ Furthermore, readers’ attraction to a book may not be a reason for considering a book good or bad, because neither “will”, nor “appetite”, nor “the tyrannie of fashion” should judge a book finally: but only “reason” and “time”. Thus what Finet opposes to a somewhat vain and shallow humanism is a pragmatic rationalism with applicability, reason and reception history.

The sharpness of this anti-humanistic, pragmatic rationalist claim, however, is softened and enriched with some extra-argumentational devices, creating thus a dynamic relationship between vain courtly erudition and pragmatism. There are three Latin quotations in the text—one in the first thematic unit and two other in the second one—which are supposed to appeal to an educated audience, beyond those readers who could only read in the vulgar tongue, especially in a writing which appears in English.

The significance of the first Latin quotation lies in its invoking classical tradition and poetry. The quotation itself says: “*Pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli*”⁹ (b3r), which clause Finet may have known from a recent edition of

⁸ Bacon, Francis (1996) *Advancement of Learning*. 138–40 in *Francis Bacon. A Critical Edition of the Major Works*. ed. Brian Vickers. Oxford, New York: OUP, 120–299.

⁹ Terentianus Maurus, *De litteris, De syllabis, De Metris*. Verse 1286.

Terentianus’s *De litteris, de syllabis, de metris*,¹⁰ or did not necessarily have direct knowledge of, but came across in commonplace books or anywhere. This quotation is part of the classical tradition, which is remarkable because the strictly Christian nature of the dedication is twisted, or enriched, with a mark of classical, pre-Christian learning. This classical reference is further significant, as with its entire context it invokes poetry, which was so close to Finet, as Love and Marotti show

Finet collected and transcribed verse both at court and at the university, producing both a personal and a culturally symptomatic anthology of poetry from the latter part of Elizabeth’s reign, including work by Oxford, Raleigh, Breton, Dyer, Sydney, Gorges, Spenser and Elizabeth as well as student poetry from Cambridge.¹¹

The relevance of this is that he actively contributed to the courtly culture, book-making, and also appreciated classical authorities.

In the context of Lucinge’s work, however, this love of courtly erudition and poetry sounds rather strange. In Lucinge’s book it is precisely this courtly culture and book-making that is presented as the pestilence against western culture. Lucinge thrice makes a rough-handed remark about courtly culture. First he presents an anecdote about the Goths who, after having defeated the Greek army, gave up the idea of burning the Greek books, arguing that: “leave [...] this poison amongst the Grecians, since in time they [i.e. books—Zs.A.] will bereave them [the Greeks—Zs.A.] of all martial courage, as ordinarily they do all such as apply them selves too much to the like learning and knowledge, making them become tender, effeminate, and altogether unfit for the use of armes; so as failing of courage they will proove more easily the pray of our fortunate conquest” (A2r-v). Second, in the main-text of the book Lucinge asserts that Christian soldiers are not effective on the battlefield because they are more concerned with irrelevant things than with the battle at hand. Back at home, instead of exercises, they spend their time with learning, which Lucinge often delineates as something harmful. He claims that learning “softeneth the courage, and is not fit for ought but to make a man fearfull, vnapt, and of a weake resolution for war” (A2v). Elsewhere he says: the effective Turkish soldiers are “far from all ciuility; free from such delicacy and wantonnesse as is corruptly stept in amongst us” (A3r). Third, at the end of the book, siding with the opening anecdote, Lucinge returns to books as the most powerful weapon against the

¹⁰ Terentianus Maurus, *de litteris, syllabis, pedibus, et metris*. Item, eiusdem argumenti, Marij Victorini... *de orthographia, et ratione carminum libri IIII*. (1584), Ex officina Sanctandreaana (Apud Petrum Sanctandreaanum [with H. Commelinus]).

¹¹ Love, Harold and Arthur F. Marotti “Manuscript transmission and circulation”, in David Loewenstein, Janel M. Mueller eds. (2002) *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*. Cambridge: CUP, 65.

Turks. Books spread in the Turkish Empire have seemingly a double objective: to convert the Turks, or to “make them doubt of the foolish superstitions they observe” (V4v).

Furthermore, one can also note Finet’s reliance on such popular images as the well-known emblem of *Veritas temporis filia*,¹² when he writes: “one thing I am sure of; time hath discovered their weaknesse, and trueth his concealed daughter is come to light” (b3r) In Whitney’s emblem book Time is represented as a naked, winged old man, holding a scythe, who is liberating a kneeling woman, Truth, from her dungeon.¹³ This moment of invocation of another text also invokes a different genre: the argumentative layer is enriched with some moralizing overtone, i.e. books that survive the test of readers and the elapse of time are not only supposed to bear truth, but also to be morally acceptable.

Elitist, humanist, courtier English faces are proposed by the arguments that Finet applied in the second part of the “To the Reader.” The second half of this chapter is more apologetic than the rest of this chapter and the other dedication. In this part Finet prepares the reader for the layer of Lucinge’s text that may be condemned, owing to its “harshnesse towards euen woorthy strangers” (b3v), “discourteous fault” (b3v). It is very likely that Finet is thinking about the parts in which Lucinge finds strategic mistakes in the conduct of certain battles that were lost, or when he does not have a high opinion about Christian soldiers. Finet defends this layer by claiming that these only apply for the “common sort” and not to the “gentrie & persons of more eminent quality” (b3v). The appropriate reader will find that the book is “such as a wel breathed runner, gathers more strength towards the end of the race, then was bewraied at the beginning” (b3v).

The strategy used here works in two directions. He applies a simile which is simple, brings home the argument easily, because whoever saw a race would remember the one who could finish the race with strength and dignity. But at the same time the simile claims that the runner is not only strong and fast, but someone who bears the painful virtue of discipline: breathing well against natural inclinations; keeping the body fit needs much discipline beyond practice. This is precisely the virtue – discipline – that Lucinge will appreciate in the

¹² Cf. Whitney, Geoffrey (1586) *A Choice of Emblems*. ed. Peter M Daly and Anthony Raspa 54 (1988) *The English Emblem Tradition. Index Emblematicus*, Vol. 1, ed. Peter M. Daly et al. Toronto – Buffalo – London: University of Toronto Press, 79-337.

¹³ The function of time as a revealer of truth can be found in Shakespeare’s *The Rape of Lucrece*: “Time’s glory [...] / To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light,” (939-40); Cordelia in *King Lear* says: “Time shall unfold what pleated cunning hides” (1/2/280); and in *Twelfth Night* Viola claims: “O, Time, thou must untangle this, not I” (2/2/40). For critical material consult Spurgeon, Caroline F. E. (1958) *Shakespeare’s Imagery and What It Tells Us*. Cambridge – London – New York: Cambridge University Press, 172, and Turner, Frederick (1971) *Shakespeare and the Nature of Time. Moral and Philosophical Themes in Some Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 5. An illuminating discussion of this topic is Tibor Fabiny’s “Time and Truth in Shakespeare’s Imagery,” 78-83 in *Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 26 (1984), 61-98.

Turkish soldiers.¹⁴ Thus what Finet does in this section is, instead of taking counter-arguments and refuting them on exclusively rational grounds, making a strong elitist turn, which is reflected on the stylistic layer of the text, e.g. in the two Latin quotations of this section.

The second Latin quotation introduces precisely this elitist turn. The quotation – “Vilia miretur vulgus” (b3v)¹⁵ – seems to be a learned catch-phrase of turning away from the mob, the crowd, the vulgar sort, towards the more sympathetically educated readership. The phrase was rather popular at the time: Ovid’s *Amores* was published in Latin twice in the 16th Century¹⁶, this was the epigraph on the title-page of Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*¹⁷; it also appeared in one of Marlowe’s poems as listed by Catherine Duncan Jones¹⁸. Finet’s short reference to this half-line is indicative of his elitist humanism, and may agree with how Shakespeare may have used it: turning away from “the mob”, “from immediate profit” and fostering the “immortality” of the author, and the lines as Catherine Duncan-Jones claims about Shakespeare.¹⁹

The special features of the third Latin quotation, the chapter-closing sentence, are that this is the first time that the author’s name is mentioned, and that there is no English translation added to help the reader. The quotation is from Seneca’s *De tranquillitate*

Non ignoro etiam quae in speciem laborant, dignitatem dico et eloquentiae famam et quicquid ad alienum suffragium uenit, mora conualescere:²⁰ [I am not ignorant that even those which struggle for appearance’s sake—I mean for high position, reputation for eloquence, and whatever depends upon the judgment of others—gain strength with time:]²¹

¹⁴ “the principall strength and sinew of an army consisteth, in affection, in Military Discipline, and in well disposed order in the day of the battell: [...]” (D2r).

¹⁵ Ovid, *Amores*, 1.15.35.

¹⁶ (1583) Publii Ouidii Nasonis Heroidum epistolae. Amorum, libri III De arte amandi, libri III De remedio amoris, libri II Aliaque huius generis, quae sequens pagella indicabit. Omnia ex accuratiss. Andreae Nauigerij castigatione. Guidonis Morillonii argumenta in epistolas. London: Thomas Vautrollerius. And another edition closer to Finet in time: (1594) P. Ouidii Nasonis Heroidum epistolae. Amorum, libri III De arte amandi, libri III De remedio amoris, libri II Aliaq[ue] huius generis, quae sequens pagella indicabit. Omnia ex accuratiss. Andreae Nauigerij castigatione. Guidonis Morillonii argumenta in epistolas. London : R. F[ield].

¹⁷ Shakespeare, William (1593) *Venus and Adonis*. London: Richard Field.

¹⁸ Duncan-Jones, Catherine (2007) Introduction, 12 in *William Shakespeare’s Poems*. The Arden Shakespeare eds. Catherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen, London: Thomson Learning, 1-125.

¹⁹ Cf. Duncan-Jones Introduction, 12.

²⁰ L. Annaei Senecae Ad Serenum De Tranquillitate Animi. I.3.

²¹ I have found this (<http://www.molloy.edu/sophia/seneca/tranquility.htm>) translation by William Bell Langsdorf (1900) revised and edited by Michael S. Russo more faithful to the original than the standard Loeb one. Lucius Annasus Seneca (1928-1935) *Moral Essays*. Trans. John W. Basore. The Loeb Classical Library. London: W. Heinemann, 3 vols.: Volume II. [I am well aware

The first English translation of *De tranquillitate* could not be used here, first because it came off the press only in 1614, later than the publication of Lucinge's book, and also because at this point it is almost unintelligible.²²

The significance of this closing line lies in its original context, making the ending a complicated concluding argument open up a moralising and creative claim. It is important that this is not from a letter, but a dialogue—as it was obvious in Finet's time as well, as in Lodge's translation it was not labelled as a letter, but as a treatise on its own. The form of this treatise is epistolary; but the first part is told by Serenus about his moral problem, and the other part consists of Seneca's solution to the problem. The sentence quoted by Finet is from the first part, i.e. told by Serenus, so Finet is partly misleading, claiming that he "will close with a saying of that euer most reuerenced Master of moralitie Seneca" (b3r). As Inwood writes, "[s]ince Serenus is seeking a "cure" from Seneca, he must of course give a true and honest account of his symptoms and of his state of moral progress."²³ So the dialogue form is there to represent another voice and the idea of progress. The last sentence thus is there to present a voice twice removed from that of Finet, as it seems to be that of Seneca; but it is that of Persona Serenus. This twofold removal gives objectivity and distance, which distance is further fostered by the lack of English translation that appeared in the case of the two previous Latin quotes. The objectivity and distance, the hermeneutic movement between historical authority and present purposes make the claim strong and emphatic.

The claim further fosters the general argument taken from the criteria of the good book in the first part of this introductory chapter, and the argument of the second part that these criteria apply to Lucinge's book in particular. The claim of the quotation that time strengthens opinion reinforces the general argument that rests on time, and thus sharply concludes the meditation. The concept of time in the meditation does not only involve closeness, i.e. the book has been a success on the Continent, but also openness. The progressive implications of the quote, namely that Serenus knows his sickness for which he asks for Seneca's cure, and precisely this knowledge helps him towards a remedy, so is the implication applied to the forthcoming book, the remedy is right at hand, coming after this unit of the book, and time will justify the worth of the book. This complicated dynamism of closeness and openness adds to the elitist English face introduced with the second Latin quotation in the second section.

also that the virtues that struggle for outward show, I mean for position and the fame of eloquence and all that comes under the verdict of others, do grow stronger as time passes—].

²² *The works of Lucius Annaeus Seneca* (1614) trans. Thomas Lodge, London: William Stansby, 633-634. "I know well that these things which are of consequence and reputation, to be eloquent, and all that whereupon our neighbours ground their judgement, are fortified by time."

²³ Brad Inwood (2005) *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy in Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 349.

We have seen a vast panorama of faces in Finet’s introductory chapters written for his English translation of René de Lucinge’s *De la naissance, dyree, et cheyte des estats*. These implied and fancied faces consisted of at least two ambiguous faces: the religious missionary in the dedication to Richard Bancroft, and the learned face in the “To the Reader” part. The religious missionary identity ambiguously aimed at harmonizing the spiritual with the political, while the learned attempted to represent the ambiguously dynamic relationship between the pragmatic rationalist and the elitist humanist. These ambiguities and tensions within the Face of the English, the English identity in the court of James I, are symptomatic of England after the succession of the new king. Finet’s description of the age seems to be more significant than what its original context would imply: “It is time that begets iudgement and assurance.”

7 FACES OF THE OTHER-WORLD IN THE EARLIEST OLD ENGLISH
SERIES OF HOMILIES
A DOGMA IN FORMATION:
TWO HOMILETIC VISIONS BY AELFRIC

Tamás Karáth

Scholarship has pointed out the theological eclecticism, even tensions, in the first extant Old English collections of homilies.¹ When placing Aelfric's two series of *Catholic Homilies* in the context of the somewhat earlier *Blickling* and *Vercelli* homilies, Aelfric is seen as a conservative theologian, carefully balancing between the contradictory dogmatic statements of his anonymous predecessors. In a passage of the preface to the first series of *Catholic Homilies*, Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder see evidence that Aelfric gave voice to his condemnation of the "heretical apocryphal selections of the *Blickling* and *Vercelli Homilies*"²:

*Ic geseah 7 gehyrde mycel gedwyld on manegum englisicum
bocum ðe ungelærede menn ðurh heora bilewitnysse to micclum
wisdome tealdon 7 me ofhreow þæt hi ne cuðon ne næfdon ða
godspellican lare on heora gewritum buton ðam mannum anum
ðe ðæt leden cuðon 7 buton þam bocum þe ælfred cyning
snoterlice awende of ledene on englisc.*

[I saw and heard about a great deal of errors in many English books that unlearned men, in their simplicity, considered great wisdom. And I pitied them as they did not know or did not have the divine teaching in their writings except for those who

¹ Gatch, Milton McC., "Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies," *Traditio*, 21 (1965) 117-65; Dalbey, Marcia A. (1978) *The Old English Homily and Its Background*. New York: Albany University Press; idem, "'Soul's Medicine': Religious Psychology in the Blickling Rogation Homilies," *Neophilologus*, 64 (1980) 470-7; Clayton, Mary "Homiliaries and Preaching in Anglo-Saxon England," in Szarmach, Paul E. (ed.) (2000) *Old English Prose. Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England. Vol. 5*. New York: Garland, 151-98; Gatch, Milton McC. (2000) *Eschatology and Christian Nurture*. Burlington: Ashgate.

² Greenfield, Stanley B. and Calder, Daniel G. (eds.) (1986) *A New Critical History of Old English Literature*. New York: New York University Press, 77.

understood Latin and except for those books that King Alfred wisely translated from Latin into English.]³

Whether Aelfric refers to the apocryphal materials inserted into the homilies is not certain at all, since he himself uses them in his own sermons. In one of his homilies of the Second Series of the *Catholic Homilies, In Letania maiore, feria tertia*, in the rendering of the *Visio Fursei*, he struggles with the question of the acceptability of extra-scriptural materials, as e.g. the *Visio Pauli*.

The criterion of orthodoxy, on the other hand, which would distinguish heretical statements from the ones officially held and taught by the Church, may be dismissed in the case of theological ideas still under development and before canonization. The dogmatic issues upon which the *Blickling* and *Vercelli Homilies* are judged retrospectively as heretical represent eschatological concerns. Questions pertaining to the fate of the soul after death attest to a concern in visualizing the other world. The attempts to loosen up the strict duality of salvation vs. damnation after death prepared the way for the concept of repentance after death. As no reassuring answers had been given to the problematic relationship between the individual and universal judgments of the soul or to the exact place where the soul expected the final judgment, the idea of an *interim*, i.e. transitory place of the soul waiting for its reunion with a spiritual body at the moment of the Resurrection, necessarily yielded assumptions about the existence of a kind of purgatory. Yet, the idea of a transitional place between Heaven and Hell had to await the 12th century to be officially accepted as a dogma of the Church.⁴ In this process some of the traditional attributes of Hell and Paradise were attributed to Purgatory. In the following, a brief survey of the principal eschatological passages of the *Blickling* and *Vercelli Homilies* will elucidate the theological hesitations particularly in connection with the vision of the soul's life between death and the Last Judgment.

Both collections of homilies identify death with the separation of the soul from the body.⁵ The vast majority of homilies of an eschatological bias emphasize the soul's needs still in its lifetime and the inevitable consequences of spiritual neglect at the Last Judgment. The state of the soul, however, does not appear immutable after its departure from the body: in the *interim*, the soul may undergo purification which can save the soul from eternal torments. Allusions to

³ Clemons, Peter (ed.) (1997) *Aelfric's Catholic Homilies. First Series. Text*. EETS. SS. 17. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Prefatio ll. 50-6, 174. (All translations of the Old English passages in this paper are mine.)

⁴ Le Goff, Jacques, "La naissance du Purgatoire [the birth of the Purgatory]," in Le Goff, Jacques (1999) *Un autre Moyen Age [Another Middle Ages]*. Quarto Gallimard, 771-1232.

⁵ Morris, R. (ed.) (1967) *The Blickling Homilies with a Translation and Index of Words together with the Blickling Glosses*. EETS. OS. 58, 63 and 73. London: Oxford University Press, II, 21 and X, 109-11. All references to the *Blickling Homilies* will be taken from Morris's edition. Scragg, D. G. (ed.) (1992) *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*. EETS. OS. 300. Oxford: Oxford University Press, IX, ll. 68-83 and XXII, ll. 1-66. All further quotations from the *Vercelli Homilies* will be taken from Scragg's edition.

the distinction between temporary and eternal torments record evidence for the birth of Purgatory in Anglo-Saxon England. The idea that the soul's fate is exclusively determined by its own merits, according to which it may definitively be doomed to suffering or invited to live in heavenly bliss, is strongly present in the *Blickling Homilies*. But this approach does not ultimately clarify the difference between the individual and final judgments of the soul, nor does it reveal any awareness of repentance in the afterlife. These passages attest to the conviction in the necessity of repentance before death: "Geseo we þæt oft swiþe manegum men færlice gelimpeþ þæt he [God] hine wið þas world gedæleð; forþon us is mycel ðearf þæt we simle teolian on ælce tid þæt we syn gearwe, þonne ure Drihten ure hwylces neosian wille." [We see that it occurs very often to many people that God suddenly detaches them from this world; therefore, we must continually aspire to leave sin still in this life before our Lord would visit each of us.] (Blickling XI, 125) If there is no conversion before death, people who persevered in vanity will not avoid eternal torments. The following excerpt from Homily VIII about the soul's needs suggests that the "individual judgment" at the moment of death coincides with the final judgment – at least for those whose sins exclude the possibility of an appeal to divine mercy:

Ealle þa syndon nu from heora eagam gewitene, & ofor næfre efngeyndige hider eft ne cumað, ah heora lichoman licggað on eorðan & beoþ to duste gewordne, & þæt flæsc afulað, & wyrnum awealleþ, & neþer afloweþ, & beoþ gewitene from eallum heora gefogum, & þær noht elles ne wunað, buton þæt an þæt se þe gesælig bið mæg hine sylfne be þære bysene læran, & eac þæt gyt mare is, þæt hie sceolan æfter þæm wlencum ece edwit þrowian, buton him seo soþe hreow gefultmige. Forðon, men ða leofestan, don we soþe hreowe & bote ure synna, þa hwile þe we on þyssum life syn; alesan we ure saule þa hwile þe we þæt lif & þæt weorþ on urum gewealde habban, þe læs se deaþ ær cume, & we þonne æt somne forleoson þæt lif & þæt weorþ, & þonne syn gelædde mid urum feondum on ece forwyrde. (Blickling VIII, 101)

[All those that (whose souls) have already departed from their eyes would never return here afterwards remindful of this life, but their bodies lie in earth and are turned to dust, their flesh becomes foul, wells up for worms and disintegrates deep below, and depart from all their joints. And there, there is no company whatsoever to dwell with them except for the one that the fortunate soul may teach himself by this example. What's more, after their pride they shall suffer eternal blame unless they are rescued by true repentance. Therefore, most beloved brethren, let us repent truly and correct our sins while we are living in this life. Let us save our soul while we still have this life and

this price in our possession lest death comes unexpectedly, because then we will entirely lose this life and the price, and will be led by our fiends to everlasting death.]

In a binary division of the other world, in which eternal punishment is the inevitable continuation of worldly sins, only the moment of the Last Judgment appears as the due vengeance for the sins committed on earth. The Pascal homily also repeats the motif of “Repent now or it will be late” (Blickling VII, 95). This shares the logical implication of the above passages: eternal torments in Hell are the direct consequences of a sinful life.

As opposed to the overwhelming presence of the idea of repentance in life, Homily IV, for the third Sunday in Lent, shows a surprising and sudden antithesis:

Se biscop & se mæsse preost gif hi mid rihte willaþ Gode þeowian, þonne sceolan hi þegnian dæghwamlice Godsa folce, oþþe huru embe seofon niht mæssan gesingan for eal christen folc, þe æfre from frymþe middangeardes acenned wæs, & Godes willa sy þæt hi foreþingian motan. Þonne onfoþ hi from Gode maran mede þonne hi from ænigum oþrum lacum don; forþon þe Gode is his folc swyþe leof & þa þe on heofonum syndon, hi þingiað for þa þe þyssum sange fylgeað, & hi beoþ on ealra eorþlicra gebed-rædenne þe Cristene wæron, oþþe gyt syn; & hi næfre on heora synnum ne swyltaþ; & Godes mildheortnes biþ ofer hi; & ealra haligra. (Blickling IV, 45-47)

[If the bishop and the mass priest want to serve God in the right way, they shall perform their office daily to God’s people, that is to say, to sing the mass seven times a week for all the Christian people that had ever been born since the beginning of this middle-earth. It is God’s will that they should intercede for them. Thus they [the dead] receive more reward from God than from any other sacrifice, because God finds much favor with his people. For those who are in heaven, they [the priests] intercede so that they may hear their song and participate in all earthly religious observances as they did when they lived as Christians, and their sins will be deleted. And thus they shall never die in their sins, but God’s and his saints’ mercy will be with them.]

Here, the Church is defined as the community of all the believers ever baptized. The living priests and bishops have a timeless responsibility for the care of the Christian souls by a divine command. Their intercession may influence the soul’s fate after death, and may achieve “maran mede” (more reward) for the soul from God. Souls of Christians living in an earthly body and those separated from their bodies after death help each other mutually. The vision of a universal

Church, including both the living and the dead, offers a new perspective for the theme of repentance, and destroys the belief in the irreversible finality of the soul's state at the moment of earthly death.

The ambiguity of no *post mortem* repentance as opposed to a purgatory phase after death is not resolved in the *Blickling Homilies*. The omnipresence of the descriptions of the last events suggests that the author had primarily been interested in a spiritual visualization of the Last Judgment.⁶ The only exception to the strict punishment-scheme of the homilies appears not in connection with sins, but with merits, in Homily IV. The central question raised by the homily is not whether sins merit due punishment, but whether a life with more merits than sins may not entitle a soul to be automatically saved. Although, as Milton McC. Gatch remarked, this idea is only vaguely formulated in the *Blickling Homilies*, it nevertheless emerges more emphatically in passages treating the Harrowing of Hell, which article of faith also occupies a major place in the *Vercelli* collection.⁷

The theme of the Harrowing of Hell, Christ's descent into Hell between His death on Good Friday and His Resurrection on Easter Sunday, was a usual element of Easter homilies. It was interpreted as an apocryphal proof of the universal salvation of mankind. The treatment of the event allowed an exposition on the problematic of the fate of the soul after death. The Old Testament figures, not baptized, wait for the Savior in a transitory existence in the Limbo of Hell. Their state is a special *interim* after death, in which they endure purification so that by the time of Christ's descent they merit the bliss of Heaven. The interpretation of this transitory state is, however, contradictory in the *Vercelli Homilies*.

In his review of the exegetical development of the doctrine of Christ's descent, Jackson J. Campbell refers to Bede's explanation of a verse in Peter's first letter (I Pet. 3:19) as a turning point: Bede compares the patriarchs in the Limbo of Hell to the "living realities of ordinary men."⁸ The transitory stage of

⁶ The motifs of the Last Judgment are treated in the following homilies of the *Blickling* collection: the *Magnificat* is transformed into an eschatological hymn in No. XIII; No. X treats the event in a general way; No. XI mentions the signs of the Apocalypse; No. VII refers to the apocryphal Thomas Apocalypse; finally, several scattered passages (VII, 95; XIV, 163; VII, 95; VII, 91; X, 109-11; II, 21) recount a concrete moment of the Last Judgment. Cf.: Gatch, "Eschatology in Anonymous OE Homilies," 128-32.

⁷ *Ibid.* 135: Gatch points out that the belief in a purgatorial state of the soul is only implied in the *Blickling* collection, and not at all described, since it is "peripheral to the view of salvation expressed in the homilies." In his summary he claims that "apocryphal and visionary materials are used primarily for illustration, and the allusions are self-explanatory. Thus it is neither necessary nor proper to refer exclusively to the doctrines implied by the sources to lay bare the theological undergirding of the *Blickling* collection." A further conclusion saying that the collection shows "a lively but unspeculative and generally orthodox interest in the Last Things" leads to the difficulty of interpretation, insofar as it is impossible to set up measures of orthodoxy in questions outside doctrinal truths at a certain period of Christianity.

⁸ Bede's explanation in PL 93, 59 is referred to by Campbell, Jackson J. "To Hell and Back: Latin Tradition and Literary Use of the 'Descensus ad Inferos' in Old English," *Viator* 13 (1982) 121.

the patriarchs is paralleled with the transitory existence of the soul after death, waiting for the final judgment. But, while the patriarchs were not allowed to enter either Hell or Paradise because they were not baptized, the souls of the Christians are necessarily consigned to either of the two. Still, the analogy of the soul's afterlife with the patriarchs dissolves the more rigid scheme of salvation-damnation and introduces the concept of a purging place. The transitory stage of the soul after death until the Last Judgment was conceived to be determined by an individual judgment which may be overwritten by the immutable verdict of the Last Judgment.

The relationship of the two judgments and the concept of how the soul's merits determine an eventual transitory state after death are not at all crystallized in the early homilies. Homily XIX of the Vercelli collection places the discussion of the fate of Adam's soul in a historical context in order to provide an argument for universal salvation: "Nigon hund wintra 7 þritig wintra Adam lifde on þysse worulde on geswince 7 on yrmþe, 7 syððan to helle for, 7 þær grimme witu þolode fif þusend wintra 7 [twa hund wintra 7] eahta 7 .xx. wintra" [Adam had lived nine hundred and thirty years in this world in poverty and toil; afterwards he went to hell, and there he suffered five thousand two hundred and twenty-eight years in cruel torment] (Vercelli XIX, 45-8). This explanation, however, is not without ambiguities: the place where Adam's soul arrived "automatically" immediately after his death is called hell, although he, as a non-Christian, was not allowed to enter it. Furthermore, the place designed by the name of "hell" cannot mean that of eternal damnation, since it stands for a transitory place of torments from which Adam's soul was led out after Christ's Harrowing of Hell. If the word "hell" is understood in the sense of a place where the souls of the sinful suffer eternal damnation, the implication is that "one will be admitted to heaven or consigned to hell immediately after death."⁹ This interpretation excludes the necessity of an individual judgment other than the final judgment. But, evidently, the "hell" consigned to Adam's soul is a temporary stage, as it has a very concrete duration in time; thus, the word "hell" in this context may refer to a temporary place of suffering, similar to the idea of Purgatory.

According to another passage of Homily I in the same collection, the fate of Adam, the transition from suffering into the joys of Heaven, was not given to all the souls awaiting the Savior:

[...] ure drihten ælmihtig God, þa his haliga lichama in þa halgan byrgenne geseted wæs, þurh þa myclan miht his þære ecean godcundnesse he in helle astah, 7 he þær ealle þa fæstan carcern gebræc þæs ecan deapes, 7 þæne aldor þe ealra deofla hlaforð wæs 7 ealles yfles fruma, þæne he þær, ure drihten Crist, mid sarum bendum geband 7 hine in ece susl gesette 7

⁹ Gatch, "Eschatology in the Anonymous OE Homilies," 151.

*eallum his mihtum hine bereafode, 7 ealle þa sawla þanon
alædde þe him gecorene wæron fram fruman middangeardes, 7
us þa gife forgeaf þæt nun is nænegum men þearf þæt he helle
sece, ac he biþ sona to ecre reste gelæded, syþþan he þis
deaplice lif forlæteð, gif he nu her on worulde soð 7 riht in his
life don wile. (Vercelli I, 287-97)*

[...our Lord, almighty God, when his sacred body was placed in the holy sepulcher, descended into hell through the great power of his eternal divinity, and there He destroyed the strong prison of eternal death. There He, our Lord Christ, bound the prince of all devils, the beginning of all evil, with terrible fetters, put him into never-ending torment, deprived him of all his might, and led out all the souls from there who had been chosen by Him from the beginning of this middle-earth. Thus He granted us the gift that now no one has to go to hell, but is immediately led to eternal rest after they leave this mortal life, if they pursue a true and faithful life here on earth.]

In this passage, the Harrowing of Hell is the moment of rendering justice only to the elect, which echoes the idea of the Book of Revelations about the limited (and predetermined) number of souls to be saved at the Last Judgment. The Harrowing of Hell is also conceived as a turning point in salvation history since afterwards, after a good life filled with good deeds, the souls did not have to await their salvation in “hell.” Nevertheless, this does mean that souls after death cannot immediately get to Hell, which confirms that the individual judgment after death may coincide with the eternal punishment. Indeed, the visions of the other world, usually those of the horrors of Hell, all reinforce the idea of the irreversible effects of the earthly life to be suffered after death.

Suffering appears generally as the attribute of Hell. Besides the ambiguous interpretation of what torments really mean in the case of Adam’s fate, the *Vercelli Homilies* contain some other instances where suffering – or the deprivation from the joys of Heaven after death – may refer to something other than the eternal torments of Hell. The speculation on the fate of those who came back from Hell emphasizes the obligatory *interim* even of the souls who are to be saved at the Last Judgment. They had learnt from their experiences of the other world and are able to see life from the perspective of death:

*Nænig ær him [Christ] of helle astah, ne ænig ær him of deaðe
aras, þæt he eft ne sceolde deaðes byrgan. Þæt mon leornað on
gewritum þæt monige arison of deaðe, hie sceoldon hwæðre eft
deaðes byrgan butan Criste sylfum, 7 eft sculon arisan þy
nehstan dæge. (Vercelli V, 134-8)¹⁰*

¹⁰ Cf. Colgrave’s exposition of this passage in Colgrave, “Review of Förster 1932,” *Modern Language Review* 28 (1933) 93-5 quoted by Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 124: “Though many

[No one before Christ had ever ascended from hell, or had ever risen from the dead, that was not again to be buried in death. One learns from the Scriptures that, although many arise from death, they shall nevertheless die a new death, except for Christ, and shall rise again the last day.]

This passage, however, does not clarify whether the death to be suffered by those who correct their lives under the influence of the vision of the other world is the physical corruption of the flesh or also a limited participation in the joy of Heaven.

In Homily IX the grave itself is one of the five “onlicnessa be helle-gryre” (pre-figurations of the horror of death) in the present world, besides pain, old age, death, and the torments (“tintrega”). This homily provides the richest collection of ideas concerning death and suffering after death. The homily juxtaposes, in a chaotic way, passages taken from several backgrounds - all irreconcilable, which results in many ambiguities in meaning. The introduction of the homily confuses death and the Last Judgment. Furthermore, the descriptions of the different kinds of death and eternal suffering after the Last Judgment form an uninterrupted flow of ideas, which makes it impossible to distinguish the sections referring to the consequences of death from those describing the soul’s state after the final judgment. The core of the problem is the uncertainty lingering over the soul’s transitory state between death and the Last Judgment. Gatch proves the author’s palpable concerns about some kind of a purgatory with the morphology of the word “tintrega,” which appears in an unusual masculine form (with an “a”-ending in the nominative singular) as opposed to its usual neuter form “tintreg.”¹¹ In addition to this, he admits that the “descriptive and not analytical theology in the homilies” cannot provide a basis on which to build a firm doctrine of Purgatory.¹²

If we compare Aelfric’s passages on the Harrowing of Hell, his dogmatic homogeneity and argumentative strictness form a huge contrast to the heterogeneity of the *Blickling* and *Vercelli Homilies*. Greenfield and Calder characterized Aelfric by “a more advanced eschatology”¹³ originating from an understanding of the idea “that the historical Church participates in the eternal order of God’s kingdom,” an idea not at all alien from the *Blickling* collection.¹⁴ In the descriptions of the Harrowing of Hell, Aelfric does not engage himself in

others have risen from the dead (e.g. Lazarus and the many recorded in the various lives of the saints) yet they have all had to return to death again and they will have to rise again on the last day just like the rest of the dead.”

¹¹ Gatch, “The Eschatology of the Anonymous OE Homilies,” 150: if “tintrega” in the list of the five likenesses of hell in the present world means torture (of hell), the first element of the list, pain, would be redundant. Moreover, Gatch claims that “tintrega” “cannot mean eternal torment, for the author is speaking of an anticipatory sign of the final woes.”

¹² *Ibid.* 160-1.

¹³ Greenfield – Calder, *op. cit.*, 77.

¹⁴ Cf. Homily IV in the *Blickling* collection also analyzed above.

the speculations about a possible intermediary stage after death and the Last Judgment. Although in his preface to the first series of *Catholic Homilies*, the homily entitled as *De initio creaturae*, as well as in the homily for Palm Sunday and the Easter homily of the same series, he “is careful to mention that only part of the souls in hell were saved,”¹⁵ Aelfric does not investigate the eventual implications of the event on the conception of the afterlife of the soul. In Greenfield and Calder’s conclusion, Aelfric “was able to avoid the confusion which pervades [the anonymous homilies’] speculations on the soul’s fate between death and Judgment.”¹⁶ The theological consistency of the Harrowing of Hell passages in Aelfric does not, however, attest to the fact that Aelfric decisively turned away from speculating on the idea of Purgatory. The purpose of the analysis of two consecutive visions in the second series of *Catholic Homilies* - No. XX, *In Letania maiore feria tertia*, and No. XXI, a homily of unspecified occasion, *Alia visio*¹⁷ - is to uncover Aelfric’s concern on the question of Purgatory and his attitude towards apocryphal material that he seems to condemn.

The two homilies share some characteristics which make them markedly different from other, more typical representatives of the genre of homily. Their core is not the exposition of a scriptural passage. On the contrary, the texts present visions known from other sources than the Bible. Homily XX renders Furseus’ vision as similar to that in Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, III, 19, but more faithful to the supposedly original common source, a version of the extant *Vita S. Fursei*.¹⁸ The second homily elaborates on another other-worldly vision, that of Drythelm, also known from Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History* (V, 12). The pure rendering of the narrative element with detailed descriptions of the vision of the other world, as well as the reduction of the exegetical and moralizing additions, give the impression of homiletic sketches or of homilies not addressed to a lay audience. The homilies provide visions of the same type: in addition to the two visions mentioned, Homily XXI ends with the evocation of similar stories taken from Gregory’s *Dialogi*. The main interest of

¹⁵ Campbell, op. cit., 135. In his commentary on the Easter Homily of the first series, Malcolm Godden interprets the reference to Adam, Eve, and the other souls as follows: “Aelfric adds a reference to Adam and Eve and the other souls rescued from hell [homilia in Dominica Pascae, II. 167-8], who are not mentioned by Gregory [Homily 21, PL 76, 1173]. Haymo, recasting Gregory, also introduces a reference to the souls of the righteous being freed. [...] That Christ left the evil behind is perhaps needed emphasizing in the light of a sustained heterodox tradition that he rescued all its inhabitants.” Godden, Malcolm (2000) *Aelfric’s Catholic Homilies. Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*. EETS. SS. 18. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 126.

¹⁶ Greenfield – Calder, op. cit., 77.

¹⁷ Godden, Malcolm (ed.) (1979) *Aelfric’s Catholic Homilies. The Second Series. Text*. EETS. SS. 5. London: Oxford University Press, 190-205.

¹⁸ On the connections of the sources, cf.: Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. (1988) *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People. A Historical Commentary. Oxford Medieval Texts*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 112-3 and Szarmach, Paul “Aelfric, the Prose Vision, and the *Dream of the Rood*,” in Szarmach, Paul E. (ed.) (2000) *Old English Prose. Basic Readings. Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England*. New York: Garland, 331-2.

the homilies seems to accumulate a body of authoritative sources on the same subject and to comment on them. The invitation of the addressed to contemplate not only a theological idea but the problem of authorities and the right use of sources implies very suggestively a context of private reading in ecclesiastical circles.¹⁹

Homily XX, the account of Furseus' vision, is introduced by a seemingly irrelevant note on the *Visio Pauli*. This apocryphal source, also known as the Apocalypse of Paul, is of a mid-3rd century Egyptian origin. The original text has several earlier Latin renderings from the 4-6th centuries, but the abbreviated versions from the 9th century became more popular.²⁰ The biblical root of the *Visio Pauli* is Paul's second letter to the Corinthians (12:2-4), which is an account of a man's rapture to Heaven by the apostle Paul. Paul adds to the vision that the experience gained in the other world by that man cannot be told by anybody (cf. the Latin verse also quoted by Aelfric: "Et audiuit archana uerba que non licet homini loqui" [And heard arcane words that people are not permitted to say] Hom. XX, 9-10). This verse was interpreted by Augustine as the proof of divine prohibition on the dissemination of the experiences gained in the other world. At the same time, it justified his condemnation of an apocryphal text going against a clearly formulated divine command.²¹

Aelfric's homily starts in a confusing way. In the very first sentence, before quoting the scriptural passage, he attributes the vision to Paul himself: "Paulus se apostol ealra ðeoda lareow awrat be him sylfum þæt he wære gelædd up to heofonum oð þæt he becom to ðære ðriddan heofonan and he wæs gelæd to neorxnawange." [The apostle Paul, teacher of all nations, wrote down himself that he had been led up to heaven, and that he came to the third heaven, and was led to Paradise.] There is an obvious confusion of the *Visio Pauli* and the biblical pericope which inspired it. The ensuing Latin quotation of the biblical text and its English rendering, however, recommence the same story according to the biblical version. Instead of the apostle, an unknown person appears as the subject of the vision. "Archana verba" is translated by "þa gastlican dygelnyssse," i.e. the spiritual secrets or mysteries. As a response to the divine prohibition on the articulation of the visions, Aelfric also echoes the Augustinian attack. At this point, he makes it evident that the work he had in mind from the very beginning is the *Visio Pauli*: "Humeta rædað sume men ða leasan gesetnyssse þe hi hatað paulus gesihðe nu he sylf sæde þæt he ða digelan word gehyrde þe nan eorðlic mann sprecað ne mot." [For this reason, some people claim that Paul's vision is a deceitful composition as Paul himself said that he had heard secret words that no living being can utter.] (Hom. XX, 14-6) While Aelfric condemns the popular

¹⁹ The basic distinction between the loud reading of a homily and private reading is also confirmed by Clayton's essay: "Aelfric seems to envisage two uses for his work: one is reading aloud in church, the other private reading." Clayton, op. cit., 177.

²⁰ Le Goff, op. cit., 818.

²¹ Ibid., 819.

authority that raised Paul's vision to its popular status, at the beginning of his homily he himself makes the vision acceptable by invoking Paul's authority.

The introduction of the homily defends ultimately the non-biblical sources with a turn to another vision whose description does not come into conflict with the divine command: "We wyllað nu eow gereccan oðres mannes gesihðe ðe unleas is nu se apostol paulus his gesihðe mannum ameldian ne moste." [Now we want to tell you about another man's vision which is true, as the Apostle Paul could not report on his vision to anyone else.] (Hom. XX, 16-8) The next section of the homily is Furseus' vision, a rapture to Heaven and to other regions of the other world, similar to what might have been the content of the man's vision in Paul's letter. The only difference between the visions is thus the presence or absence of divine justification. Aelfric does not refute the idea that God himself would prohibit all attempts to tell about visions of the other world, nor does he investigate the causes why God would want to hide some narratives, whereas disclose others of a similar type. Furseus' vision cannot be traced back to a biblical verse, but it is transmitted by Bede and the *Vita Fursei*. Its authority derives from Bede himself and from the fact that the story is an illustration of a saint's earthly life whose historical authority, in return, is supported by Bede.

Aelfric entirely accepts the context of Furseus' story as one providing sufficient evidence for authority. When citing the angel's songs (ll. 33-8) in Furseus' first vision, he openly denies the divine prohibition in Paul's letter, and suggests that visions, in some instances, are revelations about Heaven. In the description of Furseus' life prior to the first vision, Aelfric emphasizes all the qualities that convince us of Furseus' holiness: deep faith, learning, purity and devotion, the abandon of the parental house in order to lead a monastic life and the foundation of a monastery. Indeed, Aelfric grants the beatitude to Furseus in advance, and calls him already in the middle of his first vision "se halga Furseus" [holy Furseus] (l. 44). Aelfric's retrospective approach to a known story explicitly uses the opposite methods of composition that characterize Bede. The chapter in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* hides Furseus' fate till the last moment, which creates the underlying tension of the passage. His sanctity is justified in Bede by *post mortem* miracles. Aelfric does not tell the story because of an historical interest in order to exploit the narrative possibilities. He anticipates the outcome of the story at the very start, and follows strictly the linear chronology of the *Vita Fursei*, contrary to Bede's rearranged chronology. Aelfric does not reduce the moralizing dialogues between the angels and the evil spirits present in the *Vita*. The three series of dialogues constitute the real plot of Furseus' vision; they extend the individual fate of Furseus' soul into a *psychomachia*, a universal clash between Furseus' protecting angels and the evil forces. The theological conversation (the evils appear as learned as the angels) examines questions pertaining to the consequences of sins, and to the repentance of venial sins after death.

The first set of dialogues (ll. 74-92) contrasts the evils' severe scheme of damnation with the mercy of God. The devils claim that no sinner can be saved, to which the angels answer that only mortal sins entail damnation. The devils represent the conviction that a soul stained with any sin cannot enter Heaven, to which the angels propose the possibility of repentance for the sins even in the after-life. The deletion of sins comes from God through His mercy, but the vision following this dialogue may allude to another possibility through which souls may be purified from the sins.

In the vision four fires appear to Furseus:

He [Furseus] ða beheold underbæc and geseah swilce an ðeostorful dene swiðe niðerlic and geseah ðær feower ormæte fyr atende and se engel cwæð him to; þas feower fyr ontendað ealne middaneard and onælað þæra manna sawla þe heora fulluhtes andetnysse and behat ðurh forgægednysse awægdon; þæt an fyr ontent þæra manna sawla þe leasunge lufedon; þæt oðer ðara ðe gitsunge filigdon; þæt ðridde þæra þe ceaste and twyrednysse styredon; þæt feorðe fyr forbærnd þæra manna sawla þe facn and arleasnysse beeodon. (ll. 94-102)

[Then Furseus looked back and saw a very dark and deep den, and saw there four enormous fires burn. The angel spoke to him: "These four fires inflame the whole middle-earth and incite people's souls to remember their baptismal vows and their forgotten promises. One fire incites those souls that loved deceits, the second one those who were greedy, the third one those who instigated strife and discord, and the fourth fire burns the souls of those people who committed sins and wicked deeds."]

The fires that burn people according to their sins do not explain themselves easily. That this fire does not only have the function of torturing is clear from the angel's words addressed to Furseus. Furthermore, it is a spark from this fire that springs on Furseus' face and symbolizes his purification of the sin he is accused of. At the end of Furseus' vision, when he is instructed with the essential good advice of how to avoid damnation, he receives a list of again four things that do not coincide with the four sins mentioned in connection with the vision of the fires. The four things whose direct consequence is damnation are "[þurh] leahtras, deofles tithing, lareowa gymeleaste, and yfele gebysunge unrihtwisra heafodmanna" [sins, devil's tithing, the neglect of teachers, and unrighteous leaders setting bad examples] as opposed to the list of "leasunge, gytsung, ceaste, and arleasnysse and facn" [deceit, greed, discord, and sins and wicked deeds]. The sins purified or punished by the fires would enter rightly into the category of mortal sins, since all of them (lying and falsehood, avarice, strife, impiety and deceit) belong to the seven deadly sins, and go against one of the

Ten Commandments. But the fires do not devour all the souls who committed a sin entailing damnation according to the angels' teaching. The vision of the fires is implicitly explained while looking back from the scene of Furseus' encounter with two of his former fellow monks in front of the gates of Heaven. This passage arranges the motifs of the vision in pairs of oppositions (high-low, saved-damned, holy-evil) which, consequently, reinterprets the fires as the opposite of the heavenly joys, i.e. the torments of Hell.

When, at a heavenly decree, Furseus has to return into his body, he again passes through the "*witniendlicum* fyre." The adjective signifies "torturing," but the conclusion of Homily XXI provides us with another connotation of the same word. There Aelfric writes about "*fela witnungstowa*" [many places of purification], similar to those shown in the preceding vision and also to be found in the fourth book of Gregory's *Dialogi*. In Homily XXI, it is apparent that the places Drythelm saw are regions of Purgatory. The places of suffering (*witnung*) refer to them. Accordingly, the moral conclusion of this homily ("We on ðisum life magon helpan þam forðfarenum þe on witnunge beoð" [We, living on this earth, may help the dead who are suffering] Hom. XXI, 131-2) and the attached hortatory sermon about the necessity of praying for the dead interpret the word "*witnung*" not as "eternal torture," but "the tortures and pains of Purgatory."

Although Furseus' vision does not contain an overt discussion of Purgatory, its images are reinterpreted retrospectively, in the context of the ensuing homily, Drythelm's vision. The vision of Drythelm, based on Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (V, 12) follows Drythelm's way through four places of the other-world. The first place, a deep and infinite valley where souls suffer either the unbearable heat of fire or the unbearable cold, is explained by the angel as Purgatory. In the next instance, Drythelm has an insight into Hell's mouth. In the positive half of the vision, Drythelm is led to a *locus amoenus*, a pleasant garden encircled by high walls, which is another aspect of Purgatory. Finally, he is allowed to get close to Heaven, but, as in Furseus' vision, he cannot participate in its joys, and has to return to the garden to listen to the angel's explanation. The verbal link between the two homilies is "*witnung*," which, in the second homily, is entirely used in the meaning of "purifying torment / fire." The first place of the vision, where souls are purified by fire and rime alternately, is described by the word "*witnungstow*." In the explanation of the angel

*[O]n þære beoð þæra manna sawla gewitnode and geclænsode
þe noldon heora synna þurh andetnysse and dædbote
gerihtlæcan on gehalum þingum hæfdon swa þeah
behreowsunge æt heora endenextan dæge and swa gewiton mid
þære behreowsunge of worulde and becumað on domes dæge
ealle to heofonan rice. (ll. 72-7)*

[Here, the souls of men are purified and cleansed that could not correct their sins (while still alive) through confession and repentance, but had nevertheless repented everything on their last day, and so they departed from this world with repentance, and will come all to the heavenly kingdom on the day of the Last Judgment.]

The same expression returns at the end of the homily. In the sequence of the two homilies we can follow the development of the meaning of “witnungstow” from its connotation of the eternal tortures of Hell to the ambiguous reference to unidentified tortures and the pains of Purgatory.

Parallel with the process of circumscribing the meaning of “witnung,” in Homily XXI Aelfric also arrives at the full elaboration of the concept of Purgatory. He continues the debate of Homily XX on the problems of salvation, and as an extra-contextual response to Furseus’ attacks by the devils he offers a theology of Purgatory. Furseus’ vision does not solve the individual dilemmas of salvation in frames of the binary division of Heaven and Hell.

Aelfric’s Homilies XX and XXI in the second series of *Catholic Homilies* speculate on the universal aspect of the Church. The interpretation of sin is approached from the perspective of a living soul measuring itself to eternal dimensions. The idea of Purgatory blossoms out not from a scriptural core, but from other sources not confirmed by the authority of the Bible. As opposed to the method of the anonymous Old English collections of homilies, whose unselective juxtapositions of authorities result in a theological confusion, Aelfric is aware of the fact that he has to justify the use of his sources before drawing any dogmatic conclusions. The existence of Purgatory is finally accepted on the assumption that the extra-scriptural materials are confirmed by signs (an openly acknowledged holy life, the tradition of the Church Fathers) that attest divine assent to the use of these materials in speculations on theological issues.

