

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE, SERBIA

**BELGRADE**  
**ENGLISH**  
**LANGUAGE &**  
**LITERATURE**  
**STUDIES**

VOLUME XI  
2019



Belgrade, 2019

## **Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies (Belgrade BELLS)**

2019 – Volume XI

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### *Proofread by:*

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### *Published by:*

Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade

### *Graphic design:*

Biljana Živojinović

### *Printed by:*

Čigoja štampa, Belgrade, Serbia, 2019

ISSN 1821-3138 (Printed volume)

ISSN 1821-4827 (Online text)

UDC 811.111+82

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## EDITORIAL PREFACE

The eleventh issue of *Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies* (*Belgrade BELLS*) comes out in the year in which the English Department of the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade celebrates its ninetieth anniversary and makes preparations for the Sixth International Conference of the English Department to mark such a significant tradition. As in each regular issue of *Belgrade BELLS*, the contributions in the present one are divided into two principal sections, Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, and Literary Studies.

The first part of the volume, Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, comprises four articles from the fields of cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics, EFL methodology and second language acquisition. **Andrijana Bročić** in her “Pride as a Metaphorical Treasure: The Conceptualization of *Pride* and *Self-Respect* in English and Serbian Via ‘The Possession of a Precious Object’ Scenario” explores the conceptualization of a subset of emotion concepts related to positive self-evaluation – *pride*, *self-respect*, *self-esteem* and *dignity* in English and *ponos*, *samopoštovanje* and *dostojanstvo* in Serbian – via a metaphorical scenario referred to in the paper as “the possession of a precious object scenario”. The analysis was performed within the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and its results indicate a high level of productivity of the metaphorical scenario in the structure of PRIDE and SELF-RESPECT in both languages, as well as the salience of the elements of ‘destruction’, ‘theft/loss’ and ‘defence/preservation’ within the scenario. In “Stylized Quotations as Parodic Practice in Teenage Dating Blogs: Stylizing Patterns, Quotative Marking and language-Ideological Meanings” **Ksenija Bogetić** claims that the linguistic practices in young people’s computer-mediated communication (CMC) have attracted great interest both in linguistic scholarship and in public discourse, but that youth’s own perspectives on language and technology are rarely explored in their own right. Her paper draws attention to this gap, by focusing on one specific phenomenon – the parodic stylization of

teenagers' language online by teenagers themselves, found to be a common practice in personal blogs written by American youth. The first part of the paper focuses on the pragmatic features of stylizations and their quotative marking, while the second part presents a discursive analysis of the stances and social ideologies indexed by the teenagers' stylizations. **Milica Vitaz** in "Using Games to Revise Grammar and Vocabulary – Students' Perspective" presents part of the research which shows the comments and opinions of students of English as a subsidiary at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade who were exposed to revising grammar and vocabulary through educational games. The comments included student statements on why they liked or disliked certain games, and their suggestions on how certain games could be improved. In her article entitled "Early Foreign Language Learning: Intensive Exposure, Vocabulary Development and the Cognitive Skills Involved" **Lia Efstathiadi** reports on vocabulary development and its cognitive underpinning in 49 young Greek learners after a two-year intensive exposure to L2 English. Having measured L2 vocabulary (comprehension, production) and working memory (WM), its phonological store in particular, as it shares close links with early L2 vocabulary development, and investigated the role of the central executive of WM in early FL vocabulary development the author concludes the following: a) the active role of the central executive from the earliest stages of this process; b) comprehension and production are two distinct processes that follow different trajectory paths; the latter is more tedious and takes more time to emerge than the former.

The second part of the volume, Literary Studies, contains nine articles, three of which deal with the works of John Updike, two with the revolutionary vibes of 1968 and the remaining four treat various topics, from Shakespeare to the poetry of Nick Cave. The articles on John Updike were presented at The Fifth Biennial John Updike Society Conference held in Belgrade from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018. **Alexander Shurbanov** in his plenary entitled "Recreation of the Second Degree: Updike's Shakespeare in Translation" recounts his own work on translating John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* into Bulgarian, noting particularly the challenges of transferring ideas, images, atmospheric suggestions and stylistic effects from one language into another and from one culture into another. **James Plath** in "John Updike's *The Centaur* and the Artist Divided" discusses the divided artistic self of Peter Caldwell, torn between the effort to become an abstract expressionist and his proneness towards traditional representational

art. In “Psychic Sexuality: Memory and Dream in John Updike’s *Villages*” **Pradipta Sengupta** applies the insights from psychoanalysis to analyse the nature of memories and dreams in Updike’s *Villages* and claims that it is at once Updike’s autobiographical journey across his memory lane to review his own love life and an attempt to examine sexuality through the lens of an aged hero who finds an alternative for his diminished sexuality in memories, and dreams of his previous erotic encounters. The section which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the 1968 protests comprises two essays. **Radojka Vukčević** in her “Revolutionary Vibes of 1968 and the American Dream” considers the notion of the American Dream, which has always strongly influenced American individual and collective life and seeks to answer such questions as: to what extent it really exists and to what extent it is a product of the American imagination, how far has its imaginative territory reached, how much has the changing face of the Dream informed politics, everyday life and the nation’s identity, and how have the Americans created themselves through an idea that no one can completely define but everyone wants a piece of. **Aleksandra Jovanović** in “Narratives in the Visual Field: Legacy of 1968 in Belgrade and the Art of Performance” focuses on the impact the global spirit of change in 1968 had on the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and young artists in Belgrade – notably Marina Abramović and Raša Todosijević – who were striving to indicate a new artistic language through the art of performance. “Moral Corruption in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*” by **Milena Kaličanin** and **Nina Miladinović** aims to show that the roots of the protagonist’s moral corruption stem from diverse social and historical circumstances as opposed to certain scholars’ allusions to his innate capacity for evil. The article also includes a detailed account of the notion of guilty conscience and what it uncovers about the protagonist’s psyche and the nature of his supposed wickedness. **Bojana Gledić’s** “Faces of Empire in Graham Swift’s *Waterland*” offers a postcolonial reading of one of the most praised British novels of the 1980s, and discusses the role history plays in the life of ordinary people. The paper points to the underlying presence of Empire in the novel, and examines its multi-faceted role in Tom Crick’s version of history. The article by **Natalija Kaloh Vid** entitled “The Role of Paratexts in Mediating Ideologically Adapted Translations in the Soviet Union: the Case of Robert Burns” focuses on reviews, prefaces and articles that accompanied Soviet translations of Robert Burns, their impact on readers and relevance for supporting the official ideology. The author points to the

role of manipulative paratextual devices, considering that target readers' main access to the world of foreign culture was through literary translations. **Branislava Miladinov** in "The Mirror and a Gun: Narrative Aspects of Nick Cave's 'O'Malley's Bar'" offers the analysis of narrative techniques and strategies in Cave's famous song; it argues that three types of narration are employed in the poem, that they build a generically multilayered text, and point toward various traditions in dialogue – from popular folk ballad, via Milton, Blake, Coleridge and Poe, to film and news narration.

We would like to express our genuine thanks to all who have made this volume possible – to our contributors and reviewers and to our colleague Charles Owen Robertson who kindly proofread all contributions. Our special thanks goes to the Faculty of Philology and our Dean, Prof. Dr Ljiljana Marković, for her constant and generous support of the *Belgrade BELLS* project.

Belgrade, 11 February 2019

*Milica Spremić Končar*



***Theoretical and  
Applied Linguistics***

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## PRIDE AS A METAPHORICAL TREASURE: THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF PRIDE AND *SELF-RESPECT* IN ENGLISH AND SERBIAN VIA 'THE POSSESSION OF A PRECIOUS OBJECT' SCENARIO

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the conceptualization of a subset of emotion concepts related to positive self-evaluation – *pride*, *self-respect*, *self-esteem* and *dignity* in English and *ponos*, *samopoštovanje* and *dostojanstvo* in Serbian – via a metaphorical scenario referred to in the paper as “the possession of a precious object scenario”. The analysis was performed within the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and is based on the data obtained from general corpora. The results indicate a high level of productivity of the metaphorical scenario in the structure of *PRIDE* and *SELF-RESPECT* in both languages, as well as the salience of the elements of ‘destruction’, ‘theft/loss’ and ‘defence/preservation’ within the scenario. The analysis also sheds light on some of the potentially manipulative aspects of the structuring of *collective* pride, dignity and honour via this scenario in Serbian public discourse, pointing to a need for further research in that direction.

**Key words:** pride, self-respect, dignity, conceptual metaphor, precious possession, English, Serbian

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## 1. Introduction

The cross-linguistic differences and similarities in the metaphoric conceptualization of emotions have been the subject of a number of cognitive linguistic studies (e.g. Kövecses 2005; Kosanović 2009, 2016; Dziwirek & Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2010; Ogarkova & Soriano 2014a, 2014b). Following that line of research, this paper deals with the metaphoric conceptualization of a subset of emotion concepts related to positive self-evaluation – *pride*, *self-respect*, *self-esteem* and *dignity* in English and *ponos* ‘pride’, *samopoštovanje* ‘self-respect’ and *dostojanstvo* ‘dignity’ in Serbian – by means of a metaphorical scenario referred to in the paper as “the possession of a precious object scenario”. Based on the linguistic analysis of a corpus of examples obtained from representative corpora, the paper sets out to explore the similarities and differences in the conceptualization of pride and self-respect via the above scenario in English and Serbian at conceptual, linguistic and cultural levels<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. Theoretical and methodological background

One of the central tenets of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (henceforth CMT; Lakoff & Johnson 2003[1980]), and more generally, cognitive linguistics, is that metaphor is an indispensable cognitive mechanism responsible for understanding one conceptual domain (target domain) in terms of another (source domain); the target domain is usually (but not necessarily) abstract, whereas the source domain is usually concrete and more clearly delineated in our everyday experience (Lakoff & Johnson 2003[1980])<sup>2</sup>. Conceptual metaphors therefore only indirectly emerge as metaphorical linguistic expressions – in the domain of emotions, for example, ‘*Shame burned within her*’ would be regarded as a linguistic instance of the conceptual metaphor SHAME IS FIRE.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on a much larger study into the conceptualization of self-conscious emotions in English and Serbian (Bročić 2018a).

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of this conceptual phenomenon see e.g. Klikovac (2004), Kövecses (2010[2002]).

Within cognitive linguistic research, the conceptual representation of emotions has received considerable attention, especially regarding metaphors structuring emotion concepts, and the issues such as the experiential grounding of emotion metaphors, their potential universality and variation across languages and cultures, or the question of whether there are any emotion-specific metaphors have been discussed in great detail (c.f. Lakoff 1987; Kövecses 1986, 1998, 2000, 2005, 2008a, 2008b, 2010[2002], 2014; Grady 1997; Lakoff & Johnson 1999). Kövecses (2000, 2008a, 2008b), for instance, argues that emotions are conceptually represented as cognitive or rather cognitive-cultural models, which are in turn composed of conceptual metaphors, metonymies and related concepts. The most prototypical cognitive model underlying the concept of EMOTION can be schematically characterized as a five-stage scenario consisting of the following elements: cause (of emotion) – emotion – controlling emotion – loss of control – (behavioural) response (Kövecses 2000: 58). More recently, Kövecses (2014) has elaborated on “the emotion-as-cognitive-cultural-model idea” (p. 23) by drawing on the notion of ‘domain matrix’, originally proposed by Langacker (1987). Succinctly put, it is suggested that the concept of EMOTION evokes a vast array of additional concepts, constituting a domain matrix: for instance, it evokes the notions of SOCIETY, SOCIAL RELATIONS, SOCIAL NORMS, as well as the notions of RIGHT OR WRONG, APPROPRIATENESS OF RESPONSE, APPROPRIATE MEASURE OF FEELING etc. since emotions commonly arise in social situations and derive from moral ideas. Importantly, the emotion domain matrix that is activated depends on the context in which it is used (ibid. pp. 23–24).

Given that every conceptual metaphor has a *meaning* or *semantic focus* (Kövecses 2010[2002]; Soriano 2015), i.e. it *highlights* certain aspects of the target domain while simultaneously *hiding* others (Lakoff & Johnson 2003[1980]), metaphor analysis is helpful in discovering those aspects that are particularly salient in the structure of specific emotion concepts. For instance, the conceptualization of emotions in terms of HEAT and FIRE accentuates their intensity as well as their potentially destructive aspects (see Kövecses 2000; Klikovac 2006[2000]; Bročić 2018a, 2018b), whereas the domains of WARMTH and LIGHT impart a highly positive evaluation to a particular emotion, e.g. HAPPINESS IS LIGHT/WARMTH (Kövecses 2008a; Kosanović 2009) and

PRIDE IS WARMTH/LIGHT (Bročić 2012, 2018a, 2018b) in English and Serbian. In addition, some of the major semantic foci in the domain of emotions include the following: existence, positive/negative evaluation, harm, passivity, (an attempt at) control (Kövecses 2000), self-regulation, the intrinsic controllability and degree of expressivity of a particular emotion (Ogarkova & Soriano 2014b).

In this respect, the study of emotion metaphors has also proved to be a useful tool for uncovering prevalent folk (as opposed to expert) theories of emotions, or even ideologies lying at the heart of such folk theories. Goatly (2007) thus claims that the folk view of love, as enshrined in the dominant metaphors for love in English, namely, EMOTION IS FORCE, WEATHER, MOVEMENT, A CURRENT IN A LIQUID, portrays the experiencer as essentially passive in relation to it, or as Goatly puts it, it is “a sickness caught involuntarily, an irresistible gravitational force, a “falling” in love” (ibid. p. 199). On the other hand, Soriano (2015) and Ogarkova and Soriano (2018) have emphasized the relevance of CMT-based studies of emotion concepts for the disciplines such as cross-cultural emotion psychology, or, more generally, the affective sciences. For instance, metaphor analysis can reveal aspects of emotion particularly salient for ‘laypeople’, but potentially neglected in expert theories – as suggested by Soriano (2013, 2015), the prominence of the metaphors ANGER IS INSANITY and ANGER IS ILLNESS shows that both irrational behaviour and the damage anger can cause to the experiencer form an important part of our folk representation of the emotion; these aspects are, however, frequently neglected in the descriptions advanced by experts theories, which, by and large, focus on the overall utility of emotions as adaptive mechanisms and anger-induced aggressive behaviour.

In recent research, practitioners of corpus linguistics have focused on the different types of contributions that data-driven corpus-based approaches have made to metaphor theory and analysis, claiming that reliance on large collections of authentic texts can render metaphor analysis more accurate (e.g. Deignan 2005, 2006, 2008; Stefanowitsch 2006a, 2006b; Semino 2017; Ogarkova & Soriano 2014a). In the domain of emotions, Stefanowitsch (2006b) and Ogarkova and Soriano (2014a, 2014b), for instance, make use of large corpora to establish a full inventory of conceptual metaphors structuring a particular emotion concept and discover whether

those metaphors are frequent in a statistically significant way (e.g. Stefanowitsch (2006b) found that ANGER IS A HEATED LIQUID figures prominently in the structure of ANGER). On the other hand, Deignan's (2008) and Bročić's (2018a, 2018b) corpus-based research into heat and fire metaphors of anger and pride suggests that those metaphors are predominantly associated with the collective anger/pride and behaviour of people as a group rather than as individuals. In addition, as shown by Bročić (2018a, 2018b), close attention must be paid to both connotative and contextual meanings of metaphorical expressions in order to more accurately determine the utilized elements of the identified source domains, those aspects of the target domains highlighted by the pertinent conceptual metaphors, as well their underlying experiential bases. To illustrate, Bročić's (2018b) fine-grained analysis of the metaphorical expressions instantiating PRIDE IS HEAT and SHAME IS HEAT demonstrated that these metaphors differ with respect to their meaning foci and experiential bases, i.e. "PRIDE IS HEAT focuses on the *existence* and *intensity* of pride in both English and Serbian, as well as *its potential to incite the experiencer to violence* in Serbian; SHAME IS HEAT, on the other hand, foregrounds the *intensity* and *severity* of shame, and *the magnitude of its effects from the perspective of the experiencer*" (p. 61).

