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GROPING TOGETHER, AVOIDING SPEECH: ELIOT, GREENE, LACAN

Abstract

This paper examines how a being can be distanced from the world enough to formulate a question about it. In other words, how can one be in the world which one questions? What is important here is not how we know that we know something, but rather, how we know that we do not know something. In the literary domain, both T. S. Eliot and Graham Greene have created works which address these issues. Eliot's poem 'The Hollow Men' (1925) features a traumatic stuttering in the form of a repeatedly truncated question, while in Greene's novel *The Power and the Glory* (1940) a gap is opened by a refusal to name that which is welcomed into one's world. Both 'stuttering' and 'refusal' are considered essential in this analysis because they show how questions can be disruptive while still being lodged within the formulations of symbolic language, just as the answer is. To this end Jacques Lacan's thought will help develop a strategy for how to actually reside in such a traumatic moment of refusal, or what he calls the Real. In short this is done through strategies of resistance and withholding from within language itself. Put another way, fundamental questioning will be found in the refusal, stuttering and un-naming of things.

Keywords: T. S. Eliot, Graham Greene, Jacques Lacan, disruption, stuttering

One way to advance in the world is to question it. The activity of questioning is the basis of scientific, philosophical and political thinking. However, this raises the issue of how a being can be distanced from the world enough to formulate a question about it. In other words, how can one be in the world which one questions? What is important here is not how we know that we know something, but rather, how we know that we do not know something

(Mensch 2005: 1; Boyd 2009: 164). This problem of locating a profound relationship to one's world within the ability to question is found in how questions are formulated using the same symbolic code they are meant to investigate: language (Heidegger 1962: 19; Derrida 1991: 129-136n6; Critchley 1993; Willems 2010: 78-86). This essay aims to foreground ways in which the symbolic order is disturbed from within itself in order to open up moments of inquiry. In short, this is done through strategies of resistance and withholding from within language itself. Put another way, fundamental questioning will be found in the refusal, stuttering and unnamings of things.

In the literary domain, both T. S. Eliot and Graham Greene have created works which address this issue. Eliot's poem 'The Hollow Men' (1925) features a traumatic stuttering in the form of a repeatedly truncated question, while in Greene's novel *The Power and the Glory* (1940) a gap is opened by a refusal to name that which is welcomed into one's world. Both 'stuttering' and 'refusal' are considered essential in this analysis because they show how questions can be disruptive while still being lodged within the formulations of symbolic language, just as an answer is. To this end Jacques Lacan's use of 'The Hollow Men' in his essay 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis' (1953) will help develop a strategy for how to actually reside in such a traumatic moment of refusal, or what he calls the Real. This residing will take the form of a foregrounding of the 'stupidity' (Ronell 2002) of who we always already are.

Greene's novel is being read in conjunction with Eliot's poem because the title of *The Power and the Glory* is the answer to a question 'The Hollow Men' has trouble asking. The question in Eliot's poem takes the shape of a number of alternations of a line from the Christian *Pater Noster*:

For Thine is the Kingdom

For Thine is
Life is
For Thine is the (Eliot 1991: 82)

In these lines Eliot provides an answer to a question before the question itself is posed: the answer comes first, in the form of the full line 'For Thine is the Kingdom.' This is then followed by the particular question of 'How does this line from the Lord's Prayer go?', which is formulated in the stuttering, unfinished, altered utterances of the same line. This then raises

issues of questioning in general. The way that Greene's novel 'answers' Eliot's question is that it takes its title by continuing the *Pater Noster*: 'For Thine is the Kingdom / the power and the glory.'¹

The importance of these lines in Eliot's poem lies in how they represent the way a questioning of language can be found within language itself. A supposedly unbroken use of language is represented by the full line of 'For Thine is the Kingdom.' The way that this text is set off from the rest of the poem, in the right-hand margin, and put in italics, indicates its role in relation to the stuttering attempts at grasping the question which follows (and this happens a number of times over in the poem). It indicates that one does not need to be somehow removed from the answer in toto in order to foreground questioning's power, although this too is an attempted strategy, in the work of the Zen kōan, for example (Ronell 2005: 116-129; Willems 2008: 25). In 'The Hollow Men' the symbolically constructed question is there, but put to the side. It is sidelined, perhaps for bad behavior. But nevertheless it is there, declaring its necessity in order for a more profound question to take place.