8 FACING INDECENT TEXTUAL DISCOURSES
THE MOCK TRIAL SCENE OF SHAKESPEARE'S *KING LEAR*
IN THE LIGHT OF GEORGE PUTTENHAM'S *THE ARTE OF ENGLISH POESIE*

Judit Mudriczki

Considering both the innumerable theatrical and film adaptations of his works and his dignified position in the British literary canon, we can assert that Shakespeare has undoubtedly become one of the best selling cultural products of England by the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, in the midst of all its mediated versions the words Shakespearean drama often seem to reflect a concept that has little or nothing to do with the work of the seventeenth century playwright – a deficiency this paper intends to remedy by discussing a particular scene of *King Lear* from a historical approach and describing it by applying the relevant Renaissance poetical terminology to be found in George Puttenham's *the Arte of English Poesie*.¹ Instead of posing the question of why this play is still popular today, I would like to focus on how it is embedded in the various discourses of the early seventeenth century and what characteristic features the close reading of this work can reveal about Shakespeare's dramatic practice. My choice for the textual analysis is the so-called mock trial scene in which Gloucester and Kent escort Lear and his companions, the Fool and Edgar in the guise of poor Tom, to a hovel in order to protect them from the storm and console Lear after his highly intensified rage of madness. This part being the second of Lear's three mad scenes bears a special significance since it also stages the last appearance of the Fool, who, to apply Grace Ioppolo's wording, is the king's

¹ The idea to relate *The Arte of English Poesie* to Shakespeare's poetic practice entered the sphere of Shakespeare scholarship in the twentieth century with the publication of William Rushton's book *Shakespeare and the Arte of English Poesie*. Liverpool, 1909. To my knowledge, the only scholar who has tried to point out some correspondence between *King Lear* and Puttenham's work was Kenneth Muir, the editor of the 1977 Arden edition of the play. See: Muir, Kenneth (ed.) (1977) Shakespeare, William. *King Lear. The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare*. London & New York: Routledge, 104. Nevertheless, this idea has so far stayed on the margin of academic discourse though there is also some extrinsic evidence that could support the claim that Shakespeare most certainly knew Puttenham's handbook, as the copy of *The Arte of English Poesie* in the possession of the British Museum today was owned by Ben Jonson. See: "Note". Puttenham, George (1968) *The Arte of English Poesie 1589*. A Scholar Press Facsimile. Menston, England: The Scholar Press Limited, npn. Moreover, both Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and Puttenham's handbook were published by Richard Field, with whom Shakespeare most certainly had both business and family ties. See Stuart, Gillespie (2001) *Shakespeare's Books, Athlone Shakespeare Dictionary Series*, London and New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone, 439.

“court jester, and surrogate son, but more importantly his uninhibited alter ego and conscience.”²

As for the reception history of *King Lear*, the mock trial has long been in the focus of scholarly attention mainly for two reasons. First, it proved to be an excellent passage to demonstrate the textual ambiguities of the play, as the 1608 Pied Bull Quarto edition contains thirty lines and Edgar’s soliloquy, which are missing from the 1623 Folio; whereas in the Folio there are two utterances of the Fool that are unique additions to the Quarto text.³ Many questions have been raised and many hypotheses have been formulated about whether the earlier version of the text was changed to conform to the constraints of censorship⁴, or the playwright himself introduced these changes in the text for dramaturgical reasons.⁵ Regardless of the reasons for the textual revision, even at the first sight it becomes obvious that the Folio version is shorter, shifts attention to Lear’s madness and his accusation of Regan, and completely lacks the extraordinary trial of Goneril’s case.

Secondly, scholars have also studied the Quarto version of this passage in order to illustrate “Shakespeare’s familiarity with criminal procedure”⁶ and his “use of technical legal phraseology.”⁷ Such claims are based on one particular line uttered by Lear: “thou robbed man of Iustice take thy place, & thou his yokefellow of equity, bench by his side, you are ot’h commission, sit you too.”⁸

² Ioppolo, Grace (ed.) (2003) *A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on William Shakespeare's King Lear*. London & New York: Routledge, 123.

³ In order to visualize the textual ambiguities, I conflated the Quarto and Folio texts and marked their special qualities with different fonts. In the appendix attached to this paper the portion of the text that both the Quarto and the Folio share appears in standard script; the passages that only the Pied Bull Quarto contains are highlighted by being bolded; and the underlined lines refer to the Folio version.

⁴The most comprehensive summary of those topical allusions and the description of the 1606 political climate that could give ground for arguments based on the influence of Jacobean censorship can be found in Patterson, Annabel M. “‘Betweene our sentence and our power’: King Lear and the double text.” in (1984) *Censorship and interpretation. The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England*. London and Madison: The U of Wisconsin P, 58-73. In a recent article Paul Hammond also proposes that the Fool’s lines might contain covert references to King James’ sexual preferences and that is the reason why they could have been omitted. Cf.: Hammond, Paul. “James I’s Homosexuality and the Revision of the Folio text of *King Lear*.” *Notes and Queries* (1997), 62-64. Even if one does not find Paul Hammond’s arguments convincing, the publication of his article shows that scholars still regard this question worthy of discussion.

⁵ As Roger Warren argues, the parts omitted from the Quarto shift attention to the meeting of the mad Lear with the blind Gloucester in act 4 scene 6, thus help to speed up the action, and besides, these omissions contain details that are later treated in a more detailed manner. “The Folio Omission of the Mock Trial. Motives and Consequences.” in (1983) *The Division of the Kingdoms. Shakespeare's Two Versions of King Lear*. Oxford: Calderon Press, 49.

⁶ John Lord, Campbell (1859) “King Lear.” *Shakespeare’s Legal Acquirements*. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 102.

⁷ *Ibid.* 100.

⁸ Shakespeare, M. William (1608) *HIS True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King LEAR and his three Daughters. With the vnfortunate life of Edgar, sonne and heire to the Earle of Gloucester, and his sullen and assumed humor of Tom of Bedlam*. London, Treasures in Full:

According to Mary Sokol, this sentence manifests a direct reference to the equity jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery, the institution whose decisions were not based on common law and precedents but on natural justice, allowing a fair judgment in a situation which is not covered by the existing law. For instance, the state trial of Mary, Queen of Scots – that is, James I’s mother– also took place at the Court of Chancery.⁹ Bearing in mind that the title page of the 1608 Quarto version clearly states that this text was based on a court performance at Whitehall in December 1606 “played before the Kings Maiestie”¹⁰ – that is, James I – many scholars have traced some topical allusions to contemporaneous trials that can determine the interpretation of the scene.

To begin with, Leah Marcus draws attention to the fact that at the time of the play’s performance at Whitehall the Parliament was debating the details of the Union of the Kingdom and the naturalization of the Scots.¹¹ Moreover, in 1608, when the Quarto was printed, the case of the Post Nati, the children born after the Union, was tried at the Court of Chancery, which decided in favor of their right to citizenship on the basis of civil law and equity. It was this court that King James, just like Lear, used to work his will, with the help of the judges under his influence.¹²

On the other hand, William Gulstad argues that “the details of the mock trial re-enforce its connection to witchcraft in general” and particularly to Reginald Scot’s work, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*,¹³ a sixteenth century narrative account of witch trials. To single out one of his examples, the line in which the Fool says to the imaginary Goneril, “Cry you mercy I tooke you for a ioyne stoole” cannot only be read as a seventeenth century colloquial expression meant to apologize for overlooking a person, but also as an allusion to witchcraft since, according to traditional folklore, “it was believed that for purposes of obscuring their movements witches left behind them, among other things, joint-stools, enchanted in such a way as to assume their likenesses.”¹⁴

Last but not least, it has also been proposed that since the trial Lear conducts is in fact an “act of treason,” this scene could also allude to the trial of the participants of the Gunpowder Plot, whose court case was settled in March 1606.¹⁵ Regarding the textual instability discussed earlier, we can see that all three contemporaneous cases mentioned above lost their topicality by the time

Shakespeare in Quarto. British Library. Downloadable from the Internet from <http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html>, accessed March 1, 2009. sig. G4r.

⁹ Sokol, B.J and Sokol. Mary “Introduction.” in (2003) *Shakespeare, Law, and Marriage*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 6-7.

¹⁰ Shak-speare, M. William. op.cit. sig. A2r.

¹¹ Leah S., Marcus, “Retrospective: King Lear on St. Stephen’s Night, 1606.” in (1988) *Puzzling Shakespeare. Local Reading and its Discontents*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: U of California P, 150.

¹² Ibid. 151.

¹³ Gulstad, William. “Mock-trial or witch-trial in King Lear?” *Notes and Queries* (1994), 495.

¹⁴ Gulstad, op.cit. 497.

¹⁵ Taunton, Nina and Hart, Valerie “*King Lear*, King James and the Gunpowder Treason of 1605.” *Renaissance Studies* (2003), Vol. 17, 709-710.

the Folio was published, which offers a plausible explanation for why these lines were cut from the 1623 version.

Without even trying to solve this problem, I would like to propose a new aspect to the question at hand and argue that the setting of this scene shows strong correspondence with the contemporaneous descriptions of indecent or unmannerly behavior, as it was recorded in George Puttenham's 1589 book *the Arte of English Poesie*. The third book of this work dedicated to the poetical use of figurative language contains a chapter on decent behavior, which seems to diverge from the book's main line of discussion. However, Puttenham argues that "the good maker or poet who is in decent speach & good termes to describe all things and with prayse or dispraise to report euery mans behaiour, ought to know the comelinesse of an action aswell as of a word."¹⁶

Despite the topical allusions to contemporaneous court cases mentioned above, the whole scene seems much more like the parody of a "trial in absentia"¹⁷ at which the culprits are not present and the judges are singing¹⁸ therefore the main emphasis falls on the weird behavior and diction of the people on stage. Based on conventional presumptions, court trials are supposed to be the ultimate example of public speech, yet what happens in this scene is anything but publicly acceptable. Nevertheless, the main goal of the playwright is to illustrate indecent behavior in order to entertain his audience, a feature that modern adaptations often lack, yet Puttenham's book helps us understand and explain in a philologically acceptable manner. Moreover, the knowledge that Puttenham can provide us with also shows how the dramaturgy of the action relied on the expectations of the contemporaneous audience.

The Participants of the Trial

Even the twenty-first century audience can feel that there is something extraordinary about the combination of characters when King Lear, the old man of royal origin, appears with Edgar, who is obviously much younger than him, even if he takes the disguise of a beggar, and with the professional Fool, who has been conversing with Lear in riddles from the very beginning of the play. Nevertheless, this strange company even more sharply contradicts the assumed expectations of the Renaissance courtly society, as Puttenham asserts:

And in the choise of a mans delights & maner of his life,
there is a decencie, and so we say th'old man generally is no
fit companion for the young man, nor the rich for the poore,
nor the wise for the foolish. Yet in some respects and by
discretion it may be otherwise, as when the old man hath the
gouernment of the young, the wise teaches the foolish, the

¹⁶ Puttenham, George. op. cit., 231.

¹⁷ Phillips, Owen Hood. "Trial Scenes." in (1972 rpt. 2005) *Shakespeare and the Lawyers*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 90.

¹⁸In the appendix the Calibri font lines indicate the sentences that were actually sung.

rich is wayted on by the poore for their reliefe, in which regard the conuersation is not indecent.¹⁹

Thus it seems that the characters themselves provide the first example for indecency as this notion was understood in the seventeenth century. Even if one argues that from a dramaturgical point of view this part of the play should be considered a “play-within-the-play”²⁰ and the characters on stage actually performing a court trial, Edgar and the Foole’s singing lines still challenge the expectations regarding proper manners. To recall Puttenham’s wording again:

after the same rate euery sort and maner of businesse or affaure or action hath his decencie and vndecencie, either for the time or place or person or some other circumstaunce, as [...] a Iudge to be incorrupted, solitarie and vnacquainted with Courtiers or Courtly entertainements.²¹

Based on Puttenham’s description, the presence of the Fool, who is the emblem of courtly entertainment, and the songs they are singing, intensify the impression that even for a trial scene it is indecently written.

The Characters’ Appearance

Although we do not have too much reliable evidence about the costume the actors could have been wearing in 1606, Puttenham states the contemporaneous presumption that people’s identity can be clearly determined by their appearance, based on the Renaissance “dress code”:

And in the vse of apparell there is no litle decency and vndecencie to be perceiued, as well for the fashion as the stufte, for it is comely that euery estate and vocation should be known by the differences of their habit: a clarke from a lay man: a gentleman from a yeoman: a souldier from a citizen, and the chiefe of euery degree from their inferiours, because in confusion and disorder there is no manner of decencie.²²

In *King Lear* there are at least two passages that make this description relevant to the interpretation of this scene, one of which is the Fool’s riddle when he asks Lear: “Prithe Nunckle tell me, whether a mad man be a Gentleman or a

¹⁹ Puttenham, George. op. cit., 234.

²⁰ Taylor, Gary “Monopolies, Show Trials, Disaster, and Invasion: *King Lear* and Censorship.” in (1983) *Division of the Kingdoms. Shakespeare’s Two Versions of King Lear*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 89.

²¹ Puttenham, George. op. cit., 245.

²² Ibid., 237.

Yeoman.”²³ According to Puttenham’s examples, this question could be easily decided by looking at their clothing, yet Lear’s answer refers to himself: “A King, a King...” though the only “mad” character on stage is Edgar in the half-naked disguise of poor Tom. Nevertheless, later on Lear draws attention to Edgar’s clothing again saying: “You sir, I entertaine you for one of my hundred, / Only I do not like the fashion of your garments youle say, / They are Persian attire, but let them be chang’d.”²⁴ Puttenham also provides a description of the characteristics of Persian clothing:

And the country custome maketh things decent in vse ...
The Turke and Persian to wear great tolibants of ten, fifteen,
and twentie ells of linen a peece vpon their heads, which can
not be remooued: in Europe to were caps or hats, which
vpon euery occasion of saluation we vse to put of, as a sign
of reuerence.²⁵

If Lear’s remark on the “Persian attire” partly refers to Edgar’s imaginary tolibant then the king seems to ask him to take it off, which Edgar could hardly do – according to Puttenham’s description; therefore these lines may also contribute to the indecent quality of the scene.²⁶ Yet the source of mockery in both cases is the fact that the characters point out something unacceptable about the clothing of Edgar, who actually appears as a half-naked madman.

Still by seventeenth century standards Edgar’s most outrageously indecent deed in fact is that he almost starts crying: “My teares begin to take his part so much, They marre my counterfetting.”²⁷ As Puttenham explains:

But generally to weepe for any sorrow (as one may doe for pitie) is not so decent in a man: and therefore all high minded persons, when they cannot chuse but shed teares, will turne away their face as a countenance vndecent for a man to shew, and so will the standers by till they haue suppress such passion, thinking it nothing decent to behold such an vncomely countenance.²⁸

²³ Shak-speare, M. William. op.cit., sig. G3v.

²⁴ Ibid., sig. G4r–G4v.

²⁵ Puttenham, George. op. cit., 239.

²⁶ According to OED, in the seventeenth century both attire and garment had a general meaning and could denote any article of dress. In the case of attire, the dictionary lists a meaning typical of the sixteenth–seventeenth century, ‘a head-dress of women’, that could strengthen the impression that these lines might have referred to a piece of clothing on Edgar’s head. And if this association with female pieces of clothing is appropriate then the scene receives an even more comical overtone.

²⁷ Shak-speare, M. William. op.cit., sig. G4r.

²⁸ Puttenham, George. op. cit., 243.

The Characters' Diction

From a dramaturgical point of view, the mock trial scene is supposed to illustrate that King Lear is mad or, as Kent explains, "his wits are gone" but, as opposed to the storm scene, here his madness is manifested not in the form of passion but by his behavior in a situation that imitates the utmost public event during which he completely transgresses courtly etiquette. Therefore this scene becomes the climax of the play, as it provides the parody of public speech and behavior sharply contrasting the ceremonial public discourses at the beginning and the end of *King Lear*. The comic elements are also strengthened by the indecent features I mentioned earlier and, last but not least, by the non-referential utterances of Lear's companions.

What we can see after comparing the Quarto and Folio versions of the text is that the omitted passages include some sort of direct contact with the courtly audience in the form of such entertainment as the Fool's joint-stool joke or Edgar's songs and vision of the foul fiend that is the devil, which, according to twentieth century scholar Roger Warren, all lead to "a generalized sense of chaos."²⁹ Nevertheless, Puttenham reminds us that for the Renaissance audience indecency was the main source of laughter:

But most certainly all things that moue a man to laughter, as doe these scurrilities & other ridiculous behauiours, it is for some vndecencie that is found in them; which maketh it decent for euery man to laugh at them. And therefore when we see or heare a natural foole and idiot doe or say any thing foolishly, we laugh not at him: but when he doeth or speaketh wisely, because that is vnlike him selfe: and a buffonne or counterfeit foole, to heare him speake wisely which is like himself, it is no sport at all, but for such a counterfeit to talke and looke foolishly it maketh vs laugh, because it is no part of his naturall, for in euery vncomlinesse there must be a certain absurditie and disproportion to nature, and the opinion of the hearer or beholder to make the thing ridiculous.³⁰

So when the buffoon (Shakespeare's Fool) and the counterfeit fool (Edgar) talk and look foolish, the audience of the 1606 performance most certainly found it entertaining. Obviously, this was a rather indecent sort of entertainment; yet it perfectly fit not only the dramatic context but also the historical context of its performance, which perhaps becomes the most apparent if we juxtapose the four-line song Edgar and the Fool sing in the Quarto with another passage

²⁹ Warren, Roger. "The Folio Omission of the Mock Trial. Motives and Consequences." in (1983) *The Division of the Kingdoms. Shakespeare's Two Versions of King Lear*. Oxford: Calderon Press, 46.

³⁰ Puttenham, George. op. cit., 243-244.

describing “rime” and musical “concord” in Puttenham’s handbook. Although the text lacks stage instructions to make it undeniable that the following passage was sung, its rhythm and jingling rhyme scheme do propose such a performance: “Come ore the broome *Bessy* to mee./ Her boat hath a leake, / and she must not speake, / Why she dares not come, ouer to thee.” It is also worth remarking that this song could have had some topical reference, and even perhaps an indirectly indecent reference to Queen Elizabeth since it strongly resembles the first verse of William Birch’s 1564 ballad entitled “Song between the Queen’s Majesty and England”: “Come over the bourn, Bessy, come over the bourn, Bessy, Sweet Bessy, come over to me; and I shall thee take, And my dear lady make Before all that ever I see.”³¹ However, *The Arte of English Poesy* associates end rhymes with the common poetry most likely enjoyed by ordinary people in the Christmas season, which would perfectly conform to the circumstances of the 1606 Whitehall performance, and also with the character of a fool in a dramatic context:

Note also that rime or concorde is not commendably vsed both in the end and middle of a verse, vnlesse it be in toyes and trifling Poesies, for it sheweth a certaine lightnesse either of the matter or of the makers head, albeit these common rimers vse it much [...] so on the other side doth the ouer busie and too speedy returne of one maner of tune, too much annoy & as it were glut the eare, vnlesse it be in small & popular Musickes [...] or historicall rimes, made purposely for recreation of the common people at Christmasse diners & brideales, and in tauernes & alehouses and such other places of base resort, also they be vsed in Carols and rounds and such light or lasciuious Poemes, which are commonly more commodiously vttered by these buffons or vices in playes then by any other person.³²

Consequently the very fact that the song cited above was omitted from the Folio shows how textual alternations like this could turn the history play of the Quarto into a less amusing yet more tragically decent piece of writing.

To summarize, what I have been trying to demonstrate is that the mock trial scene contains all those indecent and unmannerly elements that the 1606 courtly audience could have found entertaining. While modern adaptations provide various interpretations of *King Lear* that very often reflect a particular director’s idea, George Puttenham helps philologists reconstruct the Renaissance

³¹ Quoted in the following nineteenth century critical edition: Furness, Horace Howard (ed.) (1880) *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare. Vol 5. King Lear*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 208.

³² *Ibid.* 68-69.

“horizon of expectations”³³ against which the validity of historical readings of Shakespearean drama can be plausibly tested. Therefore a close reading of both *King Lear* and the *Arte of English Poesy* seem to disclose many distinctly Renaissance and in this case even entertaining features of Shakespeare’s poetic practice that otherwise would be inaccessible for a reader living in the twenty-first century.

Appendix

The Pied Bull Quarto and the Folio text conflated

Scena Sexta.

Enter Kent, and Gloucester, Lear, Foole and Tom.

GLO. Heere is better then the open ayre, take it thankfully: I will peece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.

Exit.

KENT. All the powre of his wits, haue giuen way to his impatience: the Gods reward / **deserue** your kindnesse.

Enter Lear, Edgar, and Foole.

EDG. *Fraterretto* calms me, and tells me *Nero* is an Angler in the Lake of Darknesse: pray Innocent, and beware the foule Fiend.

FOOLE. Prythee Nunkle tell me, whether a madman be a Gentleman, or a Yeoman.

LEAR. A King, a King.

FOOLE. No, he's a Yeoman, that ha's a Gentleman to his Sonne: for hee's a mad Yeoman that sees his Sonne a Gentleman before him.

LEAR. To haue a thousand with red burning spits Come hizzing in vpon 'em.

EDG. **The foul fiend bites my back,**

FOOLE. **He's mad, that trusts in the tamenes of a Wolfe, a horses health, a boyes loue, or a whores oath.**

LEAR. **It shalbe done, I wil arraigne them straight,
Come, sit thou here most learned Iustice
Thou sapient sir sit here, no you shee Foxes-**

EDG. **Looke where he stands and glars, wanst thou eyes, at
trial madam come ore the broome *Bessy* to mee.**

FOOLE. **Her boat hath a leake, and she must not speake, Why she dares not
come, ouer to thee.**

EDG. **The foul fiend haüts poore *Tom* in the voyce of a nightingale,
Hoppedance cries in *Toms* belly for two white herring,
Croke not black Angell, I haue no foode for thee.**

KENT. **How doe you sir? Stand you not so amazd, will you lie downe and
rest vpon the cushings?**

³³ This term is meant in the Jaussian sense to describe the criteria that modern readers can assume in order to judge a piece of writing deriving from a certain period other than that of the reader’s age. Cf. Jauss, Hans Robert. “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory.” in (1982) *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Trans. Timothy Bahti, Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 23.

LEAR. Ill see their triall first, bring in their euidence, thou
robbed man of Iustice take thy place, & thou his yokefellow of
equity, bench by his side, you are ot'h comission, sit you too.

EDG. Let vs deale iustly sleepest or wakest thou iolly shepheard,
Thy sheep be in the corne, and for one blast of thy minikin
Mouth, thy sheepe shall take no harme, Pur the cat is gray.

LEAR. Arraign her first tis *Gonoril*, I here take my oath before
this honorable assembly kickt the poore king her father.

FOOLE. Come hither mistrisse is your name *Gonorill*.

LEAR. She cannot deny it.

FOOLE. Cry you mercy I tooke you for a ioine stoole.

LEAR. And heres another whose warpt lookes proclaime,
What store her hart is made an, stop her there,
Armes, armes, sword fire, corruption in the place,
False Iusticer why hast thou let her scape.

EDG. Blesse thy fiue wits.

KENT. O pittie: Sir, where is the patience now That you so oft haue boasted to
retaine?

EDG. My teares begin to take his part so much,
They marre my counterfetting.

LEAR. The little dogges, and all;

Trey, Blanch, and Sweet-heart: see, they barke at me.

EDG. Tom, will throw his head at them: Auauunt you

Curses, be thy mouth or blacke or white:

Tooth that poysons if it bite:

Mastiffe, Grey-hound, Mongrill, Grim,

Hound or Spaniell, Brache, or Hym:

Or Bobtaile tight, or Troudle taile,

Tom will make him weepe and waile,

For with throwing thus my head;

Dogs leapt the hatch, and all are fled.

Do, de, de, de: sese: / loudla doodla Come, march to Wakes and Fayres,
And Market Townes: poore Tom thy horne is dry,

LEAR. Then let them Anatomize *Regan*: See what breeds about
her heart. Is there any cause in Nature that makes these hard-hearts /
hardnes.

You sir, I entertaine for one of my hundred;

only, I do not like the fashion of your garments. You will say
they are Persian **attire**; but let them bee chang'd.

Enter

Gloster.

KENT. Now good my Lord, lye heere, and rest awhile.

LEAR. Make no noise, make no noise, draw the Curtaines: so, so, so
wee'l go to Supper i'th' morning, **so, so, so**,
Enter Gloster.

FOOLE. And Ile go to bed at noone.

GLO. Come hither Friend: Where is the King my Master?

KENT. Here Sir, but trouble him not, his wits are gon.

GLO. Good friend, I prythee take him in thy armes;
I haue ore-heard a plot of death vpon him:
There is a Litter ready, lay him in't,
And driue toward Douer friend, where thou shalt meete
Both welcome, and protection. Take vp thy Master,
If thou should'st dally halfe an houre, his life
With thine, and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assured losse. Take vp, take vp, / **the King**
And follow me, that will to some prouision
Giue thee quicke conduct.

KENT. **Oppressed nature sleepes,
This rest might yet haue balmed thy broken sinews,
Which if conuenience will not alow stand in hard cure,
Come helpe to beare thy maister, thou must not stay behind.**

GLO. Come, come, away.

Exit. Exeunt.

EDG. **When we our betters see bearing our woes: we scarcely
Thinke, our miseries, our foes.
Who alone suffers suffers, most it'h mind,
Leauing free things and happy showes behind,
But then the mind much sufferance doth or'e scip,
When griefe hath mates, and bearing fellowship:
How light and portable my paine seemes now,
When that which makes me bend makes the king bow.
He childed as I fathered, *Tom*, away,
Marke the high noyses and thy selfe bewray,
When false opinion whose wrong thoughts defiles thee,
In thy iust prooffe repeals and reconciles thee,
What will hap more to night, safe scape the King, Lurke, lurke.**

9 THE FIGURE OF THE ROOD MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY RESHAPING RHETORICAL TROPES

Zsuzsanna Péri-Nagy

The history of the criticism of the *Dream of the Rood*,¹ considering the amount, quality and depth of the research into the poem, testifies to the fact that this work is largely recognized as being of high artistic value. Taking into account the theme and origin of the poem it is understandable that investigations about its doctrinal background are not lacking. These range from theological-doctrinal presentations, through studies of contemporary monastic liturgy, to more recent studies of the implications of early medieval exegetical rules in the stylistic conception of the poem.² The figure of the Rood is considered by its interpreters as a token of victory, symbol of redemption and a revered cult emblem. The acknowledgement of the Rood as a cult figure could lead to the detection of its sacramental nature, but a further analysis of this aspect has not been provided yet. Although Martin Irvine asserts that "The Cross is represented with language descriptive of relics and sacraments,"³ he does not elaborate either on the nature of such language or on the consequences of it on the poetic or semiotic functioning of the poem. The concept of the sign of the Cross as being of a sacramental nature is mirrored in works of art which employ the cross thematically. Consequently, considering this aspect in the analysis of the identity and functioning of the use of the cross in the poem may seem promising. The present essay attempts to apply this approach, focusing on the implications of medieval thinking with regard to sacramental realities in the domain of sacred literature.

¹ Swanton, Michael (1987) (ed.) *The Dream of the Rood*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

² Judy N. Garde offers a brief overview of the history of criticism of the poem in Garde, Judy N. (1991) "The Dream of the Rood, Crucifixion Tree: Tree of Life." In *Old English Poetry, Medieval Christian Perspective A Doctrinal Approach*. Cambridge: Brewer, 1-112. For further studies, see Lee, N. A. "Unity of the *Dream of the Rood*." *Neophilologus* 56 (1972) 470-484.; etc. One of the most convincing essays is that of Pasternac, Carol Braun "Stylistic Disjunctions in *The Dream of the Rood*." *Anglo-Saxon England* 13 (1984) 167-86, or from among the most recent ones, see O Carragain, Eamonn (2005) *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Poems of The Dream of the Rood Tradition*. London: University of Toronto Press.

³ Irvine, Martin (1994) *The Making of Textual Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 442.

In Anglo-Saxon Britain effective power was attributed to the cross, cross artefacts and erected stone crosses, reliquaries made to contain parts of the true cross of Christ given to King Alfred in 885 and to Aethelstan in 926. The study of the sacramental life and the sacramental rites themselves has so far remained undeveloped as regards the investigations about the background of the poem, as well as that of the sacramental character of the Cross in doctrine and practice in Anglo-Saxon Church.

The Anglo-Saxon literary tradition of the early Middle Ages is built on two important cultures: the Germanic heritage and the Latin culture of Christianity, which already incorporated the antique *Grammatica* into the new literacy of Christian patristic exegesis. Several studies support the idea that the new medieval *Ars Grammatica* formed an essential part of the monastic culture and literacy of Anglo-Saxon Britain from the earliest times on.⁴ The influence of Donatus, Isidore of Seville, and Augustine is clearly detectable in Bede's *De Schematibus et Tropis*.⁵ Therefore the assumption that these systems of literary theory left their mark on the creation of literary works about complex theological concepts (of which *The Dream of the Rood* is an example) seems plausible.

A correct understanding of the cross as a sacramental sign relies on patristic sacramental theories, among them the theory of Augustine, which provides clues for the intricate sets of semiotic references. Martin Irvine contributed exigent essays providing a new understanding for the process of formation of the new medieval *Grammatica*.⁶ His analysis of the typological pattern of semiotic references sheds new light on the working of such literary tropes as sign, symbol and allegory in these early medieval texts. His work enables the discovery of correlational systems where sacramental signs would fit in well, having as a common basis the typological structure. It also demonstrates the functioning of these on the stylistic level, that is, how a sacramental sign can exceed such other poetic forms of sacred literature as sign, allegory and enigma-prosopopoeia, and in which ways it combines with these.

1 Sign, allegory and enigma

Augustine regarded the knowledge and usage of grammatical tropes as essential prerequisites for the study of the Sacred Scripture, in which texts with infinite layers of meaning were encoded according to patristic exegesis. Faced with certain problems of interpretation, which, according to him, arose mainly in the cases of 'ambiguous signs', he became one of the first to develop a more

⁴See e.g. Campbell, Jackson J. "Learned Rhetoric in Old English Poetry." *Modern Philology* 3 (1966) 189-201.; see also Irvine, Martin *The Making of Textual Culture*, etc.

⁵*De arte metrica, De schematibus et tropis, De orthographia.* (ed.) Charles W. Jones. *Bedaе Venerabilis Opera, Pars I, Opera Didascalica. Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 123 A. Turnhout: Brepols, 1968.

⁶ Irvine, Martin "Anglo-Saxon Literary Theory Exemplified in Old English Poems: Interpreting the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood* and *Elene*." *Style* 20. 2 (1986) 157-81; see also Irvine, Martin *The Making of Textual Culture*.

elaborate theory of signs, mostly in *De Magistro*⁷ and in *De Doctrina Christiana*.⁸ He theorised the correspondences between ‘res’ (the object) and ‘verbum’ (the word) and the rules of transference of meaning, as well as the distinctions of such the other categories of tropes as allegory and their relation to signs.

The term ‘allegoria’ was first used to designate the typological character of the Scriptures in early patristic writings.⁹ Nevertheless, it also appeared bearing its primary meaning as well, which originated in the classical *Ars Grammatica*, where it was defined as a grammatical-rhetorical trope. From the beginning it suggested an encoded meaning, where the allegorical form is not an immediate reality, but only serves the expression (several times through hidden correspondences) of another reality. As Isidore of Seville, in his *De Tropis* (which was known and read in Anglo-Saxon monastic circles as well)¹⁰, formulated it: “Allegoria est alieniloquium. Alium enim sonat, et aliud intelligitur.”¹¹

A sub-category of allegory is the trope in which the characteristics of a person are transposed to an animal or object. This trope is called prosopopoeia, which is related to enigma. Enigma, or to use the English word *riddle*, is therefore a sub-category of *allegoria*. Isidore of Seville defines the difference between the two, stating that the meaning of an enigma is so veiled that it is unattainable without an explanation: “Huius [allegoriae] tropi plures sunt species [...]: ironia, antiphrasis, aenigma [...]. Aenigma est quaestio obscura quae difficile intelligitur, nisi aperiatur” (There are many species of this trope [allegory] [...]: irony, antiphrasis, enigma [...]. An enigma is an obscure problem which is difficult to understand unless it is revealed).¹² However, patristic typological exegesis introduced a new form of symbol: the sacrament.

2 “What is more than all these”: The sacrament

The semiotic structure of a sacramental sign is very similar to that of a simple

⁷Augustine (1970) *De Magistro*. (ed.) K. D. Daur. Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 29. Turnhout: Brepols.

⁸Augustine (1962) *De Doctrina Christiana*. Ed. Joseph Martin. Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 32. Turnhout: Brepols. Trans. Robertson, Jr. D. W. (1958) *On Christian Doctrine*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

⁹It refers to the existence of a multivalent signification, very often suggested by the term ‘mysteria’. Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great and other contemporary authors have a tendency to use this term when referring to the typological character. The formulas are: ‘allegorica praefiguratio’ (*Civitas Dei* XVII) or ‘Scripturam allegoriae’ (*Contra Manicheos* I.11) with Augustine, or the term ‘allegoriae mysteria’ in *De Ezechielem* of Gregory the Great. Bede differentiates between verbal and factual allegory, understanding typology as the latter.

¹⁰ See Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*.

¹¹ Isidore of Seville (1911) *De Tropis. Etymologiae* I. 37. 22. 26. Ed. W. M. Lindsay. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹² See also “Inter allegoriam autem et aenigma hoc interest, quod allegoriae vis gemina est et sub res alias aliud figuratiter indicat; aenigma vero sensus tantum obscurus est, et per quasdam imagines adumbratus.” Ibid.

sign or an allegory. However, it exceeds such tropes as signs, symbols and the different types of allegories as it is endowed not only with semantic and stylistic significance but also with a 'virtus', an inherent power. Sacramental thinking (that is, the knowledge of sacramental realities and of their functions and effects) basically influenced the conceptuality of theologians dealing with scriptural themes and, as a consequence, helped to determine the stylistic devices and their usage in literary works dealing with sacral realities.

John Whitman, on the basis of the Augustinian theory, formulated a concise yet enlightening definition where the similarities and differences between tropes and sacraments become clarified:

A symbol works through an identification based on distant similarities of two notions, one similarity being enough for the existence of it.

Allegory is built on distant identification of parallel systems of notions, where correspondences exist between the respective parts of the chains running parallel.

A sacrament requires the identification of two notions having a similarity on the basis of typological correspondence, the denominee has always to be figural, concrete. Similarity (*similitudo*) is the common edge where the correspondence takes place. The basic difference between a sacramental sign and all the other rhetorical forms based on some kind of identification consists in the fact that here the denominee actually fuses with the denominator, creating an identification which is far closer than in the case of any other form. The essential feature that differentiates a sacrament is consequently its efficacy. It is through the presence of this "virtus" that sacraments transcend all other kinds of signs, symbols and allegories, also through the way of signification. From the semiotic point of view sacraments can be characterised by the term "significando causant", that is, they bring forth what they signify by being a sacred sign.¹³

Whitman also recognized that a complex and not always quite clear interaction between the different levels of sacramental meaning and the 'allegorical' one is present in more medieval works, and is difficult to detect.

The sacramental theory of the Church began to be formulated from the earliest times by a significant number of patristic authors.¹⁴ The term is used to

¹³ Whitman, Jon (1987) *Allegory: The Dynamics of an ancient and medieval technique*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 125. On the different medieval theories on allegory, see also Whitman, Jon Ed. *Interpretation and Allegory. Antiquity to the Modern Period*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

¹⁴ Theodor of Mopsuestia's *Homilies* are amongst the most important sources of the doctrine of sacraments of the early Church, followed by the *Mystagogical Catechesis* by Cyril of Jerusalem, the *Liturgical Homilies* of Gregory of Nazianze and Gregory of Nyssa, of *De Sacramentis* and *De Mysteriis* by Ambrose of Milan, the teacher of Augustine. In order to understand the sacramental thinking of the early Church, it is indispensable to be aware of its typological character. This is the basis of the semantic references which determine the existence of a sacramental reality. First the existence of a reality is demanded (it can be an object, an act, a ritual) – which is a sign in itself, referring to something beyond its first meanings, retaining its first, concrete signification as well. This sign then becomes the figure of a sacrament, its abstract significance indicating the presence of a divine reality.

cover a very wide range of notions.¹⁵ As all sacraments have their source of existence in Christ, He himself becomes the sacrament *par excellence*. As Augustine writes: “Omnia ergo futuri populi signa sunt et mysteria de Domino nostro Jesu Cristo [...]”¹⁶ Augustine builds his theory of sacraments on the theory of signs and significations developed in his *De Doctrina Christiana*. He builds his definitions of sacraments on this system of signs, stating that when the signs refer to divine realities they are called sacraments. He says that a sacrament is a sign of a sacred thing,¹⁷ or “Nisi autem longum et convenienter disputare de carietate signorum, quae cum ad res divinas pertinent, sacramenta appellantur.”¹⁸

In the case of sacraments, likeness (*similitudo*) has a different function than in the case of rhetorical tropes. John Whitman acknowledges the importance of the different workings of likeness in the case of rhetorical tropes and of sacramental signs:

The term *similitudo* gives evidence of the fact that a sacred sign having a sacramental value has a much deeper significance than a symbol. It does not only refer to something beyond its original, concrete meaning (the *res*), having a secondary spiritual content as well, but a sacramental sign-event is the re-actualization and completion of a former event or inherent significance.¹⁹

A sacrament consists of two basic elements according to the theology of the earliest times: of an external sign and an internal efficacy. Augustine also discerns the ‘virtus’ and ‘fructus sacramenti’. The ‘fructus’ means the fruits, the changes operated by the sacrament in the receiver’s soul; ‘virtus’ means the ‘device’, the power lying behind the sacrament which brings forth these fruits: “Aliud est sacramentum, aliud virtus sacramenti,”²⁰ and “Gratia, quae virtus sacramentum est.”²¹ The term ‘gratia’ denotes the transcendental reality which guarantees that the consecration takes place, that is, the essential transformation of the substance of the sacrament into another substance; consequently, it

The Jewish tradition knows about realities representing spiritual truth through an actualization of a past event in the form of the feasts. Christian faith, by relating the whole Old Testament to its fulfilment in the person of Jesus Christ also considers these realities with a certain sacramental value as figures of later sacraments founded on the New Testament.

¹⁵In the larger sense they write about ‘sacramentum Israel’, that is, about the elected people who also are the *prefigura* of the Church, of the chosen of God, of the mystical body of Christ, of the ‘sacramentum Ecclesiae’. The Sacred Scriptures, that is, the Bible, itself appears in the writings of Augustine and his contemporaries as ‘sacramenta’, or as a book “full of sacramenta”. They are also ‘mysterion’, that is, a secret and the uncovering of this secret is achieved by exegesis.

¹⁶ Augustine (1955) *De Civitate Dei* XV, 26. *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 48; Turnhout: Brepols.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, X, 5.

¹⁸ Augustine (1966) *Epistula* 138.7. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 44, 131. 9-11. Vienna: Tempsky.

¹⁹ Whitman, 125.

²⁰ Augustine (1955) In *Ioannis evangelium tractatus* 26:11. *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 36. 265. 18-20. Turnhout: Brepols.

²¹ *Ibid.*

denotes the working of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit, according to patristic theology, who guarantees that a sacrament or a sacramental sign transcends the effect of a simple sign. “Sed non quaerant spiritum sanctum nisi in Christi corpore, cuius habent foris sacramentum.”²²

Finally, according to the wording of patristic theologians, the Cross of Jesus itself is referred to as “sacramentum”. The Cross appears as “sacramentum crucis” already in St. Paul’s letters. (Ephesians 3, 14-19: “In hoc mysterio figurae crucis ostendit”).

Henry Rondet, in “Notes d’exégèse Augustinienne”,²³ presents a detailed survey of how the notion of the cross as a sacrament developed in Augustine’s thought. The Cross of Christ, as the “sign of signs”, is considered as having a sacramental value. In his analysis of the spiritual significance of the Cross, he tries to define the symbolic correspondences of the different parts of the Cross; he tries to define the symbolic unison of the different parts of the Cross through exegesis: the horizontal, the vertical beam, and the part buried in the earth: “Quant á la profondeur, elle préfigure le secret du sacrement, ‘secretum sacramentum praefigurat’”. (As regards profundity, it prefigures the secret of the sacrament.) Augustine draws here a parallel between the Cross and all other sacraments, attributing sacramental value to the cross as well.

The Cross as a sacrament, that is, “mysterium”, condenses the dichotomy of the visible and the latent. From the earliest examples of the Old Testament serving as foretokens of the Cross this visibility is strongly accentuated. Nevertheless, as a completing counterpart of the visibility stands the existence of latency, a characteristic which is incorporated even in the denomination of the sacrament (the first, Greek term used by the Church was “mysterion” which means mystery, secret, the Latin term “sacramenta” bears the same meaning²⁴).

This dichotomy will find a richly artistic representation in the depiction of the cross in the *The Dream of the Rood* itself.

3 Implications of the sacramental nature of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England

Celia Martin, investigating the Cross in Carolingian iconography writes: “[...] the glory of the Cross is perpetual even though it has its origin in a past deed, its sacral powers are ones that it contains forever, both in its mystery and in the

²² Augustine (1966) *Epistula. Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 185. 44. 131. 9-11. Vienna: Tempsky. For a brief history of theology of the Holy Spirit, see Vandenbroucke, François. *Esprit Saint. Dictionnaire de la Spiritualité Chrétienne*. Vol. 4. 1246-1318.

²³ Rondet, Henri “Notes d’exégèse Augustinienne.” *Recherche de Sciences Religieuses* 52 (1964), 280.

²⁴ Camelot, analysing Augustine’s teaching about sacraments, writes: “*Sacramentum* désigne ici á la fois le signe et la réalité sacrée et secrete qu’il signifie. *Sacramentum* ici garde quelque chose de l’ambivalence du mysterion grec.” Camelot, P. Th. “*Sacramentum*.” *Revue Thomiste* 57 (1957) 429.

sign made by hand²⁵. Much ink has been spilled on the spiritual significance the Cross had for early Anglo-Saxon religiosity.²⁶ The numerous erected crosses had several functions, for example, as memorials, (as Oswald's Cross erected prior to the Battle of Heavenfield, or the one erected in memory of Cuthbert); mortuaries; signalling boundaries; sanctuaries; or functioning as oratory crosses. They testify to the multiple roles and also to the importance this primary symbol of Christianity had in the life and mentality of Anglo-Saxons from a very early period. Two of the most elaborate and finished specimens in the seventh century are the Bewcastle Cross and the Ruthwell Cross, together with the Gosforth Cross. The Ruthwell Cross bears in runic script parts of *The Dream of the Rood*. Judy N. Garde underlines the significance this cross may have had for its contemporaries, where words and the visual intertwined to strengthen the intended impact of it:

If we recall the stone cross at Ruthwell, surviving possibly from the early seventh century and inscribed in runes with the dramatic lines that are central to the crucifixion event in the poem, we may understand the affective power attributed to the cross and cross artifacts in the Old English period. S. J. A. Bradley notes that in the carved stone imitation "the personality and the voice itself of the true Cross," asserting "in the wilderness of undominated nature and of heathenism the triumph of Christ over Satan and death."²⁷

The dating of the poem itself depends on the dating of the Cross, which is still a debated issue among scholars. However, considering the artistic design, the linguistic features of the inscriptions, and some other evidence it seems probable that the Ruthwell Cross was produced some time after 650, procuring a rough *ante quem* date for the first composition of the poem.

The Vercelli Book, a 10th century manuscript containing 23 Old English homilies and six poems, preserved the larger version of the *Dream of the Rood*, written in a different dialect and in a more elaborated style.²⁸ Opinions about the authorship of the poem differ to this day, ranging from Cuthbert to Cynewulf, supporting the idea of the authorship of the latter by appealing to the fact that

²⁵ Chazelle, Celia Martine (1985) *The Cross, the Image and the Passion in Carolingian Thought and Art*. Yale: Yale University Press.

²⁶ A first detailed presentation of the role of the Cross was by William O. Stevens (1904), in his dissertation entitled *The Cross in the Life and Literature of the Anglo-Saxons*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Studies of Sandra McEntire deal with the correspondences between these stone crosses and the poem *The Dream of the Rood*. See McEntire, Sandra "The Devotional Context of the Cross Before A.D. 1000." *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*. Ed. Szarmach, Paul. E. Studies in Medieval Culture 20 Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University, 1986, 345-56.

²⁷ Garde, Judy N. "Dream of the Rood. Crucifixion Tree: Tree of Life." 92. She cites from Bradley, S. A. J. trans. and ed. (1982) *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*. London: Dent, 5.

²⁸ Dickins and Ross assert that the Vercelli text is an expanded and composite version of an earlier work, parts of which were carved on the Ruthwell Cross, and claim that the final part of the poem, at least the last 78 lines, are a later addition, on the basis of metrical and linguistic evidence. See Dickins, B. and Ross, A. S. C. (1951) *The Dream of the Rood*. London: Methuen and Co., 18.

two of Cynewulf's signed poems are also part of the Vercelli Book, as is *Elene*, another long and elaborate poem by the same author treating the Holy Cross theme.

Whatever the case may be, the time-span between the two occurrences of the poem is a period rich in texts with representations of the signification and efficacy of the Cross. A very brief list of examples would suffice, due to the limits of this paper, in drawing a rough sketch of it. Common consent, in the footsteps of Shapiro, states that the earliest crosses were intended as 'conversion tools'.²⁹ N. A. Lee³⁰ cites the example of the sculpted road crosses, mainly the Ruthwell Cross, which are accompanied by the text of the Apocalypse: "super aspidem et basilicum ambulabis: et conculcabis leonem et draconem", illustrating how the Cross, in the allusion to the Last Judgement, was seen by contemporaries as a sign of conquest, triumphing over all the enemies of Christ.

Furthermore, the capacity of healing and resurrecting was also attributed to the Cross. These aspects are exemplified in many literary works as well. In *Elene*, the True Cross resurrected a dead man when it was held up above the corpse:

Heht þa asettan sawlleasne,
 life belidenes lic on eorðan,
 unlifgendes, ond up ahof
 rihtes wemend þara roda twa
 fyrðgleaw on fæðme ofer þæt fæge hus,
 deophycgende. Hit wæs dead swa ær,
 lic legere fæst. Leomu colodon
 þreanedum beþeapt. þa sio þridde wæs
 ahafen halig. Hra wæs on anþide
 oððæt him uppan æðelinges wæs
 rod aræred, rodorcyninges beam,
 sigebeacen soð. He sona aras
 gaste gegearwod, geador bu samod
 lic ond sawl. þær wæs lof hafen
 fæger mid þy folce. (lines 876-890)³¹

The sign of the Cross may be a prophetic sign or it may be the emblem of holiness. The text of *The Life of Saint Guthlac*³² contains several passages where the holy sign of the cross intervened to exercise its power in various

²⁹ Shapiro, Meyer (1944) "The Religious Meaning of the Ruthwell Cross." *The Art Bulletin* 26. New York: College Art Association.

³⁰ Lee, N. A. "Unity of the Dream of the Rood." *Neophilologus* 56 (1972) 470-484.

³¹ For the edition, see (1958) *Cynewulf's Elene*. (ed.) Gradon, P.O.E. London.

³² Krapp, George Philip and Dobbie, Elliot van Kirk (1936) (eds.) "The Exeter Book" *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*. New York: Columbia University Press.

situations. It appeared as a heavenly sign in the sky at the time of Guthlac's birth, foretelling the fate of the child. Aelfric, in his *Homilies* and *Lives of Saints*, testifies to a very complex representation of what the Cross meant for his times.³³ The *Dream of the Rood*, encompassing this rather long period, is maybe the example *par excellence* of the richness of meaning and artistic forms the Cross gained.

4 The Rood

In the poem *The Dream of the Rood* the figure of the cross is the result of an intricate construction of identities which appear at times to overlap and at others to be quite separate. Thus, in this construction the Rood alternately and simultaneously takes on different forms of rhetorical tropes.³⁴ After appearing as a powerful sign at the very beginning, gradually it takes up other forms of rhetorical tropes: it becomes a symbol and an allegory, and finally appears in the complexity of *posopopeia* and enigma. At first it appears as a sign, keeping this primary function throughout the poem. The first level of the identification between Christ and the Rood is created on this level. The figure of the Rood functions as an enigma in the second part of the poem, beginning with the narration of the crucifixion, but as a special one: as a speaking riddle. However, considering the consequences of sacramental power attributed to the Rood, some passages which have not yet yielded a full interpretation could possibly be clarified. This new approach would also help in the unfolding of the extreme complexity of the figure of the Rood. Although the implications of this approach influence the whole structural, semantic and artistic pattern of the poem, the present essay will be limited to the analysis of only one line of the first section, a line where the working of the sacramental nature of the figure of the Rood is the most pronounced.

“Syllic was se sigebeam, and ic synnum fac, / forwunded mid wommum.”
(14-15a)

The first part of the verse, presenting the vision, works through the force of the visual appearance of the sign, the sign of the cross. Its presence, its extremely

³³ See Kinane, Karolyn “The cross as interpretative guide for Aelfric’s *Homilies* and *Saints’ Lives*.” In Karkov, Catherine E., Sarah Larratt Keefer, Karen Louise Jolly (2006) (eds.) *The place of the cross in Anglo-Saxon England. Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies*. Vol. 4. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.