### **3. Reification and "the possession of a precious object scenario"**

The use of abstract nouns to refer to emotional experiences reflects the conceptual process of objectification, i.e. *reification* (Langacker 1991), or a specific type of metaphorical shift known as *ontological metaphor* (Lakoff & Johnson 2003[1980]) whereby we view relational concepts as abstract things. For instance, the relation 'be happy' is construed as a thing when we speak of 'happiness'. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003[1980]: 25–32), objectifying our experiences through ontological metaphors, that is, understanding them in terms of objects and substances, allows us to "refer to them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them – and by this means, reason about them" (p. 25). The objectification of emotions through ontological metaphors thus enables us to identify and define the private sensation of emotion and ultimately motivates

their more specific conceptualization as objects that may be *desirable*, *undesirable*, *possessed*, *acquired*, *given*, *lost*, *preserved*, thereby allowing us to capture different aspects of emotional experience. For instance, pride and self-respect being defined as positive emotional states, it is natural that, alongside happiness and other positive emotional experiences, they should be understood as VALUABLE OBJECTS. The source domain POSSESSION OF AN OBJECT is, for instance, used to conceptualize the existence of emotion, or as explicitly argued by Kövecses (2000), the metaphor EXISTENCE OF EMOTION IS POSSESSION OF AN OBJECT is one of the three major metaphors that focus on the existence of emotion and apply to all emotion concepts, the other two being EXISTENCE OF EMOTION IS PRESENCE HERE and EXISTENCE OF EMOTION IS BEING IN A BOUNDED SPACE. These source domains are by no means restricted to emotion concepts – EMOTION IS A POSSESSED OBJECT is an instantiation of the higher-level ATTRIBUTES ARE POSSESSED OBJECTS metaphor, which, in combination with the Changes Are Movements of Possessions (acquisitions and losses) and Causation Is Transfer of Possessions (giving and taking) submappings, forms part of the Object Event-Structure Metaphor (Lakoff 1993; Lakoff & Johnson 1999).

The main aim of this paper is to explore the role of the VALUABLE POSSESSION/PRECIOUS OBJECT source domain – or, more specifically, the metaphors which jointly constitute “the possession of a precious object scenario” – in the conceptualization of pride and self-respect in English and Serbian based on corpora examples. The term “the possession of a precious object scenario” will be used throughout the paper to refer in particular to the following submappings: the elements of ‘acquiring’, ‘possessing’, ‘losing’, ‘stealing’, ‘destroying’, ‘preserving/defending’ and ‘returning’ a precious object.

#### 4. Data and method

The English data for the analysis were excerpted from the *British National Corpus* (henceforth BNC), whereas the Serbian examples were gathered from the electronic *Korpus savremenog srpskog jezika* (henceforth KSSJ, [Corpus of the Contemporary Serbian Language]). Both corpora are relatively evenly balanced across different genres of written languages and are approximately of equal size (the



BNC contains 100 million words, whereas the KSSJ currently contains 113 million words), thus providing an adequate basis for a comparative study of the metaphors in the two languages and for some generalization to be made.

The linguistic examples contain the target domain lexis – for the concept PRIDE, the nouns *pride* in English and *ponos* in Serbian, and for SELF-RESPECT, the nouns *self-esteem*, *self-respect*, *dignity* in English, and *samopoštovanje*, *dostojanstvo* in Serbian.

The procedure and analysis involved the following steps: first, a random (nth-basis) sample of 1000 examples for each lexical item under examination was retrieved from the corpora, and in case there were fewer than 1000 occurrences, all the citations were extracted (for instance, 738 for dignity, self-esteem – 421, self-respect – 190, and samopoštovanje – 266). Next, upon identification of metaphorical expressions, the underlying conceptual mappings were established on the basis of the meanings of the words which collocate with the noun lexemes designating the abstract concepts of pride and self-respect, for instance, *pride reawakens*, *ponos se budi* > PRIDE IS A LIVING BEING/AN ANIMATE ENTITY; the identified metaphors were subsequently grouped following the basic classification of metaphors into those with the source domains of AN OBJECT, LIVING BEING, SUBSTANCE, LOCATION and CONTAINER (see Bročić 2018a).

The quantitative analysis showed the realizations of the generic-level OBJECT metaphor to be prominent in both corpora, accounting for over 50% of all the identified metaphors structuring the concepts under consideration. In particular, the metaphors that can be subsumed under the PRECIOUS POSSESSION SCENARIO provide the bulk of all the realizations of the OBJECT metaphor, especially in the case of concepts more closely related to self-respect. It can thus be concluded, based on the quantitative data alone, that this metaphorical scenario is particularly salient in the structure of the concepts under discussion. The full quantitative data for both the high-level OBJECT metaphor and the more specific POSSESSION OF A PRECIOUS OBJECT SCENARIO are given in Table 1:

Table 1. The OBJECT metaphor and the 'PRECIOUS POSSESSION' SCENARIO (quantitative data)

English	the OBJECT metaphor % relative to all metaphors	The 'PRECIOUS POSSESSION SCENARIO' % relative to OBJECT metaphors	Serbian	the OBJECT metaphor	The 'PRECIOUS POSSESSION SCENARIO'
<i>pride</i>	56.91%	38.16%	<i>ponos</i>	62.25%	24.39%
<i>dignity</i>	85.78%	59.38%	<i>dostojanstvo</i>	85.56%	86.37%
<i>self-esteem</i>	80.71%	84.95%	<i>samopoštovanje</i>	79.91%	74.86%
<i>self-respect</i>	77%	83.80%			

## 5. Results and analysis

### 5.1. The elements of ‘acquiring’ and ‘possessing’ a (valuable/precious) object

The examples from our data confirm that FEELING PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT can in both languages be conceptualized as BEING IN POSSESSION OF PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT-OBJECT, whereas, in line with the Object Event-Structure Metaphor (Lakoff 1993; Lakoff & Johnson 1999), BEGINNING TO FEEL PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT and AWAKENING PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT IN SOMEBODY are construed as ACQUIRING and GIVING PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT-OBJECT (TO SOMEBODY) respectively:

E:

- (1) *He gave me pride in myself and made me feel wanted*<sup>3</sup>.
- (2) *Men and women who brought a renewed sense of pride and self-respect to our country.*
- (3) *Director Roland Joffe tries to bring home the pride and dignity of people existing in the meanest of mean streets.*
- (4) *We need to give children dignity and self-respect*
- (5) *Through Highlander’s programs, many people have been encouraged to find beauty and pride in their own ways, to speak their own language without humiliation*
- (6) *It is inevitable that my own hard-won sense of propriety or dignity should tempt me into being the scourge of other, more self-indulgent beings.*
- (7) *With my new-found self-respect I may decide to refuse any longer to be called by that ridiculous name.*
- (8) *Although I am down, I still have my pride and dignity.*

---

<sup>3</sup> Representative English and Serbian examples were selected to illustrate the pertinent conceptual mappings. The Serbian examples (or parts thereof) are followed by word-for-word translation into English.

- (9) They forced me to leave. But I left of my own free will. I wouldn't give them the satisfaction. I resigned. *I have my pride*, you know. They can't kick me around.

S:

- (10) *Svome bratu je ostavio vojnički ponos*  
'He left his brother military pride'
- (11) *Pacijentima moramo pružiti osećaj sigurnosti i ljudskog dostojanstva* tokom lečenja  
'We must give our patients a sense of security and human dignity during treatment'
- (12) mnogi od njih imaju zadovoljstvo od tog svog znanja, koje je ravno čitavoj nauci, *stiču na taj način samopoštovanje*  
'many of them derive satisfaction from that knowledge....  
*acquiring self-respect* in the process'
- (13) Tito, Naser i Nehru, u najžešćoj konfrontaciji velesila, okupili su male, nesvrstane i nerazvijene zemlje i *dali im po prvi put osećaj samopoštovanja i dostojanstva*.  
'Tito, Nasser and Nehru.....brought together small, non-aligned and underdeveloped countries, *giving them for the first time a sense of self-respect and dignity*'
- (14) Nekada je ovaj narod *imao ponos*  
'This nation used to have pride'
- (15) Ali, novi predsednik Venecuele se zasad ne osvrće mnogo na pritiske Bele kuće. „*Mi imamo svoj ponos*. Venecuela je suverena zemlja koja donosi odluke u skladu sa svojim interesima”.  
'But the new president of Venezuela doesn't pay much attention to the pressures of the White House. „*We have our pride*. Venezuela is a sovereign country and makes decisions in accordance with its own interests'.

On the basis of the above examples, it can be observed that the metaphors EXISTENCE OF PRIDE IS POSSESSION OF PRIDE-OBJECT and AWAKENING PRIDE IN SOMEBODY IS GIVING SOMEBODY PRIDE-OBJECT are more often than not constitutive components of the form of pride that can

be characterized as ‘a sense of self-respect’, rather than ‘pride as an immediate emotional reaction to something’. The frequent co-occurrence of the lexemes *pride/ponos* and *dignity/dostojanstvo*, *self-respect/samopoštovanje* in the same context further corroborates this conclusion<sup>4</sup>.

Also, the wider context in which the examples are embedded further indicates that the PRIDE-AS-THE POSSESSED OBJECT metaphor can, apart from the existence of pride, additionally highlight that the emotional state of pride gives the experiencer the strength to fight for him/herself, i.e. this metaphors underlines that ‘having pride’ entails not allowing others ‘to kick us around’, as explicitly stated in examples (9) and (15).

What is also observable is that the experiencer is often portrayed as the passive recipient of pride/dignity-object. Namely, while the subject can through personal efforts *acquire*, *win* or *earn* pride/dignity-valuable object, in the vast majority of the examples this object is explicitly *given to the experiencer*. Moreover, it is often emphasized that it is incumbent on somebody else to provide the experiencer with the valuable object, for instance, parents should give it to children. This can be taken as evidence that according to the folk view of pride and self-respect, as manifest in English and Serbian, whether we will start feeling pride and self-respect frequently depends on other people.

It is obvious that in the above examples pride/self-respect is characterized, albeit implicitly, as a sought-after or valuable object. There are a number of examples, however, in which pride/self-respect is explicitly construed as a VALUABLE OR PRECIOUS POSSESSION; some of the examples also point to further specific-level metaphors within the generic-level PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT IS A VALUABLE POSSESSION metaphor:

<sup>4</sup> Bročić’s (2018a: 148–161) corpus-based analysis of the metaphors structuring pride has identified four cognitive models associated with the concept of pride in both English and Serbian: 1) PRIDE/PONOS 1: ‘an immediate emotional reaction to something’ and ‘enduring emotional response to something’; 2) PRIDE/PONOS 2: ‘self-respect’; 3) PRIDE/PONOS 3: ‘(stubborn) preoccupation with personal worth’ and 4) PRIDE/PONOS 4: ‘excessive pride and a sense of superiority’. As argued by Kövecses (1986), ‘balanced pride as immediate response’ – which is the equivalent of the above ‘PRIDE/PONOS 1’ – is a cognitive reference point in the domain of pride insofar as a number of related concepts (such as dignity, self-esteem, vanity etc.) derive from it; this form of pride is also the most prototypical example of the emotion category.

E:

- (16) England boss Taylor has made no secret of *his admiration for the pride* and passion Adams puts into his efforts for his country
- (17) you either do it yourself and preserve *your precious dignity*
- (18) Indirect Rulers *ranked self-respect above* all the other *blessings they could bestow*, wealth, health, and the conveniences of modern life paling by comparison
- (19) She *valued her self-respect too highly* to accept dross when she knew she must seek for gold
- (20) ...they also *bring corresponding rewards* in the way of job satisfaction and *self-esteem*

S:

- (21) Naravno, Koštunica i Đinđić nisu, niti će ikada razumeti da *srpski nacionalni ponos, čast i dostojanstvo vrede mnogo više od američkih dolara*  
'Koštunica and Đinđić never understood, nor is it likely that they ever will, that Serbian *national pride, honour and dignity are a great deal more valuable than US dollars*'
- (22) I jedne i druge *krasi junaštvo, ponos i veliko srce*  
'Gallantry, *pride* and a big heart *adorn them*'
- (23) Majkl Korleone *nema osobine koje su krasile njegovog oca Vita, dostojanstvo, uzvišenost*  
'Michael Corleone is not possessed of the qualities that *adorned his father Vito, dignity, excellence*'
- (24) Ceo svet se *divio moralu, hrabrosti i ponosu građana*  
'The whole world *admired* the citizens' morality, courage and *pride*'

- (25) *Šta Vam je najvrednije u životu?* Karakter, obraz i dostojanstvo  
 ‘What is *your most precious thing* in life?’ Character, ‘cheek’<sup>5</sup>  
 and *dignity*’
- (26) [stvaraoci] koji talentom, *ponosom* i individualnom snagom  
*služe kulturi svog naroda*  
 creators serve culture pride-INST.SG  
 ‘creators who *serve* their people’s culture *with* talent, *pride* and  
 personal strength’
- (27) Preziru nas i braća i došljaci, a *mi se branimo ponosom* i  
 mržnjom.  
 we defend ourselves pride-INST.SG  
 ‘Our brothers and incomers despise us, but *we defend ourselves*  
*with pride* and hatred’
- (28) *Samo takvim samopoštovanjem privolećeš i druge da te poštuju*  
 you will make others respect you self-respect-INST.SG  
 ‘Only *with that kind of self-respect* will you make others respect  
 you’

The choice of lexemes such as *to admire*, *admiration* and *diviti se* (*ponosu*) ‘*to admire pride*’, *nekoga krasi ponos* (*pride adorns somebody*) points to the existence of a more specific-level metaphor PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT IS AN ORNAMENT in both languages, whereas the examples in which the Serbian nouns denoting pride and self-respect are used in the instrumental case suggest that pride and self-respect can additionally be conceptualized as AN INSTRUMENT in Serbian.

<sup>5</sup> The Serbian lexeme *obraz* ‘cheek’ is figuratively used to represent one’s honour, pride and honesty, as defined by the Dictionary of the Serbian Language (RSJ, 2007). Therefore, a person who has ‘cheek’ is honourable and reputable, while being without it or having ‘a thick cheek’ points to one’s lack of dignity and sense of shame (RSJ). The dictionary definitions thus highlight the connection between the concepts of pride, dignity and honour on the one hand, and moral integrity, on the other, i.e. that pride, dignity and honour frequently derive from having strong moral principles. Similarly, the link between pride/dignity and honour is also highlighted in the English dictionaries. For example, the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) lists ‘the state or quality of being worthy of honour or respect’ as one of the sense descriptions of the lexeme *dignity*, while *honour* is given as one of the synonyms of the lexeme *pride*. (For a more detailed analysis of the sense descriptions of *dignity*, *honour*, *dostojanstvo* ‘dignity’ and *čast* ‘honour’ in the authoritative English and Serbian dictionaries see Bročić 2018a: 162–168).

While in examples (26) and (28) the conceptualization of pride/self-respect as an instrument is realized via case inflection alone, or, more specifically, the instrumental case, whose most basic meaning is that of a physical instrument (see Stevanović 1989; Antonić 2005; Imamović 2013), in the example such as *braniti se ponosom* ‘to defend oneself with pride’ (27), PRIDE-INSTRUMENT is further specified as A WEAPON owing to the synergy of the meaning of the verb *braniti se* ‘to defend oneself’ and the noun denoting pride in the instrumental case. In this case, the metaphor PRIDE IS A WEAPON, as well as imparting a positive evaluation to pride, has an additional meaning focus □ it highlights that pride has a vital role to play in combating negative emotions.