However, perhaps Eliot's inclusion of the question in its destabilizing wholeness illustrates how language actually never does anything but stutter, although often we move too fast through language to hear it. Perhaps this 'putting aside' of the question can be read as a call to slow down in a way. The function of slowing-down enacted by the poem is one of the main features of poetry, and is tied to the way that poems are about language rather than story (Agamben 1999: 34-5; Eagleton 2003: 87-91). This need to slow down can be seen, for example, in the difference between Paul Celan's '*Todesfuge*' ('Death Fugue', 1948) and his latter '*Engführung*' ('The Straitening', 1958). The first version was too easily appropriated, becoming a fundamental in the educational system, and thus was too quickly read. In response the more staggered and recalcitrant position of '*Engführung*' can be seen as a call for a slower reading (Celan 2002: 30-33; 114-127).²

¹ Michael Shelden argues that 'Once again Greene's admiration for T.S. Eliot led him to do some creative borrowing. *The Power and the Glory* is merely a prose extension of Eliot's vision of a "cactus land", peopled by lost souls who find themselves surrounded by broken images of an abandoned faith. The hollow men wander aimlessly in a landscape of dry grass and ruined buildings, with rats crawling over the rubble. They want to believe in something but have no faith left. They struggle with the phrase "For Thine is the kingdom", not remembering what comes next in Lord's Prayer. What comes next of course, is "*The Power and the Glory*"' (Shelden 1994: 263).

² In a 1958 speech Celan makes a statement that reflects the thesis of this essay, that one needs to go through language to 'enrich' it: 'One thing remained reachable, close and

In 'The Hollow Men' this slowing-down is enacted by a seeming non-cognizance of the answer in a stuttering of the asking. Thus the poem preserves not so much a question as a questioning: it shelters the performance of the question. This holding is a way, or a style, of not letting the poem move too easily forward, of slowing down 'the time of the poem' (Agamben 2005: 78-87). By 'slowing-down' I mean allowing for the time for the difficulties of the question to come forth. The clearing-away of the answer can allow for a space for the stuttering which perhaps always already accompanies the question to be heard; in other words, a holding-still of the question allows for the question's difficulty to become present. This presencing calls for a *weaker* (Lawlor 2007) position for the question than it would have in the strong symbiosis of a more traditional notion of Q&A. This weakness can function as an opening which allows the thought of the question to be unveiled, since the protective walls of the immediate answer are down (Ronell 2002). In this (perhaps Zen-like) sense the letting-be of weakness is actually a form of strength.

The reason that this weakness takes the form of a stutter is because it *takes time* to pose a question, to let the question come forth. This taking time can be seen as a *residing with the initial, or multiple forms of things*. This taking time from answering the question can problematize the question and let the question appear for what it is, a kind of initial truth in itself.

This call for an unveiling of the question in order to allow the veiled truth of questioning to come forth is Heideggerian in the sense of his reading of the unconcealing of truth, or of *aletheia* (Heidegger 2000: 203). This can be seen in some of his comments on 'silence' from a series of lectures on Nietzsche delivered at the University of Freiburg in 1937. It is here that Heidegger connects silence and thinking, which starts to develop the power of refusing to take a question at face value. Heidegger says that 'The utterance of thinking is a telling silence [*Erschweigen*]. Such utterance corresponds to the most profound essence of language, which has its origin in silence' (Heidegger 1991: 208).³ Residing in silence is, as the later Heidegger puts it, a kind of reservedness. It is not a refusal to participate

secure amid all losses: language. Yes, language. In spite of everything, it remained secure against loss. But it had to go through its own lack of answers, through terrifying silence, through the thousand darknesses of murderous speech. It went through. It gave me no words for what was happening, but went through it. Went through and could resurface, „enriched“ by it all' (Celan 2003: 34).