³⁴ A vast majority of studies agree on the stylistic and semiotic importance of the functioning of the Rood taking the form of these tropes, see e.g. Isaacs, Neil D. (1968) “Progressive Identifications: The Structural Principle of the *Dream of the Rood*.” *Structural Principles in OE Poetry*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 3-18.; Boenig, Robert “The ‘Engel Dryhtnes’ and Mimesis in *The Dream of the Rood*.” *Neophilologische Mitteilungen* 86 (1985) 442-46.; Clemoes, Peter “King and Creation at the Crucifixion: The Contribution of Native Tradition to *The Dream of the Rood*.” In Carruthers, Leo (1994) (ed.) *Heroes and Heroines in Medieval English Literature*. Cambridge: Brewer, 31-43; and Hill, Thomas D. “The Cross as Symbolic Body: An Anglo-Latin Liturgical Analogue to *The Dream of the Rood*.” *Neophilologus* 77 (1993) 297-301; etc.

strong visual power, and its mystery are gradually approached by the narration and also by the names given to it. After the description of a wonderfully adorned, glorious cross appearing to the Dreamer in his vision in the middle of the night, 12 lines of positive, majestic adjectives and denominations follow, the only exception being the assertion that the cross was not *fracodes gealga*, ‘no cross of shame,’ abruptly and surprisingly appears the line:

Syllic was se sigebeam, and ic synnum fah, / forwunded mid wommum.
(14-15a). *Wondrous was that victory-tree, and I a sinner, wounded by my sins!*

This is a line which perplexes most critics, and the solutions vary from admission of failure to interpret the lines to superficial solutions which do not succeed in providing the causal link between the two parts of the line, as shall be noted. This link certainly seems to be absent, but this absence has an important stylistic role: it creates a tension required by the religious duality of the poem. Clearly an informed understanding of the religious mentality of the time is essential for further analysis. “All that we have so far been told is that the Dreamer sees the glorious beauty of the tree. Why then, from where, does he get this sudden over-whelming sense of sin? I am fumbling without much success after something important here,” writes Edward B. Irving.³⁵ Faith Patten avoids a deeper analysis simply by stating that there is a direct link between the vision of the bright cross and the appearance of the sense of guilt without explaining how and why this direct link exists: “This juxtaposition suggests that the Dreamer recognizes his guilt and sin because the cross is a ‘wondrous victory-beam’. The metrical, alliterative, and echoic characteristics of the line reinforce this hint.”³⁶ Peter Orton faces this moment of the poem with similar helplessness. He does not succeed in uncovering fully the functioning of the visionary image of the Rood.

The quality of the Cross’s manifestation and its impact on the visionary are alike enigmatic. Despite considerable emphasis on the image’s visual qualities, the visionary responds to it in various ways not immediately explicable on the basis of its physical appearance as described.³⁷

He continues by analyzing the emotions the sight caused in the Dreamer, but to the critical, enigmatic line, he adds only a rather vague interpretation, noticing only the presence of a phenomenon bearing a moral character but not searching for its cause: “A moral emanation of some nature is suggested by the visionary’s awareness of himself as ‘synnum fah, / forwunded mid wommum’ (13b-14a).”³⁸ He pays more attention to the analysis of the following lines, concluding that a certain “intuitive judgement” helped the Dreamer recognize

³⁵ Irving, Edward B. Jr. (1986) “Crucifixion Witnessed, or Dramatic Interaction in *The Dream of the Rood*.” In Rugg Brown, Phyllis et al. (ed.) *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 101-13.

³⁶ Patten, Faith “Structure and Meaning in *The Dream of the Rood*.” *English Studies* 49 (1968) 385-401.

³⁷ Orton, Peter “The Technique of the Object-Personification in the *Dream of the Rood* and a Comparison with the Old English *Riddles*.” *Leeds Studies in English* 11 (1980), 1.

³⁸Ibid., 2.

either that he perceives the cross of Christ consciously, or more likely that he is in some way subliminally seized by the significance of the vision. He stresses the presence of this enigmatic intuition as being the key to the whole scene, conceiving the nature of the Rood as being symbolic, writing about the visionary's intuitive, unreasoned responses to symbolic aspects of the cross's appearance.

Another commentator, Richard Payne,³⁹ considers the opening vision as a clearly judgmental scene. Consequently, he attributes the Dreamer's reaction to the fact that he, by recognizing the Rood as introducing the appearance of the Judge, made an assessment of his behaviour in advance to be able to give account of himself. This view does not lack consistency or the power to convince; nevertheless, it could be questioned. First, it presupposes a very clear and conscious recognition of the vision of the Rood as a Last Judgement symbol, both by the Dreamer and the contemporary reader. However, the elements which serve to keep a certain enigmatic ambiguity around the visionary figure are numerous, and most critics agree on this point. Secondly, the behaviour of the Dreamer suggests that he was not expecting the Final Judgement. He is "mid sorgum gefreded," but this is a result of the sight of the changing colour and of the horrible bleeding. The attitude is that of contemplation, which has the aim of penetrating more deeply into a yet unattained mystery, and definitely not of a frightful expectation of a judgement to decide eternal salvation or damnation.

As several critics, among them Peter Orton,⁴⁰ state, the sense of guilt and of sinfulness appears on an almost unconscious level, under strong affective pressure, but its appearance cannot be attributed only to this. The concept of the presence of a psychological process not directly explainable from the given image of the Rood is persistent in the approach of most critics. This is even more intriguing when we look at the context: the sharpness, the directness of the position of this half-line juxtaposed with the previous one, as well as the alliteration. "Syllic waes se sigebeam, and ic synnum fah," emphasizes the existence of a direct relation between the two laconically formulated assertions. No help is offered to uncover this enigma. Certainly, this stylistic device has its deliberate function: to awaken attention by omitting any explanation for a perplexing event. At the same time this line intrigues the modern reader by creating the impression that the underlying phenomenon, which is the cause of the drastic reaction of the Dreamer, may have easily been recognized by his contemporaries.

Consequently, it seems that the Cross functions on more than one level: besides its role as a sign of profound visual import, it stirs reactions which cannot be explained by viewing it solely as a sign, even if a very strong artistic (cathartic) effect is acknowledged. Another explanation is also worth considering. A logical gap exists. Considering the Rood simply as a symbol

³⁹ Payne, Richard C. "Convention and Originality in the Vision Framework of *The Dream of the Rood*." *Modern Philology* 73 (1976), 329-341.

⁴⁰ Orton, 2.

seems to be insufficient. A symbol presupposes certain knowledge of the referee, and in this line the Cross does work as a sign because the Dreamer can identify the Rood to a certain extent. However, the phrasing of the verse suggests that the Dreamer recognizes a deep, ontological state of sinfulness, rather than a temporary feeling. Simple visual effects caused by seeing and recognizing the referee of a symbol cannot explain this deep and very sudden change.

Considering the cross as a sacramental sign, and the assumption that it was conceived as such by the author, can bring contemporary readers closer to a solution. The function of a sign, its impact on those exposed to it, is assured by the semiotic content it bears, and eventually by its artistic value (assuming that it possesses some). The sacramental character of a sign, according to Augustine, consists of the presence of a real efficacy, an inherent power capable of inducing authentic, deep changes in the receiver of its visual impact, and these changes can go so far as being essential, ontological ones, and may even have a permanent effect. This essential power is due to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who ensures the ‘dynamis’, the effective power, which guarantees the efficacy of sacraments, that is, their essence as a sacred reality, because sacraments “significando causant”. It is the action of the Holy Spirit which reveals the spiritual meaning, the essence of spiritual realities. This characteristic of the effect of the working of the Holy Spirit, that is, the acquisition of spiritual wisdom is exemplified also in *Elene*, in the case of Judas:

Iudas oncwæð,
hæleð hildedeor, (him wæs halig gast
befolen fæste, fyrhat lufu,
weallende gewitt þurh witgan snyttro),
ond þæt word gecwæð, wisdomes ful. (lines 935-939).

Or later on, in the case of Saint Elene:

Heo gefylled wæs
wisdomes gife, ond þa wic beheold
halig heofonlic gast, hreðer weardode,
æðelne innoð. (lines 1141-1144).

It is also the action of the Holy Spirit that makes the recognition of the true identity of Christ and the glory of the cross, finally of Christ as God the redeemer, possible. N. A. Lee quotes St. Leo the Great’s eighth homily on the Passion: “how gazing upon Christ lifted up on the Cross we are to see more than the physical appearance; enlightened by the Spirit of Truth we are to detect the refulgent glory of the cross.”⁴¹ The Holy Spirit has also another power and activity according to the Scriptures and patristic exegesis: convicting humans of

⁴¹ Lee, N.A., 477.

sin. According to John 16, 8, “When He comes (the Holy Spirit) He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin, and righteousness and judgement, in regard to sin because men do not believe in me[...]”. In this way, by the sight of the Cross, the sacramental sign, the Holy Spirit brings forth a deep transformation in the Dreamer, who recognizes his sinfulness. This process of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in a person who comes in contact with a sacred object is a well-known phenomenon in the mentality of Christians in Anglo-Saxon Britain. In *Elene*, a similar phenomenon is described, when Judas, after having received baptism, was filled by the Holy Spirit, prompting him to repentance:

Swylce Iudas onfeng
æfter fyrstmeorce fulwihtes bæð,
ond geclænsod wearð Criste getrywe,
lifwearde leof. His geleafa wearð
fæst on ferhðe, siððan frofre gast
wic gewunode in þæs weres breostum,
bylde to bote. (lines 1038-1039).

Therefore the sudden change of the deficient line, perplexing its modern interpreters, could be logically less incongruent for its medieval listeners, as the mechanisms of sacramental realities at work could be recognised and understood, not lessening thereby, however, the artistic quality of the formulation.

The puzzle found in lines 13-14 signifies the first step in the process of the Dreamer’s inner change and becomes the first great sign of the power of the Cross as well. In the following lines the sight of the rood changing colours has a strong stylistic force. At the same time, a clear sacramental allusion reinforces the intuitive identification of the sight with Christ: “Þæt hit aerest ongan / swaetan on Ða swiþran healfe” (19b-20a). The allusion is sacramental, as associations to the Blood of Christ of the Eucharist are evoked. Although it may be obscure, this allusion could be easily recognized by a public accustomed to feasts or processions linked to the celebration of the Eucharist. The introduction of sacramental Blood adds to the deliberately created mysterious character of the whole scene and, furthermore, strengthens its artistic value.

5 Conclusions

The aim of this essay is the clarification of one aspect of the figure of the Rood, that is, its functioning as a sacramental sign in one line of the poem. It is not claiming to fully explore the significance of the figure, leaving space for further analysis and interpretation. The dichotomy of the nature of the symbolic tree as it is represented in the poem has only partly been explained by considering it as a sacramental sign. The artistic device of the trope of prosopopoeia and its stylistic implications render this dramatic figure much more complex. However, taking into consideration the implications of sacramental efficacy, the process of

inner changes of the characters (which builds up an important part of the semantic and artistic network in the poem) could be better explained. A further analysis of the essence and attributes of sacramental realities would provide clues to detecting the different roles the Rood plays in later parts of the poem. Through the discovery of its sacramental nature the paradox of the dichotomy of the Rood as an object and, at the same time, bearer of transcendental reality becomes clearer. Furthermore, a deeper understanding of the comparisons-identifications of the Rood and Christ would be possible by attributing these also to sacramental processes of identification. Considering the figure of the Rood as a sacramental sign may also contribute to a reading which tries to follow medieval thinking deeply imbued with religious concepts.

THEATRICAL MASKS AND DISGUISES

10 RICHARD III: A VICE-FIGURE OR THE NEGATIVE MIRROR OF HUMANITY?

Edina Magdolna Berta

If one regards the Quarto and the First Folio titles of *Richard III*, a considerable confusion reigns as to the genre attributed to the play. *Richard III* was first entered in the Stationers' Register on October 20, 1597 and published in the same year under the title: *The tragedie of kinge Richard the Third with the death of the Duke of Clarence*. The First Folio of 1623 has a prefatory material in which the titles of Shakespeare's plays were displayed on a page headed: "A Catalogue of the severall Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies contained in this Volume." Heminges and Condell, the editors of the folio, grouped *Richard III* with the history plays in the catalogue under the title *The Life and Death of Richard the Third*; whereas the title of the play inside the first folio is significantly different, reminding us of its Quarto title: *The Tragedy of Richard the Third: with the Landing of Earle Richmond, and the Battell at Bosworth Field*. Thus, even though the play figures in the Histories group, its Quarto title and the one inside the First Folio imply that the story of Richard III is a tragedy.

However, the confusion as to the genre of the play caused by the different titles and its grouping in the First Folio did not exist only in the Renaissance, but it prevails even in the 20th century. Defining the genre of the play has always caused considerable problems for many scholars ever since the play was written. *Richard III* has already been regarded as a tragedy, a tragical history, a historical tragedy, a historical drama, a chronicle history, a history play, and so forth.¹

¹ Francis Meres in his work *Palladis Tamia* written in 1598 cited, as "examples of Shakespeare's excellence in tragedy", *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Romeo and Juliet* (Meres, Francis (1598, 2006) "Palladis Tamia" in *Elizabethan Authors* <<http://www.elizabethanauthors.com/palladis.htm>>). Sidney Lee, without giving detailed explanations, also considered *Richard II* and *Richard III* "Shakespeare's earliest historical tragedies" (Lee, Sidney (1898) *A Life of William Shakespeare with Portraits and Facsimiles*. New York: Macmillan, 62). F. S. Boas regarded "*Richard III*, the first historical drama" (F. S. Boas (1910) *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*. London: University Extension Manuals, 149). Hazelton Spencer gave the following title to the play: "*The Tragedy of King Richard the third*" (Spencer, Hazelton (1948) *The Art and Life of William Shakespeare*. London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 161). F. E. Halliday claimed that it is a history (Halliday, F. E. (1964) *Penguin Reference Books 10/6*).

In this essay, I will not endeavour either to account for the discrepancy in the titles, or to offer satisfactory definitions of tragedy and history plays in Shakespearean literature. The sole purpose of my analysis is to examine whether or not *Richard III* can be considered a tragedy. Though I could enumerate and refer to several critical writings on the definition of these two genres, I intend to restrict my analysis to the discussion of only one genre theory, the one established in the *Poetics* of Aristotle, because his theory was well known by dramatists in Shakespeare's time, and manuals of poetics in the 16th and 17th centuries also made references to his theory.

According to the theory of genre formulated in Aristotle's *Poetics* (350 B.C.), the difference between a historian and a poet is "that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular."² The subject of a tragedy can be historical too, as some events may follow the rule of probability.

Whether the play conforms to this principle of tragedy, namely the portrayal of events that may happen, and the expression of universal ideas, depends on how Richard and his acts are interpreted. Richard can be conceived as the representation of the evil, or that of anyone who is too ambitious. One may wonder why, in his first soliloquy right at the beginning of the play, Richard declares that "I am determined to prove a villain" (I.i.30.), which is one of the key statements in the play. As I see it, it can be interpreted in different ways, and each interpretation of this statement may change the meaning of the whole drama, influencing or even determining how it is performed, and may also determine the genre of the play.

Antony Hammond, the editor of the Arden edition of the play, refers to two possible interpretations. First, as the editor explains in the footnote, by making this statement, "Richard means he is resolved, has made up his mind, to be a villain."³ Most critics agree with this interpretation; for instance, in the *York Notes on Richard III*, Charles Barber interprets this line as Richard's "deliberate moral choice", his decision "to be a villain."⁴ This opinion is shared by Trevor R. Griffiths as well in the *Longman Guide to Shakespeare Quotations* who

Aylesbury: Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd., 414). For Alexander Leggatt, it is a history (Leggatt, Alexander (1988) *Shakespeare's Political Drama: The History Plays and the Roman Plays*. London and New York: Routledge). Richard Dutton maintained that it was one of Shakespeare's "English chronicles histories" (Dutton, Richard (1989) *William Shakespeare: A Literary Life*. Palgrave: Macmillan, 71). István Géher and Nicholas Grene also regarded the play as a history (Géher, István (1991) *Shakespeare olvasókönyv, tükörcépünk 37 darabban*. Budapest: Cserépfalvi kiadó; Grene, Nicholas (2002) *Shakespeare's Serial History Plays*. Cambridge: CUP).

² Aristotle 2006 (350 B.C.) "Poetics." ed. Daniel C. Stevenson. *The Internet Classics Archive* Section 1:26. <<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.1.1.html>>.

³ Shakespeare, William (1591, 1981) *Richard III*. ed. Antony Hammond. London and New York: Routledge, 127.

⁴ Barber, Charles (1981) *York Notes on Richard III*, William Shakespeare, Longman Literary Guides. Beirut: York Press.

claims that his determination means that he has made a decision, “‘am determined’ means have decided.”⁵

Secondly, the footnote of the Arden edition also draws the reader’s attention to the opinion of two other critics, David S. Berkeley⁶ and Jennifer Strauss,⁷ who maintain another interpretation of the line, as the verb can be read in the passive voice, implying that Richard’s role has been determined by Providence. What Berkeley and Strauss have in common in their articles is the idea that Richard’s fate is decided even before his birth by divine Providence, by God: he is the embodiment of evil, and also the Scourge of God who is devoid of free will.

In supporting this second interpretation Hammond remarks that Richard symbolizes the Vice-figure from the morality plays, and he is not merely the representation of a “ranting tyrant.”⁸ In studying Richard’s first monologue, the editor also asserts that though Richard would make us believe that his deformity is the cause of his villainy, they are indeed the “outward and visible signs of the disharmony and viciousness of his spirit.”⁹ He also recognizes the characteristics of the Vice-figure in Richard, but he only cites some out of the sixty ones listed by Peter Happé.¹⁰

Nonetheless, instead of seeing the play as the purge of England from her sins by Richard, the Scourge of God, whose role as a villain is assigned to him by divine Providence, *Richard III* can be regarded not only as a negative mirror image reflecting a bad king, but also as a mirror of human beings in general. In studying Thomas More’s *Richard III*, Péter Benedek Tóta claims that in the play there exists “a Richard everywhere”; moreover, “he is in us”,¹¹ a notion that in my opinion could be applied to Shakespeare’s character as well. As this statement can be true for the play in question as well, I totally agree with him, since evil is present in all of us, and it depends on us whether we give free way to wickedness or try to oppress it and amend our way of life.

As for Richard, because he cannot love and is not loved, which may be regarded the main or one of the main reasons why he makes his decision “to prove a villain”, he decides to cast aside his conscience, even his faith in God, and to choose wickedness – instead of goodness – that resides in himself as in everyone else. Thus he decides to act the role of the villain *par excellence*. In

⁵ Griffiths, Trevor R. “Richard III” in Trevor R. Griffiths and Trevor A. Joscelyne (eds.) (1985) *Longman Guide to Shakespeare Quotations*. Harlow, Essex: Longman Group Limited, 451.

⁶ Berkeley, David S. (1963) “‘Determined’ in *Richard III*, I. i. 30.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 14/1, 483.

⁷ Strauss, Jennifer (1967) “Determined to Prove a Villain: Character, Action and Irony in Richard III.” *Komos, A Quarterly Journal of Drama and the Arts of the Theatre*. 1/3, 116.

⁸ Shakespeare, 99.

⁹ Shakespeare, 100.

¹⁰ Shakespeare, 103.

¹¹ Tóta, Péter Benedek (2006) “Seminar on Thomas More’s *Richard III*.” Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Catholic University.

this way, Richard is also regarded as the representation of anyone, or rather 'everyman', a power-hungry person who feels that nobody loves him.

Even the interpretation of the word 'prove' causes many problems. In the introduction of *Richard III*, István Vas, Hungarian translator of the play, makes comments on his difficulties in translating the line "I am determined to prove a villain". He explains that while he was translating the text, suddenly he noticed that, instead of "prove a villain", "be a villain" would also fit the iambic line, and he observes the relevance of repetition, as the word 'prove' also appeared two lines earlier: "and therefore since I cannot prove a lover" (I.i.28).

Nevertheless, as he translated that line with the verb 'play' (*játszani*), following the German and Hungarian traditions of translation and his common sense, Vas was determined not to translate "prove a villain" with the Hungarian verb 'play,' but with 'be' (*leszek*), though he admitted that the two instances of 'prove' should be translated with the same verb. His friends asserted that the previous Hungarian translations were rooted deeply in people's mind. Also, in his opinion, 'play' as the Hungarian translation of 'prove' in the line "I am determined to prove" is far less expressive of the meaning of the English line, and to translate 'prove' with its Hungarian equivalent 'try' (*megpróbálni*), would have resulted in something uncertain. He also adds that, as for the phrase 'be determined', he chose the Hungarian equivalent of 'decide' (*dönteni*), and not 'be determined' (*elhatározni*), so as to emphasize the possibility of free will.¹²

As I see it, 'prove' and 'be' are not at all the same, inferring different interpretations of the play. 'Prove' may mean that Richard is already wicked to a certain extent, just like anyone else, and he decides to prove, to show his villainy to others, to the whole world if he cannot succeed in proving that he can love and can be loved. Also, 'prove' may carry the meaning that Richard makes a decision between good and bad, and contrary to 'be,' Richard cannot create wickedness, he can only 'operate it.' Whereas, 'be' may mean that it is his 'self-definition': he is wicked, and that is how he sees himself. 'Be' would also imply that wickedness is within us, it is our substance, and we cannot do anything against it. We would have no options, just like Vice-figures who act according to the evil in them. 'Prove' is more "dramatic", while 'be' is more fundamental.¹³

Another important point is that in the line 'villain' is not an adjective but a noun, and it may also affect the interpretation of the line. If it were an adjective in the declaration, "I am determined to prove villain", it would mean a 'qualitative change', that is, Richard would be evil. The noun, 'villain', implies a figure, a pattern which infers Richard's identification with it, undertaking this role and the ensuing actions, as well.

The second occurrence of "prove" is not by chance, but it was well prepared beforehand in the text. Richard is given a moment when he can think over who he is and what he is like. Despite the influence of the circumstances,

¹² Vas, István (1984) *Magyar Shakespeare-tükör: esszék, tanulmányok, kritikák*. Budapest: Gondolat, 442-3.

¹³ Tóta.

he can reach a decision. As for wickedness, if something does not exist, if its germs are not in us, we cannot follow its dictates. However, we do not have to accept our capabilities; we can make a decision, which makes us individuals.

“Be determined” carries further ambiguity. It may mean not only that Richard takes a decision either as a Vice-figure or to act a villain’s role, which intensifies the option of choice residing in “prove”; or he is predestined to prove a villain; but he is predetermined to make a decision. Though the word order in English is fixed, the structure can also mean that “prove” was decided beforehand.

As I have already stated, the play can be regarded as a negative representation, a mirror of humanity, because no one in the play is blameless, not even the little princes who have to suffer for the crimes of their family – though their sin is ‘inherited’ from their family, or Richmond who is a usurper even if he acts on behalf of the English people and for their benefit and peace. Everyone represented in the play at all social levels has committed some crimes: the two Royal factions, York and Lancaster, who started a bloody war against one another; the nobles who are on the side of the family from whom they can gain more, such as Buckingham who was a Lancastrian and wishes to win the “earldom of Hereford, and all the moveables” (III.ii.194-197) for his immense services; the churchmen who serve blindly every interest of the ruler in power, such as the Bishop of Ely who satisfies the demand of Richard immediately and brings him strawberries from his garden, emphasising that he does it “with all (his) heart” (IV.iv.31-34); or the two bishops with whom Richard appears, feigning piety with a Bible in his hands; and the people who do nothing but either remain passive observers of the events, saying: “But leave it all to God” (II.iii.45) or dare to do nothing.

Richard is not the only one in the play who ‘favours’ the evil in himself: Buckingham too, as he aims at coming into fortune, or Ratcliff whose motivations are not revealed; though in the conversation between the two murderers of Clarence, Richard’s elder brother, we can learn that the murderers are driven by their lust for money. It could be true for everyone else who is involved in evil deeds. The key difference between Richard and the rest of the characters lies in the existence of Richard’s asides and soliloquies in which we can get a partial glimpse into the working of his mind, to learn about his motives and feelings. One may imagine that the other characters make similar compromises with themselves when they decide to follow and serve Richard.

Though Hammond claimed that as a Vice-figure Richard’s horrendous actions cannot be justified, I believe that it is only a matter of interpretation whether we can provide an explanation for the wickedness of Richard. If he is regarded as the portrayal of evil, one can say that we should not believe what Richard tells us about his deformity as the cause of his decision, because it is rather the outward image of his inward wickedness. What follows from this interpretation is the question, namely ‘From whence does this wickedness spring?’ One may argue that he was born like this, quoting the words of

Margaret: “Thou that wast seal’d in thy nativity / The slave of Nature, and the son of hell” (I.iii.229-230); or those of Richard’s mother: “Ah, that Deceit should steal such gentle shape, / And with a virtuous vizer hide deep Vice!” (II.ii.27-28); and Elizabeth, who also called him a “villain-slave”(IV.iv.144), which is a fairly interesting term to use, as if it meant that Richard was a slave of villainy.

Therefore, if Richard was born like this, it would also imply that “be determined” is not an act of free will, but Richard’s villainy was predetermined. He cannot decide freely, as – if he is the Vice – he has no goodness in himself, so he cannot choose between goodness and villainy. In this way, the play can be considered not as the mirror of humanity but that of the Vice, the “Archenemy”, the “anti-Christ”. Richard is seen to be the “Scourge of God”, the “sacrifice needed to redeem England from her accumulated sins. Thus, the play can be the representation of “a ritual expiation of collective guilt.”¹⁴ In this case, the story of Richard III is not about a general character but about a particular one, so it does not comply with one of the rules set out in the *Poetics*. It is the history of a man who is the embodiment of evil, and there is little we can learn from his story, as we are not Vice-figures.

Nevertheless, Richard’s decision gives way to another, more ‘human’ interpretation. Because of his deformity, Richard cannot prove to be a lover, so he feels that he is not loved, which is why he decides to take revenge on everyone by giving free way to the villainy residing in himself, just as in everyone else. He may do it because he may sense that power is very often accompanied by love. The result of this interpretation is that the play rather mirrors us; and anybody could be in Richard’s position, anybody who is born deformed.

Somehow, Richard may even resemble Cain from the Old Testament, who decided to kill his brother because he felt that God, the Lord, did not love him, and as a result he could not keep control of his anger (Genesis 4). Interestingly, one may find a similarity between the cases of Cain and Richard, since Richard too first kills his brother, Clarence. In the sources of the play, this crime does not figure as one committed by Richard, so it is Shakespeare’s invention.

Therefore, the reason or one of the reasons why Richard decides to plunge into the whirl of villainy may be his yearning to be loved. This may justify why he bothers to seduce Lady Anne and takes pride in having been able to accomplish this deed, and why he wishes to gain the love of Elizabeth, too. Even in his first soliloquy he refers to love several times, saying that:

He capers nimbly in a lady’s chamber,
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shap’d for sportive tricks,

¹⁴ Shakespeare, 103.

Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph [...] (I.i.12-17).

Such words as “lady’s chamber”; “lascivious”, “sportive tricks”, “amorous”, “wanton”, and “nymph” all imply that, for Richard, love means primarily sexual love. The lines following this passage can be interpreted as an explanation for why Richard is “not shap’d” for sexual games: he is too deformed. Therefore, since he cannot prove a lover, he decides to prove his ability to act evilly. We may ask the question why. One may say that he wants power so that he would be loved, or he wants to take revenge on everyone for not being loved by deceiving them, by making them believe that he loves them; or both reasons may be true, with Richard acting unconsciously, as so often happens when we do not know why we do this or that.

Love is a recurrent element in the play, as it is used as the means to seduce Lady Anne: “That hand, which, for thy love, did kill thy love, / Shall, for thy love, kill a far truer love” (I.ii.193-194); to reconcile the two families: “Dissemble not your hatred, swear your love” (II.i.8); to show loyalty and friendship: “Cat.: He for his father’s sake so loves the prince, / That he will not be won to aught against him” (III.i.165); and so on. The lack of love on Richard’s part is raised as the main reason for the others’ mistrust of him: “Eliz. Oh, he is young and his minority / Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester, / A man that loves not me, nor none of you” (I.iii.11-13). In fact, this is the first virtue that his mother asks from him: “God bless thee; and put meekness in thy mind, / Love, charity, obedience, and true duty!” (II.ii.107-108). Love is also the means of convincing the Lord Mayor that Hastings betrayed Richard and Buckingham, that they acted righteously and not out of hatred: “Rich.: So dear I lov’d the man that I must weep” (III.v.24).

One of the major errors many characters make is that they falsely believe Richard’s feigned love. For instance, this is the case of Clarence: “2 M.: You are deceived, your brother Gloucester hates you. / Cla.: O, no, he loves me, and he holds me dear” (I.iv.221-222). This passage can be regarded as a recognition scene, in which Clarence realizes that Richard has deceived him with his sobs and tears. The son of Clarence was also duped to believe in the fatherly love of Richard: “Boy: Bade me rely on him as on my father, / And he would love me dearly as his child” (II.ii.25-26). The execution of Hastings is due to his error of believing that Richard holds him dear: “Buck.: Lord Hastings, you and he are near in love. / Hast.: I thank his grace, I know he loves me well (III.iv.13-14). Moreover, Hastings does not even see through Richard’s playing: “I think there’s never a man in Christendom / That can less hide his love or hate than he; / For by his face straight shall you know his heart” (III.iv.51-53). Lady Anne also admits that she was seduced because of what Richard told her: “Within so small a time, my woman’s heart / Grossly grew captive to his honey words” (IV.i.78-79). Buckingham prophesies in his promise what will happen to

him if he does not keep it: “Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate / Upon your Grace, but with all duteous love / Doth cherish you and yours, God punish me / With hate in those where I expect most love” (II.i.32-34). As Buckingham does not wish to help Richard with the killing of the princes, Richard decides to get rid of him. Before his execution, he gives voice to his own error (IV.i.82-84).

The main consequences of Richard’s disappointment in love may be seen to be his rejection of God and the oppression of his conscience. Lady Anne lets us know about the nightmares Richard has every night: “For never yet one hour in his bed / did I enjoy the golden dew of sleep, / But with his timorous dreams was still awak’d” (IV.i.82-84). The presence of these dreams implies that Margaret’s curse on Richard has been fulfilled:

The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul;
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv’st,
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends;
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Unless it be while some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils. (I.iii.222-227)

With his decision at the beginning of the play, Richard tries to oppress his sense of remorse but also to deny his faith in God. This may be the reason why he obstinately refuses to believe in curses which seemingly have no effect on him. Even if Margaret’s curses make themselves manifest in the form of the nightmare Richard has before the battle, Richard does not acknowledge or notice that those curses are fulfilled unlike all the other characters who see the curses to have come true when they have to face their executions. Even when Richard is unhorsed and in danger, he maintains that his fate depends on his luck, on the wheel of fortune and not on the will of God: “Slave, I have set my life upon a cast, / And I will stand the hazard of the die” (V.iv.9-10). However, in one case Richard tends to believe in an omen which is “even as far-fetched as the resemblance in sound between ‘Richmond’ and ‘Rougemont’”¹⁵:

Richmond! When last I was at Exeter,
The mayor in courtesy show’d me the castle,
And call’d it Rougemont: at which name I started,
Because a bard of Ireland told me once
I should not live long after I saw Richmond. (IV.ii.101-105)

Richard’s last soliloquy shows us that his aim in getting rid of his conscience and his faith was futile, as Lady Anne also let us know about his terrible nightmares. We can witness such a nightmare in his last monologue. This brief moment of weakness may make him seem human or even tragic.

¹⁵ Shakespeare, 99.

To conclude, the discussion of *Richard III* in order to see whether it is a tragedy was provoked by the confusion over the grouping of this play, reigning from the drama's 'birth' till the present time. I based my analyses solely on one principle formulated by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, because I needed to narrow down the scope of the paper, and my purpose was to see to what extent *Richard III* obeys this principle.

According to this principle, a tragedy is essentially a play which relates events that may happen, and which is about universal ideas. Although there are many others, I examined three structures: "I am determined", "prove", and "a villain", which lend themselves to various interpretations in the play. The first one holds that Richard as a Vice-figure decided to be a villain, and sees his physical deformity as the visible sign of his spiritual deformity.

The second interpretation is different in that Richard is predetermined to be a villain by Providence. It follows from both of these views that Richard has no free will, as he cannot choose between doing good or bad deeds. He is the representation of evil whose story is a particular case, and we may not learn much of his story.

The third interpretation is markedly different from the previous two. In my view, Richard chooses of his own accord to follow the incentive of the evil present in himself and not the goodness. The reason for this decision may be the fact that he is not loved and – or that is why – he cannot love (either), which is supported by the frequent occurrence and significance of love in the play. In this case, the play conveys general ideas, as it is the negative mirror of humanity and society in which everyone is guilty.

As for the fourth interpretation, it is very similar to the previous one. The only difference is that Richard's decision was foreordained, that is, Richard has to make a decision, but it depends solely on him what he determines to do. We may also draw a moral from the play if it is interpreted in these last two ways.

Certain interpretations make it possible to conceive *Richard III* as a tragedy, whereas others imply that its genre is history, tragical history, historical tragedy, historical drama, chronicle history. Other parts of the play can be also examined on the basis of many different genre theories and critical writings, which would yield further results and would provide a deeper understanding of this play.

11 CULTURAL MEMORY AND CHANGING TEXTUALITY TWO HUNGARIAN PLAY-SCRIPTS FROM THE NINETIES

Katalin Palkóné Tabi

When talking of *Hamlet*, the quartos and folios are for the English what the ever-widening variety of translations are for us, the Hungarians. By the 1990s, we had two new renderings of *Hamlet*¹ and there were more to come.² What distinguished them from their predecessors was that the new translations were all commissioned by the theatres. Thus for us the renewal of the attitude to the Shakespearean text in the theatre started with the employment of new translations. This, however, was not without difficulties, for the man who is William Shakespeare to the English is to us, broadly speaking, János Arany. His 1867 translation (a compilation of the Second Quarto and the Folio) is the mountain that later translators could not circumvent but had to climb, and consequently the attempt to replace Arany's classic version generated debate in Hungarian theatrical as well as literary life in the 1990s.³

It was also at that time that theatre directors started to experiment with Arany's *Hamlet*-text. Putting reverence aside, theatre directors employed an increasing number of dramaturgical modifications unknown earlier. Apart from the traditional device of omission, they started to insert different texts, transpose scenes, use foreign languages or add new characters – just to mention a few of

¹ These are István Eörsi's in 1988 and Dezső Mészöly's in 1996. This does not mean though that there had been no translations before; but the earlier attempts were not powerful enough and therefore could not become popular with theatrical producers.

² Ádám Nádasy's in 1999 and György Jánosházy's in Transylvania in 2002.

³ This actually started in the eighties and got settled by the nineties. What actually made this debate break out was István Eörsi's "retranslation" of the play for the 1983 Kaposvár production. In fact, Eörsi did no more than make some alterations to Arany's text (he only prepared his own translation a few years later), yet this subversive "feat" gave rise to a debate about whether it should be allowed to touch (or to overthrow outright, for that matter) Arany's cultic translation in any way. (Cf. the articles by István Eörsi, József Czímer, Tamás Koltai and Balázs Vargha in: *Élet és Irodalom*, April 21 and 22, May 27 and June 16, 1983.) Eventually, the fact that all the new translations were born to meet practical needs (they were all commissioned by theatres) had proved to justify their existence, and the debate settled down by the middle of the 1990s. Moreover, Arany's text had not even been "dethroned". Even today, because of its "magic" quality (Hungarian Shakespeare-scholar István Géher's expression) it serves as a control text and a reference point for most directors.

their alterations. It is exactly this reshaping that makes the textual handling of play-scripts an exciting field of research. They provide us with invaluable information about our changing attitude to the text, and thus they contribute to our understanding of the construction of our cultural and social identity.

Taking Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as my test case, I would like to show how the formation of the play-scripts reflects all radical changes that Hungary went through in the 1990s, an exciting period in Hungarian history politically and culturally as well as theatrically. There were altogether 12 performances in this period, but this paper will focus on only two of them: Gábor Zsámbéki's 1991 *Hamlet* in Kamra (Chamber), the studio stage of Katona József Theatre, Budapest, and a studio performance directed by Csaba Kiss in Győr, 1994. I selected these productions primarily because their play-scripts represent two extreme ends of the alteration-scale. Both were based on János Arany's classic translation, but while Zsámbéki created a rather conservative and respectful play-script, Csaba Kiss considerably de- and re-constructed Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Zsámbéki did not make any other textual changes than the so-called "classic cuts": that is, certain major and minor speeches traditionally excised from *Hamlet*-productions.⁴ Kiss employed the same "classic cuts" together with further omissions, transpositions and his own insertions.

Both productions were staged just a few years after the change of the communist regime when society could experience a dense and tense atmosphere, with a mixture of anger with the past and hope for the future. Zsámbéki's and Kiss's play-scripts refer, even if indirectly, to this political situation. After the idea of Hamlet as the advocate of social and moral justice – popular until the mid-eighties – the nineties witnessed a turn: away from social, to private life. Instead of the subversive and often covert political messages of the previous era, directors turned gradually toward the problems of the individual. This brought about a change in acting style: it became more intimate, closer to natural. The nineties was the time of the studio *Hamlets*. Nearly half of the 12 productions of this decade were directed in a studio space which provided more intimacy between actors and audience, and also allowed the use of more natural voices and subtler gestures and movements.

Both Gábor Zsámbéki and Csaba Kiss directed a studio production. Zsámbéki actually twice: his first Hamlet was Zoltán Ternyák in 1991, who had to be later replaced by Gergő Kaszás. Both Hamlets were taking notes during the performance. Zsámbéki explained in an interview⁵ that note-taking stood for Hamlet's intellectual attitude, and he wanted to understand Hamlet's outsider nature: why society could not bear him. The surging capitalist system caused

⁴ Classic cuts have already been collected in an article by Claris Glick in "Hamlet in the English Theater: Acting Texts from Betterton (1676) to Olivier (1963)," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XX, No. 1 (1969) 17-35. Although there are significant differences between the English and Hungarian histories of *Hamlet* play-scripts—the most important being the use of Q1 and Q2 in England, and the use of several translations in Hungary—this article can be of great use for comparison.

⁵ Bartók FM, *Szalon*, 4 April 1993.

divisions within society: the wheel of fortune took some people up, others down – but not always justly. This resulted in disappointment, especially among intellectuals.

The sight of Zsámbéki's acting space reinforced the bleak and gloomy world from which a young man with no prospects was trying to find his way out. The performance was played on an empty octagonal floor with no scenery, just props, and the colours of the ageless costumes were black, brown, white, and grey. The audience surrounded the players on four sides, so the atmosphere was intimate and suffocating at the same time. As for the scenography, Zsámbéki's central idea was to use doors and mirrors at certain parts of the play. Although the way they are used cannot be discerned with all certainty from the play-script, they clearly denote the notions of in and out, secret and revelation, appearance and truth. They were most probably used in this sense at Claudius's coronation speech (I.ii), for example, where, after the sentinels' opening scene, the doors were shut and the mirrors were turned towards the acting area.

Apart from colours, props and scenery, Zsámbéki's fourth main interpretive device is rhythm. He is not afraid to cut certain scenes very bravely for the sake of dramatic effect. Parts like the guards' scene (I.i) or the Claudius-Laertes scene (IV.vii) are usually thought of as quite animated and full of tension. Yet, in Shakespeare's text, these scenes are lengthy and pregnant with interesting but comparatively incidental elements. Many of these "superfluous" passages are lyrical inserts that may well have worked on the Elizabethan stage, but not as much in today's theatres. On the page, these details can contribute to the reading experience, but on the stage they divert the audience's attention and make the action complicated and tiresome.

The scene that suffers the most cuts in Zsámbéki's script in order to speed up the action is the discussion between Claudius and Laertes about how to kill Hamlet in the duel. Their conversation actually starts at the end of IV.v, after Ophelia's exit. Then it is interrupted by the Sailors' scene (IV.vi) in which letters are delivered to Horatio; and then Claudius and Laertes' discussion continues for another 232 lines in IV.vii until Gertrude's entrance. Although Zsámbéki retains all the three scenes, only 84 lines remain from the original 253, which is a massive reduction. Thus the action becomes considerably faster: Claudius and Laertes agree with icy brevity and cruel elegance on the ways and means of killing Hamlet.⁶ This directorial decision is emphatic because Zsámbéki's Claudius (Gábor Máté) was a handsome and powerful politician in his forties who made decisions quickly and effectively – as opposed to the hesitant and often inert Hamlet of TERNYÁK or KASZÁS.⁷

⁶ As one of the critics remarked, the cuts made the performance almost opera-like. Cf. Forgách, András, "Hamlet borotvaélen" ["Hamlet on a razor blade"], in *Színház*, 36/3 (1992) 8-13.

⁷ Although Zsámbéki does not seem to wish to take sides as to whether it is Hamlet or Claudius who is stronger and more resourceful, the choice of actors definitely increased the audience's sympathy for Claudius. For more discussion of this shift of emphasis, see Veronika Schandl's comments in this volume.

In Csaba Kiss's direction, the actors did not have such close contact with the audience. Although he also used minimal scenery and more props, for him the intimacy of the studio space served a different purpose. The audience took the position of the attentive observer so that they could then "truly deliver" what they had seen. This was heavily underpinned by the transformation of play-script. Kiss's main conception was to *decentralize* the play and divert the focus of attention from Hamlet himself to his relationships with his mother, Claudius and Ophelia.⁸ He was looking for answers to such questions as "What is sin?", "Is it possible to tell who is guilty?" and if so, "Who has the right to judge and punish?" He explained in a conversation that after the change of the regime there was a strong demand for political retribution on the one hand, but a kind of passivity or uncertainty on the other, and this hesitation created psychological tensions in society. For the director, this situation was so obviously Hamlet-like that he decided to articulate the problem in his staging of *Hamlet*.

In contrast to Zsámbéki's meticulous loyalty to the text, not only did he use the acting space, costumes, props and textual omissions to adjust the play-text to his conception, but he also invented two frame-scenes in which two grave-diggers were speculating, over the dead bodies, about who could possibly be responsible for all the deaths. The first scene then was followed by Hamlet's homecoming from Wittenberg – another invention of the director's, to be discussed later on. This retrospective time-structure made a witness of the audience, who thus could not but identify with the witnesses rather than Hamlet or any of the other main characters.

Similarly to Zsámbéki, Kiss also pays special attention to the figure of Claudius. He also cuts the Claudius-Laertes scene (altogether 133 lines remain out of 253), but in his case it is rather the restructured scene sequence that modifies the tempo. In his play-script there is no Horatio, and consequently the sailors' scene is missing. Claudius and Laertes' conversation is largely uninterrupted. The only person to intrude is Gertrude, who always appears at the most exciting or (if you like) secret parts of their talk. So Kiss's cuts influence not only the tempo but also the characterization of the relationship between Gertrude and Claudius.

In the original play, after having met her brother Ophelia leaves the stage unaccompanied; but in Kiss's version she is escorted by Gertrude. The king remains alone with Laertes, and takes the opportunity to explain to him how he personally feels about Hamlet. He complains that Hamlet is still alive because "The queen his mother / Lives almost by his looks" and because of "the great love the general gender bear him." (IV.vii:11-12, 18) He is about to reveal his personal opinion of the prince when the queen suddenly enters (in the original play a Messenger enters here), and Claudius has to stop his sentence. In the script it reads as follows:

⁸ This idea was taken further a few years later when Kiss wrote his own play entitled *Return to Denmark* in 2002. On this play, see Veronika Schandl's paper in this volume.

CLAUDIUS I loved your father, and we love ourself,
 And that I hope will teach you to imagine –
 So much for this. (*Enter the Queen*)
 How now? What news?

The sudden change of the subject creates a tense atmosphere. Gertrude enters to deliver a letter from Hamlet which she has to read out at the king's command. Since there is no Horatio in this production, Gertrude takes over Horatio's role as Hamlet's best friend. This adds a special edge to the scene. Later on, in V.ii it is *her* to whom Hamlet tells his sea-voyage. This alteration makes the mother-son relationship especially emphatic; this also has a bearing on the Gertrude-Claudius relationship.

After having read out the letter, the king asks Gertrude, "What do you say to this?" to which she leaves the stage without a reply. After this episode the king and Laertes continue the discussion of their plans, and Gertrude enters for a second time with the news that Ophelia has drowned—an obviously uncomfortable entrance again.

As for Hamlet's characterization, there is a significant difference between the basic conceptions of the two productions. Zsámbéki puts the emphasis on Hamlet's loneliness and misfit nature, while Csaba Kiss concentrates on the deformity of human relations that ends in tragedy. Zsámbéki shows the tragedy of the individual, while Kiss shows that of the community. Therefore, in Zsámbéki's script none of Hamlet's soliloquies are abridged by any means. Hamlet is often left alone, soliloquizing to the audience.

As opposed to this, Kiss does not leave one single soliloquy without modification. His Hamlet also remains alone sometimes, but his soliloquies are considerably shorter, which suggests that the director was not very interested in the image of the lonely prince. Hamlet's "Hecuba" soliloquy, for example, at the end of Act II, is shortened by one third. Four lines are missing from the "To be or not to be" soliloquy, and more than half of Hamlet's last soliloquy, starting with "How all occasions do inform against me", is omitted, too.

Kiss also puts more emphasis on the point of view of the average man. He inserts four scenes, some of which have already been mentioned earlier. In the first scene, two gravediggers (called "witnesses" on the playbill) are looking at the "quarry" of dead bodies and one of them mentions that he was there in the harbour when young Hamlet arrived from Wittenberg. This statement takes us back to the beginning of the story, and the second scene – still Kiss's insertion – displays Hamlet's homecoming. The director explained in a conversation that he wanted to see Hamlet's warm-hearted reactions when greeting his mother and uncle in the harbour before knowing anything about the home affairs. In this way there is a sharper contrast when he becomes astonished by the unexpected news.

The third insertion is an extra scene between Hamlet and Ophelia, which highlights their intimate but just as controversial relationship. In this scene the

girl is persuading the prince to take back the “remembrances” he has given her. This insertion is partly Shakespeare’s, partly the director’s own creation. Ophelia enters saying:

OPHELIA The sun is rising, my good lord... I’ve been
 awaiting you!
HAMLET I’m sorry if you had to wait... Go to sleep...
OPHELIA I’d like to talk to you, my lord...
HAMLET Not now!

In Shakespeare’s play, Ophelia comes to Hamlet only in III.i, after the grand soliloquy, but in this production this scene comes immediately after Hamlet meets his father’s ghost. As the director explained, he wanted to find an explanation for why Hamlet has no time to meet Ophelia. In the original play there are hardly any scenes which expand upon their relationship. Kiss believes that it is Hamlet’s unwanted political mission that prevents him from dealing with his private life. Therefore he places Ophelia’s entrance after Hamlet’s “Time is out of joint” speech. The girl finds the prince in a distracted and distressed mood, which is further worsened by the girl’s rejection of his love. It is this unpleasant situation into which Osric intrudes, with his flamboyant style, learning French phrases from a guidebook:

Bonjour, that is good morning, isn’t it?
Je...je...je m’appele Osric,
je suis danois...that is my name is Osric.

Csaba Kiss expands Osric’s part by having him replace Reynaldo, so at this point he is entering the stage to talk to Polonius about his journey to Paris to spy on Laertes. If the different moods created tension between Hamlet and Ophelia at the beginning of the scene, now the stylistic clash between the young lovers and Osric does the same.

Lastly, the director’s fourth interpolation is the final scene when Fortinbras enters the stage to give orders in Norwegian, and then leaves. Only his Captain and a grave-digger remain on the stage, with the corpses, in the same position as in the opening scene. The Captain asks, “What assassination has happened here?”—to which the grave-digger replies, “I don’t know,” then leans the shovel against the wall and leaves the stage. This is the end of the performance. The uncertainty of this close invites the interpretation that the witnesses started an investigation at the beginning of the play to find out about the whys and wherefores, but in the end they could not come to any conclusions, so gave it all up: this time Hamlet’s story remained unsolved again.

My aim with this play-script analysis was twofold: to demonstrate how the historical background can be detected in the staged versions of *Hamlet*, and to show how this changed attitude to a classic such as *Hamlet* relates to our

notion of textual identity. Thus the first conclusion can be that despite the fact that they worked along completely different lines, both Zsámbéki and Kiss created a *Hamlet* firmly rooted in the social-political atmosphere of the nineties. Zsámbéki staged Hamlet as an outcast, a lonely young man with a mission impossible. Kiss also concentrated on the psychological side of the plot, but shifted the focus of attention from the individual hero to the problems of the community. In fact, Kiss did not want Hamlet to act as a hero. He was just another man who got into a difficult situation that confused all his previous conceptions of family, love and politics. His production presents the play from the spectator's (that is, the investigator's, or, if you like, posterity's) point of view. Both play-scripts, however, were played out against the fresh experience of democracy. Zsámbéki chose to achieve this without using extra texts. Kiss wrote new speeches to be interpolated, and these insertions decisively determined the structure of the whole production.

The second conclusion can be that these two play-scripts epitomize the transitory phase that the theatrical handling of the play-text of *Hamlet* was going through. This was the decade of textual experiments, and it was far from a foregone conclusion that a production tampering with the play-text so impertinently could be valid and in many ways "loyal" to Shakespeare. Although the success of Kiss's *Hamlet* – followed by other productions later on – justified the use of post-modern dramaturgical devices, it has to be added that not all performances handling the text freely received critical approval. Notwithstanding, the analysis of the ways directors deal with the play-text contributes to our understanding of the nature of post-modern textuality. The different Hungarian translations and their ever-changing theatrical applications can provide us with an insight into our changing attitude to a classic literary text. In a broader perspective, the examination of the play-scripts of *Hamlet*, a canonical masterpiece, also raises the question of canonicity; of what it implies, and whether textual sanctity and constancy constitute the definition of a canonical work of art.

12 FACES OF THE ENGLISH: AN INTIMATE PORTRAIT OF A PUBLIC FACE

DAVID GARRICK: "IMAGINE HIM AS A PLAY"

Gabriella Reuss

Many have reinvented Shakespeare as Gary Taylor noted, but perhaps no one with as much imprudence and success as David Garrick. Many have written on Shakespeare and Garrick, but perhaps no one with as much imprudence and success as April de Angelis.