Even though the implied presupposition of the metaphorical structuring of pride and dignity as a prized possession is that the experiencer is eager to take possession of, and consequently retain pride/dignity-desirable object, there is an important group of examples (particularly prominent in the Serbian sample) that evoke the image of an individual who is willing to discard or sell the precious possession. The element of social disapproval is strongly attached to such an act, yielding the conceptual mapping PRIDE IS A PRECIOUS POSSESSION WHICH MUST NOT BE DISCARDED AND TREATED LIKE A COMMODITY:

E:

- (29) She said: *‘They traded in our political self-respect for representation on a committee which doesn’t mean a thing to anyone*
- (30) That was how many of them got into the peep shows, *selling off their self-respect* in order to finance their habit.

S:

- (31) Tom prilikom, general Lazarević je istakao da zlikovci NATO alijanse, ono što nisu postigli u oružanoj agresiji, pokušavaju sada da učine na podmukao način, angažujući one koji bi da *za šaku dolara prodaju slobodu, otadžbinu, poreklo, svoj ponos i dostojanstvo*.  
‘On that occasion, General Lazarević pointed out that NATO evildoers were trying to achieve their own ends.....by employing



- those who were ready to *sell* their freedom, homeland, origins, as well as *their pride and dignity for a handful of US dollars*'
- (32) Građani koji su za *sitne pare* prodali svoj ponos  
'The citizens who *sold their pride for a song/trifling sum*'
- (33) moji igrači nisu od početka shvatili da će ovoga puta *prokockati svoj ponos i samopoštovanje*  
'my players at first didn't realise that this time they would *gamble away their pride and self-respect*'
- (34) *Kakav bi to bio čovek koji bi se odrekao svog dostojanstva? Kakav bi to bio narod koji bi odbacio vlastito dostojanstvo?*  
'What kind of man would *give up his dignity*? What kind of a nation would *throw away its own dignity*?'
- (35) *narod izdajnicima nikada neće dati poverenje niti svoje svetinje, otadžbinu, slobodu i dostojanstvo.*  
'The people *will never give their trust, nor their sacred objects, homeland, freedom and dignity to traitors*'
- (36) Poslanici SPS-a su isticali da je osnovna karakteristika DOS-ovske vlasti vladanje uredbama, te da je „politička samovolja jača od prava i zakona i da smo *Hagu prodali naše dostojanstvo* i objavili kraj SRJ”.  
'SPS (The Socialist Party of Serbia) MPs emphasized that...*we had sold our dignity to the Hague (Tribunal)*'
- (37) Neće nas pokolebati u odbrani otadžbine ni *unutrašnje destruktivne snage, koje rade za račun našeg neprijatelja.. vrlo jeftino prodaju, ne samo svoje dostojanstvo, nego i svoju zemlju.*  
'in a struggle to defend our homeland we will not be discouraged by the internal destructive forces which collaborate with the enemy and *sell very cheaply not only their dignity, but also their country*'
- (38) *Gde nam je ponos i dostojanstvo? Želimo li mi da sačuvamo integritet i identitet ili da.....prepustimo drugima ovo što imamo?*  
'*Where is our pride and dignity? Do we really want to keep our integrity and identity or else... give others what we have?*'

- (39) Sem što smo, po cenu svog obraza i samopoštovanja, spasavali obraz i jedinstvo EU  
'except that we were saving the honour (lit. cheek) and unity of the EU *at the expense of our own 'cheek' and self-respect*
- (40) Ovo je sramna deklaracija, koja je potrebna *da bi Srbija još više snizila svoju cenu samopoštovanja* na putu u EU.  
'This is a shameful declaration, and it is necessary so as to ensure that *Serbia lowers the price of its self-respect* on its journey to the EU'

Given the strong association between the concepts of pride and dignity on the one hand, and moral rectitude and integrity on the other, as evidenced in the above examples and dictionary definitions of *pride*, *dignity*, *ponos* and *dostojanstvo*, it is no surprise that the 'throwing away the precious possession' element of the scenario is transposed onto 'disregard for one's moral codes'. Consequently, 'gambling away or selling one's pride or dignity (to the enemy)' frequently presupposes putting selfish interests and private agendas ahead of the common good, hence the prominence of the element of social denouncement that is built into the metaphor.

On the other hand, a closer look at the Serbian examples, which predominantly come from the newspaper section of KSSJ, reveals that a negative perception of 'a morally reprehensible individual' can be reinforced through the use of more creative realizations of this metaphor – for instance, pride is not simply thrown away, but also *gambled away*, *sold for a trifling sum*, *a handful of US dollars*, or *given to traitors and enemies of the community*, as well as the choice of emphatic, emotionally loaded structures, such as rhetorical questions, exclamations, as in examples (34) and (38). Importantly, these expressions primarily apply to *collective pride* and *dignity*. It could thus be argued that metaphorical expressions and structures which carry such dramatic overtones can be consciously exploited by political leaders with a view to discrediting their opponents and arousing a wider sentiment of fear in the community by evoking images of the threat posed by the external enemy. (See relevant discussion below).

## 5.2. The elements of 'theft/loss' and 'destruction'

As shown in the previous section, the element of the imminent danger that is closing in on the precious object is already present in the depictions of pride/dignity as A PRECIOUS OBJECT WHICH MUST NOT BE DISCARDED AND TREATED LIKE A COMMODITY. Namely, as previously shown, while the subject can, in pursuit of selfish interests and personal agendas, merely discard the precious object, this object is, more often than not, deliberately given or sold *to a hostile enemy of the community*. On the other hand, the wide array of the examples in which pride/dignity-object is explicitly depicted as *a precious object that is being damaged or stolen from the experiencer* testifies to a high level of productivity of the DAMAGE and THEFT metaphors in the conceptualization of THE (FIGURATIVE) LOSS/CESSATION OF PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT in both languages:

E:

- (41) *A real threat existed [...] to so much that she valued as part of her individual identity, autonomy, independence, pride, all of which would be lost...*
- (42) *By taking away a people's culture and pride in their appearance, you literally change the way they see themselves.*
- (43) *His words dented her pride and left her speechless.*
- (44) *The loan was damaging to British pride.*
- (45) *His pride in being able to cook three hot meals a day for two of us, on just one litre of meths in six days, was shattered.*
- (46) *At least I lived as I believe, And no matter what They take from me, They can't take away my dignity.*
- (47) *Yet in one the father did not know what was going on, and was robbed of all dignity.*
- (48) *He's had a lifelong fight with feminists who accuse him of extreme male chauvinism and damaging their dignity.*

- (49) war on drugs' as a *frontal assault on a worker's dignity* and entitlement to due process.
- (50) Though *you did make rather a big dent in my dignity*.
- (51) But if the experiences of work are a *continual bombardment of the individual's sense of self-esteem*, he can only respond aggressively in his own defence
- (52) He was a thief, was Dr Pseud — *he was stealing my self-respect*.

S:

- (53) ...tako da se *ponos*, nada i *dostojanstvo*, zajedno sa spartanskom izdržljivošću srpskog naroda *nisu gubili* ni u najtežim krizama.  
'*pride*, hope and *dignity*, together with the Spartan endurance of the Serbian people, *were not lost*, not even during the severest crises'
- (54) Komentarišući to što „neki ljudi u Srbiji smatraju da su izručanjem Miloševića *izgubili ponos*” Đinđić je izjavio da Srbiji sada treba svež novac, kako bi se isplatile penzije, izgradila infrastruktura i obezbedilo gorivo za zimu.  
'...„some people in Serbia think that, having extradited Milošević, *they lost their pride*'
- (55) Srpski nacionalni *ponos nije uništio* ni vekovno ropstvo pod Turcima.  
'*Serbian national pride was not destroyed* by protracted Turkish rule'
- (56) *Unakazivanje osećaja nacionalnog ponosa*  
'*the mutilation of national pride*'
- (57) Na sličan način treba i ubuduće rešavati sve nesporazume, podvukao je Mihajlović, kako sebe ne bismo više doveli u situaciju da budemo *gubitnici* svojih teritorija, *časti*, *ugleda*, *dostojanstva* i suvereniteta.  
'...to avoid being *losers of our territories*, honour, reputation, *dignity* and sovereignty'

- (58) Glumica živo i opipljivo predstavlja njena razarajuća osećanja, posledice...brutalno oduzetog dostojanstva.  
'The actress vividly and graphically portrays her devastating feelings, the consequences of *being brutally stripped of dignity*'
- (59) univerzum junaka ratnih i poratnih trauma i razočarenja i ukradenog dostojanstva.  
'*stolen dignity*'
- (60) Ovo je nečuveno kršenje i iranskog i međunarodnog prava, grub nasrtaj na osnovno ljudsko dostojanstvo.  
'This is a flagrant violation of Iranian and international law, a *vicious attack on basic human dignity*'
- (61) Hladnokrvne automatizovane ubice su u rušilačkom pohodu 78 dana atakovale na našu zemlju, njenu čast i njeno dostojanstvo.  
'Cold-blooded automated murderers spent 78 days *carrying out raids against our country, its honour and dignity*'
- (62) U jučerašnjem saopštenju se kaže da je taj „besprimereni čin pokušaj da se naruži obraz Beograda i Srbije, a ujedno i mučki udar na kulturu i dostojanstvo srpskog naroda”.  
'this unsuitable act is an attempt to stain the honour (lit. cheek) of Belgrade and Serbia, as well as a *savage attack on the culture and dignity of the Serbian people*'
- (63) Od Zapada dobijamo najteže udarce po dostojanstvu.  
'*Our dignity is being severely beaten by the West*'

The above examples unequivocally point to the metaphorical structuring of PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT AS AN OBJECT VULNERABLE TO THEFT AND DESTRUCTION, or more specifically, the conceptual mapping JEOPARDIZING ONE'S FEELING OF PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT IS STEALING/CAUSING PHYSICAL DAMAGE TO HIS/HER PRIDE-(VALUABLE) OBJECT<sup>6</sup> in both languages, with any differences between the languages occurring at the level of more specific metaphorical images and linguistic expressions of these mappings.

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<sup>6</sup> Kövecses (2000: 30) postulates the metaphor CAUSING HARM TO A PROUD PERSON IS CAUSING PHYSICAL DAMAGE TO A STRUCTURED OBJECT in English.

For instance, while in English ‘to damage one’s pride’ can be specified as ‘to dent one’s pride’ (example 43), this elaboration does not seem to exist in Serbian.

Furthermore, the negative evaluation and unpleasantness/suffering from the perspective of the experiencer seem to be especially highlighted through the wide variety and specific choice of verbal lexemes instantiating these mappings, which often carry strong emotional connotations and serve to conjure up images of violent attack and complete (wanton) destruction – i.e. *damage, destroy, ruin, harm, threaten, assault, undermine, make a dent in, trample (on), bombard, erode, knock* in English, and *uništiti, kršiti, zbrisati, pogoditi, (po)gaziti, (grub) nasrtaj na, (mučki) udar, atak na* in Serbian. The English data additionally demonstrate that self-respect can be conceptualized as a less prototypical object (for example, a textile or an object filled with air), which in turn motivates linguistic expressions such as *rip, leave in shreds* or *puncture* (one’s self-respect/dignity).

Close inspection of the Serbian examples further reveals some interesting peculiarities of the characterisation of pride/self-respect via the DAMAGE metaphor in the Serbian corpus. Namely, it is worth noting that this metaphor is particularly productive in the conceptualisation of *collective/national* pride and dignity and that the majority of the examples come from the newspaper section of the Serbian corpus, often containing verbatim quotations from political speeches or interviews (for instance, (57), (61), (62)). Therefore, the observations that emerged from the analysis of the linguistic realizations of PRIDE/DIGNITY IS A PRECIOUS POSSESSION WHICH MUST NOT BE DISCARDED AND TREATED LIKE A COMMODITY seem to be equally relevant in this case: the use of dramatic and striking expressions in which national pride is not merely damaged but *mutilated* (example 56) may also be pragmatically motivated insofar as such expressions can be consciously employed to achieve a particular rhetorical goal – in this case, deliberately provoke or heighten fear, worry, indignation and resistance in the face of the threat posed to the prized possession.

### 5.3. The elements of 'defence/preservation' and 'recovery/returning'

The characterisation of pride/self-respect as a precious object that can be destroyed or stolen implies the need for preservation and defence against this kind of attack, giving rise to the submapping PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT WHICH HAS TO BE PRESERVED AND DEFENDED in both languages:

E:

- (64) I've had plenty of relationships back in England, she went on doggedly, *salvaging her pride* as best she could.
- (65) what the worker does *to protect* himself and *his dignity* from persecution by those who attempt to exercise control over him
- (66) It is necessary to stress that elderly people facing loss do not always have to be overwhelmed by their circumstances, with very little chance of *preserving their dignity or sense of self-worth*.
- (67) José Gabriel Tupac Amaru the Second, renegade leader of an attempt *to restore the pride of the Incas*, was himself executed in 1781.
- (68) A little community *gets back its pride*.
- (69) And *he has given the club back its pride*.
- (70) It is to renew the spirit and the solidarity of the nation ... at the heart of a new mood in the nation must be *a recovery of our self-confidence and our self-respect*.'
- (71) Kim was a passionate nationalist imbued with determination *to restore self-respect to Korea* and to unify the peninsula.

S:

- (72) Prema njegovim rečima, *ponos ovog naroda očuvan je samo zahvaljujući Miloševiću*.  
'According to him, it's *thanks to Milošević that the nation's pride was preserved*'

- (73) Podnosimo sve teškoće da bi sačuvali svoj ponos, čast, dostojanstvo i patriotizam, da bi sačuvali svoju grudu, lepu zemlju, miroljubivu i snažnu Srbiju.  
'We are prepared to endure every hardship to preserve our pride, honour, dignity and patriotism, to protect our beautiful homeland, peace-loving and strong Serbia'
- (74) Danas vi, mladi vojnici i mornari, prihvatate častan, izuzetno složen zadatak odbrane slobode, časti i dostojanstva svakog našeg čovjeka i naše zemlje, za koju, ako zatreba, spremno dajemo i naše živote. Veliki je to ulog, ali bez časti, dostojanstva i slobode, koje su naši preci krvlju stekli, nema ni nas i nema naših životnih vrijednosti.  
'Today, you, young soldiers and sailors, are taking on the honourable, and extremely complex task of defending the freedom, honour and dignity of every man and our country, for which we are ready to lay down our lives if need be'
- (75) ...prećutkivanja Brozovih i Miloševićevih logora u ime spasavanja srpske časti i ponosa.  
'a cover-up of Tito's and Milošević's prison camps in the name of trying to salvage Serbian honour and pride'
- (76) branitelj ponosa srpskog naroda i svih potlačenih ljudi, kako tvrde njegove kolege i prijatelji  
'the defender of the pride of the Serbian people..., as claimed by his colleagues and friends'
- (77) Na Vama je g. predsedniče [...] da li ćete [...] sačuvati obraz i dostojanstvo Crne Gore, njenu pravicu i slobodu, koja je rodila, ili ćete, što ne dao Bog, ostaviti sramni pečat na njenom obrazu, stid i poniženje.  
'It is up to you, Mr. President, to protect Montenegro's honour/cheek and dignity'
- (78) U skladu sa ustavom i federalnim zakonodavstvom, kao predsednik Ruske Federacije, obavezan sam da štitim život i dostojanstvo ruskih državljana, gde god da se oni nalaze“, rekao je Medvedev, dodajući da je „gruzijska vojska u suštini izvršila akt agresije protiv ruskih mirovnjaka i civilnog stanovništva”



‘as the President of the Russian Federation, I have an obligation to protect the lives and dignity of Russian citizens, wherever they are’, said Medvedev’

(79) *Herojskim otporom pod rukovodstvom Slobodana Miloševića odbranjena je sloboda i dostojanstvo našeg naroda.*

*‘Under Milošević’s heroic leadership our nation’s freedom and dignity were successfully defended’*

(80) *Slobodan Milošević je najbolje i najvernije oličenje naše Partije i borac za mir, slobodu, istinu i dostojanstvo.*

*‘Slobodan Milošević is the best personification of our party and a champion of (lit. fighter for) peace, freedom, truth and dignity’*

(81) *Svim Srbima.....vraćeni su samopoštovanje, ponos i dostojanstvo.*

*‘All Serbs have been given their self-respect, pride and dignity back’*

The aforementioned observation regarding the potentially conscious use of destruction imagery to achieve a particular argumentative effect seems to be even more applicable to the linguistic realizations of the DEFENCE metaphor. Although this metaphor is realized through a relatively narrow range of stock expressions, such as *očuvati, spasiti, odbraniti ponos/dostojanstvo* ‘preserve, salvage, defend’, the very meanings of words such as *defend* or *defender* can be said to be emotionally resonant and as such have great potential to be used in constructing political arguments. In the words of Charteris-Black (2004: 91), ‘the domain of conflict highlights the personal sacrifice and physical struggle that speakers claim are necessary to achieve social goals’, which accounts for linguistic realisations of this metaphor being particularly prominent in public utterances of political leaders. Namely, as evidenced in some of the Serbian examples, politicians can put themselves in the role of defender, i.e. present themselves (or be presented) as the agents of defence or recovery, possibly in an effort to drum up public support. (e.g. 72, 76, 78, 79, 80). (COLLECTIVE PRIDE/DIGNITY-OBJECT IS DEFENDED BY A DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUAL ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY). Alternatively, by evoking images of ‘the precious possession under threat’,

the general populace can be spurred into action and even driven to acts of violence in defence of the precious possession (73, 74).<sup>7</sup>

What can also be observed from the Serbian examples is that in the context of attack and defence, (collective) pride and dignity frequently collocate with *honour*, and metonymically *obraz* ‘cheek’, indicating that all three lexemes are closely related in meaning.