³ I have developed this thought in *Hopkins and Heidegger* (Willems 2009: 94-100).

but rather participating in the style of being reserved: ‘...silence must be *set* into work and word in the *style* of reservedness’ (Heidegger 1999: 9, my emphasis). What ‘style’ means here is that silence must take place as a part of speech. This is not avoiding language but letting language speak. This is similar to how the ‘full’ question in Eliot’s poem is very much a part of its disruption. In other words, in order to hear what is not being said, a saying is needed. It is needed in order to put the eruptive tension of silence into thought. A stuttering poetics is one place for this to happen.

But for ‘what’ to happen? Heidegger scholar Christopher Fynsk argues that it is the originary way that humans are given over to language, to the enunciation of language, that is heard:

language cannot but (not) say the relation for which it proceeds as it ‘speaks’ or is brought to language. Of course, language cannot ‘speak’ without an act of enunciation of some kind. Hence language’s ‘need’ for human speech, as Heidegger describes it. But humankind would not be capable of such originary ‘usage’ were there not a prior assignment of the human being to language – as assignment...language cannot come to language, cannot ‘speak’, without an act of enunciation on the part of a being whose own always prior exposure to language offers language its material site (Fynsk 2000: 55-6).

So perhaps the truth that the stuttering question reveals is one of enunciation, of the act, or gesture of speech rather than speech itself. This theory is substantiated by the lines following the disruption of ‘For Thine is the Kingdom’ in ‘The Hollow Men.’ The following lines point towards another feature underlying enunciation, repetition:

For Thine is the Kingdom

For Thine is
Life is
For Thine is the

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper (Eliot 1991: 82).

The repetition, or rhythm, in Eliot's poem demands the reader's attention to be focused on language, which again is one way to define poetry as a whole. In this sense stuttering and repetition are similar, in that they are both acts of unveiling which participate in a silence, refusal or slowing-down of language within the symbolic realm. However, what is now left to develop is in what way this unveiling can be profound for the writers and readers of literature. For this Graham Greene's novel will be of use.

As stated above, the *Pater Noster* from which Eliot quotes in 'The Hollow Men' continues thusly: 'For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory / Forever and ever.'⁴ 'The Power and the Glory' is the phrase that Graham Greene takes to title his novel. The reason Greene is being brought in here is because his novel *The Power and the Glory* is an example of showing what sort of mood, or attunement one should aim for while being a part of an unconcealed silence or stutter. This can be seen in two key scenes of the novel: one where the main character, an adulterating whiskey priest, is jailed, and the other being the last scene of the book.⁵ It will be shown that in both scenes the priest works hard to 'remain a question'.

The Power and the Glory functions as a modern hagiography of a whiskey-addicted, bastard-fathering priest who clandestinely travels around a tightly controlled, imaginary Latin-American country where the Catholic faith and hard alcohol have been outlawed. Atheism and socialism are being instilled in the Catholic people of the country by the iron hand of the law. This whiskey priest remains nameless throughout, as does his arch-enemy, the lieutenant chasing him across the country. However, these are the only two important characters which remain unnamed.

The priest, who is the last priest in the country, is continually reminded that he will become a saint, even if it is only because there are no other contenders for the position: everyone the priest meets, although most are scared to have him near for fear of being executed by the law, confirm his

⁴ Actually, the line 'the power and the glory' was not a part of the Vulgate form of the prayer, but only added later by the Cathars (Runcimen 1999: 166).