In this paper I will be musing over and reflecting upon what this eighteenth century actor and theatre manager looks like in a recent portrait by British playwright April de Angelis, sketched not for literary critics with quick ears but (according to what the "celeb" Garrick's wish would have been) for the wide public.

De Angelis' recent portrait, a comedy entitled *A Laughing Matter* (2002), incorporates much of what was said about Garrick by literary critics over the past few centuries. This may not really surprise us in this age of postmodernist re-writings. The extent, however, may: what de Angelis does, in fact, is nothing but dramatize two centuries of literary and theatre criticism. Hence her characters not only look and behave as contemporaries noted they did but they also say what they wrote and published. For instance, the character Goldsmith/Goldy argues against weeping comedy / melodrama and for laughing comedy with what William Goldsmith indeed wrote in his *Essay on the Theatre* (1772); the character Dr Johnson grumbles against the Shakespearean ending of *King Lear* nearly word by word with what Samuel Johnson indeed wrote in his *Preface* to his edition of *King Lear* (1765). The more one knows about eighteenth century drama, patent theatres and Shakespearean reception, the more of the fun/puns one notices in De Angelis' play. Nevertheless, the piece is not really the wax works of already well-known eighteenth century literary figures only to make use of their reputation, far from it. The author merely does what the character Burke once suggested on seeing a repulsive old man: "Imagine[s] him as a play". Thus April de Angelis imagines Garrick the actor as a play; and one can bet that the repulsive old man who should be imagined as a play is Garrick himself disguised. A cheeky sketch. In this dramatized close-up on the face De Angelis has the old man fart and burp in Johnson's Club only to raise an argument in the ongoing drama-aesthetic debate against the lowness of laughing comedies. Highest of acting in the lowest of roles. A typical multilevel De

Angelis-joke that winks at national pride as well as high literature and low humour (low lit and high humour?) at the same time.

“Shakespeare’s most zealous evangelist”¹, one of the high number of laudatory titles Garrick earned, this one from literary critic Michael Dobson. “Genius and national treasure!”² he is called twice in the play, framing his first and last appearances on the stage. April de Angelis sets her plot in 1776, the ultimate year of Garrick’s acting and managing career. As to the facts of literary and theatre history, there appear to be no ironic overtones in this title. However, the personality of the character who utters it, Lady Kingston, uses her theatre patronage to cover her gambling and love affairs (“I take culture very seriously. It is one field in which a woman may restore a reputation somewhat sullied by incessant gambling”³), does indeed add some ironic and sarcastic resonance.

What makes one, seriously, a “genius and national treasure”? Or “Shakespeare’s most zealous evangelist”? (Which is meant to be only half-funny and half serious, even in this postmodernist English play?) Their own Shakespeare, certainly.

As “England’s prosperity in the eighteenth century was built in part on its success as a trading nation, and Shakespeare was one of its most successful cultural exports”⁴, as Gary Taylor puts it bluntly, it proves a good nose that Garrick aimed at Shakespeare, then not yet an industry at all, and “set out to ally Shakespeare, patriotism and the profit motive.”⁵

We know that from his adaptations of *Hamlet* and *King Lear* foreign references and characters were carefully unweeded⁶: it is Laertes instead of a Norwegian prince who takes over the throne of Denmark; and it is Edgar and not France, by marrying Cordelia, who succeeds Lear on the English throne. Patriotism, Garrick’s and eighteenth century English in general, thus seems to be a factor that must be taken into account. [The heat of English patriotism, once underestimated by our hero Garrick, is described, indeed, mocked emphatically in *A Laughing Matter*:

¹ Dobson, Michael (1995) *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship, 1660-1769*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 176.

² de Angelis, April (2002) *A Laughing Matter*. London: Faber and Faber, 7, 87. As the title is out of print presently, the page numbers of this paper refer to the manuscript of the play, in possession of Vörösmarty Theatre, Székesfehérvár, Hungary, legally obtained from the agency representing the author.

³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴ Taylor, Gary (1991) *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 123.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁶ On Garrick’s adaptations see e.g.: Dobson, 124, Stone, G. W. “Garrick’s Production of *King Lear*: A Study in the Temper of the 18th Century Mind”, *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (1948) 89-103, or Reuss, Gabriella, “Veritas Filia Temporis: *King Lear*, 1834”, unpublished PhD dissertation.

A louder jeer from the audience No Scots! No foreigners!
MRS BUTLER You have a fair number of foreigners in
 your play, Reverend Cumberland.
CUMBERLAND That is intentional, ma'am.
MRS BUTLER It is trouble sir.
[...]
CAUTHERLY Someone called me a French arse. It was
 when I said I'd engaged in a
 contretemps.[...]
BARRY They said I was French, too Mr Garrick,
 but I am not, am I? [...] You've got to
 tell them I've never been further than
 Barnstable.⁷]

Patriotism was apparently essential for a portrait of an individual [for the portrait painter Reynolds and the profit motive, see *A Laughing Matter*, once again]; and portrayal as such was another fever of which Garrick made good use. Generally,

popular actors and scenes from popular plays were among the most popular subjects for popular prints. And in an age when English art drew so much of its inspiration from the theatre, the theatre drew much of its inspiration from Shakespeare. [...] Shakespeare too had been especially praised for his portrayal of individuals, and his characters accordingly became natural subjects for Georgian artists. Portrait painting [on stage, too, I am sure!] and its ugly younger brother, political caricature, expressed a more general Georgian fascination with individuality⁸

says Taylor. It is this Garrick exactly, the first self-made man of the theatre, new member of the rising middle class, or, in Gary Taylor's wording, "the little parvenu"⁹, that is portrayed or imagined as a play by April de Angelis.

Gary Taylor is not the only literary critic whose description fits the image of De Angelis' Garrick. Michael Dobson, though dealing with another, textual aspect of the English Shakespeare cult in his *The Making of the National Poet*, paints a picture of Garrick highly similar to that by Gary Taylor: "Garrick's own histrionic celebrity was furthering Shakespeare's popularity in the theatre, and Shakespeare was providing Garrick's living."¹⁰ Realizing quite early how much, money and fame, Shakespeare may mean to him, the little parvenu subordinated his career and his private life as well to the great cause.

⁷ de Angelis, 68-69.

⁸ Taylor, 125.

⁹ Ibid., 126.

¹⁰ Dobson, 167.

“His claim to embody the **respectable Shakespeare** promoted in the 1730s as the decent alternative to Harlequin forms part of a wider claim, and an extraordinarily successful one, on behalf of the theatre in general.”¹¹ Respectability is a key notion in the dictionary of Mr and Mrs Garrick. For the sake of decency, Garrick threw over his former lover and first Ophelia, Peg Woffington, married the daughter of an Austrian count (in 1746)¹², and added to his repertoire the new role of the respectable husband and manager. In De Angelis:

- GARRICK It’s a standard practice for a new manager to create a new repertoire.
- WOFFINGTON With none of my parts in it. [...] You still love me and out of sheer bitterness you want to destroy me.
- GARRICK Peg, I’m about to be a happily married man.
- WOFFINGTON I’ve met a lot of those. [...] Why have you cut ‘The Constant Couple’? Nobody does Sir Harry Wildair like I do. I’ve got the legs for it.
- GARRICK [...] It is now considered vulgar for a woman to play a man.
- WOFFINGTON Don’t be a prick.
- GARRICK Unfortunately there are a lot of pricks that think the same way and they buy the tickets. [...] Your theatre is finished. People are eager for a change and I want to give it to them.
- WOFFINGTON What kind of change?
- GARRICK Emotion, not cynicism. Dignity not immorality.
- WOFFINGTON I bet you never fucked her yet, have you?
- GARRICK No, because she’s been well-brought up.¹³

Thus, according to most knowledgeable literary critics, the little parvenu eventually achieved his social aims. Nonetheless, in her rereading of the critics April de Angelis cannot resist the temptation of giving again the words of praise to the incessant gambler Lady Kingston, thus questioning the value of the fact: “Mr Garrick, through a spotless reputation you’ve raised your profession to

¹¹ Ibid, 176. (emphasis mine).

¹² Taylor (1991) referring to Winchester Stone, George and M. Kahrl, George (1979) *David Garrick: A Critical Biography*. Springfield: Southern Illinois Press, 54-8.

¹³ de Angelis, 53-54.

respectability. It has seen you admitted to the greatest houses in the land.”¹⁴ The playwright sees to it that her Mr Garrick, introduced as a genius and national treasure in the beginning of the play (1776), receives in a retrospective scene (1746) a sentence of very similar content, then a prophecy, à la Peg Woffington: “Married to a virgin and arse-licking your way around London.”¹⁵ The portrait De Angelis paints seems surprisingly and pleasantly straightforward a picture while offering a panoramic, round view of the examined subject.

Garrick’s bright talent as an actor was never criticised at all(!); his susceptibility of expressing a wide range of emotions, and his then new and shocking way of natural acting, a style initiated by Charles Macklin in Shylock, were all his tools to move and excite and bid good bye to the old declamatory school. This aspect is also present in *A Laughing Matter*: Garrick’s talent is fairly and credibly (and also painfully, from a rival actor) appreciated by the character Macklin, the previous star of the stage:

MACKLIN [...] once upon a time Garrick was the newest thing that had ever been seen. I’ll give him that. But, and this is a little known fact, there was another before him and it was he who invented the whole new style. He who really fired the dart that fatally struck the past. And do you know who he was?

CAUTHERLY No sir.

MACKLIN No, nobody does and that is why I like a drink.¹⁶

Garrick’s naturalness, to which Fielding’s Partridge refers in *Tom Jones*, originated from the fact that David Garrick identified with the role, acted, unlike most of his colleagues and all predecessors, even when he had no lines. De Angelis seems to be familiar with this fact, too: she has the character Johnson say something very similar to what Partridge did (what an impertinent piece of inter-textuality!), that he does not perceive the player’s acting at all, stating that “Anybody. The tea-boy may do it [Hamlet’s soliloquy] as well in a week.”

The new style, the natural way of acting, as Macklin’s example proved, was clearly not enough for a player to achieve higher reputation and social status, while Garrick’s idea of promoting Shakespeare worked and smoothly moved this mobile individual upward. Dobson is of the same opinion: “In looking at the interrelations between Shakespeare’s art, Garrick’s art, and the new strain of Protestant nationalism both were coming to represent, it is hard to decide whether the playwright is being used to canonize the ideology, the

¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., 54.

¹⁶ Ibid., 21. (Macklin performed his famous Shylock in 1737.)

ideology to canonize the performer, or the performer to canonize the playwright; but that they thrived on one another is indisputable.”¹⁷

The idea of Shakespeare and Garrick canonizing one another is not Dobson’s extreme idea: it is most easily proved by the fact that the paintings, busts and statues of Shakespeare commissioned in the fever of the emerging Shakespeare cult induced by Garrick bore at least some reference to the star (and national treasure). Having founded and organized the first Shakespeare Jubilee at the once sleepy little country town, Stratford-upon-Avon (thus launching the Stratford Shakespeare relic industry), portraits were made with the following titles: *Garrick with Shakespearean Characters, Commemorating the Jubilee at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1769* (by Isaac Taylor), or *Garrick delivering the Ode to Shakespeare at the Jubilee, surrounded by Shakespearean characters 1784* (by Robert Edge Pine, engraved by Charles Watson). The titles make it quite clear that Shakespeare is just as much (and not more!) celebrated as the Jubilee and its creative author. Their fates are intertwined, even identified: the statue of Shakespeare by Roubiliac (1758) which Garrick commissioned [for his own Temple of Shakespeare in the park surrounding his country house at Hampton] has a high resemblance to the actor himself. Dobson calls our attention to textual identifications, too, in his amazing chapter with the revealing title ‘Embodying the author’. Dobson quotes an anonymous poem in the *London Magazine* of June 1750, in which “Shakespeare’s ghost urges Garrick to replace the adapted [by Tate, Cibber, Davenant] texts of his plays still in the repertory with their originals, recognizing Garrick as his rightful avenger.”¹⁸ No wonder, Garrick was busy rewriting (though not restoring) such Shakespearean adaptations in the following years as *Florizel and Perdita*, *Catharine and Petrucchio*, etc. But who would possibly have given him the licence in the anonymous poem? Perhaps himself as part of his PR. And who would have authored another anonymous piece of text 26 years later, featuring a dialogue between Shakespeare’s spirit and Garrick, which repeatedly and even more clearly licences the actor: “Freely correct my Page [...] / Let me partake this night’s applause with thee / And thou shalt share immortal fame with me.”¹⁹ Perhaps, as Dobson assumes, it was composed by Garrick’s protégé Richard Cumberland, or perhaps composed by Garrick himself. In April de Angelis’ play the Rev Cumberland, there Garrick’s protégé too, is given very little dramatic talent thus raising the question whether Cumberland indeed was a bad playwright? By this, the direction of rereading turns backward: no factual evidence at hand, the critic believes the dramatist (very factual so far). In case we accept De Angelis’ play as fact, as for the sake of amusement and experiment, it is even worse for Cumberland: the piece in which Shakespeare’s spirit licences Garrick to practically everything in his name, then, must have been written by Garrick.

¹⁷ Dobson, 179.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 175. (Dobson is quoting from the *Universal Magazine* (1776), 102.)

“Oh happy time!”, one should say with Garrick’s Cordelia (who of course does not die in his adaptation of *King Lear*) to see or at least presume that Dobson’s most exciting findings exceed the narrow circle of literary critics and become the raw material, just as Shakespeare and the adaptations, for the twenty-first century playwright.

In De Angelis’ play Garrick is honoured by Shakespeare’s gloves on his retirement from the stage (Macklin notes: “That’s the twelfth pair I have seen.”²⁰) from his company, thus having her elderly Garrick face the already thriving (relic)business he himself was so eager to launch. Richard Cumberland’s name, as Garrick’s protégé, thus known perhaps from Dobson, also appears among the characters of De Angelis. He and his play are introduced and strongly recommended to Garrick by the ominous Lady Kingston:

LADY KINGSTON [...] our parson [...] has written a play. My first thoughts upon the matter were, I must admit, what utter tedium. [...] it is extraordinary all these clergymen writing plays [...] it keeps them away from religion, which has led to so much trouble in the past. I’m so keen to get involved. Rev Cumberland has written a new weeping comedy called...
CUMBERLAND *The Fashionable Lover*. [...] It has no jokes in it.²¹

The play did prove to be “utter tedium”. Although Garrick’s PR, massive correspondence with the audience, is well-known for its efficiency, and his friends among the critics and in “the greatest houses” usually ensured the success of whatever he put on stage, Cumberland’s play proved a flop at Drury Lane - which we may enjoy from behind the scenes in De Angelis’ comedy: shouts, vegetable projectiles, torn cushions, “untimely ripped [a *Macbeth* aftertaste] from the new seating arrangements”²². De Angelis’ Act Two amuses us with the process of choosing the weeping comedy by Cumberland, of presenting it on the first night: a bad choice not based on the play’s merit, but on the fear of losing money, reputation and all in the farewell season. Garrick’s mind is shown from the inside: trapped in his own theatre, in his own fame. All seems lost.

“The play is unrelieved by laughter” – Macklin explains the cause of the flop to the author Cumberland. What will save the Drury Lane box office for Garrick? And what will the audience of De Angelis, supporting their genius and

²⁰ de Angelis, 19.

²¹ Ibid., 8.

²² Ibid., 71.

national treasure, favoured character so far, be relieved by? Comedy? Shakespeare? Both?

GARRICK Company, we must prepare for Lear.²³

It sounds like a recipe. Lear is a fit role for the aging Garrick, and so is Shakespeare for saving the stage. (Garrick's faithful friend lending him his cult.) De Angelis sarcastically comments upon the British Shakespeare cult by having various characters express their praise and pride towards Shakespeare, according to their situation and temperament. Here is a selection: "Well, Mr Garrick, Shakespeare is certainly our great poet. I now understand your great admiration for him"²⁴ sighs a fully satisfied Lady Kingston after a two-act shag with Macklin, both dressed in Lear costumes. "You can't ban Shakespeare! We've nothing else and our audience is turning against us"²⁵ shouts a nervous Garrick at the Lord Chamberlain's man. "Shakespeare is just what the British public needs!"²⁶ adds ominous theatre patron Lady Kingston. The censor's line which provokes Garrick's previous shout (and any respectable audience!) is perhaps a sober De Angelis projection for the future: "And this next, *King Lear*. Shakespeare, isn't it? I don't know that one. [...] The only way I could ever condone with it would be to categorize it as a musical."²⁷

Eventually, Garrick's *King Lear* provides a happy ending in the play in every sense: it saves the revenue of the ominous night, saves and furthers Shakespeare's cause over shallow contemporaries, and saves, of course, Cordelia from hanging. That is, promotes Shakespeare, freely corrected by Garrick.

The display of the correction is somewhat enlarged: De Angelis has Garrick act / recite for his company, friends and patrons in the greenroom on receiving (the twelfth pair of) Shakespeare's gloves. Trapped in his fame and the *respectable* sentimentality he promoted, Garrick is asked to change track when he speaks the real Shakespeare.

MRS CIBBER We want the ending you rewrote so movingly.

JOHNSON The cruelty of the original cannot be countenanced by civilized people.

MRS GARRICK Give them what they want, Mr Garrick.²⁸

²³ Ibid., 74.

²⁴ Ibid., 78.

²⁵ Ibid., 82.

²⁶ Ibid., 82.

²⁷ Ibid., 82.

²⁸ Ibid., 88.

Clearly, in her portrayal De Angelis caught a Garrick that is caught in his portrayal of Shakespeare. *His* Shakespeare, looking genuine and natural as he presented him, saved Garrick: as genuine and natural as his expression of terror, making all his hairs in his wig stand on end. Garrick's wig, just as De Angelis's portrait of Garrick, in this eighteenth century light, seems "a glorious piece of engineering."²⁹

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

13 “THEN SAW YOU NOT HIS FACE?” – MORPHING IMAGES OF “HAMLET THE HUNGARIAN”

GÉZA BEREMÉNYI’S *HALMI, OR THE PRODIGAL SON* AND
CSABA KISS’S *RETURN TO DENMARK*

Veronika Schandl

Morphing is a special effect which enables the smooth transformation of one image into another one, often used in video clips and films to blend faces into one another, making links between images which are otherwise not visible for the naked eye. The more similarities the images have, the better is the illusion – during a good morph boundaries dissolve and identities merge, it becomes well-nigh impossible to tell where one image ends and the other begins. This feature, which needs elaborate programming on the computer, is an innate characteristic of the theatre, where each night the miracle happens: Hamlet, the Dane – who is hardly ever Danish, unless, maybe when played in Denmark, and even then not necessarily – is transformed into Hamlet the German, the Italian or the Japanese.

Looking at theatre history one gets the feeling that Shakespeare plays in general, and *Hamlet* in particular, yield themselves especially well to “cultural morphing;” the countless productions all over the world, as well as the numerous appropriations on stages and in films alike all bear witness to the fact that Hamlet seems to have features we all share. Therefore the morph is perfect; “Deutschland ist Hamlet,”¹ “Shakespeare is a nineteenth-century Hungarian,”² and the list could go on.³ This paper wishes to search for “Hamlet the

¹ Ferdinand, Feiligrath, “Deutschland ist Hamlet” in Julius, Schwering (ed.) (1909) *Werke*. Berlin: Bong, 97.

² Professor Kálmán Ruttkay in personal conversations.

³ See among others: Scolnicov, Hanna and Holland, Peter (eds.) (1989) *The Play out of Context – Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Kennedy, Dennis (ed) (1993) *Foreign Shakespeare – Contemporary Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; D’hulst, Lieven and Delabastita, Dirk. (eds.) (1993) *European Shakespeares: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company; Dávidházi, Péter and Karafiáth, Judit. (eds.) (1994) *Literature and its Cults – An Anthropological Approach*. Budapest: Argumentum Könyvkiadó; Kishi, Tetsuo; Pringle, Roger and Wells, Stanley (eds.) (1994) *Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions*. Newark: University of Delaware Press; Hattaway, Michael, Sokolova, Boika and Roper, Derek (eds.) (1995) *Shakespeare in the New Europe*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press; Joughin, John J.(ed) (1997) *Shakespeare and National Culture*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press; Hortmann, Wilhelm (1998) *Shakespeare on the German Stage – The Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; István Géher, “Hamlet the Hungarian: a Living

Hungarian” in two twentieth-century rewritings of Shakespeare’s play – Géza Bereményi’s *Halmi, or the Prodigal Son*⁴ from 1978 and Csaba Kiss’s *Return to Denmark*⁵ from 2002, aiming to track down what happens during the morph, focusing mainly on the main characters and their relationships to the past and its legacy.

In her article on post-Communist Romanian *Hamlet* productions Nicoleta Cinpoș argues that “it is interruption [...] that exposes history as a cumulus of individual stories, and makes theater the business of remembering.”⁶ This statement is especially true in the case of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, as the play itself is an interruption, an interlude which pauses the course of Danish history. It is a play about remembering and forgetting, a play obsessed with the idea of the past and with the question of how one should deal with its heritage. While theatrical and critical interpretations can argue about Claudius’s character, the play’s value structure needs one axiom to be accepted: that old Hamlet’s death was a loss – that it is not only Hamlet’s mourning that makes it look so, since the past was worthier than the present. When this maxim is called into question, Hamlet’s tragedy and the validity of his sacrifice are being doubted as well. This, however, is exactly what happens in both Bereményi’s and Kiss’s play. Bereft of a morally superior otherworld, both Hungarian Hamlets in turn morph from the par excellence tragic hero of European literature into its direct opposite: melodramatic antiheroes the audience is forced to reject. This essay is an investigation into the *why*-s of this change, claiming that it is *their Hungarianness* which is the reason for the alterations of these characters.

“I don’t have to” – Halmi, the Prodigal Son

First let us look at Géza Bereményi’s *Halmi, or the Prodigal Son*, written in 1978, in the thawing but highly hypocritical status quo of the Kádár-regime. The year 1956 marks the end of an era and a turning point in the more than forty years of Hungarian state Socialism, since after the failure of the revolution two

Monument” in Dávidházi-Klein (eds.) (1996) *Shakespeare and Hungary*. Lewinston: The Edwin Mellen Press; Kujawińska Courtney, Krystyna (ed) (2000) *On Page and Stage – Shakespeare in Polish and World Culture*. Krakow: Universitas; Stříbný, Zdeněk (2000) *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press; Kennedy, Dennis (2001) *Looking at Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Pujante, Angel-Luis and Hoenselaars, Ton (eds.) (2003) *Four Hundred Years of Shakespeare in Europe*. Newark: University of Delaware Press; Matei-Chesnoiu, Monica (2006) *Shakespeare in the Romanian Cultural Memory*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; Kujawińska Courtney, Krystyna and Guntner, Lawrence (eds.) (2007) *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance*. Lodz: Lodz University Press; Delabastita, Dirk., deVos, Josef and Franssen, Paul. (eds.) (2008) *Shakespeare and European Politics*. Newark: University of Delaware Press.

⁴ Bereményi, Géza. *Halmi, or the Prodigal Son*. in (1992) *Three Contemporary Hungarian Plays*. London and Boston: Forest Books. From now on: *Halmi*.

⁵ Kiss, Csaba (2002) *Hazatérés Dániába*. Available at <http://mek.niif.hu/03900/03902/03902.htm> (last accessed: 10. 10. 2009). All translations from this play are mine. Henceforth: *Hazatérés*.

⁶ Nicoleta, Cinpoș “Stillness in *Hamlet*” in Marta, Gibinska and Agnieszka, Romanowska (eds.) (2008) *Shakespeare in Europe: History and Memory*. Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 291.

conclusions had to be drawn: first, that the regime could not return to the Stalinist doctrines of the 1950s, if it did not want to risk another uprising; and second, that with the Soviet forces “temporarily” stationed in Hungary, no democratic changes were possible in the foreseeable future. Thus people were resigned to living *within* the boundaries of the Socialist state, and János Kádár, the new party leader whose rule was ensured by the Russian tanks stationed in Hungary, made it easier for them. Drawing a lesson from the downfall of his Stalinist predecessors, Kádár created, with the help of billions of forints from European loans, a false sense of well-being in the country, which, after the starvation and hardships of the 1950s, was warmly embraced by most. In exchange for these new, higher standards of living – which were still ridiculously low compared to Western examples– the Kádár-regime expected its citizens to accept an artificially reduced and strongly controlled public sphere where explicit criticism was forbidden and potential political comments could only be sounded in centrally prescribed forms. If Hungarians wanted to live in relatively decent conditions they had to become politically inert – this was the Faustian deal the Kádár-regime offered its people.

Since 1956 determined their living conditions in many ways, and because they were a generation that grew up in the shadows of their fathers, the failed heroes of the revolution, it is not surprising that in the only tolerated form of criticism – that is, in their artwork – the young artists of the post-1956 generation often reflected on their relation to the revolution and its legacy, which they had to carry on. This anger, at the inheritance of their taken freedom and the imposed status quo, is the central theme of Bereményi’s version of *Hamlet*, too. In the play, the revolution of 1956 functions as a prism which refracts the beam of the past on the characters of the old generation and casts a different light on Bereményi’s Hamlet, János Halmi. The plot still roughly follows the events of Shakespeare’s tragedy, but the characters are altered significantly.

The protagonist of Bereményi’s play, János Halmi/Hamlet, is a highly intelligent and extremely sensitive 18-year-old secondary school student who is at odds with the world in which he is living. The forced idyll of his family, with his stepfather Kondor/Claudius the mighty factory manager and a Socialist hero and his stay-at-home drunken Mother, who is simply called Mother in the play, crumbles to pieces one day when his real father (whom he has never seen before) returns from his emigration in America and wishes to confront Halmi with the truth about his stepfather. He explains how the two of them, brothers and ardent Communists both, found themselves on the opposite sides of the barricades in the 1956 revolution, he fighting for democracy and his brother active in the Communist militia. When the revolution failed Kondor betrayed his brother, Halmi’s father, who was then imprisoned for a few years. After he was released he fled the country, hiding in a freight train to start a new life abroad, in Vienna, with his wife. However, his wife, who was supposed to follow him the

next day, decided to stay behind in Hungary, where she soon gave birth to their son, Halmi, and married Kondor.

Halmi dutifully listens to his father, but shows no apparent interest in his confession. So much so that first he convinces himself that the old man in a trench coat is a policeman looking for him, trying to nail him for some hideous crime he might be capable of committing in the future. Therefore he dashes up an elongated tale about his supposed sins, almost begging the man to arrest him, for imprisonment, in his opinion, would be the only escape route from his hated surroundings. The fact that, instead of a prison sentence, he only receives another father disappoints him greatly. Unwilling to understand the moral implications of his father's story, Halmi angrily disclaims the old man, who runs off in disbelief and anger to a crowded Budapest boulevard. Confused as he is, the old man gets pushed under the wheels of a passing tram and dies. His corpse is brought back to Halmi for identification, but he denies having known him.

After the death of his real father, an event which really leaves him as the sole trustee of the truth, Halmi is not willing to take on the role of the avenger; instead he watches a series of terrible events unfold as a detached observer, to finally find his death in the last scene of the play in a hospital corridor, when a patient who strangely resembles Halmi's father appears, and mistaking "his son" for the doctor he thinks responsible for his illness, strangles him. Halmi's friends flee the scene, and the play ends with Kondor/Claudius embracing the only other survivor, Levente/Laertes, who has just returned from his political exile in Paris, and announcing that he will adopt him as his new son. The next step for them, Kondor claims, is forgetting. "We lost many," he declares, "but we mustn't be too concerned with that."⁷ The past which temporarily opened closes again, the interruption is over, history rolls on and those living gladly embrace the status quo.

In following the trajectory of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Bereményi's play also reaches its first climax when Halmi meets his father. It is the major turning point of the drama, mainly because it causes a rift in Halmi's character, who, in the beginning, comes across as an average teenager, but who, after his father's death, becomes, as he himself admits, a strange monster who, despite his lethargy and constantly-sounded, forced detachment from the events which affect his family, is the culprit responsible for almost all the deaths. His mood swings – from indifference through cool irony to flaming anger – direct the course of the events. What saves the play from sinking into melodrama, however, is that if you look closely, there is indeed method in Halmi's madness.

With the appearance of Halmi's father the scope of the play changes significantly. What started as a general parable about the aimlessness of adolescence is transformed into a play about 1970s Hungary. Halmi's father brings history into the play, as his story about 1956 (which is the only date specifically mentioned throughout the entire play) combines national and

⁷ *Halmi*, 141.

personal narratives and pins the unfolding events to a clearly recognizable and culturally loaded time and space: Kádár-regime Hungary. His fate is at the same time unique and common, a personal tragedy and a parable about the disillusionment, hope and betrayal that his generation shared.

What is more, he also embodies literary history, retelling the story of a father who comes back to open the eyes of his son about the truth of his disappearance. At the same time he reenacts but also questions and deconstructs Shakespeare’s *topos*, because, although he is metaphorically a ghost from the past, he is still very much alive. That the literary nature of their encounter is important is also shown in the fact that both he and Halmi are strangely aware of the weight of the words they utter. The father starts his talk by admitting that he has learned his story by heart, as if it were a poem he told and retold to himself, so that when finally meeting his son, he would remember it perfectly. Being both the hero and the writer of his work, he is also concerned with the effect he has on his audience. As he explains to his son, “I’ll say it, I’ll pass it on, I’ll do everything I can. I’ve pulled all my experiences together and if they have no meaning for you, there is nothing more I can do.”⁸

Halmi is as conscious of the power of words as is his father. He feels that once the story is retold, he becomes the next in line with the task of relating it. And apparently he is appalled by the idea that he is given no choice but to take on the responsibility for the deeds of his stepfather.

HALMI: Well, that’s amazingly base! Go on, spread the word: from now
I’m the one that is to blame for everything.

FATHER: I don’t want to blackmail you.

HALMI: You’re doing that already.

FATHER: It’s nature’s way – you come next.⁹

But this is exactly the reason Halmi is reluctant to take on the task of listening and retelling his father’s story. He is, as are his friends, Horváth/Horatio and Lili/Ophelia, of a generation that wishes to live in the present, without concerns for the past or even the future. This paralyzing present, which Halmi complained about even before meeting his father, is at once the prison and the liberation of this generation. “Escaping” here means that they can forget about the disputes of their fathers, the political turmoil of the previous years, their inability to change the status quo, as well as the consequences of their lethargy and stagnation, which will evidently bring about a dreary future. The survival technique Halmi and his generation follow is to find exile at home in their own land, that is still somehow abroad – to escape to parallel, imaginary worlds where reality and the

⁸ Halmi, 86.

⁹ Ibid.

burden of the past cannot reach them.¹⁰ In the play, however, their escapism is not depicted as a general, existential, philosophical state of mind, but is closely linked, and is described as a reaction to the contemporary Hungarian state of affairs – the consequences of the 1956 revolution.

However, it seems there is no understanding between the generations about what exactly happened in 1956. When his father asks Halmi if he knew why that date was important, he receives this answer:

HALMI: You started a counter-revolution. Or they started one against you.

FATHER: That's what my brother says. It was a revolution.

HALMI: (*waving his arms in dismissal*) Whatever! Take it up between you.¹¹

It is this relativity of historical facts, this absence of political truth that Halmi rejects. He is disgusted by the fact that the relationships between the people in his parents' generation are arbitrary and that the explanations they give are random and unassimilated. "What you feel right depends on your generation,"¹² he claims, and therefore he refuses to take sides in the dispute of his fathers, which started in 1956 and which, clandestinely, still goes on in the 1970s. This is why he refutes all with the sentence he repeats several times in the course of the play: "I don't have to." His rejection results in a breakdown of communication between the generations: the past of the fathers and the future of the sons both become undecipherable and of no interest to the other. It is not only after his father's sudden, accidental death that Halmi changes his mind about becoming his father's mouthpiece. For him time is not out of joint, it has simply stopped. And it is in this elongated present moment that Halmi is frantically looking for an escape route. His love for Lili/Ophelia is impossible because the girl is another fugitive, choosing the world of dreams instead of realities. Learning also proves a dead end, because teaching is also governed by the interlocking net of social bonds instead of by facts, Halmi's teacher (and Lili's father) Pilisi/Polonius is unable to take sides in the course of the debate because he is indebted to Kondor, who helped his son immigrate to Paris after the revolution.

The only character that stays intact and alive by the end of the play is Kondor/Claudius, the epitome of the new social icon and the morally bankrupt "man of compromises" who, with his final cynical remarks, becomes a symbol of a contemporary regime which is willing to forget. "Life, it seems," he states, "works with allowances. We lost many, but we mustn't be concerned with

¹⁰ Like Halmi in the play, Bereményi also lived the life of "symbolic dissidence," as he built an Indian camp with his friends each summer and "became" a tribe leader for a few weeks in the Bakony hills of Hungary.

¹¹ Halmi, 89.

¹² *Ibid.*, 91.

that.”¹³ Bereményi’s rewriting of *Hamlet* thus, in a way, ends where Shakespeare’s play actually begins, with a figure of Claudius who urges a version of Hamlet to give up all that unmanly grief. Whereas in Shakespeare the drama ends in meaningless slaughter by which little seems to have been mended, here the slaughter has preceded the play about to unfold and Shakespeare is thrown back into the everyday.

But even more importantly than that, in Bereményi’s play Kondor/Claudius survives the pragmatic Fortinbras, who comes at the end of Shakespeare’s play to assume power. Here Kondor’s pragmatism emerges as the only survival tactic in this world, whereas his success amply signifies the lack of historical justice or of moral standards. Kondor, who is responsible for the whole series of events, shakes off the burden of the past and creates a future he can control by adopting Levente as his new son. Whereas in Shakespeare the meaninglessness of the world is countered with refined sensitivity and nobleness of language, here the heroic ideal, either in its real or its rhetorical garb, is completely dissolved. It is not there at the end either; there are no echoes of military victories, no one to fire the five-gun salute for the dead, only a litany of defeats, humiliations and escapes. It is the darkest political interpretation of *Hamlet* imaginable, but it is the one that appealed to the young generation of Hungary in the 1970s, which Bereményi described in one of his song lyrics as: “a generation keen on conforming and dispersing/ [who] was born to go missing one day; water onto flames/to merge into an era they could hardly change.”¹⁴

“I’ll call a doctor and cure him” – The Prince of “Denmark”

In his book *Kádár köpönyege* Péter György maps the intellectual, ideological and cultural links that connect the now twenty-year old Hungarian democracy to the last phase of the Communist era, the Kádár-regime. Claiming that the bonds connecting the two periods are much more numerous than we usually admit, György concludes that we all emerged from under Kádár’s cloak. To legitimise itself, György claims, for the Kádár-regime it was essential to forget about its past, the Stalinist years of pre-1956 Communist dictatorship and to blur the political and personal links that uncomfortably connected the two regimes. This is why Kádár ideologically created a society geared towards the future, a hermetically “closed neverland where one’s past was not historically determining (...), and which, according to the intentions of the political elite, did not only cover but even denied sensing the questions arising from a historical consciousness.”¹⁵ This attitude, as we have seen, was aptly illustrated in Bereményi’s play as well. Here I would argue further, however, that one intellectual link the new, post-1989 regime inherited from its predecessor – and

¹³ Ibid, 141.

¹⁴ Bereményi, Géza (1971) *Előrejelzés*. Song lyrics from an unpublished song, translated by Ágnes Lehóczky.

¹⁵ György, Péter (2005) *Kádár köpönyege*. Budapest: Magvető, 29. My translation.

the main reason why it often does not recognise its deep indebtedness to the past – is its uneasiness in dealing with its immediate history.

After the change of the regime in 1989 Hungary was again left with a weighty historical legacy to deal with. The swift break from a state-Socialist to a democratic capitalist society, it seems bereft the Hungarians of both a satisfying closure and a moment to sufficiently address the questions of responsibility, consequence and guilt the previous 40 years left behind. Having been swept off their feet by the winds of change twenty years ago it is now, in the new millennium, that Hungarians realise how they drag with themselves the almost-dead corpse of the past, a burden that, when not dealt with, can very well make or break the country's future.

It is no wonder therefore that playwright, dramaturge and director Csaba Kiss¹⁶, when wishing to rethink “the Hamletian problematic with respect to our contemporary emotional and intellectual ‘answers’”¹⁷ also gave a central role to the past in his version of *Hamlet*. “Although there are Danes and Norwegians fighting in this story, too, it is about us, about what we are at the change of the regime – about our strange and confused relations to sin, to power and forgiveness,”¹⁸ thus Kiss introduced his new play in the playbill of its first production in 2002. In subsequent interviews he repeatedly stressed that his main concern in turning to Hamlet's theme was to discover how it was transformed in the here and now, among the circumstances of post-Communist Hungary. Kiss's questions with respect to the Hamletian dilemma were twofold: constantly paralleling, opposing and deconstructing Shakespeare's plotline and linking the events to the offstage Hungarian world he wished to reflect upon what happens to morals in a godless world, providing a pathography about contemporary affairs, while at the same time, and even more importantly, he offered several cultural models on how one can cope with one's past.

The Prince, who is called by no other name in the play¹⁹, returns from his scholarship in Germany to his native land, Denmark. His uncle and his mother joyously await him on the shore, passing the time of waiting with wild drinking, feverish hugging and loud kissing. They are joined by another merry family that of Polonius, whose daughter, Ophelia, has long been attracted to the Prince, and cannot wait to see him again. Since the bottle of 60 percent Danish apple brandy is continuously passed around between them, by the time the weary Prince trudges off to the shore they are all in very high spirits. He, however, cannot share their joy; instead he anxiously asks about the last days of his Father, who, as it turns out rotted to death, and died recently. The boy is taken aback by all the gory details his companions are eager to share with him

¹⁶ For a detailed discussion of Kiss's engagement with *Hamlet* see Katalin Palkóné Tabi's essays in this volume and in: Géher, István and Tabi, Katalin (eds) (2007) *Látszanak, mert játszhatók - Shakespeare a színpad tükrében*. Budapest: ELTE, 80-99.

¹⁷ Kiss, Csaba (2002) *Hazatérés Dániába* - programme note.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The fact that Hamlet does not appear in the drama can innately show that the Hamletian dilemma, the Hamletian life question is missing from this onstage world.

about the King’s last days, when, on top of all, he is informed that his uncle Claude married his mother a week ago. Amidst the merry company he alone tries to discuss these past events, but he is declared “too sober” by the others and is forced to swallow a bottle of the above-mentioned famous Danish brandy, as a consequence of which he rapes Ophelia, and doses off in a drunken sleep.

These very first scenes of the play introduce a country where, as Kiss put it, “God no longer exists as an absolute, therefore morals only depend on human judgement.”²⁰ With the possibility of a punishment in the afterlife taken out of the equation what remains is an earthly life that is driven by one directive: *carpe diem*. Enjoy life to the fullest, since there is nothing more in store for you. Furthermore, if you are not caught in this life, you will never have to answer for your deeds. So, dare to commit whatever makes you happy. These are the edicts according to which Denmark’s new king, Claudius lives his life and governs his country. This attitude also works retrospectively; the past is discarded since it seems to bear no consequences on the present.

Like a swamp – with the help of the apple brandy and the forcefully undressed Ophelia – Claude’s hedonist Denmark instantly pulls down the Prince, too, whose moral superiority is thus questioned from the very first instance. Even if he does not take part in the feasts, the orgies and the luscious breakfasts of the king and his company, he has no means to oppose their merrymaking. Primarily because, as is evident from the start, he is an outsider, an offspring of his German schooling, which renders him oversensitive, oversophisticated, effeminate and weak, both physically and mentally.

In this Denmark life is short, there is no time left to linger on past events. Talk is cheap, unless direct and straightforward. Therefore the Prince’s insistence on wishing to discuss his Father’s death and his uncle’s marriage runs into constant reprimands by his companions: “Come on, pull yourself together! A nice hot bath, a rich breakfast...a fresh white shirt!”²¹ that is all the King suggests he needs to find his balance again. This “forgive and forget” rule applies not only to him, but to everyone. Thus when Laertes brings up the Prince’s rape of his sister, he is silenced the same way: “Enough, Laertes. What happened happened. Your sister’s case is closed. I don’t want to hear about that any more.”²² retorts Claudius, who, just to be on the safe side, even sends Laertes away to Norway on a diplomatic mission.

For Claudius the past is a chapter well closed. The faint lingering shadow of the dead only appear to induce him into enjoying life’s small pleasures even more: for example he turns the official mourning ceremony of his brother also into an orgy. Still, the play’s events prove the Prince right: they suggest that the past is alive and among them – literally, since in the fifth scene Horatio informs the Prince that his father is not dead. He is hidden away in the old library, guarded and nursed by Horatio, a prematurely-aged fanatic, who has

²⁰ Programme note.

²¹ Hazatérés, 9.

²² Ibid, 10.

sacrificed his youth to keeping the King alive so that he could serve as a living proof of Claudius's sin. Corpus, as the old King is called, is not significantly more than a corpse by then, a body which is slowly rotting away from the inside. He is, however, at the same time, the corpus, the cultural, or even the literary heritage handed down to the present, the embodiment of the past, which lies forgotten and discarded in a derelict monument of past virtues: the library. From Horatio's explanations it becomes clear that Claudius in his fastidious pursuit of life had no time to wait until his slowly administered poison would kill his brother, so he buried him alive. It was Horatio who stole the body, and has ever since spent his time deciphering Corpus's sentence fragments, meticulously recording all his words, trying to understand their shattered meaning.

What indeed questions the value of Horatio's endeavour is that, without his interpretation, Corpus's story would not make much sense; the past is confused and incomprehensible without mediators. As with old codices one has to lean very close to the old King's dying body even to hear his mutterings, which sound something like this: "Bees! The buzzing of bees! Wet here on my neck. Oh, murderer! Murderer! And darkness...Oh, poor man... Darkness and cold...the scent of candles...and bees and darkness and the scent of flowers."²³ The Prince cannot understand them either; he needs Horatio to explain to him what has happened, how one afternoon Claudius, wishing to speed up the events, poured a final, deadly dose of poison into the ears of his brother, who then fell into a coma, was deemed dead and consequently buried among flowers and scented candles.

Horatio's fanatic adherence to the old King is echoed in Corpus's maniacal obsession with one task: to kill Claudius. "Kill him, kill him, kill him, my son, murderer, kill him,"²⁴ Corpus keeps repeating, and this is the only task that pushes Horatio forward as well. The Prince, however, does not understand the logic of revenge. In his cultured, western way of thinking murder does not solve anything. He instead wishes a trial, an occasion to talk everything over. He plans to carry Corpus's body around Denmark and convince everybody of Claudius's sins, but only ends up enraging Horatio.

Like Bereményi's hero, the Prince is also unwilling to take revenge; their motives, however, differ significantly. While Halmi, as a typical, almost allegorical representative of Kádárist youth, knows the ropes of his world way too much to instantly understand the futility of vengeance, Kiss's Prince is so far removed from "Denmark" that he is unable to comprehend the necessity of retaliation. His repeated insistence on rational solutions and the apparent futility of such endeavours gradually reveal how anachronistic or even pathetic the German or European "cultural" ideas of law and order he aims to follow are in this Denmark, which is not a prison, rather a brothel. While the Prince, the overtly sophisticated intellectual, wishes to confront his uncle in a verbal duel he misses his own play – the events go on without his interference: Polonius

²³ Ibid, 15.

²⁴ Ibid, 16.

conspires to overtake the country, Ophelia goes mad and hangs herself, Corpus dies, Horatio plans to poison the King, while Fortinbras’s army stands in waiting on the border. All this while the Prince stands on the sidelines, unable to show interest in these people he feels so different from, whose ferocious love of life terrifies him.

It is indeed life, the enjoyment of life that estranges the Prince, the Western intellectual, from the Danes: he fails to recognise how happy his mother is, because he is too taken aback by the fact that she is barefoot, he repeatedly pushes away Ophelia, who already knows all his secrets and is willing to accept him the way he is, but whose connection to his own sexuality frightens him. His ultimate solution is also telling about his frustrations: instead of murdering Claudius he plans to kill himself, and thus revenge everybody by causing them twinges of conscience. In the end he only gets as far as to thrust a knife into his hand, being even too weak to take his own life.

During the course of the play, as in Halmi’s case, readers are gradually forced to distance themselves from the Prince. It is not only his frustrating impotence that turns him into an antihero, but also his boorish arrogance, with which he treats everyone who is inferior to him: the actors or Ophelia, for instance. Horatio’s insistence on revenge is also disqualified, since we gradually learn that Corpus was a bad king, hated by his family (by Gertrude, Claudius and probably the Prince, too, who was informed about his father’s illness, but did not care to visit him) and his subjects as well.²⁵ Strangely, and rather disturbingly it is Claudius the reader might sympathise with the most. Disturbingly, since there is no doubt that he killed his brother. He admits it to the Prince – “Yes – I killed him, so what?”²⁶ – as to everyone who asks about it, only regretting that he did not do it before and had to suffer thirty years in the shadows. Still, it seems he is willing to give up the throne and the trouble of governing the Danes anytime. What he is concerned with is not power, but food – lavish breakfasts and Bavarian sausages flavoured with gourmet mustard. Claude, as he is endearingly called by others, is often associated with animal, mostly pig imagery, while his frequent mention of bodily functions distances the reader from him. However, he is also given the most poetic speech of the play, an ode to the little sausages he adores. One cannot but have the feeling that among the other courtiers it is him Kiss acquits the most from his sins.

His hedonistic kingdom, however, cannot stand long either; what comes after is Fortinbras’s wild North, a mixture of Soviet ingeniousness and Nomadic cruelty. Kiss’s final vision is the death of a nation, with the cold unknown to follow, suggesting that this is the price one pays for not dealing with the past. While Bereményi showed the cycle repeating itself at the end of his play, Kiss envisages a mindless massacre which means the end of Denmark: “I’ll bring

²⁵ Both the gravedigger and Polonius remember him as a bad king.

²⁶ Hazatérés, 43.

new inhabitants here, new Danes – from our own sort.”²⁷ announces Fortinbras before his soldiers sabre the royal family.

Be it the forcefully tranquil days of the Kádár-regime, or the hedonistically immoral life of the early days of wild capitalistic Hungary, it seems that the Hungarian *Hamlets* of the time ultimately question the relevance of the Hamletian attitude to life. Instead of a tragedy we get a melodrama, or a farce – instead of the noble Dane an impotent clown, who is unable to face up to his historical, literary or theatrical role.²⁸ In this essay my aim was to demonstrate how this incapability is a direct consequence of the troubled relation these Hungarian versions of Hamlet have with their own literary as well as with the Hungarian historical past. The mirrors which these two plays hold up to contemporary affairs, as in a funhouse, morph Hamlet into one of us and us into Hamlet – waiting for us to recognise the similarities or the tricks the authors use to make the transition seem more seamless than it is.

²⁷ Ibid, 66.

²⁸ The change from the optimistic fighter-Hamlets to disillusioned intellectualising Danish princes has been a long one on the Hungarian stages. For further discussion of this matter see: Schandl, Veronika (2008) *Shakespeare Behind the Iron Curtain – Shakespeare’s Plays on the Stages of Late Kádárist Hungary*. Lewinston: The Edwin Mellen Press.

POETIC PHYSIOGNOMIES

14 THE ENDING OF *ODE TO THE WEST WIND* AND SHELLEY'S CONCEPT OF NECESSITY

János Barcsák

Shelley's most famous lyric, "Ode to the West Wind", ends with a rhetorical question that has acquired proverbial status in English: "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"¹ In an early draft of the poem, however, this last sentence was an affirmative one. It read: "When Winter comes Spring lags not far behind."² It is probably significant that Shelley changed this affirmative sentence and that by recasting it in the interrogative form he introduced the only question proper in his poem. This way the poem that seeks and seems triumphantly to find affirmation ends with a sinister question mark. In this paper I will start out with a brief analysis of this rhetorical question using Paul de Man's method of the "grammatization of rhetoric"³ and will then try to explain why the particular form of the closing sentence is significant in the poem as a whole through a discussion of Shelley's concept of Necessity.

That the primary meaning of the closing question of the poem is an optimistic affirmation is, I think, beyond doubt. In saying "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" the speaker clearly implies that spring cannot be far behind and he even seems to suggest that we have reason to rejoice over this fact. What, then, is the purpose of Shelley's casting his final affirmation in the interrogative form? One purpose of course may be to strengthen the affirmation and to amplify the joyful anticipation. "Can spring be far behind?" both takes it for granted that rebirth cannot be far behind and at the same time expresses the speaker's ardent wish that it should come as soon as possible.

This urgency, however, might also be expressive of an anxiety, and the rhetorical question – as we have learnt from Paul de Man's analyses – is often a double edged weapon, for it can also be read literally. We must ask, therefore, whether this rhetorical question makes sense if we interpret it literally. And the

¹ All subsequent references to the text will be to this edition: Reiman, Donald H., and Sharon B. Powers (1977) *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. London: Norton.

² Holmes, Richard (1974) *Shelley: The Pursuit*. London: Penguin Books, 547.

³ De Man, Paul (1979) "Semiology and Rhetoric" in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 16ff.

answer to this question must be 'yes'. Awkward though this interpretation may sound at first hearing, yet we must admit that it is possible. The closing section of the "Ode" would mean in such an interpretation "if winter comes, if something comes to an end, is it possible that spring, or rebirth may be "far behind", that is, delayed, or even indeterminately deferred; is it possible that winter is just the end and nothing comes afterwards?"⁴

After we have identified this literal meaning we must of course ask 'Does this meaning have any relevance to the poem?' And the answer must again be 'very much so'. In fact I believe that the duality of the anxiety expressed in this reading of the question and the excited affirmation that the rhetorical reading of the same question implies is at the very heart of the poem. The ode, in a sense, is based on a certain dividedness within the speaker between enthusiastic celebration and intense anxiety.