As regards ‘the recovery of the precious possession’ element, it is obvious that the experiencer is, once again, predominantly portrayed as passive in relation to this act, as was the case with ‘giving pride-object to somebody’. As evidenced above, this is especially true of the conceptualization of collective pride and dignity (e.g. 67, 71, 81).

#### 5.4. Summing up

In the light of the linguistic evidence examined in this paper it can be said that the ‘POSSESSION OF A PRECIOUS OBJECT SCENARIO’ imparts a highly positive evaluation to the emotional experiences of pride and self-respect in both languages, while the prominence of the elements of ‘destruction/theft’ and ‘defence’ within the scenario highlights the inherent fragility of those states and the need to constantly reaffirm them<sup>8</sup>. The existence of the same metaphors in English and Serbian can be explained by the fact that PRIDE/SELF-RESPECT IS A PRECIOUS POSSESSION is ultimately built on the primary metaphor VALUED ASPECTS OF EXPERIENCE ARE PRECIOUS POSSESSIONS, as formulated by Grady (1999).

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<sup>7</sup> It is also noteworthy that the realizations of the DEFENCE metaphor account for as many as 22% of all the examples (metaphorical and non-metaphorical alike) containing the lexeme *dostojanstvo* ‘dignity’ in the Serbian sample.

<sup>8</sup> The diversity of the pertinent metaphorical expressions is taken to be a major indicator of the productivity of a particular metaphor. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the corpus-based studies of the metaphorical structure of happiness in English point to an elaborate metaphorical substructure pertaining to the first element of the scenario. Namely, as shown by Stefanowitsch (2006b), the element of ‘trying to acquire happiness’, i.e. TRYING TO ATTAIN HAPPINESS IS SEARCHING/HUNTING FOR SOMETHING, is realized via a wide range of lexical items: for instance, *sought-after happiness*, *pursuit of*, *search/quest for happiness*, *X chase after happiness*, *X be in search of/pursue/seek/reach out towards/snatch at/buy happiness* etc. (p. 48). Stefanowitsch further interprets his findings against a backdrop of dominant cultural values, claiming that this metaphor “forms part of a PURSUIT-OF-HAPPINESS model which is strongly entrenched in English-speaking cultures” (p. 43). We can therefore conclude that specific emotion concepts can differ with respect to the prominence of particular submappings or elements within a single, underlying scenario.

Despite the strong conceptual parallels between the languages, the characteristic differences can be said to have arisen at the level of ‘emphasis’ – as is clear from the above analysis, the characterisation of pride and dignity as a precious possession, almost a sacred object, is particularly striking and productive in the structure of the collective manifestations/forms of the ‘trinity of pride, dignity and honour’ in the Serbian language, which might be interpreted as an indication that these collective emotional experiences constitute core values in Serbian culture.

Before reiterating the major implications of this kind of metaphorical structuring, it is appropriate to recall the oft-quoted Lakoff and Johnson’s (2003[1980]) claim that “Metaphor may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor... In this sense, metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies” (p. 156). In view of this, it could be argued that the construal of pride and dignity as a PRECIOUS, almost A SACRED OBJECT can further enhance the value of those emotional experiences, and consequently have a considerable bearing on the behaviour and cultural practices of people who live and act by this metaphor. On the one hand, heightened concern over the protection of one’s pride/dignity/honour(-precious object) can lead one to act honourably and to the highest moral standards, but, on the other hand, and more perniciously, people who act on the basis of this metaphor can resort to violence in defence of something that they hold sacred.

Moreover, public opinion can be influenced and shaped by the manipulative use of the linguistic realisations of these mappings in political discourse. Namely, as is clear from the present findings, by exploiting the emotive potential of such metaphorical structuring, politicians can present themselves as – or be hailed as – the saviours of the sacred/precious object, thereby providing grist for personal agendas and sometimes even a politically expedient cover for warmongering. On the other hand, the use of dramatic expressions which reinforce the image of pride-treasure as being under attack can serve to drum up the patriotic spirit of the people, or simply, increase tensions and foment nationalist sentiments; they can even legitimate acts of violence perpetrated in the name of, or for the sake of trying to protect the sacred object from the enemy.

At the same time, it is interesting to note that the abovementioned potentially negative implications of this metaphorical structuring are explicitly focused on in a few examples from the Serbian data. A case in point is the following example, in which the author appears ‘to call into question’ the dominant metaphorical framing:

S:

(82) Ovde sve više i sve češće, manje ili više, *svi političari govore da Srbija mora sačuvati svoje dostojanstvo, da Srbija mora da vrati svoje dostojanstvo*. Pa to je govorio i Milošević i *kada čujem da neko na taj način govori o povratku dostojanstva, o dostojanstvu kao najvažnijoj stvari...mene obuzima nelagodnost, setim se nekih bliskih vremena*.

‘Here increasingly....all politicians say that Serbia has to protect its dignity, that Serbia has to recover its dignity. Well, Milosevic himself used to say that, so when I hear that somebody refers to the recovery/returning of dignity, or describes dignity as the most important thing...I feel overwhelmed by a sense of unease, I remember the events of our recent past’

More broadly, the present analysis – or more specifically, the observation that the metaphor PRIDE/DIGNITY/HONOUR IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT (together with all the identified submappings constituting the scenario) creates realities, i.e. encourages people to live and act by it – can be tentatively related to the findings that have emerged from studies investigating similarities and differences in the notion of honour across cultures, as well as the role of honour (and honour-related values) in cultural belief systems, norms and social practices (e.g. Rodriguez-Mosquera et al. 2002; Leung & Cohen 2011; Helkama et al. 2012; Van Osch et al. 2013). Some of this research on honour has explicitly focused on the negative consequences of one’s excessive preoccupation with personal honour, i.e. the study of the role of anger and aggression in defence of honour. Leung and Cohen (2011) thus highlight that in the so-called honour cultures, in which honour is a focal value, (or in cognitive linguistic terms, it can be argued that HONOUR is construed as A SACRED OBJECT), an individual whose honour has been *attacked* or *stolen* has a moral obligation to avenge him/herself. Similarly, Cohen and Nisbett (1994, as cited in Rodriguez Mosquera et al. 2002) and Van Osch et al. (2013) claim

that men may resort to violence in defence of masculine and family honour, whereas some authors argue that the pursuit of military honour helped provoke the bloodshed of the Second World War (Robinson 2006, as cited in Helkama et al. 2012) or the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Afghanistan (Royal 2008: 61–69, as cited in Helkama et al. 2012).

## 6. Concluding remarks

The corpus-based quantitative and qualitative analysis presented in this paper indicates that the ‘possession of a precious object scenario’ plays an essential role in the conceptualization of pride and self-respect in both languages. The languages are found to exhibit a high degree of overlap with respect to the generic-level metaphors, with any differences between the languages predominantly occurring at the level of specific-level metaphors and specific linguistic realizations of these metaphors. The analysis has also uncovered some of the culture-specific properties of the metaphorical structuring of collective pride, dignity and honour via this scenario in the Serbian language, which may be indicative of their privileged position in the Serbian value system.

Furthermore, a comparison of the identified mappings related to pride/self-respect and the existing metaphorical conceptualization of happiness in the literature indicates that emotion concepts can vary at the level of individual elements of a single, overarching scenario. Namely, while the elements of ‘destruction’, ‘theft/loss’ and ‘preservation/defence’ are particularly foregrounded within the ‘possession of a precious object’ scenario in the structure of pride and self-respect in both languages, happiness is essentially characterized by the prominence of the element of ‘trying to acquire a valuable object’.

The present analysis was performed on a large sample of corpus examples. What differentiates it from the existing corpus-based research into emotion concepts, however, is that an attempt has been made to take into account the surrounding co-text as well as the connotative and contextual meanings of metaphorical expressions<sup>9</sup>,

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<sup>9</sup> That aspect of analysis is not usually taken up in the existing corpus-based studies of emotion concepts as they, albeit drawing on large collections of naturally used examples, predominantly focus on shorter stretches of text, i.e. conceptual metaphors are formulated

which has enabled us to connect the identified conceptual metaphors with specific cognitive models (e.g. the POSSESSED OBJECT metaphor and 'PRIDE/PONOS 2'), identify related concepts (e.g. the association between defiance and pride), to uncover metaphors featured most prominently in the structure of 'collective emotional experiences', as well as the ideological aspects of a particular metaphorical framing. This approach can thus lead to a more nuanced and accurate analysis of the complexities of the metaphorical conceptualization of emotions.

Lastly, and in relation to the last point mentioned, the findings presented in this paper have highlighted the need for a more comprehensive study of the various aspects of the metaphorical conceptualization of collective emotional experiences generally (hitherto neglected in the cognitive linguistic studies of emotion concepts). They have, more specifically, pointed to a need for further research into the conceptualization of (the trinity of) pride, dignity and honour in specific discourse settings (i.e. Serbian public and political discourse) through the prism of Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Metaphor Analysis.

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based on individual lexical items collocating with emotion nouns (e.g. *boiling/simmering anger, anger boil/simmer in X* > ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER (Stefanowitsch 2006b: 19); *X be obedient to rage/frustration dominate X* > RAGE/FRUSTRATION IS A CONTROLLER/SUPERIOR (Ogarkova & Soriano 2014b: 100)).

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Received: 14 December 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

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### ПОНОС КАО МЕТАФОРИЧКО БЛАГО: КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИЈА ПОНОСА И САМОПОШТОВАЊА У ЕНГЛЕСКОМ И СРПСКОМ ЈЕЗИКУ ПУТЕМ „СЦЕНАРИЈА ПОСЕДОВАЊА ДРАГОЦЕНОСТИ”

#### Сажетак

У овом раду испитује се концептуализација групе емоција које се односе на позитивно самовредновање – *pride, self-respect, self-esteem* и *dignity* у енглеском и *понос, самопоштовање* и *достојанство* у српском језику – путем метафоричког сценарија који смо назвали „сценарио поседовања драгоцености”. Анализа је спроведена на теоријској подлози когнитивне лингвистике и у методолошким оквирима анализе примера из општих корпуса. Резултати указују на висок степен продуктивности датог метафоричког сценарија у структури поноса и самопоштовања у оба језика, као

и на изразитост елемената 'уништавања', 'отимања/губитка' и 'очувања/одбране' драгоцености у структури испитиваних појмова. Осим тога, анализа показује да је метафоричко уоквиравање тројства *поноса*, *достојанства* и *части* као драгоцености изразито наглашено у српском корпусу, што упућује на њихов вредносни статус у српској култури, али и на манипулативне аспекте оваквог метафоричког уоквиравања у јавном дискурсу. Резултати стога упућују на потребу за даљим испитивањем колективног поноса, достојанства и части и у окриљу критичке анализе дискурса.

**Кључне речи:** понос, самопоштовање, достојанство, појмовна метафора, драгоценост, енглески, српски



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## **STYLIZED QUOTATIONS AS PARODIC PRACTICE IN TEENAGE DATING BLOGS: STYLIZING PATTERNS, QUOTATIVE MARKING AND LANGUAGE-IDEOLOGICAL MEANINGS**

### **Abstract**

The linguistic practices in young people's computer-mediated communication (CMC) have attracted great interest both in linguistic scholarship and in public discourse, and are expected to exert the richest influences on language in the new millennium. Nevertheless, youth's own perspectives on language and technology are rarely explored in their own right, beyond sensationalist popular descriptions of a "whatever generation" (Baron 2002) oblivious to the rules of language when communicating online. The present paper draws attention to this gap, by focusing on one specific phenomenon – the parodic stylization of teenagers' language online by teenagers themselves, found to be a common practice in personal blogs written by American youth. The first part of the paper focuses on the pragmatic features of stylizations and their quotative marking, extending insights into quotation marking as one major ongoing change in all varieties of English (Tagliamonte 2016); the second part presents a discursive analysis of the stances and social ideologies indexed by the teenagers' stylizations. Overall, the findings highlight great metalinguistic awareness in an online context where it was little expected, and strongly challenge the view of youth CMC as linguistically "whateverist".

**Keywords:** youth CMC, stylization, quotative marking, language ideologies, personal blogs

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## **1. Introduction**

The topic of young people's computer-mediated interactions and their influence on language has become popular in linguistic scholarship just as in public discourse. Linguists' specific interest in youth is not surprising, as technologically-influenced youth culture is often expected to exert the richest influences on (English) language in the new millennium (Bucholtz 2000). In fact, at the turn of the century, youth language online became a major focus of broader language ideological debates. In the English-speaking world at least, young people's online language has been sensationally exoticized by the mass media, described as a threat to standard English and even to human relationships and the social and moral order (Herring 2008). Even in scholarly circles, young people have been described as the "whatever generation" (Baron 2002) when it comes to language use, a generation oblivious to the rules of language when communicating online, whose linguistic practices have been scrutinized as having an unprecedented impact on language. Still, while the need to shift to more ethnographically grounded "user-related" approaches has hence been rightly acknowledged (Thurlow & Mroczek 2011, Androutsopoulos 2010, 2011) youth perspectives on their own new-media language remain almost unaddressed in linguistic and computer-mediated communication (CMC) scholarship. The fact that they do often exhibit an explicit stance was pointed out in a few earlier studies (Jones & Schieffelin 2009, Herring 2008, Bogetić 2016), where clear examples of youth's own metalinguistic practice within online discourse can be seen, but these are to date rarely explored in their own right.

The present paper addresses this gap, highlighting the need for understanding young people's own perspectives on their language, with their own metalinguistic practices being a valuable and insufficiently exploited source. Specifically, however, I illustrate these points with a look at metalinguistic comments in personal blogs written by American teenagers, with a particular focus on one phenomenon found to be very common in the data and little researched in this context – young people's parodic stylization of young people's talk. Stylization is seen as a specific type of metapragmatic commentary, a mock quotation whereby the writers position themselves in relation to imaginary 'others' and their perceived language use. The paper focuses both on the pragmatic features of stylizations along with quotative marking, as well as on the social ideologies that they index.