⁵ Other connections between the book and poem include how the whiskey priest's face is described as 'hollow,' including the first time he is described, and more explicitly called a 'hollow man' when he accepts a drink of brandy from a dentist (Greene 2003: 11). Two other characters are called hollow in the novel, one a Captain Fellows (whose daughter helps the priest) and, perhaps more significantly, his arch-enemy, the lieutenant, is also a 'hollow man' whom the priest is unable to hate while waiting in his cell to be executed (207).

saintly destiny, even though throughout the novel the priest slowly loses the signs and symbols of his priesthood: his smooth hands become rough, he adopts the clothes of a peasant, his shoes fall apart, he loses his briefcase and the mother of his illegitimate child smashes his bottles of wine used to consecrate the few masses he is able to say. In the language developed in the first part of this essay, the priest is slowly 'unveiled', meaning divested of the signs of his symbolic position, or of things that could be considered his phallus. In addition, having lost these outer signs of his station, the priest gives up the more inward signs of his profession, meaning he no longer keeps secret his sins of drink and fatherhood.

This divesting can be found in a scene near the middle of the novel. The priest is jailed for carrying a bottle of brandy (although his identity as a priest, and as the priest the police are searching for, remains unknown). In one sense this refusal to divulge who he is seems to be a stab at protecting his identity, contrary to the idea of his being uncovered as developed above. However, in the jail cell he immediately tells the inmates that he is a priest. He does this in order to rid the inmates of their idealized versions of him, of their idealized version of what a priest is. He especially targets one woman whom he sees as *pious*, a quality he does his best to remove:

The woman's voice said pleadingly: 'A little drink, father ... it's not so important.' He wondered why she was here – probably for having a holy picture in her house. She had the tiresome intent note of a pious woman. They were extraordinarily foolish over pictures. Why not burn them? One didn't need a picture... He said sternly: 'Oh, I am not only a drunkard.' He had always been worried by the fate of pious women: as much as politicians, they fed on illusion: he was frightened for them. They came to death so often in a state of invincible complacency, full of uncharity. It was one's duty, if one could, to rob them of their sentimental notions of what was good...He said in hard accents: 'I have a child' (Greene 2003: 127).

The priest needs to be unburdened from the images of piousness that are heaped upon him by believers like the woman he meets in prison. In order to try and rid himself of this symbolic role he disrupts it with the reality of his transgressions. This scene provides a key to understanding Heidegger's 'reservedness.' It is not a state of calm but of violence, of anxiety, of trauma. That is the priest's role in this scene: a trauma inducer. This

trauma is actually himself. Nameless, sinful and proud. The priest states that piety, which is firmly lodged in the symbolic exchange of 'correct' answers to (religious) questions, is dangerous and must be removed. This removal is enacted through a foregrounding of the aspects of his self that do not fit into his symbolic role. In this way he is foregrounded as a problematic question to the answer of 'priest' that those he encounters immediately associate with him. This is one of the reasons the priest's name is never given in the novel: he is to remain a question.

Eventually the priest succeeds in turning the woman against him. To make his point clear he sides with an act of impropriety in the crowded cell, namely a couple having sex in the corner:

Somewhere against the far wall [of the crowded cell] pleasure began again: it was unmistakable: the movements, the breathlessness, and then the cry. The pious woman said aloud with fury: 'Why won't they stop it? The brutes, the animals!'

'What's the good of your saying an act of contrition now in this state of mind?'

'But the ugliness ...'

'Don't believe that. It's dangerous. Because suddenly we discover that our sins have so much beauty.'

'Beauty,' she said with disgust. 'Here. In this cell. With strangers all round.'

'Such a lot of beauty. Saints talk about the beauty of suffering. Well, we are not saints, you and I. Suffering to us is just ugly. Stench and crowding and pain. That is beautiful in that corner to them. It needs a lot of learning to see things with a saint's eye: a saint gets a subtle taste for beauty and can look down on poor ignorant palates like theirs. But we can't afford to.'

'It's a mortal sin' (Greene 2003: 130).

The priest again warns against piety, but this time he does so by connecting it with beauty. Here beauty is shown as commonly being seen as a shutting out, as a saying 'no' to that which is not beautiful: to the ugly. Instead the priest describes a more subtle approach, that of being able to see the beauty in ugliness, or as described above, of seeing the real within the illusion of the symbolic. This happens through an interruption of received notions of self-aggrandizing propriety, which is the function of the priest in this book.