In order to understand the full significance of the concluding rhetorical question of the poem we must, therefore, first see what causes enthusiasm and anxiety at the same time in the speaker. The easy answer to this question is of course that it is the West Wind, but we do not have to go very far to find a somewhat more complex and more satisfying answer to this question: it is Necessity which, as Donald H. Reiman points out, is generally represented in Shelley's symbolic universe by the image of the Wind.⁵ But why is Necessity thus ambiguous, why does it elicit such ambiguous reactions from the speaker?

I will first give a general answer to this question, outlining Shelley's concept of Necessity, and will proceed to give an account of the particular treatment of this issue in "Ode to the West Wind".

Generally speaking, Shelley's concept of Necessity is largely based on William Godwin's political philosophy.⁶ In the famous chapter of his *Political Justice* on "Free Will and Necessity" Godwin argues that human actions – just as events in the material universe – are the product of Necessity, that "if we form a just and complete view of all the circumstances in which a living or intelligent being is placed, we shall find that he could not in any moment of his existence have acted otherwise than he has acted."⁷ Just as a billiard ball colliding with another one will inevitably move in a particular course exactly determined by Necessity, so human decisions and their consequences are strictly determined by

⁴ Ágnes Péter observes here that Shelley's replacement of the adverbial 'when' in the first version with the conditional 'if' in the final one also points in the direction of the literal meaning of this final question. (Ágnes Péter (2007) *Késhet a tavasz? Tanulmányok Shelley poétikájáról*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 195.)

⁵ Reiman, Donald H. (1965) *"The Triumphs of Life": A Critical Study*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 14.

⁶ Godwin, William (1793) *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, two volumes. London: Robinson. Godwin's effect on Shelley's thinking can be hardly overestimated. Michael H. Scrivener convincingly demonstrates that 'Godwin, more than any other radical, influenced Shelley's political philosophy' (Scrivener, Michael Henry (1982) *Radical Shelley. The Philosophical Anarchism and Utopian Thought of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 8.)

⁷ Godwin, op. cit., vol. I, 285.

the laws of Necessity and have nothing to do with the individual's free will. Human history, which is made up of human actions, is thus the product of Necessity; it is driven, Godwin contends, by such forces which are beyond any individual actor's power to influence. This Godwinian idea of Necessity is of course a many-faceted concept whose implications could hardly be properly treated within the bounds of the present paper. However, one thing is clear: Shelley derived several of his central poetic images and ideas (among many others 'power' and process in "Mont Blanc", Demogorgon in *Prometheus Unbound*, and the West Wind) from this Godwinian concept of Necessity. It is also evident that this concept had a decisive influence on Shelley's concept of history and on his attitude to political change. Shelley shared, in particular, the great thinker's (from 1816 his father-in-law's) belief in the perfectibility of the human being and his faith in the progress of history, in inevitable, necessary social improvement. He believed, together with Godwin, that social inequalities will of necessity disappear and that history is heading towards a more just and equal and ultimately happier form of human existence. No tyrant, they believed, can withstand the force of Necessity; no reactionary politics, no government can stop the inevitable logic of events that leads towards the realization of a better order.⁸

This idealistic concept of Necessity was, however, tempered in Shelley's thought (as indeed it was to some extent in Godwin's, too) by the radical empirical scepticism that he inherited from David Hume. What challenges this concept of Necessity as an unstoppable, all-powerful and progressive universal force is primarily Hume's famous critique of the notion of causality,⁹ which Godwin also implicitly adopts in his discussion of Necessity. To this famous argument I will be even less able to do justice than I was to Godwin's; however, I believe that even a brief glimpse at the main line of Hume's train of thought is enough to show how it is relevant to Shelley's concept of Necessity.

Causality, according to Hume, is only a construct of the human intellect and not an essential force in its own right, not something that exists in nature. From the regularly repeated occurrence of two successive sensory experiences (like the collision of one billiard ball with another and the subsequent movement of the latter) we draw the conclusion that the second is *caused* by the first (the second billiard ball moves in a particular way *because* it was hit by the first). In fact, however, there can be no empirical evidence that any necessary causal link

⁸ I slightly simplify Godwin's position here, since, as Scrivener points out (op. cit., 11), his concept of the 'perfectibility of man' means to him only that human nature demands continuous change, it is always in flux, while all forms of government tend to arrest this flux and thus act against human nature. Godwin's concepts of perfectibility and Necessity, therefore, do not necessarily involve improvement or forward progression. It is undeniable, however, that in the first edition of *Political Justice* Godwin does express faith in such a progression, which – as Scrivener himself points out (op. cit., 47) – might be the reason why Shelley preferred this edition of Godwin's work to the other two.

⁹ Hume, David (1978) *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon.

exists between the two. All we can know is the two sensory experiences, and it is only because our mind associates these that we project the idea of causation between them; but causation itself cannot be experienced. This critique of the notion of causality makes it possible for Hume to put under thorough revision some of the most deeply ingrained philosophical beliefs of his time. However, he does not conclude from his radical skeptical argument that the notions of causation and necessity should be entirely discarded. Indeed he argues that to project causes and effects and to reason from such projections is entirely reasonable. For pragmatic reasons, therefore, the best course we can take is to act as if causality as well as inductive reasoning based on the notions of cause and effect were sound and valid. This is the position that Godwin also adopts in his own discussion of Necessity. As Hugh Roberts points out, however, Shelley went further in his scepticism than either Hume or Godwin.¹⁰ Following the lead of the radical sceptic William Drummond,¹¹ he refused to accept even such a pragmatic escape as Hume's and questioned the validity of all human constructs of the mind – even as he recognized the inescapability of such constructs. This radical sceptical attitude inevitably calls into doubt in Shelley's thinking the validity of the concept of Necessity, more particularly the assumption of meaningful and teleologically motivated political progress. For if even the causal links between events are just the arbitrary products of the human mind, then how much more so are such ideas as history and progress.

Shelley's concept of Necessity is, therefore, inherently ambiguous. He believes in progress, in the inevitable logic of the events of history that great men, such as poets, prophets, or reformers,¹² can – even if unconsciously – foretell; but at the same time his scepticism makes him maintain that this 'logic' of events, or Necessity, does not in fact inhere in the events themselves, but is *attributed, imposed by man*.¹³ As M. H. Abrams summarizes this complex notion in his description of Demogorgon – a major representation of Shelley's concept of Necessity in his *Prometheus Unbound* – “Demogorgon is simply postulated – (...) – as the course of events which is in itself purposeless and amoral, but carries out the ineluctable consequences of man's decisions or acts; whether for good or ill depends on the condition of the human will which makes neutral process the instrument of its own moral purposes.”¹⁴

¹⁰ Roberts, Hugh (1997) *Shelley and the Chaos of History. A New Politics of Poetry*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 42.

¹¹ On the influence of William Drummond's *Academical Questions* on Shelley's thought see Roberts, op. cit., 41-6.

¹² That is, all men of the imagination whom Shelley calls poets 'in a universal sense' in "A Defence of Poetry" (Shelley, Percy B. "A Defence of Poetry" in D. H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (ed.) (1977) *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. London: Norton, 480-508).

¹³ It is as if Shelley was on both Wordsworth and Coleridge's side in their debate about the effects of nature on the human mind (see Coleridge's "Dejection: an Ode").

¹⁴ Abrams, Meyer H. (1971) *Natural Supernaturalism. Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*. New York: Norton, 302.

This ambiguity within Shelley's concept of Necessity is indeed perfectly represented in *Prometheus Unbound* where the figure of Demogorgon can be seen as impersonating Necessity:¹⁵ he carries out the ineluctable change, he overthrows Jupiter and liberates Prometheus, but he does all this not because he has a purpose, not because he wants to achieve this change but because this is the inevitable course of events after Prometheus's change of heart.¹⁶ Although Demogorgon carries out the action, he is in fact no actor; the real actor of the drama, paradoxically, is the static, chained Prometheus. In *Prometheus Unbound*, however, this ambiguity within the notion of Necessity is not problematic. Demogorgon is actor and no actor; he is – to put it in Kant's terms – 'purposeful purposelessness'; he is omnipotent power and no power; he is and is not. But all this does not matter, for the main interest is Prometheus' fate, the action of the 'One Mind' or 'Mankind'¹⁷ and the ultimate triumph of Love represented in Prometheus and Asia's reunion. In "Ode to the West Wind", by contrast, this ambiguity in the nature of Necessity becomes problematic. It becomes problematic, more exactly, in stanza IV, because there the individual speaker's relation to this force is discussed. This is not an issue in *Prometheus Unbound*, where the action takes place largely on the level of abstract humanity and where actual humans are only used occasionally and even then only to people the background of the dramatic action.¹⁸ In the lyrical "Ode to the West Wind", however, human interest is in the foreground and this inevitably leads to the problematization of Necessity.

After this general introduction to Shelley's concept of Necessity, let us see how this concept is treated in the poem. The problem with the West Wind (Necessity), I have said, emerges only in stanza IV of the poem. Up to this point – that is, in the first three stanzas – the image of the West Wind provides a perfect introduction to Shelley's general concept of Necessity as outlined above. It is presented as a great force that brings change; what is more, political change is clearly suggested in the imagery: the wind seems to destroy an outdated, lifeless, regressive order and thus to prepare the way for the creation of a new,

¹⁵ The validity of this interpretation of the figure of Demogorgon has been doubted by Hugh Roberts (op. cit. 46-7); however, it has been so well established by such classics of Shelley scholarship as Cameron and Wasserman (Cameron, Kenneth Neill. "The Political Symbolism of Prometheus Unbound". *PMLA* 58 (1943), 728-53; Wasserman, Earl R. (1971) *Shelley: A Critical Reading*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 329f.) that I think it can still be maintained.

¹⁶ This interpretation has also been challenged in Shelley criticism, notably by Stuart M. Sperry, who contends that the real actor of the drama is in fact Demogorgon (Necessity) and Prometheus only reacts to this action. Cf. Sperry, Stuart M. "Necessity and the Role of the Hero in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*". *PMLA* 96 (1981), 242-54.

¹⁷ Earl Wasserman and M. H. Abrams's suggestions for what Prometheus allegorizes (Wasserman, Earl R. (1965) *Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound"*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 30-1, 195; Abrams, op. cit., 300.).

¹⁸ Tilottama Rajan even contends that the whole action of the play takes place within the human mind (Rajan, Tilottama (1990) *The Supplement of Reading. Figures of Understanding in Romantic Theory and Practice*. Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 308).

fresh and vital one.¹⁹ This force, however, carries out its action without a conscious purpose. Just as the inevitable changing of the seasons – an image which is in effect identifiable with the West Wind itself – it comes and does what is inevitable. It destroys and preserves but without intending good or evil. In the first three stanzas of the poem the speaker hails and celebrates this great power, and indeed he can easily do so, for on this level of generality, as a universal force, as the necessary progress of history, Necessity (the West Wind) can indeed be hailed unconditionally. Even its destructive aspect is celebratory, because even as it destroys, it also preserves. Moreover, what it destroys is always the old, the dry, the sapless, and with this destruction it ‘quickens a new birth’ of something fresh and full of life. On the whole, then, Necessity can be regarded in this context as ultimately benevolent.

In stanza IV, however, the context changes. The grand-scale universal force of Necessity is now looked at from the individual self's perspective and this causes difficulties.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O Uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

We can see here that even if the speaker still admires the West Wind, he just cannot fly with it, and, what is more, he must even ‘strive’ with it. The reason for this becomes clear when we examine the process through which Shelley presents this changed relation to the Wind. He contrasts an early stage (boyhood) with the present (presumably adult) state. In his boyhood the speaker was the comrade of the Wind, he could fly with it. Now that he is an adult that union

¹⁹ The paralysis of the old political order and the hope of a renovation necessitated by this decay are expressed in several of Shelley's more directly political poems written towards the end of 1819. A famous example is the sonnet “England in 1819”.

with the Wind is lost: he becomes ‘chained and bowed’ by a ‘heavy weight of hours’.

Quite conspicuously Shelley is rewriting here the Wordsworthian myth of growing up in terms of his own concept of Necessity, the implications of which would deserve an individual study which I will not be able to provide here. What is important from the point of view of the present argument, however, is that we experience the metamorphosis of the grand-scale notion of Necessity into the small-scale force that guides the life of an individual human being. This metamorphosis takes place on the ground of the image of the natural cycle that the West Wind manifests and that can indeed represent both the grand-scale process of revolution or political change and the small-scale process of individual human existence. Thus the inevitable changing of the seasons that has so far represented the necessary course of history comes now to represent the phases and the necessary progression of human life from the spring of youth through the decay of autumn to the winter of death. What the poem makes us realize at this point is that the great historical power that overthrows tyrants and ushers in a new political order is in fact the same power that sets the course of an individual human life: it is the same irresistible power that makes us grow, that makes us soar higher and higher in our youth and that – after reaching a climactic point – will just as irresistibly make us decay, grow old, and then die.

And in this context it indeed becomes problematic for the individual to relate to this power. We can easily celebrate the force that destroys the old, the dry, the sapless, and that launches a new birth as long as we talk of tyrants, political systems and history; but if the old, the dry, the sapless that is to be destroyed and to give way to the new is ourselves, then it becomes difficult to be so enthusiastic about the power that carries out this inevitable destruction. This is why the speaker finds himself striving with the force that apparently he would like to celebrate.

To speak more generally about stanza IV, we can say that through the image of the cyclic change of nature Shelley joins here to the theme of Necessity another central element of his poetic universe: the theme of mutability. Mutability is an ever present theme in Shelley’s poetry which has several implications and appears in various contexts.²⁰ The aspect of mutability that is relevant in stanza IV of the “Ode” is I think primarily the tragic one. Just as in many other of his poems, Shelley laments here the tragic fact of the transitoriness of human existence, of the ephemeral nature of joys and pleasure, of the inevitable decay of all human achievements and of everything that is

²⁰ For a thorough treatment of Shelley’s use of the theme of mutability see Roberts 426-39. Roberts sees the origin of Shelley’s use of the theme of mutability in the Lucretian idea of universal flux and emphasizes its positive, liberating aspect in Shelley’s poetry, including the “Ode”, too. This reading, however, cannot account for the undoubtedly tragic tone of stanza IV or for other great Shelleyan lamentations of mutability such as those in “Adonais” or in “The Sensitive Plant”.

valuable in life. As he puts it in a short lyric that was posthumously published under the title "Mutability":

The flower that smiles today
Tomorrow dies;
All that we wish to stay
Tempt and then flies;
What is this world's delight?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.–

This tragic theme is what is introduced in stanza IV and this is what, by the implicit identification with Necessity itself, causes the speaker's fundamental problem. However, what this fusion of the themes of Necessity and mutability results in is not merely a complication of the concept of Necessity but also an intensification of both themes. Through integrating the mutability theme Necessity is thus extended to encompass all aspects of human life. It becomes the universal law of our existence, for it turns out to control not only the grand-scale processes of history but also the blooming and dropping of a simple flower, as well as the birth and death of the individual. Similarly, the tragic theme of mutability is also amplified by its identification with the theme of Necessity. The fact that everything passes away, that nothing is stable, that all value must disappear, is tragic in itself, but at least it can be defiantly rejected as cruel and inhuman in favour of a transcendental hope – as Shelley does in fact defiantly reject this tragic aspect of mutability in some of his greatest poems ("Intellectual Beauty", "The Sensitive Plant", "Adonais" – just to mention the most obvious examples). However, if one realizes, as the speaker must realize in this poem, that the cruel and inhuman force destroying all that lives, all that we deem valuable is Necessity itself; that is to say, the very power that has given life to all things, that has created those values, "quickened their birth" in the first place, the defiant gesture loses its ground and we are left with an even deeper sense of the tragedy.

It is this keen sense of the irreversible and tragic human loss that leads the speaker of the poem to the despair represented in stanza IV. He must realize that the great universal power that he would like to celebrate in fact does not care about human fate, shows no sympathy for the problem of the individual. It carries out its mission whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not, whether we resist it or not, and regardless of the personal losses that we inevitably suffer in the process. This, then, is the main reason why Necessity becomes problematic for the speaker, the main source for the anxiety expressed in the poem.

The despair at the end of the fourth stanza is, however, not the end of the poem. Despair, it seems, is just presented as a phase in a process that Shelley is describing in its entirety and that turns out, in the fifth stanza, to be ultimately a

process of creativity. The speaker turns in this last section to poetry as a means of overcoming the predicament that he found himself in in the previous stanza. In a series of gestures he succeeds in internalizing the West Wind and thus manages to emerge from his passive dejection as an active poet-prophet who, in a sense, stands above the power of the wind. This process has received very detailed treatment in Shelley criticism and I will not discuss it here fully.²¹ Let me just point out that what the speaker achieves in stanza V is based on an essential element of the concept of Necessity. Necessity, I have said, is a power that has no meaning, no purpose in itself, and since it is based on causality, it cannot even be experienced directly. Like the West Wind, it is an ‘unseen presence’ whose existence is only derived from an observation of the movement of some other objects. We do not see the wind itself, we only see the leaves and clouds that seem to move as if driven by some force and from this observation we conclude that the wind exists as a cause of these movements. Similarly, Necessity cannot in itself be seen or grasped, it has no meaning or existence unless we attribute to it such a meaning or existence. Without the poets or prophets who make this attribution, the Wind of Necessity is in fact nothing, and thus by undertaking the task of imposing this meaning,²² the speaker succeeds in making the West Wind the agent of his own poetry; and at the end he even identifies it with his own breath when he says “Be through my lips to unawakened earth / The trumpet of a prophecy”. It might even be claimed that at this point the speaker himself is blowing the wind which, therefore, can have no power over him and thus, it seems, he has surmounted his initial difficulty.

Or has he? This quotation brings us directly to the rhetorical question with which the poem concludes and which, as has been anticipated, raises some doubt about the speaker’s ultimate success. On the first level of significance, of course, this question continues the triumphant tone of the previous lines. “If winter comes, can spring be far behind?” is in fact the very prophecy the speaker has announced and by uttering it he fulfils his prophetic mission. He has heroically undertaken his fate as a poet and prophesies the inevitable cyclic regeneration celebrating the new birth, the victory of the spring. But he can only do this by deliberately overlooking his own irreversible loss. In fact it is quite conspicuous that in stanza V the speaker brackets the issue of personal finitude which he has so clearly established in the fourth stanza. He does refer to his personal decay when, comparing himself to a forest, he says “What if my leaves are falling like its own!”; but this appears to be insignificant compared to the great prophetic task which consists in inseminating the thought of the political

²¹ For an insightful treatment of this process see Chayes, Irene H. “Rhetoric and Drama: An Approach to the Romantic Ode”, *PMLA*, 79 (March 1964), 71-4 (reprinted in Reiman and Powers 620-25).

²² This giving meaning is the very act of prophecy and this provides the link between Necessity and the theme of poetry as prophecy – another major line of interpreting this poem (see especially Bloom, Harold (1959) *Shelley’s Mythmaking*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 66; Chandler, James (1998) *England in 1819. The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 545-9; Péter, op. cit., 189-90).

regenerative force of Necessity. But the closing question of the poem indicates that a lingering doubt still remains. One is reminded by the question mark that the coming of winter is not just the sign of universal regeneration but also of irreversible personal loss. There is no new spring for the individual, no matter how strongly we believe in universal rebirth. Apart from contributing to the confident affirmation, therefore, the question at the end of the poem also asks 'Is this heroic, altruistic gesture of assuming one's fate, of becoming a poet, a prophet, really sufficient compensation for the personal loss that one must suffer in the process?'

And even if the answer to this question can be yes, there is yet another doubt that I think this question raises; a doubt that is connected once again to the essential purposelessness of Necessity. If Necessity is in fact purposeless, if its meaning is only attributed, imposed by the poets/prophets, then is the speaker's prophecy not just the work of his fancy? Is it possible that the spring that he prophesies is just a dream, wishful thinking that is never to be realized because it is simply nonexistent? And, consequently, does the poet's fate really exist? Is all this heroism and self-sacrifice not just self-deception and meaningless posing?

These questions, I believe, are ineradicably inscribed in the final rhetorical question of the poem which, in its complexity, seems therefore to be an apt conclusion to this troubled but still magnificent ode.

15 “A BEAST, AN ANGEL AND A MADMAN”: BIRTHDAY PORTRAITS OF DYLAN THOMAS

Kinga Földvály

In the endeavour to present a portrait of literary artists, the reader of modern and postmodern literature has been in a comparatively easy position, as the technological developments in the last century resulted in photography being available for the masses, therefore a more or less accurate physical portrait of a modern poet should not cause any difficulty to find. What is more, as the poet of modern Wales, Dylan Thomas was always willing to read literature, his own or that of others, for the BBC, being often short for money, and having a resonant Welsh reading voice, today it is easy to reproduce even what he sounded like. Apart from these images, though, the general reading public knows probably only the tabloid-type of information about Dylan Thomas: the odds are that no more than his Welsh origins, his scandalous love affairs, his drinking habits and his premature death could be recalled, together with the fact that he was the inspiration for Robert Zimmermann to change his name to Bob Dylan. Nevertheless, hardly any one of his readers would claim, even if interested in such realistic trivia, that these superficial details manage to catch the essence, or that they allow us to see who the poet really was or what he and his art may indeed mean to us. His work, however, is hardly ever mentioned in popular accounts of his life, as it – especially his poetry – does not offer easy access but rather requires effort and dedication from the reader who would like to pry into the hidden depths of its meaning. The poet, whose sense of humour and tendency for self-irony is clear from his private letters and most of his prose writings, hides himself behind a variety of elaborate masks in his poetic works, masks which are not easy to penetrate.

Nevertheless, this is exactly what this paper intends to do, by examining a couple of poems and several related letters of Dylan Thomas, in order to draw – or retouch – the portrait he wanted to share with us. The poems that I have chosen for this analysis are the birthday poems, pieces that were written at personal milestones that mark the way of the artist from the cradle to the grave: “Especially when the October wind”, “Twenty-four years”, “Poem in October” and “Poem on his Birthday”. Apart from the poems themselves, I have also looked at Thomas’s letters, edited by Paul Ferris, to get an insight into the way

these self-portraits were communicated towards his most immediate surroundings by the poet himself.

For a start, the task of finding references to himself appears to be easy and straightforward, as Thomas's letters abound in (often ironic) self-descriptions; when introducing himself he usually refers to his appearance in an unflattering way, such as "You'll recognise me easily. I'm short with lots of hair"¹ or "I shan't wear a gardenia but I am short with bulging eyes, a broken tooth, curly hair and a cigarette."² He is also ready to employ the same attitude when it comes to his inner qualities: "Sometimes I am very nice, but to-day I'm awful; I'm caught in my complexes, and they're giving me immense, if unholy, joy."³ Although the reticence (or superficiality) of such introductions would also be worth deeper investigation, the letters occasionally contain considerably deeper and more insightful references to not only the personality but also the poetry of Dylan Thomas. The most famous description, summarising both his personal and artistic traits, can be found in a letter addressed to Henry Treece, a contemporary poet and critic who intended to write a study on Thomas's poetry. In this letter, dated 16th May, 1938, Thomas writes the following:

Very much of my poetry is, I know an enquiry and a terror of fearful expectation, a discovery and facing of fear. I hold a beast, an angel, and a madman in me, and my enquiry is as to their working, and my problem is their subjugation and victory, downthrow & upheaval, and my effort is their self-expression.⁴

These opposing forces of the flesh, the spirit and the artistic imagination fight a constant battle, the various stages of which can be traced through the development of Thomas's poetry, as we will also see in the birthday poems, marking the poet's twentieth, twenty-fourth, thirtieth and thirty-fifth birthdays.

Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that artists are not necessarily the only (or even the best) persons to interpret their work, or even to give clues as to its meanings, however tempting that would be for the critic. To avoid the grave offence of personal heresy when expecting to find the expression of the poet's personality in his work⁵, we must strive to separate the singer from the song. In the poetry of Dylan Thomas this separation seems especially easy to make, as he does not offer easy access to what lies within his soul; still, the birthday poems are characterised by a surprisingly self-reflective quality.

"Especially when the October wind"⁶, published in the first collection of Thomas's poems in 1934, at the age of twenty, does not include any direct

¹ Thomas, Dylan (2000) *The Collected Letters*. ed. Paul Ferris, London: Dent, 258. (Hereafter: *CL*).

² *CL*, 240.

³ *CL*, 89.

⁴ *CL*, 343-44.

⁵ cf. Cuddon, J. A. (1991) *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*. London: Penguin, 702.

⁶ Thomas, Dylan (2000) *The Dylan Thomas Omnibus*. London: Phoenix, 17-18. (Hereafter: *OB*).

reference to the poet's birthday, but its clear self-referential nature would be sufficient to make it part of this analysis, even without the knowledge that the poet was indeed born in October, a fact that he made references to in the later birthday poems as well. However, it is interesting to note that the first version of the title was more explicit (although confusing for the later reader), as when the poem was first published in 1935 both in the BBC journal *The Listener* and in *Eighteen Poems*, and then again submitted for publication in *The Year's Poetry*, 1935, it bore a title identical to the famous mature birthday poem: "Poem in October", written nine years later, in 1944. Sending the manuscript of the poem together with another one⁷ to the editor of the volume, Denys Kilham Roberts, Dylan Thomas made it also clear that the calendar reference is significant for personal reasons. Looking at the full text of the letter (or rather a note), it is apparent that this piece of information is the only thing he deemed necessary to add to the poem itself:

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Here are the corrected proofs.

Poem was printed in *New Verse* and in my *Eighteen Poems*, (Parton Press). Poem In October was printed in the *Listener* and in *Eighteen Poems*.

I was born 27th October, 1914.

Yours truly,

Dylan Thomas⁸

This short note is dated almost a year later than the actual creation of the poem, 28th October 1935, a day after the twenty-first birthday of Dylan Thomas, and the certainty of these four lines may also bear witness to the pride and ambition of the young poet at the moment of his coming of age, stepping out into the world as an adult, as an equal to all the great ones (whom he was eager to criticise in speech and in writing), and conscious of his task and ambition as well. The year that passed since the poem had been written clearly did not weaken its power or render it obsolete; at least this is what the poet's choice suggests: he wished to be represented by this very poem in the poetry anthology of the year.

This early poem contains quite a number of references to the nature and landscape that came to characterise Thomas's distinctly Welsh poetry later on, together with the language and pantheistic imagery that were the trademarks of this period. Here, however, the representation of nature and landscape is clearly metaphorical, subordinated to the search for verbal expression: "vowelled beeches", "oaken voices" and the whole of creation sings from "the loud hills of Wales" in an animistic praise of art. The poem captures the experience of the poet in the making, still eager to break out from the "tower of words" in which

⁷ Probably "If I were tickled by the rub of love", cf. *CL*, 230n.

⁸ *CL*, 230.

he is shut, for whom women’s shapes are “wordy” and birds “dark-vowelled”, whose heart “sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words”, and for whom time is no more than the framework in which the race for self-expression has to be run.

Beyond the natural images, we may find further elements in the poem that connect it to other parts of the Thomas oeuvre. Most of all, if we wish to measure the work to the author’s confessional self-definition quoted above from the letter to Henry Treece, we may easily see how this early birthday poem is still more characterised by the energetic brutality of the beast than the transcendental yearnings of the angel that will dominate the more mature poems. Here the October wind “punishes” with its “frosty fingers”, the birds are “noisy” and we can hear the “raven cough”, and even the creative process bears signs of brutality, as “My busy heart who shudders as she talks / Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words.” The process of giving life to a new creation is not without sacrifice and bloodshed, but at the same time it also points forward by the selfsame birth, which may – and will – survive the fragile human who gave it life.

The maddening complexity of self-reflection is also implied by the lines in the first stanza: “Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire / And cast a shadow crab upon the land”, identifying both with the sun that casts a shadow and its object, the subjective poetic persona, whose shadow is cast; whose forward movement cannot happen without his shadow (spirit?) moving backwards crabwise: advancement in art presupposes consciousness about what we leave behind, and every anniversary is the celebration of past, present and future at the same time. The “coming fury” of the final stanza also forewarns us (and the poet) of the madness lying ahead, and it is easy to see how such an energetic plunge into creative work and fight for artistic expression might involve emotionally and intellectually heightened states of mind that threaten the delicate inner balance of the tripartite poetic personality.

The next anniversary remarkable enough for the poet to celebrate with a poem came four years later; and its nine lines bear witness to a poetic personality significantly matured, with no more doubts concerning the vocation, conscious of human mortality but at the same time claiming immortality through poetic creation. Similarly to the early poem mentioned above, “Twenty-four years”⁹ originally had a title other than the first line (which became characteristic of much of Thomas’s poetry); this short piece was first entitled “Birthday poem” when it was written in 1938 and published in his third volume, *The Map of Love* (1939), although by the publication of *Collected Poems* the title was changed to the present version. In his correspondence with his friend, the poet Vernon Watkins, about the poem, Dylan Thomas refers to it as a “very short poem...for my birthday”¹⁰, and later as “the birthday poem”¹¹.

⁹ *OB*, 71.

¹⁰ *CL*, 382.

¹¹ *CL*, 393.

Paul Ferris in his biography claims that this short poem is different in style and accessibility from the other work of the period, which appears to be hard to argue with, knowing that this is the volume which contains poems such as “It is the sinners’ dust-tongued bell”, “The spire cranes”, and “Once it was the colour of saying”. Referring to the period, Ferris states that

His verse continued to be difficult, almost wilfully so, with the one exception, that autumn, of a short, disturbing poem written for his birthday at the end of October, “Twenty-four years”. After the complicated images of the other poems the message arrived like a telegram: life means death.¹²

Comparing the volume to the Swansea *Notebooks*, however, it is easy to find the explanation for this sudden change in style, as Andrew Sinclair shows that the majority of the poems in *The Map of Love* were rewritten or polished versions of earlier pieces: “Dylan only actually wrote five new poems in the two and a half pre-war years at the beginning of his relationship with Caitlin”¹³. Whether the reason for this slow but significant maturing in his work can in fact be the beginning of a relationship that was passionate but stormy to the last moment is not for us to decide, but it is definitely true that “Twenty-four years” shows a turning away from the poetry of adolescence and the development towards a growing artistic and personal consciousness, to a sense of adulthood, with its gathering of painful experience but also finding a sense of direction towards which the poet’s path is leading, apparently for eternity: “In the direction of the elementary town / I advance as long as forever is.” What Paul Ferris claims is, I suppose, no more than the realisation that everyone makes on the brink of adulthood: to be born means that one is doomed to die as well, and being conscious of this element of our humanity helps us to be reconciled with our time spent here on earth. The knowledge, however, does not necessarily mean preoccupation, as the poem’s time-frame arches from “twenty-four years” to “forever”, “the sensual strut” has begun, but has not yet ended, the artistic purse of the poet is still bulging with creative energy: “my red veins full of money”, and the predicate of the complex sentence comprising the last four lines is an ambitious “advance”, with no intimation of fear or regret that the journey will ever end.

As it becomes evident from Dylan Thomas’s card to his friend, the poet Vernon Watkins, the above quoted final phrase (“as long as forever is”) was in fact the first part of the poem to be written, although for a while it was planned to stand at the beginning of a poem eventually abandoned by the poet: “In the old ‘Forever’ poem they [the lines] were completely out of place—& the rest of the poem wouldn’t stand without them. So bang went the whole poem,

¹² Ferris, Paul (2000) *Dylan Thomas, the Biography* Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 164.

¹³ Sinclair, Andrew (1999) *Dylan the Bard*. London: Constable, 110.

obviously, & here at last is what it should be.”¹⁴ Forever is indeed the idea around which the poem is built, and in the artist’s soul we can witness the angel rising over the beast in their continuous struggle for human nature.

The second, bracketed line in the poem: “(Bury the dead for fear that they walk to the grave in labour.)” is also striking both syntactically and in its printed form, underlining its marked separation from the short introductory sentence before and the long metaphorical seven-line sentence after it. As we can learn from the correspondence of Thomas and Vernon Watkins, this line was also the subject of argument between the two poet-friends, the reference to which is found in a letter dated December 20, 1938.

...sorry about that bracketed line in the birthday poem, but, until I can think of something else or feel, it will have to stay. [...] I do realise your objections to my line; I feel myself the too selfconscious flourish, recognize the Shakespeare echo (though echo’s not the word). If ever I do alter it, I’ll remember your line.¹⁵

The Shakespeare echo is clearly felt not only in the line mentioned above, but the “meat-eating sun” may also remind one of Hamlet’s warning to Polonius concerning the sun breeding maggots in a dead dog (2.2.181)¹⁶, which is only two dozen lines away from Polonius’s remark on the method in the prince’s madness (2.2.205-6). Even though it would sound rather far-fetched to claim that the Shakespearean scene would connect Dylan Thomas’s poem to the beast-angel-madman pattern, the presence of the opposing forces fighting for dominance within the creative mind is hard to deny in either case. In “Twenty-four years” the bestial qualities of the flesh are still dominant in quantity, as the imagery of the first seven lines is characterised by the puzzling images of mortality: of birth and tears, decomposition and death, sensuality and corruption¹⁷; but the “final direction” of the last two lines of the poem elevate its message towards a more spiritual sphere, where the madman’s confused state of mind clears and allows the visionary to follow the path in the direction of eternity. The qualifying phrase in the final line: “as long as forever is” may indeed apply “to the duration of Thomas’s existence”¹⁸; nevertheless, I feel that the overall emphasis of the poem is not on the finite duration but on the endless opportunities life offers to the young artist.

“Twenty-four years”, as we have seen, is therefore as much an end and a conclusion as a starting point, as it moves from burying the dead to setting off on

¹⁴ *CL*, 383.

¹⁵ *CL*, 393.

¹⁶ References are to the following edition: William Shakespeare (1997) *Hamlet*. ed. Harold Jenkins The Arden Shakespeare, Second Series, Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons.

¹⁷ According to John Ackerman, “Thomas frequently uses ‘money’ as an image of sensuality, corruption and worldliness”, cf. Ackerman, John (1996) *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 86.

¹⁸ Ackerman, 86.

a new journey, and John Ackerman is right in describing it as “a compact and urgent summary of the attitudes and ideas that inform Thomas’s early work”¹⁹. The next birthday poem, “Poem in October”²⁰, composed in late August, 1944 and first published in the February 1945 issue of the magazine *Horizon*²¹, is clearly the product of a different artistic period, where the physical tangibility of human nature has gained strikingly different associations. The poem was later placed at the beginning of the volume *Deaths and Entrances* (1946), and is therefore very close to “Twenty-four years” in the collected volumes of Thomas’s poetry, although the two poems are worlds apart in style and content. In a letter to Vernon Watkins, Dylan Thomas writes the following about the poem: “Here is a new poem. It’s a month & a bit premature. I do hope you like it, & wd like very much to read it aloud to you. Will you read it aloud too? It’s got, I think, a lovely slow lyrical movement.”²²

The poem has indeed a peculiar auditory quality, with its eight ten-line stanzas, whose intricate rhyme scheme (mainly ABACABCABC) and syllable pattern (9, 12, 9, 3, 5, 12, 12, 5, 3, 9) remind one of several other mature poems, especially “Fern Hill” and “Over Sir John’s Hill”, both of which have elaborate verse patterns, almost pictorial and certainly adding a visual impact to the whole, although the three stanzas are not identical with each other. The stanzas in “Fern Hill” consist of nine lines, those of “Over Sir John’s Hill” have twelve lines each; the length of lines varies in both, in “Fern Hill” the syllable pattern is mostly 14, 14, 9, 6, 9, 14, 14, 7, 9, while in “Over Sir John’s Hill” it is roughly 5, 6, 14, 15, 5, 1, 15, 5, 14, 5, 14, 14. These numbers in themselves may not prove more than the remarkable skill and ease with which Thomas handled practically any poetic form he found or devised, but together with the intricate rhyme patterns ABCDDABCD and AABCCBDEAEDD of “Fern Hill” and “Over Sir John’s Hill” respectively, they suggest a symmetrical wave-like shape, which can also be read as a double hour-glass, reinforcing the central metaphor that characterises all three of the poems, both the sea and the hour-glass referring to the central image of time.

The shared topicality between “Poem in October”, “Fern Hill” and “Over Sir John’s Hill”, however, is not only born out of the formal qualities of the three poems; what strikes the reader most is rather a common setting, which is more than simple background: all three poems invoke the locations of the poet’s childhood, beautiful rural Wales, with its atmosphere of prelapsarian innocence and lush green nature. In a letter dated four days before the one mentioned above, Thomas also refers to “Poem in October” as “a Laugharne poem: the first place poem I’ve written”²³, describing the joy of finding inspiration in the surroundings of Blaen Cwm, the family cottage where they

¹⁹ Ackerman, 85.

²⁰ *OB*, 73-75.

²¹ *CL*, 594n.

²² *CL*, 581.

²³ *CL*, 580.

were staying with the parents of Dylan Thomas, and a place resonant with poetic memories, as “he had been writing poetry since adolescence” there²⁴.

“Poem in October” may have been the first of his place poems, but it was certainly not the last one, and it belongs to the well-known mature poems mentioned above in several ways, by virtue of both its atmosphere of silent wisdom, and its preoccupation with looking back on the poet’s childhood rather than forward to the future with any new ambition. The vocabulary also fits the religious mood: “my thirtieth year to heaven”, “priested shore”, “water praying”, “parables of sun light”; together with all the animate and inanimate characters populating the poet’s childhood: the heron, the sleeping town, the winged trees, the horses, larks, blackbirds, owls, the apples, pears and red currants, all parts of the “child’s forgotten mornings”, “the twice told fields of infancy”, singing “the true joy of the long dead child”.

“Poem in October” appears therefore to be a summary and a representation of the whole period (just like “Twenty-four years” was a conclusion of the earlier years), placing the problem and metaphor of time in the centre (what could be more accurate for such a topic than a birthday poem?), showing in a crystallised form what the poet could and would be concerned with in the middle of the 1940s.

“Poem on his Birthday”²⁵, written and published in 1951, is referred to by Dylan Thomas as “my best poem for years”²⁶, or “the best I’ve done”²⁷, although this may sound rather intentionally enthusiastic in a letter of apology, and in another of request, where he is trying to get it published. Still, the critical response to these poems is usually along similarly laudatory lines, as Barbara Hardy’s phrase: “some of Thomas’s best lyrics”²⁸, or John Ackerman’s “his finest poems”²⁹ also suggest. Nevertheless, it is also true that Thomas did not spare any effort when he was writing the poem: an American patron, Isabella Gardner, who bought some of Thomas’s manuscripts, acquired among others 143 worksheets of “Poem on his Birthday”³⁰, implying that no financial, emotional or health-related problem could discourage the poet from striving for the only expression he felt right.

This poem bears strong relations to “Poem in October”, partly in its rural Welsh setting, making it as much of a Laugharne poem as the previous one, but at the same time it also suggests that the poet has arrived at a more advanced stage in his creative progress. The distance that is remarkable in Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, when the direct narration suddenly gives way to the diary form with its first person references to all that is important to draw that

²⁴ *CL*, 580n.

²⁵ *OB*, 125-28.

²⁶ *CL*, 900.

²⁷ *CL*, 909.

²⁸ Hardy, Barbary (2000) *Dylan Thomas: An Original Language*. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 118.

²⁹ Ackerman, 134.

³⁰ *CL*, 938n.

portrait, this change of tone of voice is apparent here as well, when in the ninth stanza out of twelve, the pronouns ‘me’, ‘I’ and ‘my’ appear; besides, the last stanzas can also be interpreted as a poem-within-the-poem, a song of prayer and praise, underlining the self-reflective nature of the poem, as Barbary Hardy also remarks in her lectures³¹. Even if it is not a religious poem, the certainty of the transcendental presence is uncommonly straightforward, compared to the earlier animistic or pantheistic beliefs represented in the poems of his youth; phrases like “the unknown, famous light of great / And fabulous, dear God” make it clear that the speaker is no longer afraid of the journey that is ahead of him because of the reward that awaits at the end: “Dark is a way and light is a place, / Heaven that never was / Nor will be ever is always true.”

Without even attempting to do a thorough close-reading of the poem, which would be practically impossible within the scope of the present paper, as “Poem in October” is the longest of the four birthday pieces with its twelve 9-line stanzas, it is enough to have a look at the language of this final section to find the imagery of both literary and religious devotion dominant here. “Let me midlife mourn” employs a Dantesque pose to sum up human experience at what he hopes to be halfway between the cradle and the grave, while “the voyage to ruin I must run” reminds the reader of the frequent Pauline metaphors for life on earth³².

The journey that is implied by both of these images reaches its Yeatsian conclusion in the final clause, which combines the wise acceptance of the inevitable with the elevated mood of transcendental joy over leaving the mortal shell behind: “And my shining men no more alone / As I sail out to die.” There is no more fear or uncertainty as to what the future holds, and all earthly ambition seems to have been purged from the beast, to give way to the angel whom no more madness can divert from the way.

In conclusion, we may see that the words John Arlott used when introducing Dylan Thomas’s poems on the BBC programme on “Welsh Poetry” are no exaggeration at all: “They need little explanation, except to say that they have welded the typical Welsh religious consciousness with a profound depth of visual and emotional recollection which carry them to a high pitch of excitement.”³³ Even though we may not fully agree as to their no need of explanation, I feel that the four birthday poems, as we have seen above, perfectly illustrate this combination, or in other words, the battle the beast and the angel were fighting in the poetic consciousness, occasionally giving way to the madman within, aware of the impossibility to win the race against time, but also finding eternal joy in the battle raging on for self-expression.

³¹ Hardy, 120.

³² Cf. 1Cor 9:24-27; Heb 12:1; 2Tim 4:7-8.

³³ Thomas, Dylan (1991) *The Broadcasts*. ed. Ralph Maud, London: Dent, 49.

16 PHYSIOGNOMY IN SEAMUS HEANEY'S POETRY HEADS, FACES, EYES

Benedek Péter Tóta

Opening one's eyes, perceiving one's face

The art of physiognomy would say that the triangle of your eyes and nose or mouth point out the primary surface – or interface – of human communication: your face. The most important and fundamental act of adequate communication is contacting one's eyes. If you look someone in the eye, you send a non-verbal message of being firm about something that is crucial.¹ Thus, reading the language of the face you can decipher one's mind and character.² Let us read then, you and I, Seamus Heaney's poetic physiognomy to learn how his self-portrait reflects the portraits of others.

You can witness how Seamus Heaney's childhood alter ego performs "An Advancement of Learning"³ after having met the "obscene threats" of "the angry frogs" sitting "[p]oised like mud grenades" down the flax-dam ("Death of a Naturalist" [DN 3-4]), and after having lain "face-down to shun the fear above" in "The Barn" – on the "mouse-grey" floor "where bright eyes stared / From piles of grain in corners, fierce, unblinking" – "when bats were on the wing / Over the rafters" and "[t]he two-lugged sacks moved in like great blind rats" in the mind's eye of the speaker (DN 5). The narrator's advancement of

¹ In contrast, protecting personal rights in criminal cases, the eyes of the suspect, the accused or the convict are blocked out. Shy or disturbed persons tend to cover their eyes. Evildoers are tempted to shun the eyes of others.

² You may want to consult some professional works on physiognomy. For example: Argyle, Michael and Cook, Mark (1976) *Gaze and Mutual Gaze*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Hess, Eckhard H. (1975) *The Tell-Tale Eye: How Your Eyes Reveal Hidden Thoughts and Emotions*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold; Kendon, Adam, Harris, Richard M. and Ritchie Key, Mary (eds.) (1976) *Organization of Behavior in Face-to-Face Interaction*. The Hague: Mouton; Caspar Lavater, Johann (1806) *Essays on Physiognomy*. London: Vernor & Hood; Liggett, John (1974) *The Human Face*. London: Constable; Pease, Allan & Barbara (2004) *The Definitive Book of Body Language*. London: Orion Books; Rosetree, Laura (1988) *I Can Read Your Face: A Systematic Introduction to Wholistic Face Reading*. Silver Spring, MD.: AHA! Experiences; Mitchell, M. E. (1968) *How to Read the Language of the Face*. New York: Macmillan; Whiteside, Robert L. (1974) *Face Language*. New York: F. Fell Publishers.

³ Heaney, Seamus (1966, reset with amendments 1991) *Death of a Naturalist*. London: Faber, 6-7. Hereafter: DN page number.

learning how to face threat, fear or “terror” (DN 7) is told in a 9-unit poem of bridge-structure. As a start, the speaker anticipates the last step of the poem, that is, crossing the bridge (units 1 and 9), and in the exact centre of the text, the speaker establishes his bridgehead (unit 5). This firm construction is a sign of overcoming threat, fear and terror, since the speaker turns to the approaching rat “[w]ith deliberate, thrilled care” articulated by the scientific term “rodent”, consciously used in reference to the rat. The speaker’s strategy that has been devised in his head characterises his tactics in another balanced bridge-structure: his “stare” controls the situation (units 5, 7 and 9). In such a controlled situation as this one, and due to such controlled behaviour as his, the speaker’s “cold sweat” of panic is taken away by the retreating “cold, wet[-furred]” animal. Although the rat has “trained on” the narrator by his “raindrop eye” – aiming at the speaker as if with a gun – the narrator has “stared him out” (unit 7). The major structure is reflected in the minor structure focussing on the narrator’s fixed eyes, the characteristic appearance of his face reflecting the improvement of his power in mind.

At the very beginning of the first volume of poetry by Seamus Heaney, this is the way physiognomy is put into operation. Having the stamina to face his own self, Seamus Heaney proves his self-knowledge. This entitles him to face other characters – alive or dead, animal, vegetal or mineral.

Blind-eyed, live skulls

You can become familiar with Seamus Heaney’s agrarian ancestors “At a Potato Digging” (DN 18-20). By virtue of their heritage, they are down to earth and close to vegetation. “Heads bow, trunks bend, hands fumble towards the black / Mother.” (DN 18) In this almost agricultural mythology and ritual, the “slit-eyed tubers seem / the petrified hearts of drills.” Being buried alive as in a sacrifice, they seem to be “live skulls, blind-eyed.” Their fate is represented in a rewritten form of the Passion: “The new potato, sound as stone, / putrefied when it had lain / three days in the long clay pit. / ... // Mouths tightened in, eyes died hard, / faces chilled to a plucked bird.” (DN 19) Heaney’s family history depicted in his father’s and grandfather’s portraits (“Digging” [DN 1-2]) is taken further back in history as far as the Great Famine of 1845, recalling the profile of his nation and their history. You can find the space of this extended timeline in “Bogland”, the last poem of Heaney’s second volume of poetry: “Everywhere the eye concedes to / Encroaching horizon, // Is wooed into cyclops’ eye / Of tarn.”⁴

Characteristically, Heaney faces history, that of his family, that of his nation, and that of his land. Mentally, he keeps “striking / Inwards and downwards” (DD 56).

⁴ Heaney, Seamus (1969) *Door into the Dark*. London: Faber, 55. Hereafter: DD page number.

Reading inhumed faces

You can see the metaphoric relationship between the digging of agriculture and the excavation of archaeology – searching the data of life and death. It was in the summer of 1969 – when the troubles in Northern-Ireland started – that Heaney read a book in English translation entitled *The Bog People*. Heaney's thoughts are relevant as for "The Tollund Man"⁵ in particular, and the heads, faces and eyes in general.

It was chiefly concerned with preserved bodies of men and women found in the bogs of Jutland, naked, strangled or with their throats cut, disposed under the peat since early Iron Age times. The author, P. V. Glob, argues convincingly that a number of these, and in particular the Tollund Man, whose head is now preserved near Aarhus in the museum at Silkeborg, were ritual sacrifices to Mother Goddess, the goddess of the ground who needed new bridegrooms each winter to bed with her in her sacred place, in the bog, to ensure the renewal and fertility of the territory in the spring. Taken in relation to the tradition of Irish political martyrdom for that cause whose icon is Kathleen Ni Houlihan, this is more than an archaic barbarous rite: it is an archetypal pattern. And the unforgettable photographs of these victims blended in my mind with photographs of atrocities, past and present, in the long rites of Irish political and religious struggles. When I wrote this poem, I had a completely new sensation, one of fear. It was a vow to go on pilgrimage and I felt as it came to me – and again it came quickly – that unless I was deeply in earnest about what I was saying, I was simply invoking danger for myself. [...]

Some day I will go to Aarhus
To see his peat-brown head,
The mild pods of his eye-lids,
His pointed skin cap.

[...]

... a saint's kept body,

... his stained face
[...]

⁵ Heaney, Seamus (1972) *Wintering Out*. London: Faber, 47-48. Hereafter: WO page number.

And just how persistent the barbaric attitudes are, not only in the slaughter but in the psyche, I discovered, again when the *frisson* of the poem itself had passed, and indeed after I had fulfilled the vow and gone to Jutland, ‘the holy blissful martyr for to seke.’⁶

Heaney immediately adds that a Celtic scholar, Anne Ross, identifies a symbol

‘which, in its way, sums up the whole of Celtic pagan religion and is as representative of it as is, for example, the sign of the cross in Christian contexts. This is the symbol of the severed human head; in all its various modes of iconographic representation and verbal presentation, one may find the hard core of Celtic religion. [...]’⁷

My sense of occasion and almost awe as I vowed to go to pray to the Tollund Man and assist at his enshrined head had a longer ancestry than I had at the time realized.⁸

Heaney’s portrait of the Tollund Man serves “to make germinate” (WO 48) the icon of the head in another of his poems:

Strange Fruit

Here is the girl’s head like an exhumed gourd.
Oval-faced, prune-skinned, prune stones for teeth.
They unswaddled the wet fern of her hair
And made an exhibition of its coil,
Let the air at her leathery beauty.
Pash of tallow, perishable treasure:
Her broken nose is dark as a turf clod,
Her eyeholes blank as pools in the old workings.
Diodorus Siculus confessed
His gradual ease among the likes of this:
Murdered, forgotten, nameless, terrible
Beheaded girl, outstaring axe
And beatification, outstaring
What had begun to feel like reverence.⁹

⁶ Cf.: “To seek the holy blissful martyr ...” Chaucer, Geoffrey (1951, rpt. 1982) *The Canterbury Tales*. Translated into modern English by Nevill Coghill, Penguin Books, 19.