The findings highlight great metalinguistic awareness in an online context where it is perhaps little expected, and strongly challenge the view of youth CMC as linguistically “whateverist”.

## **2. Stylization**

### **2.1. Stylization as symbolic practice**

The concept of stylization has been developed and studied from various perspectives in the past few decades. Originally, it was associated with the literary criticism of Mikhail Bakhtin (Bakhtin 1981; see also Vološinov 1973). For Bakhtin, stylization is a clear example supporting his widely cited claim that “our speech ... is filled with others’ words, with varying degrees of otherness” (Bakhtin 1986: 89). However, as Coupland (2001) shows, the effects of stylization can be realized, and analyzed, much more locally than Bakhtin suggested: in specific communicative contexts and at specific linguistic/semiotic levels. In sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, this more local focus on stylization and style got a more prominent place following the Labovian work on stylistic variation (Labov 1972). In variationist sociolinguistics, styles were defined on a scale of formality and informality: the more formal the situation, the more prestige variants are used by speakers.

Over time, more ‘multidimensional’ (Cameron 2000) approaches to stylization have been developed. Alan Bell made a great contribution to the study of style with his ‘audience design’ theory (Bell 1984), in which he showed that stylistic variation derives from and mirrors interspeaker variation. More specifically, Bell draws on accommodation theory (Giles & Smith 1979) and argues that stylistic choices are essentially the speakers’ response to their audience, typically involving convergence towards the addressee’s way of speaking. However, Bell also identified a different kind of style shift that he termed ‘initiative’, in which speakers make creative use of language that converges not to the addressee, but to an absent reference group. This kind speaking in the voice of third parties “as if this is me,” or “as if I owned this voice” (Coupland 2001) has been most thoroughly analyzed in Ben Rampton’s work (Rampton 1995, 2010, 2011, 2017) on language crossing. Rampton uses the term language crossing for styling the language of an absent reference group, when the speaker

is not an accepted member of this group. For instance, Rampton analyzes interactions of teenagers from the UK who deliberately and playfully use Asian or Creole English to project a comic persona (e.g. **stop movin dat ting aroun** [giggle], Rampton 2010: 13). Such crossing evidently involves some kind of movement across social boundaries, and always projects identities of ‘others’, often those constructed as in some way inferior. The speakers are not speaking in their own voices, but deliberately adopting the voice of another, although the assessment of whether the utterance is playful or really one’s own can often be left deliberately unclear (Coupland 2001).

It is this view of style as ‘bricolage’ (Eckert 1996), where speakers recombine linguistic resources to project particular personas, that has been behind much influential work on “styling” (e.g. Cameron 2000; Coupland 2001; Sultana et al. 2013, Eckert & Rickford 2001, Rampton 2017). However, the concept of “stylization” has come to be seen as denoting a more specific set of discursive constructions than styling itself (Coupland 2001). As Coupland has discussed in detail, stylization is crucially a deliberate performance, a symbolic practice in which personas, identities and genres other than those current in the speech event are projected. In Jaspers’ (2011: 499) terms, stylization can be seen as “verbal cartoons, eye-catching sketches of linguistic material that are lifted out from their usual surroundings and inserted into the current proceedings to suggest one is not speaking as oneself or as would be expected”. Importantly, apart from being performative, stylization is always reflexive and knowing; it invites attention to its own modality, and requires an enculturated audience.

In addition, stylization is imbricated in social ideologies and power. It brings with itself stereotyped semiotic and ideological values associated with other groups and social contexts, and instigates processes of social comparison and evaluation. For instance, Hill cites an utterance of American English speakers’ “let’s crack a few **cervezas**”<sup>1</sup>, where the utterance’s pragmatic meaning is modified from “let’s go have a few beers” to something along the lines of “on this occasion we will be relaxed about alcohol, the way we believe that Mexicans are relaxed about alcohol” (2009: 42). It is through shared understanding of the indexical link between the sign **cerveza** and the drunken Mexican stereotype that Latino stereotypes are co-constructed in this instance. In the US context, this framework has been extended to examine the ways mock practices (re)produce negative

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<sup>1</sup> Beers (Spanish).



stereotypes about e.g. African Americans (Bucholtz 2002, Reyes 2005) or Latinos (Barrett 2006), pointing to stigmatization of nonstandard linguistic varieties that go hand in hand with white supremacist ideologies.

Formally, stylizations as mock quotations are introduced via different quotatives. They have been studied from the grammatical and pragmatic perspective, as part of the research on quoted language that has been found to be undergoing changes in form in the past few decades in all varieties of English (e.g. Tagliamonte & D'Arcy 2004, Buchstaller 2013, Tagliamonte 2016). Stylizations as mock quotations, as all quotations in spontaneous language use, typically co-occur with some quotative markers on their right and left periphery. On the left, they tend to be introduced by quotative expressions such as verbs (e.g. *say, tell, ask*), discourse markers (e.g. *like*) or the "zero" quotative (where no quotative marker is used). In addition to explicit markers, the separation of quoted and non-quoted material in stylization is often facilitated by other devices mimicking the original situation, such as interjections or discourse markers, adding authenticity to the quoted utterances. Still, while quoted (offline) speech has received the most attention, there is less research on quoted writing, much less specifically on writing online, or specifically in mimetic stylized utterances.

In the present analysis I am interested in stylization from two perspectives: the formal quotative integration into the texts, and its meaning as a symbolic and ideological practice. The stylization of teenage online language by teenagers themselves has to the best of my knowledge been practically unstudied so far (though see Staehr 2015); on the other hand, the stylization of youth talk, especially in adult popular discourse, has been recognized as a pervasive popular practice (Thurlow 2006), and deserves brief mention.

## **2.2. Stylizing youth talk**

The stylization of young people's talk, and young people's computer-mediated communication in particular, has become a common practice in popular and media discourses. Through stylized examples of an imagined 'youth talk' the media exoticize technologically mediated interactions, presenting them as a distinct form of communication barely comprehensible to adults (Squires 2010). A few researchers, however, have pointed out that these stylizations tend to reflect only adult perspectives, often involving

cumbersome language not likely to be used by young people in online communication at all.

Crispin Thurlow (2006, 2007) offers many examples of stylization in his analysis of newspaper portrayals of youth CMC. He states that humorous stylization of text messaging or text messaging language practices is an almost genre-defining feature of the articles in his corpus. Almost a third of the articles use some example of text messaging or instant messaging style in their headlines (for instance, “**Gd sAv R grAshz QE2 Gd sAv R nObl QE2 Gd sAv D QE2**”<sup>2</sup>). In-text examples are either given with ‘translations’ or a glossary, typically thrown in without any quotative marking. Thurlow shows that this type of stylized language forms part of an oppositional rhetoric, where youth online talk is constantly set in opposition to ‘proper’ language. However, the authenticity of all these adult examples is of course disputable; in many cases, as Thurlow shows, journalists seem to have made up their own exaggerated examples, which would actually seem counterintuitive to most young texters. As such, Thurlow concludes, these stylized utterances given in the media are likely to feed existing adult mythologies about the impenetrability of young people’s communication in general.

Further examples of popular stylizations of youth language in CMC are given by Jones and Schieffelin (2009), in their analysis of AT&T mobile commercials in the United States. At the heart of these commercials is the influence of youth texting on language, presented through a parodic series of stylized teenagers’ speech resembling text messages, suggesting young people have lost all communicative competence in standard conversational English. In one of the commercials, for instance, a teenage girl asks her mother “**W-U?**”, and a subtitle provides the translation of the messaging initialism: “What’s up?” The mother answers that she is angry about her cell phone bill, to which the girl responds with a series of further CMC abbreviations (“**O-M-G! I-N-B-D**”<sup>3</sup>), and says who she is texting (“**I-D-K, my B-F-F Jill?**”, with the subtitle: I don’t know, my best friend forever, Jill.).” By analyzing further similar commercial examples, Jones and Schieffelin show how the media maximally exoticize text messaging, by focusing on unfamiliar and exaggerated forms, abstracted away from

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<sup>2</sup> “God save our gracious Queen. God save our noble Queen. God save the Queen” (British national anthem).

<sup>3</sup> “Oh my God! It’s no big deal!”

the social context and conventional language practices from which those messages emerge.

In all the studied examples, stylization evokes a specific ideological persona of the teen. Slobe (2018) analyzes a more specific, parodic stylization of the US white girl by middle-aged white women, concerned with the way that girls' language sounds, and intent on saving them from it. Their stylizations, Slobe shows, rest on exaggerated linguistic and especially phonetic qualities, and problematize them as sounding infantile and unprofessional, constructed as emblematic of the US white girl today. The mock mimesis is made stronger through the absence of any quotative marking, and a contrast between the mocked teen girl language and "proper" adult language.

Outside of the anglophone context, Staehr's (2015) work on metalinguistic and stylistic practices among Danish youth interacting on Facebook offers a rare description of stylization on the part of young people themselves. Stylization is used by the observed teenagers to bring about stereotypical associations of Danishness, and also to present stereotypical use of the spoken "street language" of youth. In addition, interestingly, Staehr here offers examples of youth styling adults, specifically, styling what they see as old-fashioned language associated with the elderly. Altogether, Staehr demonstrates how this situated use of linguistic features is connected to stereotypical categories, with sociolinguistic stereotypes being actively re-interpreted by the adolescents.

The process of styling youth appears to have become a common discursive strategy in discussions about language, as well as a part of the social construction of youth CMC. The practice is closely related to another major ideological process – the enregisterment (Agha 2003, 2007) of internet language as a uniform, distinct variety of language (to be discussed in more detail in 4.2.3). In the process of stylization, youth internet language essentially emerges as a variety that is differentiable within a language as a specific register (Agha 2003). As adult practice, stylization of youth taps into the existing tendencies in sociology and psychology where youth is "continually being represented as different, Other, strange, exotic and transitory—by and for adults." (Griffin 2013: 25). However, the fact that young people themselves, as I will show below, participate in stylization practices of their own demographic, highlights new dimensions of language ideology, indexicality and enregisterment, while challenging some dominant assumptions about youth and CMC communication.

### 3. Data and method

The data were collected on two occasions (2013 and 2016) as part of related studies addressing youth linguistic practices in personal blogs, taken from a popular teenage website Mylol.com. The motivation behind this work was my observation, while studying the linguistic practices in personal blogging in general, of the surprising frequency with which the bloggers directly assessed their peers' internet language, engaging in metalinguistic characterizations of such language. For the purpose of the present analysis, from the initial random sample I created a sub-corpus of 133 blog posts that in some form mention "language" (about 40% of the random sample; all written by different authors); out of these, a total of 116 blog posts was retained for analysis, limited to those written by U.S. youth, with writers aged 13-19 (words total: 16,312).

Mylol.net is a social networking website aimed at teenagers. The site advertises as currently "the #1 teen<sup>4</sup> dating site in the US, Australia, UK and Canada". While mainly functioning as a dating site, Mylol.com offers a variety of other content, with a prominent place given to personal blogs. The blogs deal with everyday themes, often related to love problems and (un)fortunate searches for a partner on the site itself. Blogs contain links to user profiles; they are interactive, allowing viewers to post comments, though this option often remains unused on the site. Site users often use more of its aspects, such as blogging, interacting with other bloggers and chatting in chatrooms. More recently, the site appears to be converging toward mobile use, but the blogs and similar segments more compatible with desktop interfaces do not seem to be losing popularity. At the time of writing, the site had more than 300,000 users total.

Examples of stylization were collected in a separate Excel file, together with surrounding context. The analysis of stylization in the blogs is informed by the discourse-analytic approach, with some quantification given for illustration. It presents basic facts to do with frequency and length, then turns to types of quotation markers drawn upon, extending insights on quotations markers in online English, and finally presents a discursive analysis of the posts. I follow Coupland (2001) and Jaspers (2011) in seeing stylization as a symbolic practice projecting identities other than those current in the speech event. It must be acknowledged that

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<sup>4</sup> Though it allows profiles for users up to 29 years of age; users in their twenties are nevertheless rare.

the material used is undoubtedly partial and not taken to represent views of all teenagers; conversely, it emphasizes the importance of considering the multiplicity of youth identities and CMC contexts, rather than a homogenizing view of “digital youth”. The broader aim is to draw attention to adolescents’ styling practices, which challenge some prevailing views of youth, language and technology.

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1. Stylization: form and numbers

The analysis reveals that in nearly half of the blogs in the analyzed corpus (53 blog posts, or 44%) stylization is present, sometimes with more than one instance in a single post – 62 instances of stylization in total; 59 of these are clearly to do with other young people’s language use in the blog posts or online more broadly, as seen in context or the accompanying commentary<sup>5</sup>. The findings show that stylization is a prominent metalinguistic strategy employed by the blog writers. The ubiquity of parodic re-enactments and concerns over language is surprising both given the type of discourse (dating site posts) and the existing lay and scholarly beliefs on teenagers’ language attitudes.

The majority of stylized utterances include multiword segments or full sentences.

single word	multiword (phrases and sentence segments)	whole sentence	two+ -sentence stretches	Total
6	43	11	2	62

Table 1. Stylization length

In the blogs analyzed, stylization is often marked by the explicit introduction through quotative markers. A variety of quotatives are used for this purpose, for example:

<sup>5</sup> The remaining three are brief comments whose meaning/function is somewhat less evident.

- (1) *say* No, I definitely don't reply to those who *say mssg me w pics pls.*
- (2) *be like* And they *are like brrrrr boi dats it.*
- (3)  $\emptyset$  (*zero quotative – no overt marker used*) So tired of all this. **Yo supp u**, and all that fake bum talk.

The overall distribution of quotative forms is shown in Table 2.

Quot.	%	N
<i>be like</i>	58.1	36
<i>be all</i>	16.1	10
$\emptyset$	11.3	7
<i>go</i>	6.5	4
<i>say</i>	4.8	3
<i>other</i> <sup>6</sup>	3.2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>62</b>

Table 2. Quotative forms by frequency

The findings from online language use are comparable to the existing data from offline speech (Martinez 2014, Barbieri 2009) and offline writing (Sams 2009). More broadly, looking at the findings from the present online data and earlier offline data, differences are interesting to observe compared to the findings from mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, showing the quotative system has evolved – for most of the history of English the inventory was the same (*say*, *think*, and the zero quotative, cf. Buchstaller 2013), but it is now changing primarily in teen talk, and diffusing to other age groups (Tagliamonte 2016).

The new quotative *be like* stands out as the top marker by frequency. The finding is in line with the predictions that for mimetic, expressive content in particular, this quotative will grow in use (Tagliamonte & D'Arcy 2004). Over time, *be like* has risen from an emergent phase in the 1990s (Tagliamonte & Hudson, 1999) to accounting for around 50% of all

<sup>6</sup> The category includes the quotatives occurring in only one instance (specifically: *write*, *think*).

quotatives in the 2000s (Tagliamonte & D'Arcy 2004: 501); while there has subsequently been less research on its contemporary use, the present findings suggest further expansion. Also, contrary to earlier research (Tagliamonte & Hudson 1999, Buchstaller & D'Arcy 2009), *be like* does not seem constrained by grammatical person (used in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects) or tense, which suggests its further grammatical diffusion within the quotative cohort. Functionally, it is important again to bear in mind that the examples studied here represent the mimetic, voiced enactment of 'mocked other' personas; this nevertheless remains in line with initial findings on expressive quotes as being the main environment for the occurrence of *be like* (Romaine & Lange 1991).