In an interview about the novel Greene discusses how the openness of the priest to that which is not traditionally constructed as pious is central: "...several of the themes, I hope, come out in the prison – that piety is not a religious feeling – and certain aspects of the priest, his readiness to trust murderers, and their response to his trust' (Donaghy 1992: 52)".⁶ What the priest is trying to describe as saintly behavior is an openness within the disruptive moment of trauma. This is the formula developed in the novel: be open within the stuttering disjunction of anxiety. In the jail scene this takes the form of having the saintly eyes to see beauty in the ugliness of the everyday. In fact, this openness is quite similar to what William James, in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, describes as necessary for sainthood: 'A shifting of the emotional centre towards loving and harmonious affections, towards "yes, yes", and away from "no", where the claims of the non-ego are concerned' (James 1961: 221). In order for this open 'yes' to occur the priest needs to strip himself of his 'role' as priest, which he disrobes through his 'transgressions' as a man. At the end of the novel Greene posits a strategy for enacting such a 'stripping.' It is similar to the strategy offered at the end of Eliot's poem: repetition.

At the end of the novel the whisky priest is executed. He goes to death just as he should, stripped of all outer distractions. However, he does feel some qualms about the life he led on earth, for he 'felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all (Greene 2003: 210)'. But then there comes a second priest, perhaps inspired by the defiance of the first. This second priest also wanders throughout the country, looking for momentary shelter from the authorities. This second priest knocks on the door of the home of a mother who has been dutifully reading a story of the child martyr, young Juan, to her children. In the last words of Green's novel, the mother's son, who has never quite believed in the martyr's story, opens the door to the second priest:

'I am a priest.'

'You?' the boy exclaimed.

'Yes,' he said gently [this is no whisky priest], 'My name is Father—' But the boy had already swung the door open and put his lips to his hand before the other could give himself a name (Greene 2003: 222).

⁶ This is also true for much of Greene's other novels. See, especially, *A Burnt-Out Case* (1960).

The end of the novel offers a combination of both openness, represented in the literal opening of the home to the strange priest by the boy, and of repetition, as this second priest is also nameless, meaning a stand-in for the previous priest, and the following priests that will theoretically be made possible by the generosity (or perhaps the longing for a father) of the boy, who previously was a doubter. In one sense this is a very conservative ending about the role of belief, but on the other hand it describes a moment of openness to an unnamed otherness that is knocking at our door. In Lacanian terms the boy is opening up the door to an object which has no name, or more precisely, the Real. Hence the role of belief here is not conventional but radical, as Slavoj Žižek, in *On Belief*, says of Greene's work in general: 'the lesson of Graham Greene's novels is that religious belief, far from being the pacifying consolation, is the most traumatic thing to accept (Žižek 2001: 85-6)'.⁷

The reason Lacanian terminology is being used here is because it is one way to approach the interruption of non-linguistic being within the symbolic realm. In addition, Lacan makes use of the opening lines of 'The Hollow Men' in his essay 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language

⁷ Having a finite answer at the end of the story was a temptation too strong for the American film director John Ford to resist in his adaptation of Greene's book as *The Fugitive* (1947). At the end of a movie which is full of simplifications there is, in the final scene, this second priest appearing to a group of either widows or nuns hobbled together on their knees in prayer. The second priest opens the door of a clandestine place of worship and adamantly states his name, 'I'm the new priest, Father Sera' which seems to draw forth a choir of invisible angels and the triumphant swelling of Richard Hageman's score. In this way Ford attempts to restore the movement of question and answer to its more 'proper' place, ending the movie with an answer, with a name.