⁷ Heaney’s note: “Pagan Celtic Britain: Studies in Iconography and Tradition. Routledge, 1967.”

⁸ Heaney, Seamus (1980) *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978*. London: Faber, 57-59. Hereafter: P page number.

⁹ Heaney, Seamus (1975) *North*. London: Faber, 39. Hereafter: N page number.

You can take this unrhymed and syntactically disproportionate poem of fourteen lines for a sonnet. It could be Italian in type if you consider the description of the girl's head (lines 1-8) an octave and the attitude of Diodorus Siculus (lines 9-14) a sestet. The two quatrains in the octave can be detailed as follows. In lines 1-4 vegetal images dominate – gourd, prune and fern – framed by the girl's hair and its coil; while lines 5-8 are controlled by bog land images – turf clod, pools and old workings. The sestet can consist of two tercets: lines 9-11 reflect the ancient historiographer's stereotyped opinion, while lines 12-14 reveal the girl's reaction to it. However, the last six lines can be analysed in another way, as well. Lines 9-10 inform us about the disinterestedness of Diodorus Siculus, lines 11-12 detail his attitude in reference to the girl, while in lines 13-14 we learn about the disinterestedness of the girl "outstaring" two abstract values as if her face had come to life. In this way the sestet can consist of a self-referential sub-unit of 4 lines and a couplet of two lines containing two abstract concepts. Being also aware of the facts that the image of "the girl's head" in the first line starts the poem, and that the implied image of the opening phrase of line 12 – "[b]eheaded girl" – frame lines 1-12 – that can be divided into three quatrains followed by a couplet –, we can have a sonnet of the English type. The anatomy of the unrhymed sonnet form reads the physiognomy of the exhumed head fulfilling the imperative: "Read the inhumed faces // of casualty and victim" ("Kinship" [N 45]).

The dream vision of "Station Island VIII" introduces faces of casualty and victim – next of kin – to the reader.¹⁰ Helen Vendler considers "its dramatic personae as [...] alter egos – men whose lives the poet, under other circumstances, might have found himself living. [...]like his archaeologist friend¹¹ who died at thirty-two of heart disease, he might, given bad luck, have died early; like his cousin Colum McCartney, Heaney could have been the victim of an arbitrary sectarian killing."¹² Following the exchanges of the writer and his next of kin in the dream vision, you can read these faces inhumed or exhumed.

[...]
I came to and there at the bed's stone hub
was my archaeologist, very like himself,
with his scribe face smiling its straight-lipped smile,
starting at the sight of me with the same old
pretence of amazement, so that the wing
of woodkerne's hair fanned down over his brow.
[...]

¹⁰ Heaney, Seamus (1985) *Station Island*. New York: Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 81-83. Hereafter: SI page number.

¹¹ See: "Glanmore Revisited", "Scrabble: *in memoriam* Tom Delaney, archaeologist" in: Heaney, Seamus (1991) *Seeing Things*. London: Faber, 31. Hereafter: ST page number.

¹² Vendler, Helen (1998, 2000) *Seamus Heaney*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 93.

“I loved my still-faced archaeology.
The small crab-apple physiognomies
on high crosses, carved heads in abbeys ...”
[...]
... And then I saw a face
he had once given me, a plaster cast
of an abbess ...
mild-mouthed and cowed, a character of grace.
[...]
But he had gone when I looked to meet his eyes
and hunkering instead there in his place
was a bleeding, pale-faced boy, plastered in mud.
[...]

Loving these symbols and reading these faces you can probably hope to tell some day “why / what seemed deserved and promised passed [one] by” (cf., SI 82).

Stone-eyed MacDiarmid and Yeats

Thanks to *Electric Light*, you can find in “The Bookcase” of Seamus Heaney the “Collected Hugh MacDiarmid.”¹³ However, the first portrait of MacDiarmid depicted by Heaney is severe. “When [MacDiarmid’s] brow furrows with earnest ambition and his pedantic Scottish pipe begins its relentless drone we witness the amazing metamorphosis of genius into bore.” (P 197)¹⁴ Next Heaney assesses the achievement of MacDiarmid – whose original name was Christopher Murray Grieve (1892-1978) – in reference to that of John Clare (1793-1864).

MacDiarmid’s theoretical passion in the 1920s fulfilled Clare’s poetic intuition of the 1820s [...] Everything that MacDiarmid wrote about revitalizing the vernacular, all his aspirations to unblock linguistic access to a reservoir of common knowledge and unacknowledged potential, all his angry regret that English literature maintained ‘a narrow ascendancy tradition instead of broad-basing itself on all the diverse cultural elements and splendid variety of languages and dialects, in the British Isles’ – all this was a making explicit of what was implicit in much of Clare’s practice.¹⁵ (RP 74)

¹³ Heaney, Seamus (2001) *Electric Light*. London: Faber, 51. Hereafter: EL page number.

¹⁴ Heaney, Seamus (1972) “Tradition and an Individual Talent: Hugh MacDiarmid” in P 195-198.

¹⁵ Heaney, Seamus (20 October 1992) “John Clare’s Prog” in Heaney, Seamus (1995) *The Redress of Poetry: Oxford Lectures*. London: Faber, 63-82. Hereafter: RP page number.

While pointing out that the works by both poets represent “a thrilling integration of common idiom and visionary anger,” Heaney highlights “that the ballad stanza [...] places [both of them] at the centre of [their] world and keeps [them] on course like a plough in a furrow.” (RP 75). The repeated occurrence of the image of the “furrow” recalls one of its earliest appearances in Heaney’s poetry.

Follower

My father worked with a horse-plough,
[...]

[...]
At the headrig, with a single pluck

Of reins, the sweating team turned round
And back into the land. His eye
Narrowed and angled at the ground,
Mapping the furrow exactly. (DN 12)

This familiar and familial relation almost creates personal ascendancy between these three poets in Heaney’s latent acknowledgement.

You can read Heaney’s almost laudatory criticism in his essay of 22 October 1992 entitled “A Torchlight Procession of One: On Hugh MacDiarmid” (RP 103-123). Heaney installs MacDiarmid as a member of the early twentieth century literary pantheon, along with Yeats, Joyce and Ezra Pound.

MacDiarmid’s position in Scottish literature and culture is in many respects analogous to that of Yeats in Ireland [...] His linguistic overweening was hugely encouraged by the example of Joyce [...] (RP 103) MacDiarmid’s ways with the old words were as revolutionary and self-conscious as the young Ezra Pound’s ways with a diction based upon archaism and a translatoresque derived from Anglo-Saxon, Latin and Chinese originals. (RP 111)

Heaney delicately hints at an interest shared by him and MacDiarmid. “In 1922, [...] Grieve turned into MacDiarmid when he realized that his writing identity depended for its empowerment upon his securing an ever deepening access to those primary linguistic strata in his own and his country’s memory.” (RP 107)¹⁶ With such a disposition, MacDiarmid published his “astonishing poem” of

¹⁶ Remember “the Feast of the Holy Tundish” (SI 93), or the use of “thole” and “bawn” in Seamus Heaney’s (1999) “Introduction” to his translation of *Beowulf*, London: Faber, xxv-xxvi and xxx. Hereafter: B page/line numbers.

“inspired down-to-earthness” entitled “A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle” in 1926.

[T]his is an encounter between an intoxicated imagination and everything which that imagination can invent by meditation upon the national symbol of Scotland. At one moment, for example, the thistle has a mainly domestic and negative meaning [...] perceived [...] as part and parcel of Scottish kitsch, of a piece with tartan for tourists [...] But at another moment it becomes the *yggdrasil*, the world-tree, a cosmic symbol that allows for poetry that is more visionary than satiric, a poetry of great sweep and intellectual resonance which nevertheless still keeps its ear to the negative ground. (RP 112 and 113)

After having canonised MacDiarmid in the portrait gallery of high modernism, Heaney further refined his appreciation of MacDiarmid, and – with “An Invocation” – turned to him as if to a muse.¹⁷

Incline to me, MacDiarmid, out of Shetland,
Stone-eyed from stone-gazing, ...

[...]

Incline as the sage of winds that flout the rock face,

[...]

Your big pale forehead in the window glass
Like the earth’s curve on the sea’s curve to the north.

[...]

And if you won’t incline, endure
At an embraced distance. Be the wee
Contrary stormcock that you always were,

The weather-eye of a poetry like the weather,
A shifting force, a factor factored in
Whether it prevails or not, constantly

A function of its time and place

¹⁷ Heaney, Seamus (1996) *Spirit Level*. London: Faber, 27-28. Hereafter: SL page number.

And sometimes of our own. Never, at any rate,
Beyond us, even when outlandish.

In the accent, in the idiom, in
The idea like a thistle in the wind,
A catechism worth repeating always.

The verbal outline of this profile – consisting of a stone-eyed sage with pale forehead of echoing catechetic wisdom and winds flouting the rock face, thus becoming the watchful weather-eye of a poetry like the ever changing weather – resonates Heaney's essay recalling MacDiarmid, the poet-creator of a literature "in the language he had invented and which he called Synthetic Scots" (RP 104) acting "as an inspiration for the poet who was to change the course of poetry" (RP 103) in another language. The components of this complex image resemble another profile in another poem by another poet, that of "The Magi" by William Butler Yeats.¹⁸

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depth of the sky
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

While not ignoring the Biblical references to the history of salvation – the birth of Jesus, the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt in order to avoid Herod's control, the bestial floor or ground of the massacre in Bethlehem on the one hand (Mt 1:18-2:18), and Christ's passion on the other hand (Mt 26:36-27:56) –, the components of the Magi's profile – pale, ancient faces like rain-beaten stones of heads framed by helms of silver and characterised by the stare of fixed eyes – are supposed to be completed from another source, as well.

You can find "three very old men" of "weather-beaten faces" coming to Yeats' narrator "to tell [him] important things" based on their wisdom, – collected through their travels "over Ireland", and experience – due to their way of life spent "close to the stones and the trees and at the hours when the immortals are awake." Thus, "The Magi" resemble the sages of Celtic mythologies in "The Adoration of the Magi" (1897).¹⁹

Weather-eyes of perseverant faces of stone-eyed heads may hope to see some day the rising of the uncontrollable mystery.

¹⁸ Yeats, W. B. (1991) *Selected Poetry*. Penguin Books, 83.

¹⁹ Yeats, W. B. (1995) *Short Fiction*. Penguin Books, 212.

Stern-faced Eliot and Hughes

You can read in “An Invitation” that MacDiarmid spent “years in the shore-view house” (SL 27) “on the small island of Whalsay in the Shetlands. In retreat. [...] troubles [...] – in the early 1930s [...] brought MacDiarmid to the stage of nervous breakdown.” (RP 116-117) “But then and always MacDiarmid was sustained by a faith [...] deep down in the consciousness of this child of the Bible-reading Scottish Borders, Christ’s commandment to people to love one another was surely ... powerful.” (RP 123) The end of the third part of “An Invitation” rings out this conviction: “A catechism worth repeating always.” (SL 28) Its actual content is echoed at the end of the second part: “‘Who is my neighbour? My neighbour is all mankind.’” (SL 28)²⁰ Probably this wisdom is the reason for changing the bird imagery from “gull” in the first part for “stormcock” in the third part. Gulls would frequently feed on the eggs and nestlings of other sea-birds; however, “the wee / Contrary stormcock” would feed on small fishes, crustaceans, plankton and molluscs. Gulls would not, but the stormcock would live up to this principle. I think the text includes the “stormcock” compound because it could easily comply with the immediate lexical environment of “weather-eye” through the idea of “weathercock”. However, I might be almost tempted to think of the implication of a real “wee” bird, one that is small indeed. Stormcocks (if they are of the species of *Turdus pilaris* or *Turdus viscivorus*) are about 25 centimetres large, while an actual wee bird could be about 15 centimetres small. A bird of this size that could be thought of is the storm-petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*) – the smallest of seabirds – whose English name comes from Greek *petra* meaning rock. The storm-petrel’s habitat can be found on hardly accessible rocky islands, it builds its nest close to the sea in rock-crevices and scree (small loose broken rocks, small stones). It is particularly frequent in the West of Ireland, in the North-West of Scotland, and in the Faroe Islands. The Shetland Islands – MacDiarmid’s place of retreat – are between the latter two geographical points of reference.²¹ On his retreat-island MacDiarmid would “go / To the beach” – the sea-shore covered with sand and pebbles, small rounded stones. Once, eyeglasses were made of such stones.²² You can see MacDiarmid on the beach: “Stone-eyed from stone-gazing ...” In such a ruminative situation (“repeating always”), taking part in a retreat, “The weather-eye of a poetry like the weather,” MacDiarmid figuratively changes: the

²⁰ See also: “Q. and A. come back. They ‘formed my mind’. / ‘Who is my neighbour?’ ‘My neighbour is all mankind.’” (“Ten Glosses,” 2: The Catechism, in EL 54.) Cf.: Lk 10:25-37.

²¹ Cf., Mullarney, Killian, Svensson, Lars, Zetterström, Dan, and Grant, Peter J. (1999) Bird Guide: The Most Complete Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe, London: Harper: Procellariiformes, *Hydrobates pelagicus*; Laridae; *Turdus pilaris*, *Turdus viscivorus*. The English name of *Turdus pilaris* is Fieldfare, it is very rare in Great Britain and Ireland. The English name of *Turdus viscivorus* is Mistle Thrush, it does not breed in Island, Norway or the northern islands of Scotland.

²² Pebble: 2 [U] a hard glasslike kind of stone, sometimes formerly used for making the lenses of glasses 3 [C] a lens of a pair of glasses, esp. one made of this stone. (Procter, Paul, et al., (eds.) (1978, rpt.1984) *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. London: Longman.)

dimensions of a gull are taken over by a storm-petrel. In a meditative spiritual exercise, such a reduction, decrease or renunciation is an act of humility. No wonder.

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.²³

You join not only Hugh MacDiarmid facing the sea but also T. S. Eliot. Listen:

Old men ought to be explorers
Here and there does not matter
We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation,
The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
Of the petrel ... (FQ 182-183)

Eliot keeps exploring the sea,

“the sea is all about us;
The sea is the land's edge also, the granite
Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses
[...]
... The sea has many voices,
[...]
The sea howl
And the sea yelp, are different voices
Often together heard ...
[...]
And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning,
Clangs
The bell.
[...]
Pray for all those who are in ships, ...
[...]
Also pray for those who were in ships, and
Ended their voyage ...

²³ Eliot, T. S., “Four Quartets” (1969, rpt. 1978) in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot*, London: Faber, 179. Hereafter: FQ page number.

[...]

... wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell's
Perpetual angelus. (FQ 184-185,189)

As the sea has, so does Eliot's poem have many voices echoing throughout "Four Quartets" – one of them is about death and commemoration: "Time the destroyer is time the preserver ..." (FQ 187) A poem by Seamus Heaney resonates these voices.²⁴

Stern

in memory of Ted Hughes

"And what was it like," I asked him,
"Meeting Eliot?"
"When he looked at you,"
He said, "it was like standing on a quay
Watching the prow of the *Queen Mary*
Come towards you, very slowly."

Now it seems
I'm standing on a pierhead watching him
All the while watching me as he rows out
And a wooden end-stopped stern
Labours and shimmers and dips,
Making no real headway.²⁵

By virtue of auditory imagination – the faculty Heaney regarded the "most important of all" he learnt from Eliot²⁶ – homophonic *stern* creates a situation for commemoration and evokes the portrait of the commemorated person "in the mind's eye" (FK 33). Since Heaney commemorates Hughes, who in turn commemorates Eliot, you can virtually face two portraits in one. In addition, however, because in the speaker's figure Heaney himself is present in the

²⁴ Heaney, Seamus (2006) *District and Circle*. London: Faber, 46. Hereafter: DC page number.

²⁵ Ted Hughes recalls T. S. Eliot's "physical presence" in a letter to William Scammell on 15 August 1993: "when he spoke, I had the impression of a slicing, advancing, undeflectible force of terrific mass. My image for it was – like the bows of the Queen Mary." This letter echoes TH's letter to the Editor of the *Observer* on 17 January 1972: "The main impression [Eliot] left with me was something moving with indeflectible force and weight – moreso than in anyone I ever met." The aspect of moving slowly may originate from TH's memory recorded in a letter to John, Nancy, Angela and Francis Fisher on 31 July 1960: "[Eliot] speaks just as he reads his poems, funereal & measured." (Reid, Christopher (ed.) (2007) *Letters of Ted Hughes*. London: Faber, 167, 328, 645.)

²⁶ Heaney, Seamus, "Learning From Eliot" (T. S. Eliot Centenary Lecture, Harvard University, 1988) in Heaney, Seamus (2002) *Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001*. London: Faber, 34. Hereafter: FK page number.

composition as well, we can make out three portraits. Nevertheless, what makes this trinity special is the speaker's stare²⁷ that almost ends in a vision: there is watching, certainly, – we have evidence and no doubt²⁸ – in which there are three agents watching each other, or rather the watching of this triad coincides and coexists in one. This kind of mutual watching has its precedent in Heaney's oeuvre. Heaney acquired the skill of creating mirroring portraits from Dante. In his translation of "Ugolino (*from Dante, Inferno, xxxii, xxxiii*)"²⁹ you can read as follows:

"I stared in my sons' faces and spoke no word.
My eyes were dry and my heart was stony.
[...]
... I saw
The image of my face in their four faces
[...]"
When he had said all this, his eyes rolled
[...] (FW 62-63)

Dante is a shared source of poetic energy for both Eliot and Heaney.³⁰ The way Heaney describes Eliot's approach to Dante may hold true about himself as well: "recreating Dante in his own image." (FK 173) You cannot be surprised then that when Heaney discusses the "equally formative experiences" of "[r]eading T. S. Eliot and reading about T. S. Eliot," you may think that you might have found the germ of "Stern" latently conceived. "There is a *stern* and didactic profile to

²⁷ According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Fowler, H. W., and Fowler, F. G. (eds.) (1911, rpt. 1956) Oxford: Clarendon) the origin of *stern*¹ is "OE *styrne*; perh. cogn. w. *stereo-*, *stare*."

²⁸ Cf. the final meditative section on birth-and-death and Birth-and-Death, respectively, in "Journey of the Magi" by T. S. Eliot.

²⁹ Heaney, Seamus (1979) *Field Work*. London: Faber, 60-63. Hereafter: FW page number.

³⁰ Dante's indelible character appears in "The love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" – Eliot's first idiosyncratic poem. Dante's authentic compositional technique has been present in Heaney's art since his first volume of poetry ("The Early Purges" and "Mid-Term Break" [DN 11, 15]).

Heaney studied the relationship of Dante and the modern poet in the art of T. S. Eliot and the oeuvre of Osip Mandelstam. At a point in articulating the allegorical force of language, he writes as follows:

To listen to Eliot, one would almost be led to forget that Dante's great literary contribution was to write in the vernacular and thereby to give the usual language its head:

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
che la diritta via era smarrita.

(Heaney, Seamus, "*from Envy and Identifications: Dante and the Modern Poet*" [1985] in FK 172.)

Heaney composed "An Invocation" in units of three lines as if imitating and appropriating Dante's *terza rima* when he was "in middle age" (SL 27). Eliot also alludes to Dante "In the middle, not only in the middle of the way / But all the way" (FQ 179). Eliot's compositions, *The Waste Land*, *Ash-Wednesday* and *Four Quartets*, together with Heaney's *Station Island* (Part One starts with "The Underground" – Part Two documents a series of purgatorial dream visions – Part Three is entitled "Sweeney Redivivus") may follow Dante's scheme.

the Dante whom Eliot conjures up and, as he embraces a religious faith, it is to this profile he would submit in order that it be re-created in his own work.”³¹ At this point it is worth remembering that Heaney almost implores MacDiarmid in a similar way to “endure / At an embraced distance.” (SL 28) These men on the sea-shore, on the beach of “the vast waters” of literature, are “stern-faced” (cf., B 12/306). “Already in *Beowulf*” did Heaney introduce the lexical item.³² The lexical item “prow” in the first part of “Stern” also appears in Heaney’s *Beowulf*-translation in the ship-burial of the “beloved lord” (B 3/26-4/52).³³ The faces of “bewailing” and “mourning” men (B 4/49-50) must have turned stern.

While Eliot and Heaney recreated Dante in their own images, Ted Hughes – in 1988 – recreated Eliot into his own image, that of a shaman.³⁴ “Eliot too looks not a little shamanic.” (WP 272) Hughes takes “Death of Saint Narcissus” – a poem composed by Eliot in early youth – “as the first portrait, perhaps the only full-face portrait, of Eliot’s genius. [...]

... the poem records the moment when, looking into the pool beneath his ordinary personality, Eliot’s poetic self caught a moment of tranced stillness, and became very precisely aware of its own nature, inheritance and fate, and found for itself this image. (WP 280)

You can apply a line from the poem to the speaker in the poem, maybe Eliot, and to the speaker about the poem, Hughes: “His eyes were aware of the pointed corners of his eyes” (WP 279). As the critique goes on, we can learn, that

[h]e is the fatally-drained obverse of St Narcissus, striving to construct and maintain a brittly correct face for the outer world, while the entire life of his organism has been sucked up into that burning, sacred but far-removed and fugitive existence of the poetic self ... (WP 282)

A face, brittly correct but stern. Eliot’s and/or Hughes’. This is “the mirror image of Eliot’s poetic Self” (WP 283) and that of Hughes. What Hughes completes here is nothing else but performing the task of his “Famous Poet”

³¹ Heaney, Seamus (1988) *The Government of the Tongue: The 1986 T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures and Other Critical Writings*. London: Faber, 98. (Emphasis mine.)

³² The quotation at the head of the sentence is from another poem written “in memory of Ted Hughes” by Heaney, Seamus: “His Work in the English Tongue” (EL 61-63).

³³ Seamus Heaney tried his hand at translating *Beowulf* earlier in the 1980s and published that interpretation of the ship-burial part (“A Ship of Death”) in (1987) *The Haw Lantern*. London: Faber, 20.

³⁴ Hughes, Ted, “The Poetic Self: A Centenary Tribute to T. S. Eliot” in Hughes, Ted, (1995) *Winter Pollen: Occasional Prose*. London: Faber, 268-292. Hereafter: WP page number.

introduced in *The Hawk in the Rain* of 1957: "First scrutinize those eyes / For the spark, the effulgence ..."³⁵ Stern it is.

In "Casting and Gathering" (ST 13), written "for Ted Hughes" by Heaney, he immortalises two anonymous fishermen, one on the left bank and another on the right, and the words passed between them:

One sound is saying, "You are not worth tuppence,
But neither is anybody. Watch it! Be severe."
The other says, "Go with it! Give and swerve.
You are everything you feel beside the river."

I love hushed air. I trust contrariness.
Years and years go past and I do not move
For I see that when one man casts, the other gathers
And then *vice versa*, without changing sides.

Stern, though brittly correct. "I do not move" (ST 13). "Neither from nor towards; at the still point" (FQ 173). "Making ... real headway." (Cf., DC 46)

Helicon Portrait Gallery: "To see myself"

The speaker of Ted Hughes' "Wodwo", of 1967, in the last two lines awakes the listeners to the consciousness of the fact that "here's the water / again" and adds: "very queer but I'll go on looking" (TH 88). Because of the poem's repetitive nature he/we can start again as if it were the vast water of poetry.

What am I? ...
[...]
... What am I to split
The glassy grain of water looking upward I see the bed
Of the river above me upside down very clear
What am I doing here in mid-air? ...
[...] (TH 87)

Hughes – his speaker – with the pointed corners of his eye/"I" is aware of the instrumental question – "What am I?" – leading him to the reason of his existence. Till then he will "go on looking." If this is the case repeating always, you can be tempted to think that the act of looking yourself in the face is the instrumental reason of existence, however narcissistic it is. The instrumental reason is to *see* yourself. If Hughes sees "Death of Saint Narcissus" as Eliot's self-portrait, you can accept "Wodwo" as Hughes' full-face self-portrait.

³⁵ Hughes, Ted, (1995) *New Selected Poems 1957-1994*. London: Faber, 5. Hereafter: TH page number.

In a passage imitating *terza rima* in the last poem of “Four Quartets” Eliot discusses how poetry could be refined. Eliot introduces his partner as follows:

... as I fixed upon the down-turned face
That pointed scrutiny with which we challenge
The first-met stranger in the waning dusk
I caught the sudden look of some dead master
Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled
Both one and many; in the brown baked features
The eyes of a familiar compound ghost
Both intimate and unidentifiable. (FQ 193)

As Eliot did, so did Heaney. He consumed and digested the most delectable parts of tradition that involves the historical sense. “[N]ot only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously.”³⁶ “Ruminant ground” (N 41) with “the cud of memory” (N 17) for Heaney. With his individual talent, however, in the process of assimilation and synthesis, gaining his self-knowledge and self-control, Heaney differentiated himself as early as in his first volume.

Now, to pry into roots, to finger slime,
To stare, big-eyed Narcissus, into some spring
Is beneath all adult dignity. I rhyme
To see myself, to set the darkness echoing. (DN 44)

This is how Seamus Heaney created his own “Personal Helicon” out of a Portrait Gallery of Physiognomies.

³⁶ Eliot, T. S., “Tradition and the Individual Talent” in Eliot, T. S. (1920, rpt. 1989) *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. London: Routledge, 48-49.

As a “final thing” Heaney also learnt from Eliot that “in the realm of poetry, as in the realm of consciousness, there is no end to the possible learnings that can take place. Nothing is final, the most gratifying discovery is fleeting, the path of positive achievement leads to the *via negativa*. [...] But accepting the consequences of renunciation with such self-knowledge and in proceeding with such strictness of intent, he proved a truth that we want to believe not perhaps about all poets, but about those who are the necessary ones. He showed how poetic vocation entails the disciplining of a habit of expression until it becomes fundamental to the whole conduct of life.” (FK 38)

GLIMPSES AT OVERSEAS –
GENRES FACE TO FACE

17 THE FACE OF EARLY AMERICAN SATIRE: READING BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Kathleen E. Dubs

Benjamin Franklin* is best known as an inventor, contributor to the founding documents of the United States of America as well as signatory to four of the most important documents of the 18th century,¹ *bon vivant* of Paris, and in terms of his writings, for his *Autobiography* and *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Less well known is the fact that his works, when the collecting and editing is complete, will fill some forty-two volumes at Yale University, each volume averaging about seven hundred pages.² Of these, his amusing essays and bagatelles are perhaps more well-known than his many satires. In fact, his satires have largely escaped scholarly attention. Thus this paper will address a few of his satires, not only to bring them to a wider audience, but to set them into a context of their historical relevance, and to indicate something of Franklin's development as a satirist.

Franklin is often remembered for his gentle wit and good natured humor, but “[his] humor has also a dark and sinister side, [...] in which Franklin creates personae [and] fashions them in the blatantly ironic manner of Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, and employs them as his mouthpieces, adopting the point of view that he is attacking, pretending to support it while actually carrying this view to an absurd extreme, thereby making a mockery of his subject.”³ In addition to Defoe, whose *Essay on Projects* Franklin read as a young man, and Swift, whose satire was a British import, Franklin was strongly influenced by the English essayists Addison and Steele. He followed the Enlightenment beliefs in reason and logic, practicality, and earthly inquiry, to which he added the wit of his models, and embedded his own, what Walter Blair has called, American

* A shortened version of this paper was originally presented at the Polish Association for the Study of English.

¹ Franklin is the only man to have signed The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States of America, The Treaty of Paris (1783), and the Treaty of Alliances and Trade with the Americans (1778).

² Isaacson, Walter, ed. (2003) *A Benjamin Franklin Reader*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 4.

³ Piacentino, ed., Humor forum, American Foreign Relations. Accessed 23 January 2007 at <http://www.americamforeignrelations.com/Hi-Im/Humor.html>

“hoss sense.”⁴ He also shared the Enlightenment fondness for pseudonyms and hoaxes.

But in style, unlike some of his models, and unlike many of his 18th century British contemporaries, he believed that prose must be clean, direct, and sparse, devoid of the richness of the Restoration, although he relished alliteration and puns, whether in the name of Poor Rich-ard (a nice oxymoron) or in the character of Silence Dogood.

He preferred “reasonableness, common sense, and experience over emotion or speculation.”⁵ This plain style no doubt reflected his Puritan background. Also indicative of his Puritan fondness for the practical was his insistence that his writing serve purposes of utility and improvement, not only for individuals, but for the general good. He believed and said many times that writing should be judged by its practical effects and usefulness, not its ornamentation. And since “Pieces meerly humorous are of all Sorts the hardest to succeed in,” perhaps for this reason, too, he avoided the creation of compositions that were “meerly humorous.”⁶

Thus when we turn to his satirical writings we see a variety of personae, audiences, and improvements. Silence Dogood, a simple if slightly prudish country widow—acknowledging the growing number of women able to read and write (whom Franklin created when he was only 16)—wrote letters deriding “Boston manners, education, religion, government, and male idleness.”⁷ Among the targets of Mrs. Dogood was Harvard College, which Franklin had hoped to attend, until his father decided that it was not worth the cost.⁸

Some of his individual letters and proposals were aimed at the learned scientific societies of the time, or their ‘high and mighty’ members. His letter to the Royal Academy of Brussels, proposing a study into the science of farts, is filled with scientific language as well as puns and other *double entendres*, but which the author himself judged as not worth a Fart-hing. This satire has been taken as a specific mockery of Newton’s Royal Society and the empiricist school that dominated the educated classes of Europe.

Some satires targeted the intolerance of certain religious sects (his *Bagatelle on St. Peter’s Tolerance*), or Puritan non-scientific practices (“A Witch Trial at Mount Holly”). Some of his work is aimed at himself. *Dialogue between the Gout and Mr. Franklin*—not exactly St. Thomas More’s *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*—is an amusing piece of logical self-edification, in which the gout not only wins the debate, but actually earns thanks from a grateful sufferer.

⁴ Blair, Walter (1942) *Horse Sense in American Humor: from Benjamin Franklin to Ogden Nash*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, quoted in Amacher, Richard “Franklin’s Hoaxes: Studies in American Humor.” Accessed 19 January 2007 at www.compedit.com/franklin's_hoaxes.html

⁵ Amacher.

⁶ Amacher.

⁷ Piacentino.

⁸ Thus Franklin would no doubt be pleased to know that his works are being collected, edited and published by Yale.

But some of his most uncharacteristic, because biting, are the political satires aimed at the Government of England, those “dark and sinister” writings to which I now turn.

In style, Franklin’s method might be characterized as “putting the shoe on the other foot,” drawing the “absurd analogy,” or, simply, exaggerating—either by means of the famous American tall tale, or the Swiftian outrageous proposal. And, as with all good humor, most of Franklin’s satires made people laugh, but they also made them think.

Even before the Revolution, Franklin had turned his attention to policies of the English Parliament. “Britain had been expelling convicts to America, which it justified [out of parental concern] as a way to help the colonies grow.”⁹ Thus in a manner echoing Swift’s *Modest Proposal*, in a letter to *The Pennsylvania Gazette* dated May 9, 1751, Franklin recognized that such concern “calls aloud for the highest *returns* of gratitude and duty,”¹⁰ and proposes a modest means by which this gesture of “parental concern” could be acknowledged: that America send, in exchange, a boatload of rattlesnakes (which Franklin defines as “felons-convict from the beginning of the world”). In paralleling rattlesnakes to convicts (the absurd analogy), he shows, with impeccable logic, that their move to England will have the same effects on the rattlesnakes and on English society that their move to America has on the convicts and American society. But there are flaws to the proposal, as he admits:

There is no human scheme so perfect, but some inconveniences may be objected to it: yet when the conveniences far exceed, the scheme is judged rational, and fit to be executed [...]. Thus it may perhaps be objected to my scheme, that the *rattle-snake* is a mischievous creature, and that his changing his nature with the clime is a mere supposition, not yet confirmed by sufficient facts. What then! Is not example more prevalent than precept? And may not the honest rough British gentry, by a familiarity with these reptiles, learn to *creep*, and to *insinuate*, and to *slaver*, and to *wriggle* into place (and perhaps to *poison* such as stand in their way) qualities of no small advantage to courtiers! In comparison of which *improvement* and *public utility*, what is a *child* now and then killed by their venomous bite, or even a favorite *lap-dog*? [...] And *rattle-snakes* seem the most *suitable returns* for the *human serpents* sent us by our *mother* country. In this, however, as in every other branch of trade, she will have the advantage of us. She will reap *equal* benefits without equal risk [...]. For the rattle-snake gives warning before he attempts his mischief; which the convict does not.

Signed Americanus.¹¹

⁹ Isaacson, 149.

¹⁰ Isaacson, 150.

¹¹ Isaacson, 150-1.

Americanus also suggested that their distribution in St. James' Park would show the most gratitude to the Ministers, Lords, and Members of Parliament—who most deserved it.

In the lead up to the Revolutionary period, in the autumn of 1773, while in London, Franklin published two of his most famous parodies. Designed to show the British how they were viewed by Americans (the shoe on the other foot), these employ the Enlightenment love of logic and rhetoric, and the first, its deference to classical authority. The audience is the British public; the purpose is to effect changes in government policy.

The first is the piece now commonly known as “Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One,” signed by Q.E.D, which appeared in *The Public Advertiser* of September 11, 1773. As its title suggests, it is an absurd inversion. Employing the serious form which will later characterize the “Declaration of Independence,” Franklin enumerates, as suggestions, many of the practices already in existence. In a work filled with puns, Franklin acknowledges that “An ancient sage [Themistocles] valued himself upon this, that though he could not fiddle, he knew how to make a *great City of a little one*.”¹² He then modestly admits that “[t]he Science that I, a modern Simpleton, am about to communicate is the very reverse. I address myself to all Ministers who have the management of extensive dominions, which from their very greatness are become troublesome to govern, because the multiplicity of their affairs leaves no time for fiddling.” And because “a great Empire, like a great Cake, is most easily diminished at the Edges,” he calls for such policies as not incorporating the provinces into the motherland, forgetting all the expense and labor the colonists have expended in establishing a profitable province, “or resent[ing] it as if they had done you Injury;”¹³ quartering their troops among them at their own expense, possibly provoking them to revolt; and so on, to a total of twenty current practices, employing absurd but correct logic. “By this Means, like the Husband who uses his Wife ill *from Suspicion*, you may in Time convert your *Suspensions* into *Realities*.”¹⁴

The second appeared in the same paper on September 2, 1773, and is now known as “An Edict by the King of Prussia.” In this edict, dated Dantzick, September 5, the King of Prussia, employing the same logic that the King of England had used in claiming proprietorship over the Colonies, demanded that the British Isles be returned to him. After all, they were settled by Germanic peoples [Horgist, Henga, and their Germanic tribes] who never formally declared their separation from the Motherland. The King then established what he felt was his due. It is no surprise that, once again, he details the policies England is pursuing against the Colonies, and uses the very language of the English laws in his demands. This piece was so successful that Franklin sent a

¹² Isaacson, 240.

¹³ Isaacson, 241.

¹⁴ Isaacson, 242.

letter to his son William describing the enjoyment he derived from seeing an English house party believe the hoax.

[Whitehead] had them in another room, and we were chatting in the breakfast parlor, when he came running in to us, out of breath, with the paper in his hand. Here! Says he, here's news for ye! *Here's the King of Prussia, claiming a right to this kingdom!* All stared, and I as much as anybody; and he went on to read it. When he had read two or three paragraphs, a gentleman present said, *Damn his impudence, I dare say, we shall hear by next post that he is upon the march with one hundred thousand men to back this.* Whitehead, who is very shrewd, soon after began to smoke it, and looking in my face said, *I'll be hanged if this is not some of your American jokes upon us.* The reading went on, and ended with abundance of laughing, and a general verdict that it was a fair hit; and the piece was cut out of the paper and preserved in my lord's collection.¹⁵

The mention of “cutting” leads us to one of Franklin's most clever, yet most scurrilous, proposals: literally a cutting one. In a letter now known as “A Method of Humbling American Vassals”, signed by A Freeholder of Old Sarum¹⁶ and printed in *The Public Advertiser*, a British publication, on May 21, 1774, Franklin suggests that, to prevent any possibility of the American colonies ascending to a position of strength in the future, the population be controlled. The means for doing this is presented, again, in Swiftian outrageousness: “Let a Company of Sow-gelders, consisting of 100 Men, accompany the Army. On their Arrival at any Town or Village, let orders be given that on the blowing of the Horn all the Males be assembled in the Market Place,” to be castrated.

The Advantages arising from this Scheme being carried into execution are obvious. In the Course of fifty years it is probable we shall not have one rebellious Subject in North America. [...] In the meantime a considerable Expence may be saved to the Managers of the Opera, and our own Nobility and Gentry be entertained at a cheaper Rate by the fine voices of our own C-st---I, and the Specie remain in the Kingdom, which now, to an enormous Amount, is carried every year to Italy. It might likewise be of Service to our Levant Trade, as we could supply the Signor's Seraglio, and the Harems of the Grandees of the Turkish Dominions with Cargos of Eunuchs, as also with handsome Women, for which America is as famous as Circassia. I could enumerate many other Advantages. I

¹⁵ Isaacson, 254.

¹⁶ This in itself is a brilliant pun, as Old Sarum was England's most notorious ‘rotten borough’, as, with only seven voters, it nevertheless had its own MP; it was also the name of a New England sect which practiced celibacy!

shall mention but one: It would effectually put a Stop to the Emigrations from this Country now grown so very fashionable.¹⁷

Franklin's letter "From the Count De Schaumbergh to the Baron Hohendorf, Commanding the Hessian troops in America," dated from Rome, February 18, 1777, commonly entitled "The Sale of the Hessians", rather than a suggestion for the improvement of Colonial relations, is a letter of complaint. But it strikes at the heart of the practices of the British government. It seems that Lord North incorrectly reported the number of dead Hessians as 1605, for Count De Schaumbergh has it on other authorities that in fact 1950 were killed. Therefore, rather than 483,450 florins, he should have been paid 643,500, an error which would work a "prejudice" in his finances.¹⁸ He asks the Commander to rectify the situation. But he also takes the occasion to reaffirm that the wounded not be saved. "That would be making them a pernicious present, as I am sure they would rather die than live in a condition no longer fit for my service."¹⁹ He further urges him to rouse his men to valor—to remind them that death in battle is glorious. "Do you remember that of the 300 Lacedaemonians who defended the defile of Thermopylae, not one returned? How happy should I be if I could say the same of my brave Hessians! It is true that their king, Leonidas, perished with them: but things have changed, and it is no longer the custom for princes of the empire to go and fight in America for a cause with which they have no concern."²⁰ So men are becoming scarce? "I will send you boys."²¹ In closing, he curses the man who cured dysentery, as he was paid the same whether men died of wounds or disease; he chastises Major Maundorff who, throughout the whole campaign, has not had ten men killed; and hopes that he will prolong the war as long as possible, as he has made arrangements for a grand Italian opera, and does not wish to give it up for lack of money. It seems here that more than the attitudes of a particular government are in Franklin's sites.

The two final satires I present here are among, if not the most dark and bitter of Franklin's work. The first is a letter signed by John Paul Jones to Sir Joseph York, Ambassador from the King of England to the States-General of the United Provinces, dated Ipswich, New England, March 7, 1781, on the occasion of the presentation of a memorial the Ambassador unveiled "to their High Mightinesses" in which the Ambassador "qualified [Jones] with the title of pirate."²²

In denying the accusation, Jones defines the term pirate as *hostis humani generis* (an enemy to all mankind), enumerates what activities pirates pursue,

¹⁷ Lemay, Leo J. A., ed. (1989) *An Early American Reader*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Information Agency, 669.

¹⁸ Isaacson, 271.

¹⁹ Isaacson, 272.

²⁰ Isaacson, 272.

²¹ Isaacson, 272.

²² Lemay, 674.

and maintains that he has never engaged in any such behavior. In another example of putting the shoe on the other foot, he then proceeds to list the activities engaged in by the English Government, King, and Parliament, all of which are clearly piratical. It is an inclusive list. Worthy of the best propaganda, it moves beyond mere parody, or even satire, meant to poke fun and amuse, to viciously attack the King, echoing Milton's characterization of George the First as '*Nerone Nerionor*,' but applying it with greater vehemence to George the Third, whom he predicts will "stand foremost in the list of diabolical, bloody, and execrable tyrants."²³ His parliaments, too, Jones declares, "will share his infamy, —parliaments, who, to please him, have repeatedly, by different votes year after year, dipped their hands in human blood, insomuch as methinks I see it dried and caked so thick upon them, that, if they could wash it off in the Thames, which flows under their windows, the whole river would run red to the ocean."²⁴

This is hardly Silence Dogood or Poor Richard, hardly the suffering old man debating his gout. And as it appeared in a New England paper, it is hard to see how the British audience would have been affected in any positive way. No abundance of laughing, I am sure.

The final piece is in some ways difficult to characterize: on the one hand it is biting, almost savage, yet so outrageous in its black humor that it has a kind of surreal quality. J.A. Leo Lemay has written that this piece "contains some of the most vicious satire Franklin ever wrote."²⁵

Printed as "Extract of a Letter from Captain Gerrish, of the New England Militia, dated Albany, March 7, and published in Boston, on March 12, 1782, it purports to be an account of parcels seized during an Expedition of the River St. Laurence, as part of the continuing Indian campaigns. The black humor of the descriptions is indeed black, if at all even humorous: in a shotgun blast it strikes at Indians, the British, and the Canadians. Herewith a sample:

We were struck with Horror to find among the Packages 8 large ones, containing SCALPS of our unhappy Country-folks, taken in the last three Years by the Senneka Indians [. . .] and sent by them as a Present to Col. Halimand, governor of Canada, in order to be transmitted by him to England. They were accompanied by the following curious letter to that Gentleman.

"May it please your Excellency,
At the request of the Sennka chiefs, I send herewith to
your Excellency [...] eight Packs of Scalps, cured,
dried, hooped, and painted with all the Indian

²³ Lemay, 676.

²⁴ Lemay, 676.

²⁵ Lemay, 659.

triumphal Marks, of which the following is Invoice and Explanation."²⁶

Here are a few of the 8:

No.2. Containing 98 of Farmers killed in their Houses; Hoops red; Figure of a Hoe, to mark their Profession; great white Circle and Sun, to show they were surrounded in the Daytime; a little red Foot, to show they stood upon their Defense, and died fighting for their Lives and Families.

No.5. Containing 88 Scalps of Women; hair long, braided in the Indian fashion, to shew they were Mothers; Hoops blue; Skin yellow Ground, with little red Tadpoles, to represent, by way of Triumph, the Tears of Grief occasioned to their Relations; a black scalping-Knife or Hatchet at the Bottom, to mark their being killed with those Instruments. 17 others, Hair very grey; black Hoops; plain brown Colour; no Mark, but the short Club or *Casse-tête*, to shew they were knocked down dead, or had their Brains beat out.

Of the scalps in No. 8, a mixture of varieties, 20 were little Infant scalps, on which one of the marks was "a little black Knife in the Middle, to show that they were ript out of their Mothers' Bellies."²⁷

The letter appearing in the paper then reports the conversation of the Chief, through a translator, requesting various goods from the "Father", a clear indication of their collusion, and concludes with Gerrish's suggestion that the scalps be hung up "some dark night in St. James' Park, where they could be seen from the King and Queen's Palaces in the Morning; for that the Sight of them might perhaps strike Muley Ishmael (as he called him) with some Compunction of Conscience."²⁸

However, the newspaper editor—remember that all these personae are Franklin's—reported that when the wagon arrived with the scalps,

Thousands of people were flocking to see them, and all Mouths were full of Execrations. Fixing them to the Trees is not approved. It is now proposed to make them up in decent little Packets, seal and direct them; one to the King, containing a Sample of every Sort for his Museum; one to the Queen, with some of Women and little

²⁶ Lemay, 671-2.

²⁷ Lemay, 672.

²⁸ Lemay, 673.

Children; the Rest to be distributed among both Houses of Parliament; a double Quantity to the Bishops.²⁹

And here with an echo of the distribution plan for the rattlesnakes with which I began, I close.

It seems clear that the youthful lightness of the earlier satire has darkened, and the “usefulness” almost blackened out of effectiveness. The darkening also, it seems to me, dims the purpose which was to be served. This is not the Franklin most people think of in connection with the Silence Dogood letters, *Poor Richard’s Almanac*, or the *Autobiography*: cajoling people to “do good.” But it is perhaps the Franklin Paul M. Zall describes as “a human being tormented by his own indecision, temper, and intellect; as a statesman who was once accused of being a thief and a terrorist; as a famous scientist, and as a frustrated public servant.”³⁰ Thus the progression toward darkness, bitterness even, which develops with his frustration with the British government is reflected in the tone and subject matter of his satires. As their policies became more severe and their willingness to compromise—or even listen—lessened, Franklin likewise grew more severe. The harshness of his writing may well have been counterproductive. For history records that it took a military defeat for the British government to relinquish its claim. And the dark satires remain as a shadow over Franklin rather than King George. Perhaps this is why they are less well known: a face of Franklin which a legend-admiring audience would rather not see.

²⁹ Lemay, 674.

³⁰ Malone, Patrick S., review of Paul M. Zall (2000) *Franklin on Franklin*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, in *White House Studies* 3 (Wntr, 2003). Review available on the web at Find Articles, 2007. Accessed 23 January 2007.

18 STORIES OF SURVIVAL AS MEANS OF SURVIVAL IN DIANA ABU-JABER'S *ARABIAN JAZZ* AND *CRESCENT*

Ildikó Limpár

In her first two novels, *Arabian Jazz*¹ and *Crescent*², Diana Abu-Jaber communicates the Arab American experience via various stories, at times attracting, at other times appalling her audience. While a few of her characters' life stories and especially her first novel were ambivalently received by the author's own community³, the stories in question share a very important quality: they are all stories of survival both in a literal and a symbolical sense. Looking at the stories from the cultural perspective, the present paper aims to detect how the stories of survival that the characters hear may serve as diverse tools for them to survive in their adopted homes.

Introduction: Literature as a Way of Cultural Survival

From a cultural perspective, all stories that present an ethnic experience may be taken as stories of survival, and Abu-Jaber is aware of the responsibility that such an attitude to the written word demands from her: “[I]ike Scheherazade, the Arabian girl who saves her life by telling stories, Abu-Jaber believes that stories are a way of survival,” as Alice Evans remarks⁴. Obviously, for someone belonging to an ethnic minority, the literature of the mother country may reinforce the cultural bonds, enhancing the development of ethnic consciousness this way. Reading stories of the ethnic experience is equally important, especially as this experience varies with time, and it is, therefore, utterly important to create stories that reflect on the contemporary experience. For members of an ethnic minority, in order to be able to face and accept their new—hybrid—identities, it is a must to rely on stories not only from the mother country but also from their adopted country, where the meaning of their ethnicity has unavoidably been undergoing a transformation.

¹ Abu-Jaber, Diana (1993) *Arabian Jazz*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace. Hereafter: *Arabian Jazz*.

² Abu-Jaber, Diana. (2003) *Crescent*. New York: Norton. Hereafter: *Crescent*.

³ Evans, Alice “Half and Half: A Profile of Diana Abu-Jaber.” (Interview.) *Poets & Writers Magazine* (July/August 1996), 42-44.

⁴ Evans, 40.

Abu-Jaber's *Arabian Jazz* and *Crescent*, as pieces of literature that deal with ethnic experience in America, reinforce the existence of an American ethnic minority both to those who belong and those who do not belong there. The stories have a community building effect, helping the members of the minority recognize their own fates and experiences in the lives of fictional characters, while also giving an impulse for the members to learn more about their culture. The recognition may lead to acceptance where it has been lacking, and the acceptance of belonging to one's culture is the prerequisite for everyone to transmit his or her heritage. Accepting and appreciating ethnic identity both by the members and the outsiders are also effective ways to ease the isolation that many suffer because of their cultural difference, and which leads to assimilation in a high number of cases. Ethnic literature may thus function as a means of ensuring ethnic survival in a dominant culture. However, ethnicity and culture are very broad concepts; consequently, the mechanisms that enhance ethnic survival may significantly differ from one another, as the analyses of the key stories in the two novels are going to demonstrate.

Forbidden Stories

One of the crucial points for which *Arabian Jazz* received such severe criticism was that it includes—and gives special importance to—the story of aunt Fatima, who, as the youngest girl alive in the family, remembers that she was forced to bury her four baby sisters alive in order that the rest of the family might survive. This “forbidden story,” as Robin E. Field calls it,⁵ was followed by other stories verging on the boundary of taboos, in *Crescent*; one such is the story of Um-Nadia's daughter, who is said to have died of learning that her husband kept a second family in Yemen; or the story of Rana, who, at the age of thirteen, was forced to marry “a total control freak”⁶, who kept her behind bars until she managed to escape, with great cunning, in order to live her life freely. Although many readers felt that these stories just fed the usual stereotypes that people have of Arabs, and thus had an alienating effect, Abu-Jaber very consciously used these motifs for just the opposite purpose: “I feel like those kinds of secrets and that kind of closing down is part of what keeps the Arab and American worlds separate from each other. Part of my project is to try to open that out”, she revealed in an interview.⁷

All of these forbidden stories are connected to the theme of survival, and among the three stories, Fatima's is the most complex, not only because it combines the theme of existential survival with the theme of cultural survival, but also because it affects practically all the family members besides Fatima herself. Although the novel seems to focus primarily on Fatima's two Arab American nieces, Jemorah and Melvina, their problems are closely related to

⁵ Field, Robin E. “A Prophet in Her Own Town: An Interview with Diana Abu-Jaber.” *MELUS* 31.4 (Winter 2006), 211.