The formal marking of others' speech in the youth stylizations allows a glimpse into the other comparatively new quotative markers in English, within the context of expressive, stylized quotes. Quotative *be all*, for example, remains underresearched in the sociolinguistic literature, though existing findings suggest it is already well established in many variants of English (e.g. Rickford et al. 2007, Blackwell & Tree 2012). The present data show that this quotative newcomer, so far mostly observed in spoken language use, is widespread in written, online American English as well, at least in the age group studied. It is suitable for marking the mimetic quotative content, but more limited than *be like*, occurring solely in 3<sup>rd</sup> person, present tense contexts in the data. Similarly, the quotative *go* is found four times in the corpus, but only in 3<sup>rd</sup> person, present tense contexts, suggesting its grammatical expansion and diffusion are still limited. Finally, some new quotatives recently found to be on the rise are absent from the corpus. Specifically, Cheshire et al. (2011) have identified a new quotative, *this is* followed by a personal pronoun in its oblique form, e.g. in *this is me*, *this is him*, as spreading in youth language. Its complete absence from the corpus, despite numerous quotative and stylizing contexts, suggests that the variant is still limited to British (youth) English; it may also be dispreferred in mimetic contexts such as stylization (the examples in Cheshire et al. do suggest it is used in non-expressive, factual retellings of others' words, though much more data are needed).

The traditional quotative *say* is comparatively less frequent, though it does occur three times and does not seem constrained by grammatical factors; this further supports the findings that the use of quotative *say* is decreasing in colloquial English, but not vanishing (Tagliamonte 2016). Finally, a proportion of stylized utterances (third in terms of frequency) are actually inserted without any quotative markers, as in:

(4) **Like i said b4 i wnt to know u & find sum 1 dat i cud trust & just talk to.** Personally, this just gives me the creeps. How will you talk to me if I can barely understand what you are saying?

The reading of such examples as stylized utterances rests on the clear distinction between their orthography and the orthography of the rest of the text, which implies no need for further demarcating the “me” from the “not me”; they are still typically referenced through deictics (*this*), personal pronouns (*you*), often with general extenders (e.g. ... *and stuff, and that, blah blah*), and a metacommentary preceding or following the utterance. Many of such metacommentaries (as in 4) involve hypercorrect spelling and punctuation, along with careful use of complex grammatical structures. In the example given, punctuation through quotation marks is absent, though many zero-quotative as well as other stylizations include marking through punctuation as well.

All the quotatives observed introduce the same pragmatic content, that of stylized mock quotations. The strong preference for *be like*, in particular, is likely to be related to its general expansion in U.S. (youth) English, rather than the stylizing content it marks. Overall, discursive analysis of the examples does not reveal differences in positioning or content among the different types of quotative marking used.

Further, stylization represents a specific type of quotative content, and needs to be understood in the local discursive and social context. In the rest of this paper, its social and ideological meanings in teenagers’ personal blogs are explored in more detail.

#### **4.2. The ideological aspects of stylization**

The majority of stylizations in the corpus are to do with the youth’s perceptions of others’ language on the internet. Specifically, the use of internet language is consistently linked with the more personal (negative) characteristics of the writers, evoking a few specific social personae. As further illustrated in the metacommentaries surrounding stylizations, they repeatedly revolve around three themes: lack of intelligence, female promiscuity, and incomprehensibility.



#### 4.2.1. Lack of intelligence, immaturity and going nowhere in life

The major repeated association between the stylized language use and the post writers involves lack of intelligence (for illustration, *dumb* is the single most common adjective in the corpus, typically used in the comments following the stylized utterance):

(5) JackMan<sup>7</sup>

What's with everyone going **msg me pls**? Not only are you begging like a total loser, but you write in this baby lingo showing you're another dumb kid with no writing skills and no prospects.

(6) Tam

**Cmn jst pics nw**. Sooooo.....You hate vowels or your IQ doesn't allow a proper sentence?

Associations with a lack of intelligence often go hand in hand with immaturity and poor prospects in adult life, echoing internalized adult ideologies on youth and language already widely documented in American and British public discourses (e.g. Squires 2010). The post below sums up these major associations in a longer metacommentary, taking an equally sarcastic stance.

(7) JasonS

The fuck is wrong with everyone today not knowing how to spell? I mean, are you just THAT fucking lazy that you can't press 3 keys to spell out you? Then there's those people that think it's "cute" to spell like a fucking 4 year old. Guess what? It's NOT fucking cute it just pisses people off and makes you look like a god damn retard. Quit making up these god damn ridiculous words like fucking "**lurve**" What the hell is a "**lurve**"? [...] I hate to break it to you all, but even though you may think that spelling in these ways is "cool" or convenient, it will get you nowhere in life but a shitty fucking job paying minimum wage with no hours.

While the contrast between the stylizations of others' writing and own posts, emphasized by using hypercorrect spelling, punctuation and grammar is common, the foul language is one aspect of a colloquial tone often preserved, adding to the forceful and adversarial position.

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<sup>7</sup> The pseudonyms have been anonymized throughout.

#### 4.2.2. The gender dimension: *Dumb sluts and shallow bimbos*

The beginning of SomeGirl's blog illustrates another common pattern in the blogs:

(8) SomeGirl

I'm as bad as those shallow bimbos... D: You know, the ones that say "txt me cute guy wit abz". [...]

Here, the use of CMC abbreviations is directly linked with "shallow bimbos", through a stylized example of sexualized messages. Descriptions like *shallow bimbos*, *sluts*, *slutty bitches* etc. are common in the blogs; the mocked internet language is associated with dumb girls far more often than dumb boys, though a larger corpus would be needed for further quantitative comparisons.

The relation between promiscuity of girls and sloppy language use is echoed in many of the ads. In the previous example, this association can be inferred from the content of stylized utterances. Associations with "sluts", however, are often more explicit:

(9) May

Not your typical girl here, and I'm proud of it. If you're looking for dumb half-literate sluts sending nude pics being all **heya boyz xxx** you're wasting your time. [...]

(10) Tom

Another slutty "**effing quite**" 8-year old all "**luv xx**" and I quit. What's wrong with you girls? Ever heard of proper writing? Or morals, and age-appropriate behaviour?

In parallel with a "slut shaming" focus on *morals* and *age-appropriate behaviour*, language is here the symbol of the criticized girlhood; in boys' messages stylizations usually provide examples to support their dissatisfaction and critical stance (e.g. on *morals* or *age-appropriate behaviour* in 10), while in girls' messages they provide a point of distancing from these imaginary other girls (again usually emphasized through hyper-correct spelling and punctuation). Further commentary typically includes references to both the girls' sexualized behaviour and their linguistic choices and aptitude (*half-literate sluts, ever heard of proper writing?*). The stylized internet language is thus indexical of a specific girl persona that the authors repeatedly distance themselves from.

An interesting occurrence is attaching to the stylized utterance an imagined, but highly ideologized vocal quality in the US – the “creaky voice”. The imagined voice quality is attached to several stylized examples of internet writing, usually with a brief metacommentary:

(11) Aron

Half the girls here are just like **heya sup yall**, that fake slutty creak roaring from their posts

(12) NN

Tired of all of you being like **u r li a boy a cud be mah**. I can hear a creaky voice muttering meaningless syllables, makes me wonder what I am even looking for here.

Comments of this type all come from the later period in the corpus, and can be seen as reflecting the recent explosion of US media coverage about creaky voice quality, often referred to as the ‘vocal fry’. In the past five or six years, both academics and laypeople have taken to the media to report an alleged increase in the use of creaky voice in teenage girls (Slobe 2016, 2018). Central to this emerging discourse are anxieties about the potential link between the use of creak and an inability to function as competent adult women, especially in the workplace (Anderson et al. 2014); the moral panic around it has become so widespread that some doctors have even proposed parents seek medical intervention to ‘fix’ their daughters’ voices, despite the lack of any biological risks of creaky voice (Slobe 2016). The creaky voice style echoed in the teenagers’ mock stylizations of writing taps into the wider adult hyper-representations of girlhood in the US, along with all the major associations linked to internet language in the blogs – lack of intelligence, immaturity and promiscuity.

As noted, comments such as the above come from girls as often as from boys, clearly echoing the adult anxieties on both sexuality and language. Rather than seeing these as boy-girl enmities or female competition, their similarity to documented adult popular discourses points to internalized gender-based values, which get refracted through the symbolics of language in the youth CMC context. It can be noted that boys’ promiscuity is never mentioned or linked to the mocked language use.

### 4.2.3. Enregisterment, adult language ideologies: A distinct, incomprehensible variety

Another association that underlies the mock stylizations analyzed is the incomprehensibility of internet language used by the teens. All of the above examples can be seen to illustrate one overarching process – the enregisterment (Agha, 2003, 2007) of youth online language as a distinct variety of language. In Agha’s terms, enregisterment is a process whereby “a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms” (Agha 2003:231), one that is ideologically linked to specific social personae. In several existing studies, similar enregisterment of *Netspeak* as a unique, barely intelligible variety ideologically associated with teenagers has been found (e.g. Thurlow 2007, Squires 2010). However, the present data reveal associations of internet language not with youth, but with a subsection of “other” less intelligent youth, and authors often make a point of distancing themselves from these “dumb teenagers” whose language is barely comprehensible:

(13) JX

**Gimme luv and I will luv 4ever.** Wait, what?! No, this doesn’t mean you’re romantic, but another dumb teenager babbling in chatspeak that people won’t even understand. [...]

(14) Miles

Okay this one ruined my morning. “**Im’a’take you to new planets, worlds you ne’er knew existed...**” You skipped class when you learned about apostrophes? They serve a purpose, apart from butchering perfectly clear words, you know. English should LOOK like English.

The author presents chatspeak as a variety in its own right, one that is not even understandable to everyone (though his own example is rather typical and almost looks dated). This form of language is directly described as belonging not to all youth, but to *dumb teenagers* (cf. 4.2.1). The idea of unintelligibility and “babbling” closely resembles language ideologies found in popular adult discourses (Thurlow 2006). This type of language is often, as in many of the above examples, placed in opposition to “good English” or “proper language”, sometimes to the point that authors refuse to communicate with others using internet language features:

(15) Fiona

Answers:

Q: **Whatcha doin then?**

A: **Im sowwy**.. I only understand proper grammar:(

(16) soz

To **hiya h sup** I can only say Pardon?, I only bother to reply to messages in English.

The first example is an excerpt of a post in which the author lists the most common questions she's been asked to chat or blog about. Stylizing the language of some of her peers, Fiona sets this type of language use in opposition to *proper grammar*. Her sarcastic use of baby-like language further contributes to the association of this type of writing with childishness and immaturity. The second example similarly involves a rejection of communication with the post writers that use CMC contractions, constructed as a variety not belonging to *messages in English*.

The enregisterment of the variety allows for its parodic reconstruction, with users expected to be able to read the humorous and 'not real' use. However, misunderstandings can occur, as (17) complains about in her blog:

(17) idonteven

C'mon, guys. Are you all really this oblivious? I realize sarcasm is poorly displayed on the internet. But there are just some instances were [*sic*] it should be just.. OBVIOUS. "**Aye boiz hmu if u wnt a deep lovin women to exchnge dirty txts wit! We can Kik if thts cool #YOLOJESUSSWAG**" What kind of tit would actually read that bunch of jargon, process it, then think to themself 'Wow, **this babe is talking srs bsns!** [...]

In similar distinctions between youth internet language and "proper language", oneself and others, issues of authenticity are also often brought up more explicitly.

(18) Max

The only problem is, that to find a legitimately REAL person sustaining life on this site, I have to swim through the hundreds of derps that can't even spell the word 'gorgeous' correctly. [...] I shouldn't have to waste a good sum of my time trying to understand what you're trying to tell me through your gibberish-

like words and mismatched phrases. The whole, **U send n00dz?**  
BS is really annoying. [...]

The stylized phrase indicates annoyance with the sexualized messages of other site users, but the complaints in the preceding text are exclusively language-focused. Those who use improper, “gibberish-like” language are described as not even being real people one can communicate with. Stressing the difficulty to understand netspeak echoes existing adult views on youth CMC as a specific, impenetrable variety of language.

Squires (2010) identified several ideological themes which lie at the core of enregistering internet language from an adult perspective: linguistic correctness, a distinction between “real life” and life happening online, technology-driven language change, social acceptability, and language protectionism. All of these themes clearly resonate in the present corpus. However, the ideological mechanisms behind the process of enregisterment in this community are not a direct mirror of those among adults – rather than associating Nestpeak with a homogenous group of today’s “Thumb Generation”, the bloggers here create ideological links with a specific, different subgroup of teenagers seen as superficial, unintelligent and lazy. Youth stylizations of the enregistered Netspeak form a metapragmatic activity whose meanings can only be understood in context, and whose ideological meanings are actively created by the participants themselves.

## 5. Discussion

The analysis has shown that stylization works as a specific type of parodic quotation, which merits attention both in terms of language form and the social meanings it indexes. From the perspective of quotative marking, the analysis has brought some new insights into the present-decade quotatives in youth American English, as well as into quotative marking in online written discourse, which has been comparatively less researched so far. The findings generally confirm further expansion of the relatively novel informal quotatives such as *be like* or *be all* (cf. Tagliamonte and D’Arcy 2009, Buchstaller 2015) and a decline of traditional quotatives such as *say*. The findings must be interpreted within the context of mimetic re-enactments created by teenage authors and directed at a teenage readership. As the changes in the quotative system continue to progress, more nuanced studies will be needed, taking into consideration the contextual, pragmatic and interpersonal factors involved.

More specifically, the analysis has shown stylization to be, somewhat surprisingly (it has not been flagged as particularly salient in youth language research so far), a prominent metalinguistic strategy employed by the teenage blog writers. The mock practice echoes existing adult ideologies on teen language already documented, through associations with a lack of intelligence, lack of life prospects, and incomprehensibility. The gender dimension is strong and can in part be seen as indexical of the broader sexual and gender ideologies that operate in dating-oriented youth interactions, but also as tied to dynamics of (perceived) youth language use – after all, teenage girls are at the forefront of linguistic innovation (Labov 2001) as well as at the forefront of lingua-cultural stereotypization (Bucholtz 2004, Slobe 2018), particularly documented in the US. Still, the symbolic meanings of language and gender are locally constructed in this context, intertwined with teen concerns of self-image, likeability and sexuality in specific ways.

A broader point emerging from the discursive analysis of the stylizations is that metalanguage, or talk about talk, is in itself worthy of linguists' attention. This very acknowledgement can be seen as significant for CMC research, especially since the metalinguistic construction of internet language is still one of the least discussed dimensions of computer-mediated discourse (Herring 2011). It is hoped that the present study contributes to the emerging discussion on language attitudes and metalinguistic awareness in CMC, particularly when it comes to the often misleading hype about youth, language and technology, which can be altered only through direct critical engagement with the beliefs that produce it. Overall, the analysis has aimed to highlight that developing a critical understanding of young people's own metalanguage is another much needed, and so far much neglected, direction for CMC research.

While tying in with popular adult discourses, the described processes of enregisterment and metalinguistic commentary pose a challenge to existing views on networked youth's "linguistic whateverism". From a sociolinguistic perspective, they show that young people variously and actively appropriate linguistic resources, rather than being passive victims of social changes with little metalinguistic awareness. In the field of CMC, this calls for acknowledging the diversity of youth responses to technology and rejecting the technological determinism inherent in the views of an agentless "thumb-generation". Again, understanding the role of youth CMC in language change also requires paying closer attention to young people's own contextualized practices, viewpoints and ideologies.