In another move from the novel, Ford decides to give us the name of the lieutenant chasing the priest around the country. This happens when the lieutenant is named by a woman he is trying to rape, and with whom he has already had an illegitimate daughter. In Greene's novel, the daughter is the child of the whisky priest, not the lieutenant. This is just one of a number of reversals between outlaw and law Ford enacts, including the lieutenant, at one point, mistaking his daughter for a boy and being corrected by the mother, an act Greene actually witnessed committed by a drunken priest while in Mexico. Greene recorded this incident in *The Lawless Roads* (1939), the non-fiction book he wrote immediately before *The Power and the Glory* and which provided the real-life inspiration for the whisky priest (Greene 1971: 105-30). By giving both the lieutenant and the second priest names, Ford draws a perhaps unintentional parallel between the two. However, by connecting the bad cop with the good priest Ford, in his adaptation of Greene's novel, actually leaves his finite answer at the end of the novel just as open as Greene does by not allowing the hermeneutic circle to close between good and evil.

in Psychoanalysis.’ The placement of this poem within the essay will help provide a clue as to why the stuttering language being described in this essay carries any kind of value at all.

Lacan’s use of Eliot’s poem once again highlights the unnamable. There is no hint as to author, title or providence of the poem when it appears in the essay. Although almost all of the other quotations are grounded, this is one which remains floating. In addition, Lacan attaches a line of his own, within parenthesis, at the end of the quotation:

*We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!*

(and so on.) (Lacan 2002: 70, italics in original)

Leading up to unnamed interruption of Eliot’s poem, Lacan describes three paradoxes he sees in the relationship between the real and the symbolic. An illustration of the Real is provided with a child’s taking of milk from its mother’s breast. The child is able to do so without trouble because the taboo of incest has not yet been put in place. This taboo is absent because language is absent: there are not yet words for breast, milk or mother. It is not until ‘the name of the father’ is introduced that the structures of kinship are developed, the laws of marriage ties are obeyed and broken.⁸ Thus this is ‘the confusion of generations which, in the Bible as in all traditional laws, is cursed as being the abomination of the Word and the desolation of the sinner (66)’. The reason this ground is being gone over here is that Lacan uses ‘The Hollow Men’ in the context of getting

⁸ A similar turning away from the mother’s breast is found in a scene from Umberto Eco’s *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* (2004). Yambo, an antiquarian book dealer who has lost his ‘explicit memory’, retains his sense of self only by recalling words from the books he has read. As he tries to regain his identity by exploring the masses of paper stored at his childhood home, he accidentally discovers the origin of his sexuality in the exposed female legs of comic books: ‘Whether that was the most erotic image I had ever seen I could not say, but surely (since the date of the *Corrierino* was December 30, 1936) it was the first. Nor could I guess whether, at four years of age, I had had a physical reaction – a blush, an adoring gasp – but surely that image had for me been the first revelation of the eternal feminine, and indeed I wonder whether after that I was able to rest my head on my mother’s bosom with the same innocence as before’ (Eco 2006: 246-8).

beyond a 'wall of language' (Lacan 2002: 70), much as Eliot's poem does in providing the wall (question) along with its cracks (the stutters).

The three paradoxes Lacan discusses are madness, the privileged position of the psychoanalyst in discovering the patient's language through her/his speech in the form of symptoms, inhibition and anxieties and thirdly how the relationship between language and speech is that of how a subject has lost their meaning 'in the objectifications of discourse' (Lacan 2002: 69).⁹

The most important paradox in this context is that of madness,¹⁰ because it is here that Lacan inserts Eliot.¹¹ In discussing the triad of ego, superego and id, Lacan states that it functions as a kind of over-verbalization, as a wall that blocks access to something more profound: 'Here it is a wall of language that blocks speech, and the precautions against verbalism that are a theme of the discourse of 'normal' men in our culture merely serve to increase its thickness' (Lacan 2002: 70). By verbalizing trauma we set it into the more familiar patterns of our own Reality. That is why an 'understanding' of the relationship between the (potentially, relatively) high standard of living in some cities and the destitution of urban slums as reciprocal in a way buffers us from the actual trauma of those who are suffering for our wealth, or at least ease (Žižek 1989: 69). It is at this point that Lacan, after a diatribe against the amount of 'words' that are produced by our culture (Lacan 2002: 70), inserts Eliot.