⁶ *Crescent*, 280.

⁷ Field, 211.

those of the aunt's, as all of them try to cope with their Arabness in an American environment. Fatima's story becomes the key story in the novel, as facing the hidden past generates a change in several characters' lives.

Born in Palestine and having been brought up in Jordan, Fatima lives as a stranger in the New World. As she is not able to adapt to her new environment, "Fatima resorts to a nostalgic invocation of an idealized past of traditional ethnic values presumed to constitute selfhood."⁸ She needs a beautified memory of her childhood in order to stay alive emotionally in America, so she represses the tragic recollections of the four infanticides she was forced to participate in and her imprisonment by soldiers when she was a young girl. Trying to bury the painful memories, just as she buried the four babies, nevertheless, remains an unsuccessful attempt, as the memories keep haunting her. At the same time, her efforts to keep up the pretense of an ideal picture of the Old Country prevent her from creating a healthy relationship to the culture she has chosen to live in.

The moment Fatima faces the tragic past is a turning point in the novel in several respects. For Fatima, this is the first step that she takes to create her new identity. "Failing 'to push memory out of her mind' (*Arabian* 120), she eventually finds respite when she acknowledges the ghosts of her childhood by breaking the silence and telling her unbelieving American nieces the story of her infant sisters' burial."⁹ "When we were homeless and dying without food, what of the four starving babies I had to bury still alive [...]. Babies I buried with my mother watching so this rest could live, so my baby brother can eat, so he can move away and never know about it"¹⁰, she cries, finally giving way to her suppressed emotions, and giving her family—as well as the reading audience—a chance to understand her character and the motivations behind her acts, motivations that served as a source of humor until that point.

As Salwa Essayah Chérif observes, "through [Fatima's] memory of female experience of the past, as contrasted with that of Matussem, [Abu-Jaber] explores the theme of ambivalence."¹¹ Accepting ambivalence, however, is also a must for all the characters in adjusting to the present conditions, as it becomes evident especially in the scene when Jem, as a result of the various discriminations she experiences, is tempted to accept her Cousin Nassir's proposal, deciding that she will live in the Arab world. Ironically though, it is the Arab man himself who calls Jem's attention to the fact that this choice would be false escapism: she would leave America behind because she does not feel at home in the land where everyone considers her "different" because of her appearance; however, Jordan would not be her real home, either, because everyone would immediately identify her as American both by her accent and her looks. Realizing that ambivalence comes from her dual identity that cannot

⁸ Chérif, Salwa Essayah "Arab American Literature: Gendered Memory in Abinader and Abu-Jaber." *MELUS* 28.4 (Winter 2003), 215.

⁹ Chérif, 210.

¹⁰ *Arabian Jazz*, 334.

¹¹ Chérif, 212.

be changed, Jem accepts both of her cultural roots and reconsiders her position and opportunities in the New World, where she was born.

Similarly, when Fatima allows herself to see clearly about the past she left behind, she also allows ambivalence to enter her feelings about both the past in Jordan and the present in America. The past is not pink-colored any more, just as America becomes a more livable place for her than it was before. Ambivalence is a positive feeling for the characters with mixed identity in the novel, exactly because hybridity itself presupposes a dual belonging. Living in America changes Fatima's cultural identity, because she develops a belonging to two worlds. When she accepts her ambivalent feelings about both of the worlds she is related to, she makes the first step in getting connected to her new, hybrid identity. Fatima may not be considered a half-and-half character¹² the way her Arab American nieces are, but duality becomes a determining factor in her character also, with time, and acknowledging this makes life easier for her.

Finding reconciliation with the deaths that Fatima tries not to remember for so long is hindered by the fact that reconciliation is also needed with the lives that were gained by the losses. Not only Fatima, but her whole family suffers from the guilty past, and, without that reconciliation, their survival as a family is at stake, since Fatima refuses to visit Jordan to avoid facing her painful memories. The family in Jordan, however, makes atonement for the infanticides, laying the babies at rest, and they call Fatima to tell that she may visit now.

The family that was separated by the geographical distance may unite now; in addition, Fatima's outburst about her childhood memories brings together the family that was separated by the cultural distance, too. Fatima and Melvina, the two endpoints on the cultural scale within Matussem's Arab American family, come closer emotionally, which signals not only a new level of family union, but also a new start in Melvina's life, who so far wanted to reject her Arab roots almost as much as Fatima fought against all the American values that the girl favored. Melvina's rejection of the Arabic traditions is tightly connected to another story of failed survival, that of her mother, who died in Jordan when the girls were still very young. Melvina's attitude to life is ambivalent, too: it may be her mother's death by typhus that unconsciously drove her to becoming a nurse, but the lack of memory about her mother and the lack of emotional help from the rest of the family make her appear as someone without empathy, finding pleasure only in carrying out her job perfectly—as far as technical matters are concerned. However, when her aunt finally speaks of her repressed memories, “it is Melvina who reacts to Fatima, finally relaxing her own rigid emotional control [..., and] is at this moment that Melvina becomes

¹² “Half-and-half” is the term Abu-Jaber uses for her own life experience in an interview with Alice Evans: “I was this half-and-half person in a half-and-half family” (Evans 40). Although this concept is primarily applicable for people of mixed origin in her novels, it may be understood in terms of emotional hybridity, too, as in the case of Fatima, who is of Arab origin, but whose identity changes because of her new environment.

capable of *emotionally* healing another person.”¹³ Thus, it is indeed “through listening and recounting stories that the past is made bare and closure via familial closeness is achieved” in *Arabian Jazz*.¹⁴

In *Crescent*, the taboo stories are not as much in the center of the novel as Fatima’s memories of her past in *Arabian Jazz*. However, this time not only one but two forbidden stories are presented, which gives emphasis to the otherwise marginally appearing stories. In Abu-Jaber’s second novel, the forbidden stories that are connected to the theme of survival function as a kind of reminder and warning, serving as guidelines for the characters in their lives, this way contributing to their survivals.

Um-Nadia’s story is, actually, a story of no survival. Her death, medically, is the result of cancer, but her mother insists that the cancer came from the emotional breakdown her daughter suffered when she learned that her husband had another family in another country. As she does not survive, her example may carry a message only to others, and the mother does use the story to give warning to Sirine, who had fallen in love with the Arab Han. The story suggests that one may never completely know an Arab man, who may have unthinkable secrets, even if he seems to be the most charming lover, husband and father.

Um-Nadia’s example, however, seems to guide Sirine in the wrong direction. She presumes that Han’s secrets are also connected to infidelity, which shakes her firm feelings towards the man, leading the woman to cheat on Han, thus risking the survival of their romantic relationship. As the story unfolds, we learn that Han has always been true to Sirine, and he is not at all like Um-Nadia’s husband, which, actually, breaks the stereotype that Um-Nadia’s story seemed to feed about secretive Arab men, who are bound to be polygamist. In addition, taking into consideration that the novel has a magical realist aspect—with Abdelrahman Salahadin’s story reflecting the main story line—Sirine’s actions, actually, are made to be seen as inevitable ones that allow Han to leave and return to Sirine. Han’s visit to Iraq, his imprisonment and miraculous escape from the country open a new chapter in Han’s life: he can leave Iraq now emotionally and come back to Sirine to restart their common life. Um-Nadia’s story thus indirectly may be linked to a number of survivals: Han’s physical survival in Iraq and his emotional survival in America, as well as the survival of Han’s and Sirine’s love life. The couple’s relationship, in addition, plays a key role in their survival from the cultural aspect: her love for Han makes the Iraqi-American Sirine realize how distanced she is from her Arabic roots, and she becomes interested in the culture about which she knows very little; for Han, on the other hand, Sirine stands not only for personal love, but also for the love of

¹³ Kaldas, Pauline “Beyond Stereotypes: Representational Dilemmas in *Arabian Jazz*.” *MELUS* 31.4 (Winter 2006), 181.

¹⁴ Salaita, Steven, “Sand Niggers, Small Shops, and Uncle Sam: Cultural Negotiation in the Fiction of Joseph Geha and Diana Abu-Jaber.” *Criticism* 43.4 (2001) 439.

his homeland, bridging the cultural gap that Han suffers because of the loss of his country.

A more explicit connection between a story of survival and its consequences is presented via Rana's case. Um-Nadia's story is only suggested as having an effect on Sirine's behavior, whereas Rana herself not only tells her story, but she also explains how that influenced her life later on. Rana's character seems to appear in sharp contrast with Fatima's. While Fatima struggles hard for years to suppress the most painful memories of her life, Rana does her best not to forget her humiliating imprisonment by her husband. She wears her veil as a constant reminder that she was a Muslim wife, absolutely at the mercy of her husband. Just like Um-Nadia's story, her life experience, symbolized by her veil, functions as a warning not to let this ever happen to Rana. Imprisonment deprived her of her life as an individual, and of the basic rights of freedom and happiness that she as an Arab American woman had taken granted. Keeping her story in mind all the time assures her survival in a community where she could easily end up in a marriage. Rana's veil, in addition, is also a sign that she has not abandoned God. She remains a Muslim despite all that happened to her, but she becomes a strong feminist, too, rejecting the traditional roles of Muslim women. Her life experience, actually, defines her place in the world culturally: as she is both a Muslim person and an abused wife, she wants to help Muslim women stand up for their rights.

Although the taboo stories all carry appalling and painful memories, facing them and coping with their truth instead of suppressing them have positive consequences, the novels suggest, directly or indirectly enhancing the characters' survivals in many ways. The contexts they appear in assure that the tension generated by their heartrending nature is resolved to a certain extent: the murdered babies are laid to rest by Fatima's family; Rana gains an experience that makes her a smart and strong woman, who will never be subdued by a man and who is able to help others; and finally, Um-Nadia's case, just like Rana's case, proves to be an exception and not a general tendency, as the two stories are presented as somewhat parallel cases to Sirine's and Han's relationship as well as other romantic relationships that unfold during the story. This strategy of presenting the forbidden stories, may actually successfully effect the cultural survival of Abu-Jaber's Arab American reading audience: it makes the readers confront the painful segments of their culture, yet offers resolution, too, which may positively influence all readers of these novels, independently of their ethnic belongings.

Fantastic Stories of Survival in the Realm of Reality

Some of the stories of survival in the two novels have an incredible nature, gaining by this a special focus in the otherwise realistic novels. The fabled aspect within strictly realistic contexts is used to deconstruct a myth or a belief, while the fantastic story of Saladin's survival keeps appearing in a magical

story-line within the realistic reading, and functions to create magical cohesion between the two texts on diverse levels.

The first category includes Rana's story, where the stunning, almost fantastic aspect comes not only from the forbidden nature of her story, which is stressed by the many details Rana shares with Sirine, but also from the outcome of the story. Sirine, embodying the average listener, wonders why Rana still wears her veil. Sirine's question suggests that one may expect Rana to abandon the culture—including religion as its basic pillar—that allowed her husband to behave with her the way he did. Yet, instead, Rana is as faithful as ever, knowing that it was not religion but her husband who imprisoned her, and, although her clothing makes her appear as the wife she once was forced to be, under her veil there is a woman who would never let anyone control her. Rana's "portrayal [...] must come from trying to debunk the stereotypes about the veiled, exotic woman, the repressed woman, and show that there are complexities, that the veiled woman can be a strong feminist, as Rana is."¹⁵

A different kind of belief is destroyed in *Arabian Jazz* when Ricky's father, who is thought to have died when his car blew up, returns to town. For those who do not know the truth, this is a miraculous survival story, perhaps even a shocking experience. The people are surprised, but they soon accept and get used to the fact that Ricky's father is alive. The only person who has real difficulties in adapting to the new situation is Ricky, the person who had previously known the truth. For him, it is not simply a general belief that is ruined by the appearance of the father, but a personal myth that he made up about his life. Building up his imagined background as a modern Gatsby-like character, he takes advantage of the mystery around his father's disappearance and the gossip about his death, and creates his own concept of himself: "I might never, ever have had no father to begin with. I might've got born all by myself, just the same way I'm gonna die," he says¹⁶, which reminds the reader of Nick Carraway's description of Gatsby, who, as he puts it, "sprang from his Platonic conception of himself"¹⁷. And as Gatsby built up his image according to the project he dedicated his life to, so Ricky entertains the idea that Elvis was his real father¹⁸, because it is the boy's nice voice and singing abilities that give him a chance to find his place in life, as it turns out by the end of the novel.

The collapse of the myth, just like the destruction of the idealized past for Fatima, brings about changes that prove to have a positive impact on the characters' lives after the first shock they have to suffer. The intrusion of reality into his secluded life also helps Ricky reveal the truths of the past for Jem, as he starts remembering his childhood and telling about it. As Ricky and Jem are mutually attracted by the similarities in their life experiences, the act of facing reality considerably affects Jem, who is the central character in the novel: she

¹⁵ Field, 220.

¹⁶ *Arabian Jazz*, 115.

¹⁷ Fitzgerald, F. Scott (1993) *The Great Gatsby*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 96.

¹⁸ *Arabian Jazz*, 157.

needs to evaluate herself realistically in order to make the proper decisions concerning her future; that is, Ricky's clash with reality is as important in her process of forming her Arab American identity and paving the way of her ethnic survival in America as is Fatima's.

Coloring the realistic experiences with a pinch of the fantastic, Abu-Jaber calls the readers' attention to the stories, suggesting that they have a special connection to the main story-line, but they serve to deconstruct misconceptions of diverse types. In *Arabian Jazz*, the effect of the story is more limited, ruining a personal myth, and only indirectly influencing our understanding about the Arab American experience via connecting Ricky's and Jem's characters, whereas in *Crescent*, Sirine's realization that her stereotypical concept of the veiled Muslim woman had proven wrong in Rana's case immediately generates the same response from the readers, directly influencing their ideas about Arabic culture, forcing them to reconsider the related stereotypes.

While *Arabian Jazz* in many ways explores the connection of the Arab American culture to the American myths, *Crescent* presents the Arab American experience in a more complex way than the author's first attempt, using practically all the story-lines to give as colored a picture of the Arabic culture as possible. It is no wonder, then, that the fantastic aspect in *Arabian Jazz* is applied to connect Ricky's character to that of Gatsby's. *Crescent*, on the other hand, uses the fantastic for various purposes. It colors the realistic story to make the debunking of the stereotype more emphatic; furthermore, it helps to create a parallel story-line that mirrors the realistic story in the dimension of myths and fables, as we will see.

Fantastic Stories of Survival in the Realm of the Unreal

Abdulrahman Salahadin's is the great survival story, as he is the one who, according to the tale, drowns, yet survives several times. His is the most fantastic story, too, giving the spine of a wondrous fable, featuring magical creatures, as well as miraculous situations and turns in the story. However, Sirine's uncle, the storyteller, presents this incredible fable as part of the family legendry, connecting the fantastic to the real, suggesting, perhaps, not simply a co-existence between the two realms, but also an interaction between the two.

The borderline between fantasy and reality is blurred, and one of the connecting factors is the character of the protagonist himself in this magical story. Abdulrahman Salahadin is said to be the uncle's relative—the son of his aunt Camille—and as such, a character from reality; yet, his name makes him perceivable as an Arab Everyman. In order that the careful reader be able to understand the symbolic content of the protagonist's adventures, Abu-Jaber explains the meaning of the name at the beginning of the novel. Aunt Camille's son has two names: Abdelrahman is a speaking name, meaning "The Servant of

the Merciful One”¹⁹, while Salahadin is derived from “the name of a great warrior and liberator—Salah-al-Din”²⁰. The two names refer to the two basic pillars that define Arabic culture: religion and history. The Muslim faith demands that everyone be the servant of the “Merciful One,” that is, God; bearing the name of the historical hero, on the other hand, not only confirms the historical dimension of the culture, but also lends a timeless quality to the character, and links him to Arabian legendry, since Salahadin—better known as Saladin in the western world—was respected for his chivalry, so much so that his life gave inspiration to many poets and writers—and by now even film makers—in and outside the Islamic world.

The tale itself has a double function, too. As Abu-Jaber reveals, she “wanted [the uncle’s story] to function as a kind of looking glass for the characters, that would in some way reflect upon the motifs of their reality in an indirect way. [...] For the *characters* in *Crescent*, the story of Abdelrahman Salahadin is meant to be a kind of code. If they’d just pay attention to the story, it would help them; it gives them a kind of treasure map.”²¹ In addition, the readers may recognize a number of components characteristic of Arabian folktales, which emphasize values such as bravery, loyalty, endurance, generosity, honor, and honesty, as well as hospitality and kindness to guests and strangers, and it features such supernatural creatures as sirens, jinns, or ifrits.²² And “although folktales might include supernatural and magical elements, they are usually based on real life events that stem from the Arabic culture”²³, as is the case in the story about Abdulrahman Salahadin, in a very modern, sometimes absurd way, mirroring the realistic story-line. As a result, the parts of the novel that tell about Salahadin’s and his mother’s adventures keep alive and renew the Arabic folktale culture. It shows the living power of such stories, demonstrating that Salahadin’s story is not just a tale of the fantastic, but is also a story that has significance in the present, because it repeats itself in the present under contemporary circumstances.

The novel establishes connections between the characters of Han and Abdulrahman Salahadin in various ways, playing, for instance, with the theme of disappointment in love as a motivation for leaving one’s life behind, or the themes of living in exile, escaping death several times, risking one’s own life on purpose, and becoming enchanted by a siren / Sirine. Nevertheless, the most obvious link is created via the name itself: when Han escapes from the Iraqi prison, his story is written about in the newspaper that Sirine reads. The photo in the newspaper shows Han, yet the article claims that the person who escaped miraculously is named Abdulrahman Salahadin—as if this name could really be

¹⁹ *Crescent*, 23.

²⁰ *Crescent*, 23.

²¹ Field, 221.

²² Hassan, Fatme Sharafeddine. “The Passion and the Magic: Distinction of Arabic Folktales.” *Al Jadid* 1.2 (Dec 1995). <http://almashriq.hiof.no/general/000/070/079/al-jadid/aljadid-magic.html> (retrieved: July 4, 2009.)

²³ Hassan.

used as the identifier of the Arab Everyman, substituting someone whose name is not known, and suggesting a heroic quality for the man who opposed Saddam's regime and who managed to perform the unbelievable.

While the two male characters, Abdulrahman and Han, may be linked through the theme of physical survival, Sirine's character may also be associated with the wondrous man's sea adventures via the theme of search, which is, in this case, directly connectable with the theme of cultural survival. Sirine's successful search for identity is the token of her survival in her new environment. She has always lived there, but only after getting to know Han and falling in love with him does she start seeing her world as both Arab and American. She realizes that to be complete she needs the mixture of the two cultural roots of her identity.

The medium through which she explores her Arabian connections is cooking, the importance of which Brinda Mehta emphasizes: "The protagonist's culinary explorations in search of her roots mirror the ancestral wanderings of the Bedouin tribes across the desert heartland in search of spiritual and physical wholeness."²⁴ This process is metaphorically represented by Abdulrahman's sea adventures, considering especially that the "Covered Man" in the uncle's tale makes the point that the Bedouin people used to be water people: "the Bedouins were once water people [...] and] where there are dunes there were once sapphire waves."²⁵ Moreover, in the novel the act of cooking and the act of storytelling are also in a tight relationship, which strengthens the connections between the realms of reality and fantasy. *Crescent* "is structured around Sirine's focus on food and her uncle's focus on storytelling. These trajectories intersect in the kitchen, where she feeds him the Arabic food he loves, and he feeds her the Scherzade-like tale of his great Auntie Camille and her son Abdelrahman Salahadin's adventures."²⁶

These two spheres, one belonging to reality, the other to the fantastic, magically merge as the main story unfolds, leaving the listeners—Sirine as well as Abu-Jaber's reading audience—with the feeling that Abdelrahman's story is not simply wondrous within the fantastic tale that the aunt presents chapter by chapter, but it also has a magical quality that may effect reality itself. For there could be no rational explanation for the fact that Han's life turns out to mirror as incredible a story as that of Abdelrahman's, and that the uncle decides that the thirty-nine-and-a-half-year-old Sirine is perhaps not too young any more to hear the whole story "of how to love"²⁷, although the romantic relationship between her and Han begins only after the uncle has promised to tell the "morallless"²⁸ story to the end this time. Surely, we know that it is the uncle who calls Sirine's

²⁴ Mehta, Brinda (2007) "The Semiology of Food: Diana Abu-Jaber's *Crescent*." In *Rituals of Memory in Contemporary Arab Women's Writing*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 232.

²⁵ *Crescent*, 65.

²⁶ Mercer, Lorraine and Linda Strom "Counter Narratives: Cooking Up Stories of Love and Loss in Naomi Shihab Nye's Poetry and Diana Abu-Jaber's *Crescent*." *MELUS* 32.4 (Winter 2007), 38.

²⁷ *Crescent*, 15.

²⁸ *Crescent*, 15.

attention to Han deliberately, but Han's life story is unknown to the uncle, so although the old man's personal wisdom may explain his choice of time for telling a strange love story, it may not offer a realistically acceptable explication for presenting a story that may be taken as a fantastic and metaphorical translation of the reality that Sirine experiences.

The fantastic story of a series of survivals offers, in various ways, parallels to the central story-line focusing on the romantic relationship between Sirine and Han, in which romance is blended with the woman's search for identity and the man's effort to maintain identity. Therefore, Abdulrahman's tale is a key story in decoding not simply the physical acts performed by the couple—including Han's miraculous escape to survive the threats he had to face in Iraq—but also the spiritual processes they go through, having a direct influence on their cultural survivals.

Conclusion: Renewal as the Token of Survival

For the characters in the two novels, stories related to the theme of survival strongly influence the attitudes to their ethnic identities in diverse manners. The stories they hear assist them to properly evaluate the past and present events, as well as their future prospects. The contents of these stories, furthermore, may be charged with culture-related issues, which also make them suitable for enhancing the formation of a better relationship with one's ethnic roots. Such is the case with stories that discredit stereotypes of the culture, or the tale that revives the tradition of Arabian storytelling. Independently of the category the stories belong to, they may provide guiding principles for the characters.

As the readers are also made to think and react to the stories the novels include, they are similarly encouraged to reconsider their own relationships to the culture, whether they are members of the cultural community or not. Moreover, as all the stories examined support the treatment of the main themes, they help the readers recognize the complexity of the issues discussed. In this respect, it is utterly important that the roles of tradition and cultural inheritance are not simply a key motif in the novels, but they are also investigated in a contemporary situation, trying to provide up-to-date answers to present day questions.

“Cultures are made of continuity *and* changes and the identity of a society can survive through these changes,” as Kwame Anthony Appiah states²⁹. Contemporary ethnic literature must serve to provide the continuity and change that are demanded from the society in order to survive. Accordingly, just like Sirine's uncle tells a Scheherazade-like story, which, at the same time, bears the qualities of a very modern story, too, so does Diana Abu-Jaber prove to have become a modern Scheherazade, who struggles for the survival of her culture—with her stories of survival.

²⁹ Appiah, Kwame Anthony (2006) *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: Norton, 107.

19 FACING DEATH: POPULAR VISUAL CULTURE AND THE FORENSIC PARADIGM

Dávid L. Palatinus

The body is the perfect specimen
(Anthony E. Zuiker)

In¹ *Power of Images* David Freedberg provocatively describes the primeval responses to the making and reception of images in terms of sex and affection: “People are sexually aroused by pictures and sculptures.”² Freedberg’s approach builds around the historicity of response, and focuses on historically emphatic, and therefore archetypical forms such as consecration, votive practices, meditation and contemplation, fetishism and arousal, iconoclasm, idolatry, as well as on the historicity of such dichotomies as representation and reality, or verisimilitude and resemblance. Nevertheless, the subject-matter he chooses and the method with which he inscribes it into a historical context point to the latent mystification of the interdependence of images and corporeality in art history. He writes:

My concern is with those responses that are subject to repression because they are too embarrassing, too blatant, too rude, and too uncultured; because they make us aware of our kinship with the unlettered, the coarse, the primitive, the undeveloped; and because they have psychological roots that we prefer not to acknowledge.³

Freedberg’s plastic example explicates the image of the body as it appears in a picture. Not the appearance of just any kind of body, but of a body the image of which is capable of inducing arousal in its viewers. Although Freedberg’s argument is sexually oriented, it underscores a cognitive transposition that occurs between the real and its image, the image of the body and the positing of its “actuality” as a kind of internalized otherness, thus inscribing the psychopathology of the body into a discourse on perception. As Freedberg

¹ The author was an Eötvös Research Fellow at Newcastle University while writing this article.

² Freedberg, David (1989) *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1.

³ *Ibid.*

explains, arousal unveils an underlying “cognitive relation between looking and enlivening.”⁴ It is not difficult to trace the introjection of the corporeality-paradigm in Freedberg’s logic; in the act of looking the “image-ness” of the image is temporarily suspended or bracketed:

Once we perceive the body as real and living (or once we wish to perceive it as real and living, or to reconstitute forms with some such result), we invest it with life and respond to it accordingly. When, *mutatis mutandis*, we find ourselves responding to an image as if it were real, it seems at that moment no mere signifier but the living signified itself. [...] The issue is not one of context, since to claim this much is not to attempt to achieve terms of definition for what is or is not seen to be lifelike, or real, or living in particular cultures or contexts. It is rather to suggest that there is a cognitive relation between looking and enlivening.⁵

As far as spectatorial response is concerned, there is practically very little difference (if any) between the physiological factors and socio-cultural agencies of fascination and repulsion. Forensic crime fiction and, especially, film, present an example of practice for these “pathological fantasies” in popular culture. Crime fiction (and crime TV and cinema in particular) embodies the trauma of the real. In forensic crime fiction the idea of the “body-as-signifier” becomes paramount, and is exploited both from a semiotic (the-body-as-text) and a phenomenological-psychoanalytical (the-body-as-image) point of view. What is common in these contexts is that they all attempt to reconstitute a fiction of some kind of corporeal presence in response to the fragmentation of the physical body. The body reveals its own textuality in one way by playing upon the materiality of the written sign manifest in the process of the visual perception (the reading and/or seeing) of the same body. On the other hand, the body is “only” present as an image which, by appealing to a more subtle interpretation, operates as a conceptual frame of reference. As a result, forensic crime film appears to be the epitome of the preoccupation and fascination with which post-modern (urban) culture surrounds the experience of the (dead or fragmented) body. In forensic crime dramas the image of the body emerges as the par excellence manifestation, the “embodiment”, of a lost narrative. At the same time, forensic crime fiction reaches beyond a simple gesturing at a misinterpreted necrophilia or the fetishization of the body. With regard to the relationship between spectatorial response and the power of images Brigitte Peucker observes:

⁴ *Ibid*, 325.

⁵ *Ibid*.

Cognitive and phenomenological approaches to perception alike tell us that spectatorial affect is real even when it is film and not reality that produces it. Thus, the emotional and bodily responses of the spectator can be said to extend textuality into the real world.⁶

I would like to consider forensic crime fiction as paradigmatic with respect to our post-cultural fascination with neurobiological and pathological knowledge, cognitive semiotics, phenomenology of perception, theories of subjectivity and the aestheticization of violence. Forensic crime fiction is paradigmatic for the constitution and dissemination of meaning – at all levels of the organism, be it bio-physiological and cognitive or socio-cultural and retroactive. In the following I will lay special emphasis on the ways one of the most emblematic televisual examples of forensic crime fiction, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, exploits the various forms of visualization by overwriting traditional patterns of visual narrative, camera work and mise-en-scène. By experimenting with the practices and technicalities surrounding the production of the cinematic image, *CSI* adopts a visual style that also redefines the conceptions of seeing, and challenges the boundaries of the visual as such. Therefore I see *CSI* as the epitome of the representation of corporeality in contemporary popular visual culture, and, consequently, as a unique televisual phenomenon.

Forensics, Science, Spectacle – Contextualizing CSI

Forensic crime fiction branched off as a sub-genre from the police procedural, and, indirectly, from the hard-boiled.⁷ John Scaggs notes that the emphasis the police procedural lays on “the actual methods and procedures of police work” indicates a “move towards [a] realism that is central to the development of the sub-genre” and that emerges as “the foundation not only of the detective’s investigative process, but also of the themes, characters, action, and setting.”⁸ The genre received its decisive impetus in the twentieth century with the publication of Patricia Cornwell’s *Postmortem* in 1990, where the plot basically revolves around the figure of forensic pathologist Dr. Kay Scarpetta. Kathy Reichs’s novels also focus on the forensic profession through the eyes of the

⁶ Peucker, Brigitte (2007) *The Material Image*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1.

⁷ For a detailed study of the history of forensic crime fiction, see among others Scaggs, John (2005) *Crime Fiction: the New Critical Idiom* New York: Routledge, especially chapters 3 and 4; Ellen Burton Harrington, “Nation, identity and the fascination with forensic science in Sherlock Holmes and *CSI*.” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 10:3 (2007) 365-82; Sue Turnbull: “The Hook and the Look: *CSI* and the Aesthetics of the Television Crime Series.” In Priestman, Michael Allen (ed.) (2003) *Reading CSI: Crime TV under the Microscope* New York: I.B. Tauris, (2007) 15-33.; *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*. Ed. Martin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, especially chapters 8 (“The Thriller” by David Glover, 135-154.), 9 (“Post-War American Police Fiction” by Leroy L. Panek, 155-172.) and 14 (“Detection and Literary Fiction” by Laura Marcus, 245-268.).

⁸ Scaggs, John (2005) *Crime Fiction: the New Critical Idiom*. New York: Routledge, 91.

protagonist, forensic pathologist Temperance Brennan. Reichs's novels served as inspiration to another forensic TV drama series called *Bones* (Fox Network). The forensic expertise had its impact on television on a broad scale, resulting in a wide range of programmes that focus on an equally wide range of activities and practices related to the profession: a highly selective list includes the BBC series *Silent Witness* with its forensic pathological theme, or examples where, instead of pathology or the technologies of evidence, forensic psychology is given more emphasis, as in the NBC production *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* and the CBS show *Criminal Minds*. In a similar fashion, the other blockbusting Bruckheimer-production *Without a Trace* (CBS) follows the investigative processes of a fictional FBI unit that specializes in finding missing persons and where profiling is also of crucial importance to the solution of cases: FBI agents deconstruct the personalities of the victims in order to reconstruct the narrative of their disappearances. Other classic examples of the utilization of the forensic theme include Jeffrey Deaver's *The Bone Collector* (1997), adapted into a feature film in 1999, and the famous Hannibal Lecter-trilogy written by Thomas Harris (*Red Dragon*, 1981; *The Silence of the Lambs*, 1988; *Hannibal*, 1999). The film adaptations of Harris's books (Michael Mann: *Manhunter*, 1986; Jonathan Demme: *The Silence of the Lambs*, 1991; Ridley Scott: *Hannibal*, 2001; Brett Ratner: *Red Dragon*, 2002;) mark important phases in the development of the genre. It is also an interesting "coincidence" that William Petersen, who plays the character of Gil Grissom in *CSI*, was cast as the protagonist, forensic profiler Will Graham in *Manhunter*. The identity and the recurrence of the same real-life actor position *CSI* within an interesting web of written and pictorial intertexts, and add a sense of coherence and continuity to the police procedural genre. The coherence of the genre, however, is played down by the fact that *The Bone Collector* and the Lecter-books (and their film adaptations), despite their heavy reliance on the potentials of the forensic expertise in their character and plot design, are still much more closely related to the thriller than to the forensic crime genre. This immanent heterogeneity of the genre illustrates the flexibility of the generic boundaries of forensic crime fiction.

The problematization (i.e. pathologization, or, semiotization) of the body has also become a popular theme of medical drama, another emblematic example of present-day televisual entertainment. With the inception of *ER*, the ultimate hospital show to date, the conducts of the medical profession were presented from the perspective of the trauma itself. Here, however, the focus was not so much on the penetration of the body as on the depiction of practices used to counteract the effects of (physical or mental) trauma, on the implementation of the medical and prosthetic gear that is at the disposal of the doctors, and on the exploration of the social, political and economic profile and reputation of the medical profession. Two most recent hospital-dramas, *Grey's Anatomy* and *House MD*, allow for slight deviations from the set patterns and exploit the narrative and representational potentials of irony. Although in *House MD* illness

and the body are paramount to the plot, the success of the program derives from the ability to effectively parody the narrative patterns and character of the Sherlock Holmes stories.

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation debuted on CBS on October 6th, 2000.⁹ Rather than relying on action-packed sequences and extensive shootouts like most traditional cop shows, *CSI* maintains suspense and achieves its dynamism primarily by appealing to the viewers' scientific curiosity and their fascination with fictions of visual technologies and of scientific (and corporeal) knowledge; in the focus of the show are characters, events, spaces, and, first and foremost, practices that, until this point, have been relatively underexposed in the crime genre: medical examiners, forensic scientists, and procedures ranging from autopsies, DNA analysis, blood spatter analysis, evidence collection and processing to the use of state-of-the-art CG imaging technologies in the reconstruction of crimes. The most important feature, however, is the show's preoccupation with the human body – its complexity as evidence, as a site of signifiers and traces, as the object of scientific scrutiny, as a piece of art in its own right, and, finally, as the subject of extensive technologization.

What gives it its specificity to the world of *CSI* is a form of predominantly visual scrutiny that literally penetrates the surface of the body. The human body had long been in the centre of artistic and scientific fascination. By the virtual and physical penetration of its surface, and, in close connection to this, by exposing the audience to the visual experience of viscera, *CSI* re-contextualizes the very concept of the body. The show, at least in the first two seasons, is primarily interested in establishing and defining the visual characteristics of the forensic crime genre and anchoring the idea of the *corpse-as-signifier*. As every type of detective fiction, *CSI* also dramatizes forms, structures and paradigms of semiosis. The forensic scientist pushes their way through the plethora of signs and marks, traces and references, muted voices and missing faces, their primary concern being to (re-)construct meaning – by piecing together the fragments of a lost narrative. However, the emphatic role of the physical, material sign (objects, traces and marks found at a crime scene or on the victim's body) situates semiotics not only in a socio-cultural but also in a biosocial context. Barbara Stafford's claim that the mind is "a phenomenologically distributed system that learns multiple ways of inhabiting the world *in relation* to our bodies, other people, diverse organisms, and the ecology"¹⁰ is really a reverberation of

⁹ Due to the success and increasing popularity of the show and the forensic drama in general, later on *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* grew into a franchise, resulting in such spin-offs as *CSI: Miami* starring David Caruso and *CSI: New York* with Gary Sinise. These programs relocate the CSI-pattern from Las Vegas to Miami and New York respectively. In this article I focus on the original show (often referred to as "CSI: Las Vegas").

¹⁰ Barbara Stafford. "The Remaining 10 Percent: The Role of Sensory Knowledge in the Age of the Self-Organizing Brain." In Elkins, James (ed.) (2008) *Visual Literacy*. New York: Routledge, 33. Cf. also Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*. M. Edie, James (ed.) (1964), Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, especially 12-43.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, suggesting that the conceptualization of language is interlocked with bodily drives, with the conceptualization of the (living) body.

As Sue Tait remarks, "what distinguishes *CSI* from other crime dramas is the focus on scientific procedures."¹¹ By dramatizing the practices of evidence / data collection and processing, "*CSI* constitutes a performance of [...] fictioned science."¹² Even though it draws on real-life crime cases and forensic procedures, the show admittedly retains the distance between fiction and reality in so far as it does not aspire to documentary status. Martha Gever explains that

One of *CSI*'s most curious features is its ambivalent appeal to realism. The series' episodes are narrative dramas with characters who resemble, and are sometimes modeled on, actual forensic scientists; they are also fictions with plots sometimes borrowed from actual cases. But the aesthetic style of the program never tries to mimic documentary realism.¹³

The depiction of procedures and the *mise-en-scène* of the techniques and technicalities that surround them highlight a different kind of interest, namely, that science is staged as being aesthetic, often overlaid with "a pedagogic tone, rendering viewers as initiates to the discourses of forensic science."¹⁴ Martha Gever describes this aesthetics from a cultural-historical perspective. She argues that the series goes beyond the kind of simplification and popularization of methods and technologies used in science that characterize most science-movies, including science-fiction:

CSI has accomplished a rare feat for commercial television: bridging the divide between modern science (not science fiction) and entertainment. Although this may seem an odd coupling, the two cultural fields share one important attribute: both concentrate upon the production of new kinds of knowledge using new kinds of scientific apparatuses and the inscriptions these produce.¹⁵

The apparent aesthetic lure of *CSI*, that of its looks in particular, underscores the intelligibility of science as that which also bears, or, at a minimum, aspires to an aesthetic appeal, especially as regards the growing tendencies to visualize and visually disseminate scientific knowledge. These tendencies seem to work

¹¹ Tait, Sue, "Autoptic Vision and the Necrophilic Imaginary in *CSI*." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 9 (2006) 48.

¹² Tait, 49.

¹³ Gever, Martha, "The Spectacle of Crime, Digitized: *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and Social Anatomy." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 8 (2005) 458.

¹⁴ Tait, 49.

¹⁵ Gever, 450.

towards the reconfiguration of the self-defining strategies of science “from within”, in an auto-poetic manner. In other words, the aesthetic plays an important role in the understanding of the concept of science. *CSI*'s aestheticization of science - and crime, indirectly – casts new light upon the age-old nature-culture dichotomy, and promotes a phenomenologically informed depiction of science as cultured rendering (or framing) of nature. In this constellation, (fictioned) science attains the status of spectacle and a means of entertainment at the same time. In *CSI* science works towards the visualization of the physical trauma inflicted on the human body. It is through the contribution of science that the body transforms from fragmented and chaotic flesh into a meaningful discourse on the one hand, and an aestheticized object of entertainment and scrutiny on the other hand.

Science is used to objectify violence by making it visible, and to keep it under control. Science and the technologies of vision reveal culture not as nature's “other” but as that within which nature is contained. Accordingly, it can be said that in *CSI* violence is not so much the characteristic feature of nature (or the wilderness) as it is of culture. Culture therefore becomes the space where violence turns out to be symptomatic. It is within this space where violence can be visualized, kept under control and commodified as spectacle and as a source of entertainment. Simply put, violence assumes spectacular appeal due to the heavily stylized context that frames it. The nature-culture / violence-entertainment dichotomy is best exemplified by the creators' decision to situate the events in Las Vegas, a city that literally tames and “cultures” the extremities of the surrounding Nevada desert. By allowing the show to (visually) play upon the apparent discrepancies of nature and culture, its creators enabled *CSI* to retain many of the traditional hard-boiled patterns, most significantly with its post-industrial urban setting. The city of Las Vegas, with its neon splendor, hotels, casinos, and a variety of residents, guests, tourists, opportunists, gamblers, tycoons, hotel and casino-owners, or, for that matter, freeloaders and runaways, provides a perfect locale for virtually any kind of crime to take place, and a constantly challenging environment for the investigators to pursue their profession. The setting allows for a range of different types of crimes normally associated with different groups of society to be pictured, and enables the show to give insight into several forms of socially deviant or extravagant behavior. The Las Vegas Strip, consequently, is pictured as a hyper-intensive, surrealistic world where nothing is out of context, and is also a rather uncanny place with the many architectural “doubles” (replicas) that it offers.¹⁶ The city as signified and signifying space becomes the quintessential construct of what Guy Debord calls the “society of spectacle”, where societal relations and cultural practices are predominantly set within a milieu determined by the presence of overwhelming spectacularity, within a space that constantly challenges the concept of the real.

¹⁶ My thanks are due to László Munteán for this remark.

It is not by chance that every episode opens with the aerial photography of the city, usually by night. The top-down perspective created by the elevated position of the camera does not only evoke the locality and temporality of the narrative. The birds-eye-view images of the cityscape shift the viewers' gaze from an outside into an inside where it is rendered part of the *mise-en-scène*. It also directs the viewer's attention to the underlying, consciously designed nature of the spectacle that derives from the visual appeal of the architectural arrangement of space and the contrastive balance of colors, lights and shades, background and foreground. The spectacular appeal of the cityscape is most plausibly exemplified by the functionality of building-replicas such as the Eiffel-Tower or the Grand Canale of Venice in the visual and architectural design of the city. The picture subsequently dissolves into more concrete locations, showing hotel or casino interiors, night clubs, or offering a voyeuristic look into more intimate spheres such as the inside of houses and the privacy of people. Occasionally, the virtual camera does not move into the city but away from the Strip, expanding the image into a panoptic overview of the surrounding, uninhabited areas in the Nevada desert.

However, the image of the city highlights the artificiality and theatricality of the spectacle. The cinematographic representation of the Las Vegas cityscape builds on the discrepancies between its components: it reflects a compositional logic that accentuates the spectacular but subverts the use of classical, well-known, commercialized and cliché-like images of the Las Vegas Strip. The city is presented as a spectacle, but this spectacle eventually constitutes the compositional focus of the *mise-en-scène* of violent crimes. Otherwise stated, the spectacular quality of the city enhances the spectacular quality of bodies – and vice versa. The glowing lights of the Strip are echoed and balanced out by the dim blue sterility of the autopsy rooms, where the body is exposed to sight. The logic of composition serves a meta-discursive and meta-pictorial purpose as well. The *mise-en-scène* of crime deconstructs the cityscape as a mere image that pleases the eye, and discloses the visual plasticity of violence as urban spectacle. This, however, may also suggest a retroactive re-aestheticization of violence and crime. To better understand this mutually retroactive conditioning of violence and spectacle, we must take a closer look at the visual style of *CSI*.

(De)Constructing the Look: CSI's Visual Style

The psychological and emotional impacts of images is particularly stigmatized in the case of the motion picture, which is by nature understood as “a technique of the imaginary”¹⁷ and as the “first ever medium to fulfill the longstanding aspiration to show moving images of the real world.”¹⁸ The question of the real, more specifically, the question of the representation of the real has always been

¹⁷ Cf.: Metz, Christian (1990) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, London: Macmillan, 3.

¹⁸ Mulvey, Laura (2006) “Uncertainty: Natural Magic and the Art of Deception.” In *Death 24x a Second*. London: Reaktion Books, 33.

coupled with the close scrutiny of the intricacies that perpetuate concerns with perception, sensation and cognition. The same question inadvertently results in problematizing response with respect to the visual techniques of creating suspense. However, the psychologization of crime receives little emphasis in *CSI*. Crime is never presented “from within,” from a subjective point of view. Instead, *CSI* shows crime as an “inside of an outside” – it anatomizes, or more appropriately, pathologizes crime, and presents it from the perspective of the corpse, rather than of the cop or the villain. This pathological tendency also means *CSI* relies on the understanding that crime is systemic in urban society. To use Martha Gever’s words: “*CSI* benefits from the ‘reality effect’ in so far as it reiterates recent trends in law enforcement policy that treat crime as a feature of everyday social commerce. According to this approach crime is neither extraordinary nor particularly remarkable.”¹⁹ As a consequence, the only real protagonist of *CSI* is the body, the corpse that, through the application of the technological and scientific apparatuses that surround it, becomes the materialization of crime. And inversely, the corpse can be read as the mark, the trace crime leaves behind, as the inscription of crime into the body of society. Rather than using action-packed sequences, the show achieves its dynamism primarily through maintaining the viewer’s suspense – by appealing to their scientific curiosity and fascination with the body: To that end, plotlines incorporate relatively long lab scenes introducing the infallible technological gear with the help of which the body is processed and, eventually, established as a repository of signs.

Technology, body and lab practice alike are depicted in great detail and in a visually appealing fashion. The purpose the techniques of visualization serve is to envelop violence as the ultimate form of *urban* spectacle – as opposed to the western, for instance, which, in this respect, represents and dramatizes the realism of the frontier. In either case, violence, as such, always carries an element of the spectacular, it always relies on the spectacle, it counts on the spectacle and, finally its purpose is to become spectacle. However, as a generic convention, film noir does not normally create effect through the detailed graphic portrayal of physical violence.

In *CSI*, when a story begins (usually at night), the crime has already been committed. Neither the plot nor the visual framing of the narrative is designed to provide any kind of pretext to the crime – it is presented as given, as systemic. The work of CSIs begins when the deed has been done, with the discovery of the body. The show does not describe what leads up to the event. It does not delineate the psychological frame of mind, the personality, the past or the social context of the perpetrator – except as reconstructed by CSIs in retrospection during the course of investigation. Consequently, the show does not follow the established patterns of a genuine police movie either. *CSI* does not feature extensive shootouts, fistfights, sex scenes or car-chase sequences that

¹⁹ Gever, 459.

traditionally characterize an action-packed cop show. Nor is *CSI* interested in raising body-counts. Death and the body do achieve a unique, marked, even stigmatized status though. The primary focus of the narrative is to shift the audience's attention from the crudity of effect, which would be the purpose of the horror film, to the "physiology of the crime", to the physiological impact crime has on the body: in other words, to the minute details of the corporeality of crime.

Cinematic affect is also achieved by the deployment of such narrative devices as the urban setting, night-for-night sequences, the combination of on-site and studio filming, and the composition of the *mise-en-scène*. Given that cinema is predominantly a visual art form, it is problematic to radically detach the thematic and narrative structural layers from the visual style, or to give an eminent and definitive description of either without drawing on characteristic features that are also apparent and decisive in the other. Consequently, the collapse of illusions is not only a matter of chance or recognition on the protagonist's part, or that of the viewer for that matter. It follows a well-established pattern and is embedded in the psycho-social conditioning of the *mise-en-scène*.

As a result, forensic crime TV primarily represents a mode of expression that adopts a unique visual style, an emphatic dark tone in its choice and elaboration of characters and themes. *CSI* uses very thoroughly composed and nicely shot images where the choice of color and the *mise-en-scène* aim at a rigorous aestheticism of the picture. The aesthetic of *CSI*'s visual style entails a kind of realism that emerges as "hyperrealism" in the sense that it finds a way to visually amplify, distort and reassert the anxieties of society. Accordingly, this realism does not have to do with the "real," it does not have to do with the real city, or with actual places within a city. It has to do with the look of the real, with what the audience recognizes and appropriates as "real." Therefore the hyperrealism of forensic crime fiction (and TV) does not signify a return to an extreme or naturalistic "representationalism;" forensic crime fiction does not represent in the classical sense of the word; it dramatizes reality in such a way that the real is exposed to and, subsequently, informed by the viewers' superimposed experience of the real.

Like many other films, *CSI* is not meant to literally reproduce reality, but rather to question realities, and confront us with the novel and the unknown. Wolfgang Iser comments on the reproduction of reality and the effect of films and writes the following:

[t]he fact that certain films gain effect by an intentional reproduction of everyday reality in order to render such an obsessive repetition unbearable shows that the reality itself is not the reason for the presentation.²⁰

²⁰ Iser, Wolfgang (1993) *The Fictive and the Imaginary. Charting Literary Anthropology*. London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 181.

The visual look of *CSI* is constructed by the transparent (and over-rhetorized) technologization of the image, which works towards the continuous maintenance of the viewer's suspense. Camera position, low key lighting, imbalanced lighting, deep focus, dissymmetrical mise-en-scène, and extreme low and high angles are all manifestations of technics (sic!) constituting meaning.²¹ In *CSI* the technologization of the image amounts to an excessive dependence on the technical and material factors that determine the logic of composition in order to visually signify something that cannot be told verbally. This system of representation reiterates the underlying violence of vision and the invasiveness of pictorial signification that permeates modern urban society. The visual appeal of images presenting brightly lit spaces like clubs, cafeterias or casinos, or dimly lit lab intérieurs and interview rooms, is primarily the result of a consciously and purposefully manipulated interplay between light and shadow, background and foreground, deep and shallow focus, and is designed to signify, frame and accentuate the moods, dialogues or actions of characters appearing in those spaces. These elements also create a marked illusion of spatial distance between the bodies of the characters and those of the viewers, locating the viewers' gaze in an outside, but still within the cinematic, apparatus.

Yet, it is not only the technics of the cinematic image that qualifies for our attention. The visualization of science and crime also greatly relies on the implementation of often yet-to-be invented, fictional technologies at the disposal of the scientists. Visualization, consequently, can be taken into account in two ways. First, as the presentation of lab procedures which, as I have already stated, take up a great deal of actual screen time: typical sequences show CSIs working in the lab analyzing specimens, pulling DNA from hair samples, experimenting with tools that might have been used as murder weapons, or searching databases of fingerprints, number plates, shoe prints. Such sequences often involve a filming technique where the image displays multiple focal points, with screens showing in close-up what is happening under the microscope or on the autopsy table, with an additional beam of light directed at the actual procedure.

²¹ Cf.: Place, Janey and Peterson, Lowel, "Some Visual Motifs of Film Noir" In Alain Silver & James Ursini, (eds) (2005) *Film Noir Reader* New York: Limelight Editions, 66.