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## Source

<http://www.mylol.net/>

Received: 19 December 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

Ксенија Богетић

СТИЛИЗОВАНО ЦИТИРАЊЕ КАО ПАРОДИЈСКА ПРАКСА У ЛИЧНИМ  
БЛОГОВИМА ТИНЕЈДЦЕРА: ОБЛИЦИ СТИЛИЗАЦИЈЕ, МАРКЕРИ  
ЦИТИРАЊА И ЈЕЗИЧКО-ИДЕОЛОШКА ЗНАЧЕЊА

**Сажетак**

Језик младих у комуникацији посредством нових технологија навелико привлачи пажњу и у лингвистичкој науци и у јавном дискурсу, будући да се очекује да ће донети највећи утицај на језик у новом миленијуму. Са друге стране, начин на који млади сами приступају језику и технологији ретко се испитује даље од сензационалистичкох описа *генерације штагод* (“whatever generation”, Baron 2002) која је у интеракцијама на интернету незаинтересована за језичка правила. У раду се скреће пажња на овај недостатак, кроз анализу једне појаве – пародијске стилизације тинејџерског језика на интернету од стране тинејџера самих, учестале у анализираном корпусу личних блогова младих из САД. Први део рада бави се прагматичким одликама стилизације те маркерима цитирања, пружајући нове увиде у облике обележавања цитирања као једног аспекта језичке промене тренутно актуелне у свим варијететима енглеског језика (Tagliamonte 2016); други део рада чини дискурсна анализа ставова и друштвених идеологија исказаних у стилизацијама тинејџера. Свеукупно, налази упућују на високу метајезичку свест у комуникацији на интернету и у супротности су са схватањима о дигиталној комуникацији младих као језичког „штагодизма”.

**Кључне речи:** стилизација, маркери цитирања, језичке идеологије, језик младих на интернету, лични блогови

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## USING GAMES TO REVISE GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY – STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVE

### Abstract

In this paper we present part of the research done for the purposes of a doctoral thesis in the field of English language teaching (ELT). In it we show the comments and opinions of students who were exposed to revising grammar and vocabulary through educational games. These students were all attending English as a subsidiary at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade. Their comments were analyzed, categorized and then interpreted. The comments included student statements on why they liked or disliked certain games, and their suggestions on how certain games could be improved. Some actual samples of these comments are also provided to better illustrate their positions and views when it comes to using games in learning a foreign language.

**Keywords:** education, games, grammar, vocabulary, revision, B2 level, students’ opinions

### 1. Introduction

Games have been part of educational systems all around the world for centuries. We encounter them in ancient Egypt and Greece (Johnson 1907: 26) and in China over 5000 years ago (Mungai, Jones & Wong 2005: 1).

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The first games were used to help soldiers practice their strategic skills (Gredler 2004: 571). They also hold their rightful place in the realm of foreign language teaching. They are often associated with fun, but their educational value, especially in the domain of learning foreign languages must not be forgotten (Richard-Amato 1988: 147). They became most prominent in the field of ELT with the communicative approach in the 1970s (Simović 2012: 678). However, long before the 1970s we encounter suggestions about using games for the purposes of learning a language. For example, Locke (1902: 130–133) talked about using dice in teaching children how to read and write. Letters could be put on the different sides of dice, and then the dice are rolled and words are formed from the given letters.

In the past some authors held the view that in schools there should be a clear difference between studying and playing games (Carr 1902: 38). For a long time, learning was considered to be a serious activity and as such it was the opposite of fun and play (Lee 1995). However, even then there were people who recognized the importance of learning through games. Hall (1904: 231) believed that we should avoid or postpone teaching children that there is a clear difference between playing and working. Making games part of the learning process is the way to help children find enjoyment in serious work (Johnson 1907: 18). Groos (1912: 399) warned us that: "... a discerning educator could not afford to ignore so important a coadjutor [as games]." Nowadays, the position that games are for playing, and classes for learning, has long been abandoned, but we believe that there are still some educators who want this distinction to exist (Vitz 2017: 39).

## **2. Are games meant to be used just with children?**

When most people think about games they think about children, as if children are the only ones who can and should enjoy playing games. It is similar when it comes to people's attitudes towards education: games are a welcome part of lessons if the students are children. Mungai, Jones and Wong (2005: 1) hold the same view, but they say that things are slowly changing in terms of the age of students with whom games are used. Gasser and Waldman (1979: 53-54) maintain that, as long as we explain the purpose of using a game in class, adults too can enjoy a game, unafraid

that they will feel childish. Lee (1986: 3), in his classification of games, refuses to define them by the age group they are appropriate for, saying that experience has shown how some games meant for children were quite enjoyable for adults, especially if the adults are able to clearly see the educational purpose of those games.

We strongly believe that educational games can be beneficial when used with adults. Compared to young children, adults are more inclined to provide the teacher with detailed and comprehensive feedback about the games they are exposed to. This feedback is valuable to a teacher in terms of planning lessons, choosing new games or adapting the ones that have already been used. This is why we chose to do our research with young adults, and analyze their opinions.

### 3. Research methodology

Ten ELT games were used with students at the Faculty of Philology, Belgrade University. These students all attended English as a subsidiary language course in the school year of 2014-2015. They were in their 1<sup>st</sup> year of studying English at the faculty and there were 71 students who took part in the experiment. Five games were connected to revising grammar and five to revising vocabulary. The table below presents the list of games used (Vitaz 2017: 179-180). Alongside, we have included the reference books where these games and their descriptions could be found. Some are very popular games in the domain of ELT, while others are not so prominent.

Table 1. A list of games with reference books

Grammar	Vocabulary
<p><b>Chain story</b> Lee (1986), Steinberg (2009)</p>	<p><b>Password</b> Gasser &amp; Waldman (1979), Lee (1986), Susser (1979), Steinberg (2009), Alemi (2010), Zimmerman (2014)</p>
<p><b>Little Red Riding Hood</b> Seymour &amp; Popova (2005)</p>	<p><b>Bingo</b> Dobson (1972), Susser (1979), Lee (1986), Rixon (1988), Hadfield (1990), Watcyn-Jones (2000), Greiner (2010)</p>

<b>Chinese Whispers</b> Chamberlin & Stenberg (1983), Lee (1995), Steinberg (2009)	<b>Memory game</b> Susser (1979), Yu (2005)
<b>Strange objects</b> Lee (1986)	<b>Charades</b> Gasser & Waldman (1979), Susser (1979), Lee (1986), Lee (1995), Steinberg (2009), Alemi (2010), Hartani (2012)
<b>The Card Game</b> Vitaz (2017)	<b>Silly Answers</b> Silvers (1982), Lee (1986), Deesri (2002), Ojeda (2004), Sánchez, Morfín & Campos (2007)

There is one grammar game we used which is not described in any ELT game books that we had access to. It is the Card Game. We encountered this one at a teacher conference. Its description can be found in the author's doctoral thesis (Vitaz 2017: 174).

The students were exposed to one game per class, and the classes lasted for ninety minutes each. The games themselves lasted from 10 to 40 minutes. Immediately after a game was used, students were given a piece of paper and they were asked to write down what they thought about the game. Their comments are valuable in terms of determining what students expect from using games in ELT. Furthermore, the comments help the teacher decide which games need to be improved or excluded.

#### 4. Results

Several games proved to be the students' favorites: one grammar game (Chain Story) and one vocabulary game (Bingo); whereas the two least favorite activities were the following ones: Chinese Whispers and the Card Game – both games used for grammar revision (Vitaz 2017: 195).

After analyzing their comments, we were able to put them in several different categories: advantages, disadvantages, suggestions (Vitaz 2017: 196-198). Below is the description of each category.

To better illustrate the students' views, we have decided to include pictures of the comments they wrote. One comment was chosen for each category and a translation of this comment was provided.



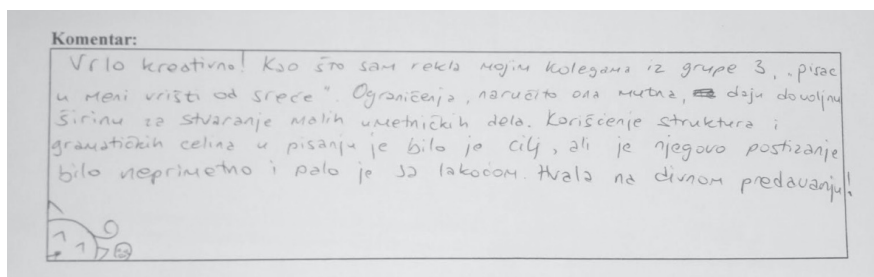
## 4.1 Advantages

Overall, students enjoyed being exposed to games during class. What they enjoyed most of all were the games which were dynamic, as well as those games which included the use of realia. They loved when there were prizes to be won. They also recognized the effect of games to include and engage all students and they preferred those games which were organized as competitions. What they considered crucial was the fact that, while working in small groups, they were able to correct each other.

Certain games gave them an opportunity to revise the materials in a variety of ways. Sometimes, they were asked to draw something, which they enjoyed immensely. This proves the assumption that, although they are students of language, they learn things in different ways, and some of them remember things more easily if their other senses are engaged.

A number of students pointed out the importance of the teacher's attitude. According to them, a good teacher should always find new ways of teaching or revising the materials with his/her students. The teacher should be motivated and motivating, with a cheerful attitude.

Picture 1. A comment about the Chain Story



Translation of comment 1:

*Very creative! As I said to my colleagues from group 3, 'the writer in me is screaming for joy'. The restrictions, especially the blurry ones, give us enough scope to create small works of art. The use of structures and grammar points was the goal, but its presence was unnoticeable and was accepted with ease. Thank you for a wonderful class!*

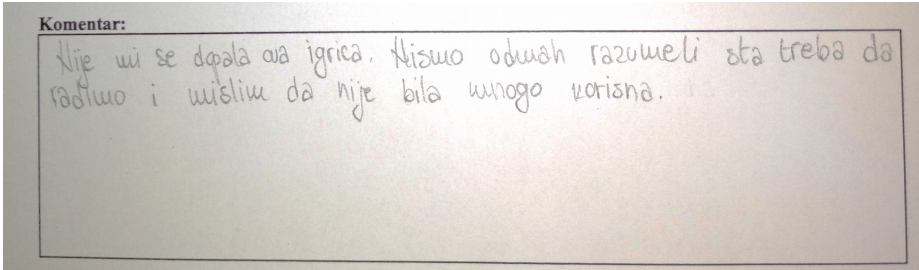
## 4.2 Disadvantages

Not all the games used were agreeable, fun and engaging. In their comments, students singled out some of the characteristics which made some of the games less interesting. For example, the students did not enjoy the games which meant they had to write or say long sentences, the games which were not very creative, but rather repetitive. The work done in bigger groups (ten to twelve people per group) was also disliked. The students consider such activities to be less useful than others.

Some students disliked certain activities for what we would describe as external reasons or factors. They said that it was too warm in the classroom, or that they were not in the mood for playing a game at that particular moment; that they were exhausted. At first glance, we might think that these comments are irrelevant, and that they do not refer to the games themselves, but we would be wrong to think that. For example, some authors see the use of games as a way of providing students with a break in learning (Susser 1979: 57). Steinberg (2009: x) recommends using games as a way to rest and relax after some more demanding activities. Similarly, Ersoz (2000) considers games to be a way of doing something useful while taking a break from learning. Lee (1995) says games are a break from learning, which then helps students go back to learning feeling refreshed and helps them endure. But if we are to compare this to the abovementioned student comments, we need to understand that sometimes the students are too tired to be able to play and enjoy a game, and that doing a more traditional exercise would suit them better.

Some games were, according to students, unclear, and thus they were thought of as uninteresting, difficult and not so useful. These were also the games which lasted a bit longer. In this case, it is the teacher's job to stage the explanation of a certain game, or to make it shorter if he/she notices the game is taking too much time.

Picture 2. A comment about the Card Game



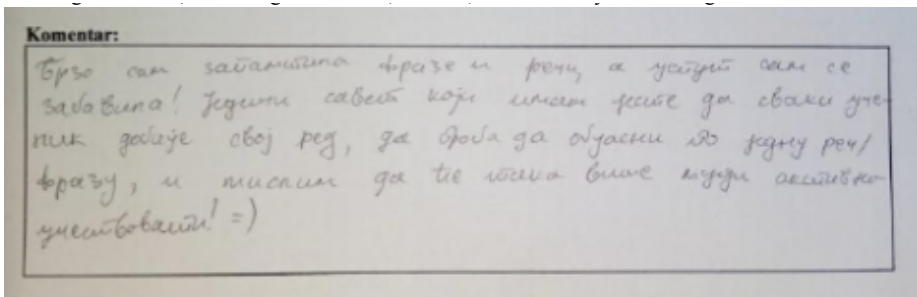
Translation of comment 2:

*I did not like this game. We did not understand immediately what we were supposed to do and I think it was not very useful.*

### 4.3 Suggestions

The comments provided by our students sometimes included suggestions about how some games could be improved and changed. For those games that meant doing work in bigger groups (e.g. the Card Game or Chinese Whispers) students recommended playing them in smaller groups, which would make more of them involved, instead of them waiting a long time for their turn. Some games that were a bit more dynamic (e.g. Chain Story) made it impossible for students to correct their mistakes. The suggestion was to devote some time at the end of an activity to error correction.

Picture 3. A comment about Charades



Translation of comment 3:

*I quickly memorized the phrases and the words, and I had fun as well! The only advice that I have is that every student should get his own turn to try and explain one word/phrase, and I think in this way more people would be actively involved. 😊*

## **5. Conclusion**

We strongly believe that educational games should be used in teaching English to young adults. However, it is of vital importance to have a constant dialog with your students, to listen to their opinions, comments, preferences and suggestions. Sometimes, as in this paper, the dialog can be analyzed more thoroughly, and specific conclusions can be drawn.

Students love being challenged, competing, working in small groups, and being engaged in activities which are lively. We as teachers should have in mind their individual differences and the ways they learn. Bringing everyday objects to class is always welcome. And last but not least, if it is clear in the teacher's demeanor that he/she enjoys what he/she does, the students will enjoy the games, too.

Longer and repetitive games are usually disliked. It is the same with games which are played in larger groups and those games whose instructions might be unclear. Sometimes, we need to recognize that our students do not feel like playing a game, for whatever reason, and we need to respect that.

When they were unhappy with a game, students were ready to make suggestions on how it could be improved, and we think it is the teacher's job to carefully listen to their advice.

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Received: 4 December 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

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## КОРИШЋЕЊЕ ИГАРА ЗА ПОНАВЉАЊЕ ГРАМАТИКЕ И ВОКАБУЛАРА – СТАВОВИ СТУДЕНАТА

### Сажетак

У овом раду представљамо део истраживања рађеног за потребе докторске дисертације из области наставе енглеског језика. У њему приказујемо коментаре и ставове студената који су понављали граматику и вокабулар кроз едукативне игре. Сви студенти похађали су енглески језик као изборни предмет на Филолошком факултету у Београду. Њихови коментари су анализирани, категоризовани и онда протумачени. Међу коментарима студената било је исказа о томе зашто им се неке игре свиђају или не свиђају, као и њихових предлога како неке игре могу бити унапређене. У рад су укључени и примери ових коментара како би се боље приказали њихови ставови и мишљења када је у питању коришћење игара у учењу страног језика.

**Кључне речи:** образовање, игре, грамика, вокабулар, понављање, Б2 ниво, ставови студената





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## EARLY FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING: INTENSIVE EXPOSURE, VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AND THE COGNITIVE SKILLS INVOLVED

### **Abstract**

This report concerns vocabulary development and its cognitive underpinning in 49 young Greek learners ( $M = 7$  years, 8 months), after two years of intensive exposure to L2 English. The data come from an experimental school for the teaching of English in Thessaloniki, implementing innovative teaching methodologies. Testing took place in Grade 2, when participants had received significant L2 exposure (approximately 300 hours). We measured L2 vocabulary (comprehension, production) and working memory (WM), the phonological store in particular, since this shares close links with early L2 vocabulary development (Gathercole & Alloway 2008). Due to the demanding nature of the L2 communicative classroom regarding attention resources, we also investigated the role of the central executive of WM in early FL vocabulary development.