After the quote he discusses a way 'out' of this reification. It is to have your language ripped out of you by something greater, more terrible, even larger. This is where 'the mad subject is spoken rather than speaking' (ibid.). Hence the eruption of a supposedly 'true speech' (ibid.). This is the

⁹ 'The Hollow Men' also makes an appearance in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) in a similar guise. See my 'The Language of Interpretation in Filmic Adaptation' (2006) for analysis.

¹⁰ On madness see also, for example, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's *Typography* (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 41-7).

¹¹ The second paradox is that it is illness, the symptom (or what in later Lacan becomes the *sinthome*) which allows the analysis a way into language. Lacan calls it, in contrast to madness, 'fully functioning speech' (Lacan 2002: 69), and gives it a long list of names, perhaps to indicate the historical pervasiveness of the concept: '[h]ieroglyphics of hysteria, blazons of phobia...oracles of anxiety...' (ibid.). The third paradox in Lacan's essay is that of the alienation of the subject in the discourse of analysis, lost in the terminology of their illness, of what Lacan sees as the passage of the *ce suis-je* to the *c'est moi*, a subject that no longer has a sense of purpose in the chaotic world, an alienation of nature in culture.

bone stuck in the throat in the face of trauma (Žižek 2001: 117). Once you can verbalize a terrifying experience, that experience is no longer Real, but Symbolic. But what Eliot's poem teaches is that there is a way into the Real through the Symbolic, and that is when the constructedness of Reality is disrupted, unnamed, silent, stuttered or repeated. And what Greene offers is a way to reside within the moment of interruption. It is not that of a calm reservedness, but rather of a violent disrobing, a disengaging with the pious elements of one's existence.¹²

In other words what is needed is to be hollow. Not to be removed from the realm of the symbolic but to be the absent figure that engenders a new symbolic. This is to be a fallen signifier, a kind of filled vacancy. A space filled with straw. For although in 'The Hollow Men' 'There is neither hope nor despair: merely a vacancy' (Moody 1994: 121), this vacancy is disruptive, truncated, and stuttering. It is work. As the poem says: 'We grope together / And avoid speech (Eliot 1991: 81)'.

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¹² In this sense we come close to Bataille.

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ОТКРИВАЊЕ СМИСЛА ПОВЛАЧЕЊЕМ ИЗ ЈЕЗИКА:
ЕЛИОТ, ГРИН, ЛАКАН

Сажетак

У есеју се испитују могућности бића да себе измести из света у довољној мери да би се створио простор за његово преиспитивање. Другим речима, поставља се питање како човек може бити део света чије вредности преиспитује? Проблем, дакле није у томе како да сазнамо да нешто знамо, већ на који начин да схватимо да нешто не знамо. У књижевности овим питањима бавили су се Т. С. Елиот (T.S. Eliot) и Грахам Грин (Graham Greene) између осталих.. Елиотови стихови у песми „Шупљи људи“ (“The Hollow Men”, 1925) подражавају муцање као израз болног искуства стварности у облику непрестаног понављања питања која су израз осећања осујећености. У Гриновом роману *Моћ и слава* (*The Power and the Glory*, 1940) провалија између речи и смисла отвара се одбијањем да се прихвати и именује придошица у „познатом“ и „заувек датом“ универзуму. Анализа се у есеју заснива на реченичним секвенцама које представљају примере „муцања“ и „одбијања“ а који, према уверењу аутора, јесу неубличена питања. У свом истраживању аутор покушава да покаже да чињеница њихове неубличености не укида њихов симболички

смиао. Теоријски оквир у коме се развијају стратегије бића за стварање прибежишта у трауматичним моментима „одбијања“ могла би пружити филозофија Жака Лакана (Jacques Lacan), односно перцепцијски простор који Лакан назива Стварним. Укратко, ове стратегије своде се на уздржавање и повлачење из језика. Другим речима, суштинско преиспитивање одвија се путем одбијања, муцања и одустајања од именовања објеката.

Кључне речи: Т. С. Елиот, Грахам Грин, Жак Лакан, одбијање, муцање, прекид, одустајање, уздржавање