I consciously and deliberately distinguish *technics* from *techniques* throughout the article. The distinction is based on Bernard Stiegler's *Technics and Time: The fault of Epimetheus* (1998) Transl. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, where the term is meant to bridge the gap resulting from the rigid separation of *tekhne* and *episteme*. *Technics*, consequently, marks a horizon of human existence where the structures of thinking and cognition closely depend on (and are defined by) the "hard technologies" created by the same structures. Applying the formula to *CSI*, we can say that the underlying episteme operative in the representation of forensic science is defined by the hard technologies generated by the cultural and temporal context. In other words, new hard technologies generate new episteme. Hence what I call the forensic paradigm: the new, democratized forms of visualization result in new, democratized forms of knowledge about the body. And hence the difference between *techniques* (implying strategies and epistemological structures), *hard technologies* and *technics* (the technological embodiments of epistemology).

Secondly, visualization also comprises sequences using technologies of vision that aid the human eye (that of the CSIs and of the viewer) to see things otherwise inaccessible. The viewer is bombarded with such images – as microscopic trace evidence seen through computer screens, CG reconstructions of crime scenes and bullet trajectories, or the inside of wounds, body cavities and images of healthy as well as damaged tissues and organs. As regards the heavy use of technological devices that envelop and manipulate vision, *CSI* features significant auto-poetic tendencies. Gever notes that

[i]ndeed, *CSI* goes to great lengths to reveal the means of production and a curious kind of self-referentiality is built into the series. The discovery of truth – what *really* happened – in any *CSI* episode requires the careful reading of inscriptions, both by the fictional investigators and the audience. The program's televisual style inscribes a particular way of seeing.²²

In other words, *CSI*, in an auto-poetic move, thematizes and elevates on a metadiscursive level forms of spectatorship and the techniques of image-making. Crime story can be considered as the par excellence meta-discourse and fictionalization of semiotics – in fact the actualization of what Jonathan Culler calls “the pursuit of signs.” This means that in order for the evidence or the body to become texts that can be read, they first need to be established as a series of signs. Trace evidence and the corpse depend on decipherment; they only become signs or traces for the learned eye. In other words, the semiotics of crime amounts to a language of its own that needs to be learned by the CSIs in order for them to be able to read the body, the crime scene or trace evidence as a text. As a consequence, even though *CSI* stands before us as a modernist genre-fiction underpinning a modernist (utopistic and positivistic) epistemology and the idea of objective science, the collapse of narrative referentiality, the decisive role of auto-poetic patterns in the representations of technology and the (re-)creation of narratives, the semiotic bouncing between the linguistic and the pictorial sign and, most importantly, the concept of the fragmented body appear as post-modern features. Otherwise stated, *CSI* follows a traditional detective-story pattern but considerable post-modern characteristics are at work on the level of presentation.

There appears to be a clear link between the visual representation of bodies and their forensic transcription via scientific discourse. Although there is a kind of an effacement of the body in favor of verbal description, there is also the intense visual focus of the show: the sophisticated use of computer graphics, animation sequences, the stylized presentation of the lab (lighting, framing, etc.), not to mention physically pleasing actors, all contribute to the “sexing up” of the visuals. All of these elements put the body “back into the scene,” so to

²² Gever, 459.

speak, creating an interesting counterpoint between the visual and verbal elements of the show (including the highly formulaic, repetitive nature of the dialogue in the character's set pieces).²³ The linguistic framing of the body, however, is closely linked with the scrutinizing gaze of the forensic scientist. The corpse always has the medical gaze superimposed over it. As Martha Gever reminds us:

The virtuoso display of digital videographics used in these close-up zooms boring into human bodies, recall the pictures produced by medical endoscopy. But despite their dependence on state-of-the-art special effects – hybrid images made up of photographs and films of props, virtual 3D models, digital 3D animation and photographic texture mapping – these scenes faithfully recapitulate the authority of the medical gaze – that is, knowledge about human life gained through visual perception that date back several centuries. In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault (1975[1963]) describes the dissection of corpses that became commonplace in European hospitals and medical schools during the mid-18th century. He maintains that these autopsies provided epistemological support for the rationalization of knowledge about disease and health. Foucault's *précis* of the lessons learned from autopsies is: "That which hides and envelops, the curtain of night over truth, is, paradoxically, life; and death, on the contrary, opens up to the light of day the black coffer of the body."²⁴

The deployment of modern imaging technologies therefore does more than enhance the visual appeal of the show. They can be described not only in terms of technics, but also as *somatechnics*, supplanting the logic of "and" in the juxtaposition of *soma* and *techne*.²⁵ The screen, the microscope, the x-ray and all the other technological devices featured in the program perform a prosthetic function: they operate as the extensions of sight. On the other hand, perception and experience are mediated through these technologies. The purpose of technology in mediating the body and its traumatic experience is to allow the investigators to decipher and reconstruct what the body has undergone, and how it came to grief (trauma and death). To be sure, the body is presented in the show as a text to be read; but this text is written in the language (and signs) of technology.

²³ I am indebted here for the comments made by Nick Mansfield at the Derrida Today Conference, Macquarie University, Sydney, 2008.

²⁴ Gever, 457.

²⁵ Here I am alluding to the explanation of the term as it was given by Nikki Sullivan, convenor of the "Somatechnics" research project at the Department of Media, Music and Cultural Studies, Macquarie University, Sydney.

Two emblematic visual effects used in the program are the so-called CSI-shots and the flashback. As I have explained earlier, a CSI-Shot comprises the application of a virtual camera floating into the body through orifices or wounds in order to reveal internal cavities, organ deformations and tissue damage. The relevance of this technique is that it allows the eye to become kinesthetic, although this kinesthesia is only virtual, as the eye does not move in space in reality. These shots exemplify Foucault's medical gaze. Gever explains its significance as follows:

Doctors once sought new knowledge about disease, and therefore health, in anatomized, anonymous cadavers. *CSI* extends and resituates the knowledge provided by the performance of autopsies as diagnoses of social pathology. But in order to do this the social body must be visualized, constituted as information and made knowable by employing scientific instruments and procedures. Enter, once again, the police wielding gear devised to visualize, and generate knowledge about, the social landscape and those who inhabit it.²⁶

The role of the flashback as a narrative device is even more interesting and also relies on the noir tradition, where much of the story (if not the entire plot) was narrated in retrospection. From a narrative theoretical point of view, we might say that the flashback is the par excellence focalizer. It allows for the superimposition of the narrative point of view of multiple characters. *CSI* uses this technique more than once in each episode to signify possible explanations in the course of the reconstruction of a crime. In the end there is usually a "master-flashback" that reveals what really happened, and accompanies the perpetrator's confession. Cinematically, flashbacks usually display rough imaging, that is to say, low saturation, different coloring and emblematic flashes that mark the transitions between the main narrative and retrospection. They receive further significance in terms of the viewer's involvement in the course of events and the investigation: obviously, flashbacks are not "seen" by the characters, but rather narrated or, more accurately, "hypothesized and theorized" by them. In fact they never get to see what happened, what the event of crime really looked like. In this respect the viewers are privy to an apparition, the illusion of "being there" by way of the flashback. As Mitchell remarks, "some texts encourage mental imaging."²⁷ This is exactly what the flashback embodies: it completes the integrity of the visual narrative on the one hand; on the other hand, however, the flashback also sets limits to the mental imaging, since no real mental imaging

²⁶ Gever, 458.

²⁷ Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994) *Picture Theory*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 112.

takes place on the viewers' part. Reiterating the views of Wolfgang Iser on the capabilities of cinema, Ben De Bruyn remarks:

[...] the visual medium of the film is able to conjure up things that are beyond the reach of our senses, but [...] it would destroy the intended effect of films as well as texts if the audience always filled in their incomplete images, be they mental or visual. Furthermore, the spectator has to participate in the viewing process, as he has to connect the cuts and scenes of a movie along precisely the same pattern as the reader has to knit textual fragments together.²⁸

The purpose of the flashback is not to subvert creative imagination, or to hinder the deciphering of forensic codes. Its purpose is to "transport" the viewers back in time without the disruption of narrative sequentiality, and make them witnesses by enhancing the illusion of their participation.

As regards the popular reception of the show and of the social status of the forensic expertise in general, one instance of criticism is of special relevance at this point. The phenomenon called "CSI-effect" refers to the often unrealistic expectations jurors, police officers, even criminals themselves have in connection with forensic science.²⁹ As pointed out at various places, these misconceptions usually stem from the "dramatic license" the creators of the show take in popularizing and exaggerating the potentials of the profession. As a result, juries usually demand DNA profiles in a much shorter time than it takes in real life, ask for finger print analyses or other sorts of scientific evidence they believe to be one hundred percent accurate and infallible. Parallel to this tendency, the ability of juries to reach a verdict has diminished as more and more jurors question the reliability of circumstantial evidence. In response to the increasing significance of the CSI-effect, new strategies have emerged in the selection of jurors. On the one hand, only people who do not watch the program are selected, because they are believed not to be under the influence of the fictional practices. On the other hand, however, there is an equally emphatic strategy, where members of the jury are expected to be familiar with *CSI*. The

²⁸ De Bruyn, Ben, "Death-Image-Medium. The Anthropological Criticism of Wolfgang Iser and Hans Belting" *Image and Narrative* 7/ 2 (2006).

<http://www.imageandnarrative.be/iconoclastm/debruynt.htm> Accessed on March 11, 2008

²⁹ For detailed discussions of the CSI-effect see Schweitzer, N. J. and Saks, Michael J. "The *CSI* Effect: Popular Fiction About Forensic Science Affects Public Expectations About Real Forensic Science." *Jurimetrics*, 47/Spring, (2007) 357-365.; Cole, Simon and Dioso-Villa, Rachel "CSI and its Effects: Media, Juries and the Burden of Proof" *New England Law Review*. 41/ 3 (2007) 24-35.; Mann, Michael D. "The 'CSI Effect': Better Jurors through Television and Science?". *Buffalo Public Interest Law Journal*. 10, (2006).

http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=michael_mann. Accessed on December 05, 2008.; Sheldon, Donald E., Young S., Kim and Barak, Gregg "A Study of Juror Expectations and Demands Concerning Scientific Evidence: Does the 'CSI Effect' Exist?" *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment & Technology Law*. 9/2. (2007) 331-368.

explanation to this is that experts such as criminalists, crime scene investigators or profilers claim to have an easier job explaining investigative procedures and presenting evidence to people who, as viewers of *CSI*, are at least superficially familiar with the terminology and the practices of detection. The implications of *CSI*'s visual style direct attention to the complexities and contradictions concerning the visual dissemination of corporeal knowledge. *CSI* "rhetorizes" visuality, to show how the framing of the image and of the gaze is mobilized and governed by a certain rhetoric, the ultimate purpose of which is to bring about a different, a body-conscious, "corporeally informed" way of seeing. Detective fiction is by nature utopistic, as it always retains the prevailing status quo (villains, in the end, are always villains, there is no confusion of social and moral values) and suggests that detectives (crime scene investigators) are the representatives and enforcers of social and moral justice. What *CSI* offers is the fiction of an entirely objective justice that is achieved on the objective grounds of science.

20 “THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUALS” AND THE DEMONIC
CIRCLES OF CONSCIOUSNESS
IN *BEND SINISTER* – NABOKOV AND WILLIAM JAMES*

Márta Pellérdi

“The desire for a certain kind of truth here brings
about that special truth’s existence...”
(William James)¹

In the introduction to the 1964 edition of *Bend Sinister* Nabokov remarked that his second novel written in English made a rather “dull thud” when it was first published in 1947.² In its choice of subject, which focuses on the individual versus a fictitious totalitarian regime, the book “has obvious affinities” with Nabokov’s Russian fiction, more specifically, with *Invitation to a Beheading*, written in Paris in 1938 (6). Nabokov claimed, however, that the “main theme” of the novel

[was] not really about life and death in a grotesque police state. [. . .] The main theme of *Bend Sinister*, then, is the beating of Krug’s loving heart, the torture an intense tenderness is subjected to – and it is for the sake of the pages about David and his father that the book was written and should be read. (7)

Nevertheless, the theme of a philosopher’s struggle for intellectual freedom against the prohibitions and brutality of the police state is too prominent to be overlooked.³ Nabokov also draws attention to the “two other themes” [that] accompany the main one:” the “dim-brained brutality” of such a government “which thwarts its own purpose” and “Krug’s blessed madness” (7). The author confessed that he rarely re-read the finished product of his efforts, “but when [he did] go through them again, what please[d] [him] most [was] the wayside

* A revised version of this article appeared as Chapter 2 in Pellérdi, Márta (2010) *Nabokov's Palace: The American Novels*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Reprinted here with the permission of the publisher.

¹ James, William (1979) *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, Burkhardt, Frederick H., Skrupskelis, Ignas K. and Bowers, Fredson (eds.), Cambridge, Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 28.

² Nabokov, Vladimir (1986) *Bend Sinister*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 5.

³ The critic Herbert Grabes (1977) for instance, claimed that Nabokov’s “explicit reading instruction positively demands to be put to the test”. In *Fictitious Biographies: Vladimir Nabokov's English Novels*. The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 19-20.

murmur of this or that hidden theme” (11). This holds true for the re-reader as well, who finds that a certain “private satisfaction” might be attained from the subsidiary themes (11). While undoubtedly the book is also about artistic creation, the reader cannot help but conclude that *Bend Sinister* is Nabokov’s most philosophical and political novel, discussing questions concerning immortality, consciousness, the importance of the individual and the freedom of thought. For philosophical support for his views Nabokov turns to the writings of William James. In his biography of Nabokov Brian Boyd mentions that Nabokov’s father had his son read the works of William James at the ages of twelve and thirteen and that the writer “kept his admiration of William James for life.”⁴ This paper focuses on how some of the ideas of the philosopher-psychologist William James, mainly from the essays grouped under the title of *The Will to Believe*, are evoked in Nabokov’s dystopian novel *Bend Sinister*. These ideas are connected to two different functions of the circle image in the text, both demonic in nature. One form of the closed circle illustrates the unwelcome intrusion of dangerous political reality that acts as a restriction on freedom of thought and results in tragic consequences for the artist, scholar or any individual. The other is associated with artistic inspiration and creation, the most ideal manifestation of the freedom of consciousness. Even ‘Krug’, the last name of the philosopher in the story, means ‘circle’ in Russian.

James’s preoccupation with consciousness, which he described as a “stream of thought,” finds its way into *Bend Sinister*.⁵ To William James, “consciousness in the brain [...] is the absolute world-enigma, – something so paradoxical and abnormal as to be a stumbling block to Nature, and almost a self-contradiction.”⁶ Nabokov expresses in his autobiography a similar wonder at the existence of “consciousness, which is the only real thing in the world and the greatest mystery of all” (156). But he also describes his dismay at discovering that time is the prison in which consciousness is entrapped.

That this darkness is caused merely by the walls of time separating me and my bruised fists from the free world of timelessness is a belief I gladly share with the most gaudily painted savage. I have journeyed back in thought—with thought hopelessly tapering off as I went—to remote regions where I groped for some secret outlet only to discover that the *prison of*

⁴ Boyd, Brian (1990) *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 90-91. Victor H. Strandberg is one of the few critics who have noticed that some of William James’s ideas are artistically woven into Nabokov’s texts. See his article on “Nabokov and the Prism of Art,” in Kellman, Steven G. and Malin, Irving (eds.) (2001) *Torpid Smoke: The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 189-202.

⁵ James, William, *Principles of Psychology*, 239.

<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/James/Principles/prin9.htm> (accessed September 27, 2009).

⁶ James, William “Human Immortality,” in Burkhardt, Frederick H., Bowers, Fredson and Skrupskelis, Ignas K. (eds.) (1982) *Essays in Religion and Morality, The Works of William James*, Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 88.

time is spherical without exits [emphasis added]. [...] the beginning of reflexive consciousness in the brain of our remotest ancestor must surely have coincided with the dawning of the sense of time.⁷

The circular shape of the prison metaphor that prevents the infinitude of consciousness in Nabokov's novel can be traced back to a famous illustration by Mstislav Dobuzhinsky in 1907 (the artist who used to give drawing lessons to the young Nabokov in St. Petersburg) in which, according to Pamela Davidson, "a circumscribed hell" can be seen with the "devil as giant spider [...] trapped within prison walls, at whose feet huddles a group of barely distinct human beings, condemned to trudge round and round in an endless circle [...]"⁸ Krug's meditations on death also evoke the spherical image of the prison with consciousness trapped within the walls of demonic time:

death is either the instantaneous gaining of perfect knowledge (similar say to the instantaneous disintegration of stone and ivy composing the circular dungeon where formerly the prisoner had to content himself with only two small apertures optically fusing into one; whilst now, with the disappearance of all walls, he can survey the entire circular landscape), or absolute nothingness, *nichto*. (147)

Adam Krug in the story is a distinguished philosopher with an international reputation who is mainly concerned, like James or Nabokov, with the problem of finite vs. infinite consciousness. A small fictitious Eastern European state serves as the background to the story of Krug and his son David, where the existing regime has been overthrown by an "Ekwilist", communist-type revolution. The Eastern European background – with a few Hungarian references thrown in to accentuate the easterly geographical location of this non-existent European country – evokes the plight of the Baltic States in 1940, when they lost their liberty and were annexed by the Soviet Union. The demonstration of the cruelty and terror introduced by the Ekwilist regime also serves the purpose of illustrating the true nature of totalitarianism that restrains and attempts to control human liberty and thought. The arrests and disappearances of Krug's friends and colleagues demonstrate that the conformist attitude of the scholars at the university is the wrong solution. When his colleague Hedron urges Krug to sign the document of allegiance he assures Krug that "Nobody can touch our circles, but we must have some place to draw them" (56). Paduk and his regime, however, will not allow these circles to be drawn, they can and will

⁷ Nabokov, Vladimir (1987) *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 17-18.

⁸ Davidson, Pamela (2000) *Russian Literature and its Demons: Studies in Slavic Literature, Culture and Society*, vol.6, Berghahn Books, 168.

destroy Krug and everybody who confronts them; they, in fact, will be the ones who will have the power to draw circles around their unwilling captives.

When the story opens, Krug is still suffering from the shock caused by the death of his wife from a kidney disease, realizing only too late the danger of remaining with his son in the newly established dictatorial state. While most of his best university colleagues and friends, like Ember the translator, are arrested, he naively thinks that his own international fame will protect him and his eight year-old son David from the persecution of the state. As he does not pledge allegiance to the dictator Paduk, who also happens to be a former detestable classmate of his, and is unwilling to serve his regime, he finally finds himself in a predicament when it is already too late for him to escape from the country. When finally arrested, Krug is willing to serve the leader of the police state just to save his son, but, owing to an accident, David is mistaken for another scholar's son and taken to a psychiatric institute for abnormal children. Here he becomes a victim of an atrociously cruel experiment and is brutally beaten to death by juvenile delinquents. Krug, upon watching the film made of David's execution, loses his mind, but with the help of his creator Nabokov (who takes pity on the sufferings of his own creation), realizes that he is just another character in the author's world of fiction.

It was at that moment, just after Krug had fallen through the bottom of a confused dream and sat up on the straw with a gasp – and just before his reality, his remembered hideous misfortune could pounce upon him – it was then that I felt a pang of pity for Adam and slid towards him along an inclined beam of pale light – causing instantaneous madness, but at least saving him from the senseless agony of his logical fate. (193-194)

When the author, the "anthropomorphic deity impersonated" by Nabokov (11), allows himself to be seen by Krug, "he [Krug] suddenly perceives the simple reality of things and knows but cannot express in the words of his world that he and his son and wife and everybody else are merely" the author's "whims and megrims" (7). Afterwards, when Krug is given the option of saving his friends' lives in return for his signature on the document of allegiance, he attempts to reassure his friend Ember and tell him that "there is nothing to fear," (198) for he has already had a glimpse of his creator. He is shot and the walls disappear, but his existence is continued on the "chaos of written and rewritten pages" produced by the author, whose hidden and creative presence Krug had been looking for all along (200). The reader also has the opportunity to see the author as he gets up from his desk full of written pages:

Krug ran towards him [Paduk], and just a fraction of an instant before another and better bullet hit him, he shouted again: You,

you – and the wall vanished, like a rapidly withdrawn slide, and I stretched myself and got up from the chaos of written and rewritten pages, to investigate the sudden twang that something had made in striking the wire netting of my window. (200)

Brian Boyd points to the “self-conscious devices” that enhance the self-reflexive quality of the text and with the help of which the author draws attention to himself and his reality, as opposed to the fictitious nightmare-world of his creation.⁹ One such “self-conscious device” is the recurring image of the puddle that is present at the beginning and end of the story. When the story begins, Krug sees an “oblong puddle” on the sidewalk from the hospital window; and the author of Krug’s story, getting up to look out from his window after having finished the novel, also sees the same puddle:

I could also distinguish the glint of a special puddle (the one Krug had somehow perceived through the layer of his own life), an oblong puddle invariably acquiring the same form after every shower because of the constant spatulate shape of a depression in the ground. (201)

Krug interprets the puddle as a metaphor for the sign of human existence which cannot just disappear without a trace after death. “Possibly something of the kind may be said to occur in regard to the imprint we leave in the intimate texture of space” (20). The puddle as an imprint in the world of *Bend Sinister* is a layer through which Krug’s fictitious world can be left behind to enter his creator’s world. Krug’s meditations on the possibility of the infinity of consciousness are also linked to another philosopher’s ideas. When he interrupts the young couple embracing on his porch, the girl’s “spangled wrap” reminds him of constellations and “those mirrors of infinite space *qui m’effrayent, Blaise*, as they did you” (59). Krug is referring to the famous passage in Pascal’s *Pensées* in which the infinity of space is discussed.¹⁰ The self-reflexivity of the text that Krug for a long time is unaware of, the hidden author-creator who finally reveals himself to his creation, corresponds to Pascal’s words in *Pensées* on the hidden God. On a narrative level, however, the hidden God is similar to the Flaubertian type of omniscient narrator-author whose presence Nabokov draws attention to in *Lectures in Literature*:

Gustave Flaubert’s ideal of a writer of fiction was vividly expressed when he remarked that, like God in His world, so the author in his book should be nowhere and everywhere, invisible

⁹ Boyd (1991) 95.

¹⁰ This is fragment no. 206: “Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m’effraie.” Pascal, Blaise (1972) *Pensées*. Paris: Livre de Poche, 105.

and omnipresent. . . . But even in such works where the author is ideally unobtrusive, he remains diffused through the book so that his very absence becomes a kind of radiant presence.¹¹

In the same manner, the author of *Bend Sinister* is diffused through the book, and is present and absent at the same time in Krug’s world, the world he has created. When he makes his presence felt, it is only to indicate to readers that the story is merely a “nightmare fancy” of his own from which his protagonist Krug, out of mercy, has to be released. The “Dieu caché” for Krug is a philosophical problem; for Nabokov it is a narrative technique and a meta-fictional device that he manages to fuse with the philosophical-political theme of his story. Thus Pascal’s “hidden God” becomes a metaphor for the “hidden author” whom Krug is intent on looking for and who happens to be the alter-ego of the real writer, or Nabokov himself. Immortality is thus granted to Krug on the printed pages of *Bend Sinister*, a state which Nabokov himself had not excluded as a possibility in his fragmentary lecture, “The Art of Literature and Common Sense”:

That human life is but a first installment of the serial soul and that one’s individual secret is not lost in the process of earthly dissolution, becomes something more than an optimistic conjecture, and even more than a matter of religious faith, when we remember that only common sense rules immortality out. A creative writer, creative in the particular sense I am attempting to convey, cannot help feeling that in his rejecting the world of the matter-of-fact, in his taking sides with the irrational, the illogical, the inexplicable, and the fundamentally good, he is performing something similar in a rudimentary way to what [two pages missing] under the cloudy skies of grey Venus.¹²

The problem that had originally preoccupied Krug as a philosopher is resolved at the end. Thus Krug’s literary existence is an immortal one, it can always be found in the pages written by Nabokov. One way in which life is possible after death is through art. For Nabokov, the dilemma of immortality finds an artistic solution.

William James, like Pascal, dedicates several essays to problems of reason and faith, human immortality, refuting the rational scientific arguments of the time which ruled out the possibility of infinite consciousness. In the essay “Human Immortality” he draws attention to the limitations of scientific thinking that exclude the possibility of immortality and influence other individuals to give

¹¹ Bowers, Fredson (ed.) (1980) Nabokov, Vladimir *Lectures on Literature*. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Brucoli Clark, 97.

¹² *Ibid.*, 377.

up notions of immortality.¹³ Such attitudes, according to James, are mainly the result of disregard and disdain for individuals who are different from us.¹⁴

The truth is that we are doomed, by the fact that we are practical beings with very limited tasks to attend to, and special ideals to look after, to be absolutely blind and insensible to the inner feelings, and to the whole inner significance of lives that are different from our own.”¹⁵

The *Will to Believe* essays emphasize the same idea, especially the one entitled “The Importance of Individuals.” James draws attention to unfavourable tendencies in contemporary sociology to examine “what produces the average man” and to disregard the individual differences in men.¹⁶

The preferences of sentient creatures are what *create* the importance of topics. They are the absolute and ultimate law-giver here. And I for my part cannot but consider the talk of the contemporary sociological school about averages and general laws and predetermined tendencies, with its obligatory undervaluing of the importance of individual differences, as the most pernicious and immoral of fatalisms. Suppose there is a social equilibrium fated to be, whose is it to be—that of your preference, or mine? There lies the question of questions, and it is one which no study of averages can decide.¹⁷

James is indignant at the “pernicious” and “immoral” attempts to regard men as groups rather than individuals. He foresees the future efforts made at “social equilibrium” but raises the question upon what grounds, “whose preferences” they are to be established. The fictitious, Ekwilist regime in *Bend Sinister* (very similar to the Soviet Communist regime) pronounces the average man (which does not exist) and the “group” to be the guiding principle of “Ekwilist” politics.

Two different types of writings, “Shadographs” and “padographs” in the novel illustrate the difference between the two different mentalities represented by Krug (or Nabokov and James) and the dictator Paduk, Krug’s former classmate. A close friend of Krug, Ember is translating *Hamlet* into the Germanic-Slavic language of the country before he gets arrested. Translation seems to be imitation, copying, but the “shadographs” produced by the good translator are unique as well, just like the original work of art itself. Ember is involved in a

¹³ “Human Immortality” in *Essays in Religion and Morality*, 77-101.

¹⁴ James refers to R. L. Stevenson (also a favourite of Nabokov) and his essay “The Lantern Bearers,” *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, n10.

¹⁶ “The Importance of Individuals” in *The Will to Believe and other Popular Essays in Philosophy*, 191.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 194-195.

process which, according to Krug, is like comparing the original work to a tree, and the translation to a completely different one; but the shadow of the second tree turns out to be identical to that of the original, having "the same outline, changing in the same manner, with the same double and single spots of suns rippling in the same position, at the same hour of the day" (107). This Krug terms "shadography". Translation also involves a "suicidal limitation and submission", which are compensated for "by the thousand devices of shadography", and the "keen pleasure that the weaver of words and their witness experience [...] at every new wile in the warp" (107). The shadograph produced by the translator, however, is substantially different from Paduk's "padograph". The invention only imitates the handwriting of people, but does not throw light on the uniqueness of the individual. Ember's work as a translator, or Krug's as a philosopher, for that matter, are shadographs; they are based on the original works of other greater minds, but the outcome of their work also throws light on their personal originality. The dictator's padograph (invented by his father) thus becomes a metaphor for the totalitarian system of the Ekwilist regime in the country, where all men lose their unique differences and are regarded as copies of one another. The main purpose of the dictatorship is to rob the population of their physical as well as spiritual freedom and mould them into submissive servants of a regime which supports the personal cult and "preferences" of the dictator. Ekwilism supports only the average not only in economic matters but in all fields of life. It also aims at balancing in human beings the "unequal portions of this essentially uniform consciousness" (70). Any deviance from these views arouses suspicion and may cost one's life or liberty. Krug and his colleagues have more knowledge and intelligence than the average and therefore cannot adjust to a system which advocates "spiritual uniformity" and locks the mind up in a prison (71).

We have seen how the metaphor of the closed circle is used to show how time and a totalitarian regime become a prison for consciousness and freedom of thought in *Bend Sinister*. But what happens when there is a rent in the prison wall and the stream of deep thought is interrupted? In the introduction Nabokov claims that Krug's private sphere of consciousness has to suffer from various disturbing intrusions. The author also reveals that Mallarmé's "L'Après-midi d'un Faune" is one of the hidden themes of the book. The recurring line from Mallarmé: "sans pitié du sanglot dont j'étais encore ivre" is re-echoed in Krug's stream of consciousness as "Donje te zankoriv" (59) and hints at harsh interruptions, unpleasant thoughts and dreams.

Krug is haunted by a passage from this voluptuous eclogue where the faun accuses the nymph of disengaging herself from his embrace 'sans pitié du sanglot dont j'étais encore ivre' ('spurning the spasm with which I still was drunk'). Fractured parts of this line re-echo through the book, cropping up for instance in the malarma ne donje of Dr. Azureus' wail of rue

(Chapter Four) and in the donje te zankoriv of apologetic Krug when he interrupts the kiss of the university student and his little Carmen (foreshadowing Mariette) in the same chapter. (10)

In Chapter Five, for instance, Krug has a nightmare and in his dream he is back at school writing an exam: “The theme to be tackled was an afternoon with Mallarmé, an uncle of his mother, but the only part he could remember seemed to be ‘le sanglot dont j’étais encore ivre’ ” (75). When Krug is finally ready to write he can “clearly perceive the outlines of the next theme” (75-76). When Olga, Krug’s dead wife, appears in the nightmare and conducts a striptease in which she removes parts of her body, the dream is a horrible indication for Krug that she is dead (76). But when the walls of the spherically shaped vicious circle disappear at the end of the novel and Krug glimpses his creator, this moment of epiphany closely parallels the moment of demonic artistic inspiration that the artist-creator experiences before creation, which in the text is reinforced by echoes of Coleridge, and is throughout also interrupted in a frustrating manner. Nabokov’s biographer reveals that “At one stage, *Bend Sinister* was to have been called *The Person from Porlock*, in honour of the visitor who interrupted Coleridge in the midst of his dream of ‘Kubla Khan’ (‘the most famous of unfinished poems,’ as Nabokov called it).”¹⁸ The novel’s tentative title also throws light on the importance of interruptions in the story and how they are linked to the image of the demonic circle. In Coleridge’s famous poem there are some mysterious lines that seem to point at the poet himself who, following Kubla Khan, is going to “build that dome in air,” by writing a poem on the ‘pleasure dome’ itself. But upon seeing how the flash of artistic inspiration has changed the poet, the people around him will be superstitiously afraid: “all should cry, Beware! Beware!/His flashing eyes, his floating hair!/Weave a circle round him thrice,/And close your eyes with holy dread,/For he on honey dew hath fed,/And drunk the milk of Paradise.”¹⁹ The circle is drawn by the people to protect them from the demon magic of artistic inspiration emanating from the poet, and by the poet to protect himself from the interruptions coming from the external world around him.

The demonic circle is transformed in *Bend Sinister* into the private sphere of the scholar. But the circle has its rents, through which continuous interruptions occur, mainly from the actual physical world in the form of death and politics. When Krug is walking home from the hospital on the night of his wife’s death the soldiers guarding the bridge send him back and forth in a pointless bureaucratic attempt to obtain papers that would allow him to pass over the bridge. Another man, a hapless grocer, accompanies him on this futile venture. The grocer keeps interrupting Krug’s train of thought:

¹⁸ Ibid., 103.

¹⁹ Abrams, M.H. et al. (eds.) (1993) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Vol. 2. New York, London: W.W. Norton and Company, 347-349.

Krug and the grocer started walking across the bridge; at least Krug walked: his little companion expressed his delirious joy by *running in circles around Krug, he ran in widening circles* [emphasis added] and imitated a railway engine: chug-chug, his elbows pressed to his ribs, his feet moving almost together, taking small firm staccato steps with knees slightly bent. Parody of a child – my child.

‘Stoy, chort²⁰ [stop, curse you],’ cried Krug, for the first time that night using his real voice.” (26)

The circles that the grocer draws around Krug turn the philosopher’s attention away from his mourning and the transcendental realm he is seeking to discover, and make him aware of the dangers of reality. At the end of the book, when Krug’s circle of consciousness is destroyed and reality enters, it means death for Krug and infinite consciousness for him (immortality) on the pages of the book, but it also signals the end of the book for the author and the reader. Russian Symbolist poets like Sologub described the circle around the artist as a ‘charmed circle’ [ocharovanny krug], as a protective spherical wall into which evil powers could not enter.²¹ Sologub compared the poet to a conjurer who draws these circles around himself for protection, but who sometimes out of carelessness leaves rents, and in the most ecstatic moments of artistic inspiration, the demon is able to squirm his way into the magic circle (like the soldiers on the bridge and the grocer).²² The harsh, demonic reality of Paduk’s regime and the death of his wife make it impossible for Krug to draw perfect impenetrable circles which would prevent interruptions and enable him to work once more.

Another interruption occurs on the part of Mariette, David’s babysitter. She is like a female demon who tries to seduce Krug just before David is abducted. Mariette slightly prefigures Lolita with her youth, but unlike her famous literary descendant she is mentally corrupt and without any human feelings. But the other, more powerful demon is Nabokov, who as creator can put an end to the existence of literary characters any time he wants to and can bestow any degree of consciousness, madness or lucidity on them. It is Nabokov who inflicts “the torture an intense tenderness is subjected to” in writing about “the beating of Krug’s loving heart” (7). Nabokov uses the metaphor of the

²⁰ ‘Chort’ means ‘devil’ in Russian.

²¹ Davidson, 168.

²² See Goretity József on the subject of circles and demons in Sologub’s novels: (1995) “Idézet, paródia és mítosz Fodor Szologub két regényében,” *Studia Litteraria* 34: 14. See also Pamela Davidson’s *Russian Literature and its Demons, Studies in Slavic Literature, Culture and Society*, vol. 6 (2000). According to Davidson, Aleksandr Blok’s idea that “ ‘art is Hell’ [...] completely infiltrated literary representations of human consciousness [...]. Sologub’s novel *The Petty Demon* (Melkii bes, 1907) evokes a totally enclosed demonic world, and the lyric hero of Blok’s poem “There is No Way Out” (Net iskhoda, 1907) is trapped in a ‘charmed circle’ (ocharovanny krug), where death is welcomed and the call to rise from the dead rings hollow.” *Ibid.*, 168.

demonic or magic circle not only for illustrating consciousness entrapped in time, but to demonstrate the timeless moment of artistic creation. The following description from the university lecture already mentioned, closely resembles the vanishing walls that Krug experienced before his death in *Bend Sinister*.

The inspiration of genius adds a third ingredient: it is the past and the present and the future (your book) that come together in a sudden flash; thus the entire circle of time is perceived, which is another way of saying that time ceases to exist. It is the combined sensation of having the whole universe entering you and of yourself wholly dissolving in the universe surrounding you. It is the prison wall of the ego suddenly crumbling away with the non-ego rushing in from the outside to save the prisoner – who is already dancing in the open.²³

In this description, however, there are no cracks in the wall to allow the entrance of impure powers; all the walls seem to disappear. This is the moment when the prisoner Krug is saved by the author himself, as we have seen. What he had always wished to believe in, God, immortality, the otherworld, has now become a certainty. With his misery and wish or will to believe, he has in a sense prompted his creator to reveal himself. In the essay on “The Will to Believe” James emphasizes the special power of will that is able to create what had been non-existent before: “often enough our faith beforehand in an uncertified result is the only thing that makes the result come true.”²⁴ But the magic circle of inspiration and artistic creation is only possible if there are no intrusions and if freedom of thought is also allowed. Nabokov, who never returned to his homeland during his exile because of the Communist regime which suppressed political freedom and killed millions, including intellectuals and artists who were considered to be enemies of the regime, made no compromises. He wholeheartedly agreed with William James, whose conviction in these matters was quite clear:

We ought, on the contrary, delicately and profoundly respect one another’s mental freedom—then only shall we bring about the intellectual republic; then only shall we have that spirit of inner tolerance without which all our outer tolerance is soulless and which is empiricism’s glory; then only shall we live and let live, in speculative as well as in practical things.²⁵

It is only when the spherical prison walls of time and totalitarian political reality disappear that the freedom of artistic creation and immortality become possible.

²³ Lectures on Literature, 378.

²⁴ “Is Life Worth Living?” in *The Will to Believe and Other Popular Essays in Philosophy*, 53.

²⁵ “The Will to Believe”, 33.

James’s views on individual consciousness, immortality, the importance of individuals thus make their way into circles of consciousness of the author-creator and his creation, contributing to the “wayside murmur” of the hidden artistic themes in *Bend Sinister*.

21 THE NOTIONS OF OMISSION AND DISREMEMBERING IN TONI MORRISON'S *BELOVED*

Anita Szabó

The two notions of omission and “disremembering” are part of people’s everyday lives. There are many situations in which one might think that the wisest solution is to omit the bothering memories, just like tearing a page out of a book. These are usually troubling memories that hurt the person so much that forgetting them deliberately seems easier than accepting them as they are and leaving them as reminders of one’s mistakes or misfortunes. Here, the concept of disremembering can be seen as a synonym for omission; however, it is even more emphatic and means the process of forgetting something deliberately. That is, to disremember means to choose to stop remembering the painful or bad incident.

Can this process ever truly work? This is the question Toni Morrison asks in her novel, *Beloved*. For Morrison, this process is often the root of future problems. In her novel, she argues that because no one – neither an individual, nor a community or even a nation – can entirely disremember something; its absence will never disappear, and thus it will come back to haunt the ‘disrememberer’ until he or she acknowledges its existence and importance. This acknowledgement, which Morrison terms “rememory,” is the only healing process for the problem. However, “rememory” is quite a difficult process even on the level of individuals, not to mention that of the American nation Morrison addresses in her text. By focusing on the tragic case of one individual family’s cases of “disremembering” and “rememories”, Morrison’s *Beloved* makes a powerful argument about the problem of the whole nation, consciously set in the times of slavery and Reconstruction in the United States. Her novel tells stories of a past that would rather be forgotten by many Americans, but which is totally unforgettable because of its huge impact on the present. In this way, Morrison’s use of disremembering and the omission of certain details, mostly visible concerning namings, are meant to show that those stages of our lives and our pasts that have a great influence on our present cannot be disremembered and, as such, cannot be considered as past at all.

When beginning to analyze Morrison’s work, it is important to note that she wrote her novel in 1987, a little more than one hundred years after the abolition of slavery. Looking on these one hundred years, it is more than clear

that the healing process of America is still not over concerning the wounds that slavery has left behind. From one part, it is a feeling of guilt that is tried to be cured by different types of political action. According to history books and the Constitution, three different Amendments were created between 1865 and 1870 that abolished slavery, gave the blacks full citizenship and finally the right to vote.¹ Similar political actions have been created also towards the end of the twentieth century by which the government tried to help African-American assimilation into the dominant society of the United States; the 1980s Affirmative Action is one example. The other side, however, consists of people whose wounds are still open, and who cannot get over the centuries during which there were slaves and who often see that despite all the political actions not much has changed in the way they are treated in the US. This way, both sides have their good reasons to disremember, that is, to deliberately forget this segment of their pasts, even though it is obvious that they are still affected by it. One side tries to forget its guilt while the other is trying to do so with all the pain. The stories that are told by Morrison's *Beloved* serve as a mirror to this attitude towards tackling slavery at the time it was written.

Morrison uses the past to create a different kind of history in her novel. The linear kind of history, well-known from history books, is replaced by a circular one, where nothing can be considered past, where the facts never die. When her protagonist, Sethe, a former slave woman who literally crawls from a Kentucky plantation to freedom in the Northern state of Ohio, thinks back to her escape, she remembers the aid which came from the most unlikely source: a white girl. While Sethe, swollen with pregnancy and with feet almost falling off from exhaustion, the white girl, Amy Denever leans over to massage Sethe's soles and reminds her that "anything dead coming back to life hurts"², Amy's words echo throughout the novel in order to refer to "rememory", saying that once one has disremembered his or her past, it is very hard and painful to bring it back. In this sense, the novel is filled with many characters and events that are tried to be disremembered and which do hurt when they come back to life in the course of the story.

The most important character of the novel coming back to life is the character of Beloved. It is her story, that is, the story of her death which is fully omitted and disremembered in the life of the community presented in the novel. "Beloved" is the name used to refer to Sethe's third child, a girl who Sethe killed in fear when the cruel slave master from whom Sethe herself escaped comes to Ohio in order to re-capture the family. This killing of her child in order to save her from a future of slavery, which Sethe thinks to be living death, is not a story that she or the community wants to remember. This omission is emphasised by the absence of Beloved's name. She is either referred to as Beloved or

¹ Pintér, Károly (2003) *Introduction to the United States of America*. Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Catholic University, 16.

² Morrison, Toni (2005) *Beloved*. London: Vintage, 42.

‘crawling-already’, but her real name is never revealed or remembered in the story.

Everybody knew what she was called, but nobody anywhere knew her name. Disremembered and unaccounted for, she cannot be lost because no one is looking for her, and even if they were, how can they call her if they don’t know her name?³

These lines clearly show the community’s attitude towards Beloved, but the words “how can they call her if they don’t know her name” can also be interpreted as an allusion to slavery. By these words, Morrison suggests that without being able to explain something, one cannot really find a way to deal with it, nor can one understand it.

Still, Beloved cannot be disremembered, as she has a strong influence on also the family’s and the community’s present. She is absent from the family she used to belong to and the change in the relationship between the community and the family is also due to her. However, the more Sethe tries to disremember her murder or ‘saviour’, the more it haunts her. In this sense, Beloved is Sethe’s ghost; she is “the manifestation of suppressed memories”, as literary scholar Linda Krumholz puts it in her essay.⁴ Krumholz goes on with this idea by saying that Beloved is not only the ghost of Sethe, but also that of Paul D, who was a slave with Sethe, and who comes to live with her family in Ohio, and Denver, the fourth child of Sethe. It seems to be true enough if one considers that both Paul D and Denver are made to face their pasts by her the same way as Sethe is.⁵ The more time Beloved spends in the house, the more Paul D and Denver want to know about her past and as such about their own pasts.

And Beloved is the reader’s ghost, forcing us to face the historical past as a living and vindictive presence. Thus Beloved comes to represent the repressed memory of slavery, both for the characters and for the readers. Beloved catalyzes Sethe’s memories as the novel *Beloved* catalyzes the reader’s historical memories.⁶

By saying this, Krumholz suggests that the readers become as inseparable as characters of the novel as those whom they read about, and, moreover, by making the readers involved, they also can be associated with omission and disremembering.

³ Morrison, 323.

⁴ Krumholz, Linda (1992) “The Ghosts of Slavery: Historical Recovery in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*” In *African American Review* (Vol. 26. No.3) Fiction Issue, 400.

⁵ Krumholz, 400.

⁶ Krumholz, 400.

Omission and disremembering become even more salient when it comes to the name of the house the family lives in: 124, which, in my opinion, serves as an individual character in the novel: it has the past of the family as much as the concept of disremembering burnt into its name. The thing that makes it obvious that Morrison tries to tell the reader something by this number is the fact that whenever there is a reference to the house, it is always done by the number. Moreover, this is the very first word of the novel: "124 was spiteful."⁷ Her conscious repetition of the number calls the reader's attention to the weirdness of it. The more often one tries to pronounce it, the more likely it is that he/she will accidentally insert number three into the number of the house because three is the logical next step in the sequence. Morrison uses this number in order to show us, readers, how disremembering works. 124. Three is missing. Beloved is the third child of Sethe. The third child is the one who is killed by her own mother, and the one whom everyone disremembers in order to move on, or as Morrison puts it: "So they forgot her. Like an unpleasant dream during a troubling sleep."⁸ And the reason why this number is so special is that it shows the actual effect of disremembering. Nothing can take the place of number three, like nothing can take the place of important events of our pasts. It will never be called 123, three being Denver, the fourth child of Sethe, since that would be a lie, and lying is different from disremembering, since disremembering is unspoken, it is something unaccepted. So number three and thus Beloved seems to be disremembered, or vice-versa; but can it be fully omitted? Can anything with effects on our present day life be entirely forgotten? Is there no trace to remind people of its absence? Well, one has to seek the answers in the number, itself. Number three is not entirely forgotten, the community can never totally disremember it, because the absence will always be there, showing that something has been taken out, something is missing. Moreover, its existence becomes, in my opinion, even more striking by omitting it than leaving it there. The ghost is created out of this absence in order to haunt those people who want to disremember what cannot be disremembered in order to prevent it from happening. And the only way to cure this is "rememory".

All of the main characters need to go through a process of "rememory" in the course of the novel; thus, it is not only Sethe, who needs to come to terms with her past. By treating 124 as a separate world, disremembering everything around it, Sethe forces Denver, her only child born outside of slavery, into a really difficult situation. Even if Sethe only wants to save her daughter from the pains of her past, Denver will never have a future of herself. As Krumholz says, "the unacknowledged past keeps Denver from moving into the future. She is jealous of her mother's past, and her exclusion from that past increases her loneliness and bitterness"⁹. Still, it is Denver who is the first to be able to put the

⁷ Morrison, 3.

⁸ Morrison, 324.

⁹ Krumholz, 404.

memories of Sethe and Beloved, and thus also that of the community together, and, as such, to help them.

Paul D, who wanders into 124 from his own painful past and eventually becomes Sethe's lover, also suffers from disremembering his past as a slave man and, so, needs to "rememory" it. He suppresses, for quite a long time, how he was systematically humiliated by Schoolteacher, a man at his slave owner's place, and how he was deprived of an identity of his own, as his name, Paul D Garner, suggests it. In this name, "Garner" refers to the owner, whereas "Paul" was the name of almost all the slaves on the plantation and D. refers to his place in the sequence of the slave men. Although, Paul D, at the beginning of the novel, refers to his last name as Garner, by the end of the novel he accepts Denver's calling him "Mr. D."¹⁰ The "D" is part of a painful past, surely, for it represents a time when he was treated as an interchangeable object, not a full human being; he was just one in a line of other workers. And yet, the "D" is also what distinguished him. It was how Sethe, whom he had always loved, knew him. In this way, a "rememory" of his own name becomes a healing for Paul D. He can drop the "Garner," or the life of being owned, but he will keep the "D." for it is part of a past that makes up his present.

At the novel's close, when Paul D rejoins Sethe and sees the destruction by Beloved, it makes him realize that they share the same past.

He wants to put his story next to hers.

'Sethe', he says, 'me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow.'¹¹

Without realizing how many yesterdays they have, they could not even have any kind of tomorrow, and by this they are on the way of healing. Paul D, as he calls himself at the end of the story, as a clear evidence of the fact that he at last finds his own identity, sees that having someone with whom he can share his painful past helps him to accept it, and so, he will no longer have to escape and omit it.

The community as a group also has to "rememory" the past together. It is not until towards the end of the book that other members of the community also start remembering their pasts, and only in this way can they accept Sethe's deeds and the existence of the ghost. One neighbour, Ella, for instance, seems to share more than what one might think with Sethe. She also killed her child – a product of repeated rapes by her slave master and the master's son – and while she initially sees Sethe's murder as evil, she soon thinks that "[w]hatever Sethe had done, [she] didn't like the idea of past errors taking possession of the present."¹² Until she finds "something very personal in her fury"¹³, that is, until she realizes that they have so much in common, Ella cannot help Sethe. But once

¹⁰ Morrison, 313.

¹¹ Morrison, 322.

¹² Morrison, 302.

¹³ Morrison, 302.

she is able to accept her own painful past, she is able to save Sethe from being pulled down by hers. As Amy Denver might put it, again, Morrison argues that “anything coming back to life hurts”. It is not at all easy for Ella, or for any of these women of the community to suddenly come together and save Sethe from Beloved’s ghost; but the fact that this ghost is the ghost of all of them, and the feeling that they share their pasts with each other make them able to cope with it together. With this, Morrison suggests how slavery, as a still haunting segment of the past should be dealt with. Whatever happened in the past is the responsibility of the whole community, and cannot be solved on individual levels; rather, the community and, as such, the United States, has to realize that the horrible past is shared by everyone, without exception.

What the community, together, and the characters, individually, do towards the end of the novel can be called reconstruction as a synonym of “rememory”. They all reconstruct their memories and stories to create one huge story out of it that becomes the story of everyone. Literary scholar Gayle Greene starts her essay with a very similar point saying that

Reconstruction is more than the period in which the novel is set: it is the task the characters face as they set about rebuilding the culture that has been decimated by slavery, learning how to love and trust and make the connections with others that will enable them to go on.¹⁴

By this additional meaning of the word ‘reconstruction’ the circle created by the novel is completed. And the emphasis is, again, on the word “circle” in order to show how closely past, present and future are connected to each other.

To also emphasise the difficulty and ambiguity one might find when trying to tackle painful memories, Morrison in her last chapter puts several alternations of the same sentence: “This is not a story to pass on”¹⁵. The sentence means that the story should be carried on as much as it means that it should be forgotten. With this ambiguity, Morrison suggests that a story like slavery or a story like that of *Beloved* cannot be continued because it reminds us of our wounds; still we can and should never get rid of it because it is part of the American people’s existence, and slavery, as such, is part of being American.

Morrison closes her novel with a forceful argument about the impossibility of ignoring the past. “If a house burns down, it’s gone, but the place – the picture of it – stays, and not only in my rememory, but out there in the world. [...] I mean, even if I don’t think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is out there. Right in the place where it happened.”¹⁶ These lines are here to close this paper because, by these words, Morrison is able to

¹⁴ Greene, Gayle (1991) “Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory” In: *Signs*, Vol. 16. No. 2, 314.

¹⁵ Morrison, 324.

¹⁶ Morrison, 43.

give the reader the most vivid picture of how disremember can never entirely happen and how things that are tried to be disremembered just circulate out there, in the world, waiting to be “remembered”.

THE FACES



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