**Keywords:** early FL vocabulary development, CLIL, phonological short-term memory, central executive

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## **1. Introduction – Setting the context**

Over the past thirty years learner performance and differential success in SLA and FL learning have been attributed to various contributing factors (for a review see Dörnyei 2005; Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford 2003) such as instructional context (Wesche 1981), age at which instruction begins (Johnson & Newport 1989), motivation (Dörnyei 2005; Dörneyi & Skehan 2003), personality traits (Gardner 1990), FL aptitude (Carroll 1981). More recently, the interest of academia has shifted to executive functions and their role in FL learning.

This article forms part of longitudinal research<sup>1</sup> with a cognitive orientation that explores the involvement of various mental skills in L2 vocabulary development and narrative writing. The present study examines early FL learning (EFL) taking place in a formal context, i.e. a partial immersion school offering optimal conditions (qualified teachers, input flood, small size of FL classes) and bilingual education to its students. It investigates the outcome of a two-year period of intensive L2 exposure in terms of vocabulary growth (comprehension and production in oral discourse) and seeks to explore whether, apart from the phonological store of working memory (see section 1.3.1), there are other cognitive skills underpinning the early (between the ages of 6 and 8) learning of an additional language.

In the following sections, we sketch out the theoretical framework of the study, touching upon issues such as the age factor and the early introduction of a FL in a formal setting, the intensification of FL programmes through the employment of teaching approaches such as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), and finally the contribution of cognitive skills, in particular WM, to the process of starting learning a FL very early.

### **1.1 Early Foreign Language Learning (EFL)**

The age factor has been at the heart of a long-standing debate in SLA literature (for a review see Singleton & Ryan 2004) and constitutes one of the crucial variables that can affect the learning outcome, in a SL or a FL setting. In a discussion of the age effect on FL learning, Muñoz (2010) argues that this has been primarily studied in natural settings, i.e. in cases

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<sup>1</sup> The same cohort of students was tested in Grades 1, 2 and 6 of primary school.

of early bilingualism where children learn their two languages at home and at school or in cases of immigrants, whose proficiency level in the TL is examined with respect to age of onset (i.e. arrival in the L2 community). In such studies the focus rests on the comparison between younger vs. older starters, with frequently contradictory findings emerging as to the language aspects each age group may exhibit superiority in (Singleton & Ryan 2004). To resolve the conflict, Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1982) introduced the ideas of rate of learning and eventual success. On the one hand, older starters seem to be faster and more efficient learners in the short run because of their explicit learning capacities and cognitive maturity (Cenoz 2003; García Lecumberri & Gallardo 2003; García Mayo 2003; Muñoz 2003, 2010), advanced conversational skills (Krashen 1985), or more sophisticated learning strategies (Oxford 1989). On the other hand, younger starters demonstrate a superior level of performance in the long term, mainly because of their low affective filter (Krashen 1985) and lower inhibition (McLaughlin 1984), the optimal conditions of learning they enjoy (Bialystok 1997; Pinter 2011) and the significant TL exposure they receive over time (Krashen, Scarcella & Long 1982; Singleton & Ryan 2004).

However, as Muñoz (2010) argues, the ultimate attainment advantage of the early start found in natural settings has been credited to a quite different setting, the FL one, even though evidence to support such a claim is scarce. Singleton and Ryan (2004) and Muñoz (2010) suggest that in a typical FL classroom setting, the superior ultimate advantage of early starters will take much longer to emerge because FL learners are *part-time* learners and the FL classroom is a low input level context: access to the TL outside the classroom is very limited and children do not receive enough contact hours to catch up in the long run (Pinter 2011). This makes the investigation of long-term benefits a tedious enterprise and explains the scarcity of such studies. On these grounds, Muñoz (2006, 2010) and Johnstone (2009) questioned the *earlier the better view in all respects* and suggested that early FL learning may be advantageous over time if various conditions are met, a representative sample of which are the following: a) young learners are provided with massive L2 exposure, b) they follow intensive L2 courses from one educational cycle to the next (primary school, junior and senior high school), and c) they are given plenty of opportunities to use the L2 in meaningful ways. One of the latest teaching approaches that may intensify FL programmes and provide learners with

additional FL contact is CLIL, with the balanced integration of the content of another school subject (e.g. History) and of the FL in one school hour.

## **1.2 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

Johnstone (2009) believes that CLIL programmes may help maximise the key variables of *time* and *intensity* and yield impressive linguistic and content outcomes, as they help learners become fluent and confident L2 users (Mihaljevic Djigunovic 2009; Nikolov & Mihaljevic Djigunovic 2006). Since the 1990s, such programmes have become more and more commonplace in Canada, the Basque country, and Europe (Dalton-Puffer 2008; Eurydice Report 2012) because they lend themselves to naturalistic FL learning. Most of the learning is implicit and incidental and does not require explicit language instruction (Mattheoudakis, Alexiou & Laskaridou 2014). In this sense, these programmes constitute a form of bilingual education and as such they are expected to carry at least some of the advantages of bilingualism and bilingual education (Cummins 1984). The experimental school this study was conducted in has introduced CLIL in the last grades of primary education since 2010 and as such it constitutes an example of a bilingual setting (see section 2.1).

As already mentioned, the study has a cognitive orientation. So far, EFLL research has investigated mostly the linguistic and affective gains of this enterprise rather than the cognitive ones (García Lecumberri & Gallardo 2003; Mihaljevic Djigunovic & Krevelj 2009; Muñoz 2010; Nikolov 2009a, b). To fill the gap, the present study examines the cognitive processes involved in the earliest stages of FL learning, between the ages of 6 and 8. In particular, it examines the relation between Early Foreign Language Learning (EFLL) and Working Memory (WM) which is one of the executive functions that emerges early in life (Beveridge, Jarrold & Pettit 2002; Wiebe et al. 2011) and is closely connected to academic achievement (St. Clair-Thompson & Gathercole 2006).

## **1.3 Executive functions**

In recent years, scientific research has been exploring the link between executive functioning and FL learning. The three most frequently researched executive functions with respect to adults (Miyake et al. 2000) and children

(Lehto et al. 2003; Monette, Bigras & Guay 2011) are Working Memory, Inhibition and Shifting (for a review see Sawyer & Ranta 2001), due to their close relevance to L1 acquisition and L2 learning (Andersson 2010). This study concentrates on and further explores the contribution of various constituents of Working Memory to early FL learning.

### **1.3.1 Working Memory and FL learning**

Working memory is the human flexible capacity to store and manipulate information in real time and one of the cognitive processes which the learning and use of a FL draws on (Baddeley 2003; Gathercole & Alloway 2008; Gathercole et al. 1992). It is a fragile system of limited capacity, regarding the amount of information that can be held before it is lost and the amount of time this material is available for further processing. Its capacity increases between the ages of 4 and 14, exhibiting a two- to three-fold expansion, while individual differences in capacity may have immediate consequences on children's cognition, L1 acquisition and L2 learning (Gathercole 1998).

Currently, the most influential model of WM is that of Baddeley and Hitch (1974)<sup>2</sup>. According to this model, the central executive or complex WM combines storage and processing functions; it is a modality-free and limited in capacity system that performs a range of higher order cognitive operations such as directing attention, planning actions, solving problems, reasoning logically, etc. (Kimberg, D'Esposito & Farah 1997). It also organises and monitors all WM operations, allocating cognitive resources and integrating information from long-term memory (LTM) and WM sub-systems: the phonological loop, the visuo-spatial sketchpad and the episodic buffer (Baddeley 1986, 1996, 2000). The loop or phonological short-term memory (PSTM) encodes, maintains and processes verbal material (Baddeley, Gathercole & Papagno 1998). It consists of a short-term phonological store that holds material in a phonological code which, if not rehearsed sub-vocally, decays within 1.5-2 seconds. It can also register visual information in the store, if this is silently articulated (Baddeley 2003; Sáfár & Kormos 2008). Children engage in such conscious and consistent rehearsal after the age of 7, which explains why there is a rapid increase of PSTM capacity after that age (Gathercole & Pickering 2000a, b; Gathercole et al. 2004). The visuo-spatial sketchpad stores material in terms of visual

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<sup>2</sup> See also Baddeley (1986, 2003).

and spatial features while the episodic buffer serves as an intermediary between the other WM stores and LTM (Dörnyei 2005), combining visual and verbal information into coherent episodes that are then sent to the LTM to be linked to existing representations (Alloway et al. 2004; Nevo & Breznitz 2011).

The contribution of PSTM is most critical at the early stages of vocabulary learning (Mackey et al. 2002) in the L1 (Adams & Gathercole 1996; Baddeley 1986; Gathercole & Adams 1994; Gathercole & Baddeley 1993; Gathercole et al. 1992) and the L2, in children and adults (Baddeley, Gathercole & Papagno 1998; Cheung 1996; Gathercole & Adams 1994; Gathercole & Baddeley 1993; Masoura & Gathercole 1999; Μασούρα, Gathercole & Μπαμπλέκου 2004; Papagno, Valentine & Baddeley 1991; Service 1992). Also, the phonological store of WM facilitates general school achievement and fluent speech (Alloway & Alloway 2010; Gathercole, Brown & Pickering 2003; Gathercole & Pickering 2000a, b; Gathercole et al. 2004; Kormos & Sáfár 2008; St. Clair-Thompson & Gathercole 2006) and improves comprehension, reading and listening abilities (for a review see Alloway 2006; Daneman & Carpenter 1980; Μαριδάκη-Κασσωτάκη 1998; Maridaki-Kassotaki 2002).

#### **1.4 The research question of the study**

There is abundant evidence on the predictive role of the phonological loop in L1 acquisition and L2 vocabulary learning. Nevertheless, Muñoz (2010) argues that these are two different processes in many respects. For one thing, FL learners are at a disadvantage when compared to L1 acquirers (Randall 2007); unlike L1 processing that is UG-driven (Bley-Vroman 1990; Chomsky 2005), FL processing is slower, less automated and more effortful, especially in the earliest stages (Andersson 2010; Wattendorf & Festman 2008). Today more than ever before, with the implementation of innovative teaching methods and the increased interaction taking place in the FL classroom, learners need to make sense of large amounts of aural data that pose heavy processing demands on both their PSTM and attentional resources (Mackey et al. 2002; Sáfár & Kormos 2008). WM is the “mental workspace” (Gathercole & Alloway 2008: 16) where this conscious, directed and targeted processing of key language patterns takes place before these manage to enter LTM (Randall 2007).

The instructed setting of the study is one such case: it is a partial immersion school that offers increased contact with English from the first year of L2 schooling; therefore, the idea of investigating whether the central executive (=the mechanism of WM that controls attention) is also involved in the early learning of novel vocabulary was viewed as an interesting challenge. The research question posed is the following:

*Apart from the critical contribution of the phonological loop, does the central executive of WM also play a role at the earliest stages of learning novel vocabulary in the FL?*

We expect participants to do equally well in the tasks that tap their phonological store and complex WM for two reasons: a) they are still building up their L1 vocabulary and are thus very much dependent upon their phonological loop to do so; although previous research indicates its close link to L1 acquisition and L2 learning up to 5 (Masoura & Gathercole 1999) there is evidence (Service 1992) suggesting this can even stretch up to the age of 11-12, b) Schmidt's theory of noticing and attention emphasises the key role of attended processing in the establishment of "new or modified knowledge, memory, skills, and routines" (2001: 29). In today's communicative classrooms young learners are constantly exposed to and overwhelmed by large amounts of input (Hummel & French 2010; Robinson 2002). However, their information-processing capacity is limited (McLaughlin 1990, as cited in Ellis 2003: 390) and for any FLL to occur, young learners need to employ their attentional resources to the maximum to sort through the massive amounts of input encountered, "tune in" only what is relevant to the occasion and "tune out" the rest (Gass & Mackey 2007: 186). As the central executive is the mechanism of WM responsible for the allocation of cognitive resources, we expect this to also play a key role in the process.

## **2. The methodology of the study**

### **2.1 The school**

The data form only part of the findings of longitudinal research exploring the involvement of various cognitive skills in L2 vocabulary development and narrative writing. The present study was carried out at the end of the

second year of FL schooling to ensure that students had received significant L2 exposure (approximately 300 hours).

The primary school of this study is experimental for the teaching of English as a FL (EFL) (Mattheoudakis, Alexiou & Laskaridou 2014). It introduces EFL from Grade 1 with five 45-minute lessons per week while these increase to eight from Grade 3 to Grade 6. This is a unique case in Greece as all mainstream schools introduce English from Grade 1 with one hour per week, which increases to three in the last four grades. Throughout the study English was taught by four highly specialised English teachers who collaborated very closely with each other. The school implements various teaching methods, some of which are Asher's (1982) Total Physical Response (TPR), Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach (1983), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-based learning (TBL), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). All encourage the joint involvement of receptive and productive language since "both qualify equally as examples of practice" (Bialystok 1981: 25) and associate with the long-term retention of new linguistic material, a better understanding of novel utterances and the development of positive attitudes in learners towards language learning (Ellis 1994). The first two methodologies were implemented in Grades 1 and 2 as the school places emphasis on learner fluency and "oral competency in communication" (Terrell 1977: 326) and supports the development of listening and speaking skills in the first two years of schooling. One of its priorities is to help young learners build up a basic vocabulary, i.e. words, expressions, lexical knowledge salient to their life experiences and lay the foundations for future learning in ways that are both fun and pleasant. Through TPR the students are engaged in play-like activities that help them best develop their comprehension skills before the emergence of oral production (Lundberg & Lindgren 2008, as cited in Nikolov & Mihaljevic Djigunovic 2011). By means of the Natural approach they learn to interact in the FL via real communicative episodes embedded in a functional-notional syllabus that contains a series of topics, all relevant and of interest to them (see section 2.3.3), supplemented by games, tasks and other play-like activities that provide them with comprehensible FL input (Krashen 1985).



## **2.2 The participants**

All participants were Greek speakers, living in the same low to middle-class neighbourhood in the western part of Thessaloniki. The exclusionary criterion applied upon recruitment was that of monolingualism: bilingual and trilingual children or children with previous knowledge of English were excluded to avoid any confounding effect the additional language(s) might have on their English performance. The 49 informants (23 boys and 26 girls) came from three Grade 2 classes. Their mean age, standard deviation and range were the following: *M* 7 years, 8 months; *SD* 3 months; *range*: 7 years, 2 months to 8 years, 2 months.

Due to the young age of the participants, informed consent was obtained from the parents. Informants were located by means of a questionnaire and a letter distributed at the beginning of Grade 1 (via the school principals and teachers) to the students' parents/guardians. The letter explained the purpose of the research and emphasised that participation was optional, participants would be seen in hours falling outside the school's core program (i.e. Greek language, English language, Mathematics) and all data would be codified to ensure confidentiality. Twenty-one students were excluded because parental consent was not obtained or because they were not monolingual.

## **2.3 The testing procedure and the tools used**

Informants were seen twice: at the beginning of Grade 1 we tested their L1 verbal intelligence and matched them for their native skills, according to the Linguistic Coding Hypothesis of Sparks and Ganschow (1991) these serve as the foundation for FL learning. We used the relevant sub-tests (vocabulary, metalinguistic concepts) of the two versions of the standardised Diagnostic Test of Verbal Intelligence (DVIQ) (Stavrakaki & Tsimpli 2000) to assess in oral discourse (comprehension, production) their linguistic abilities in L1. DVIQ I addresses pre-schoolers while DVIQ II is designed for school-age children (ages 6.5 – 9.5). We ran DVIQ I because in Grade 1 some children fell on the borderline (6-6.5 years of age).

Before the end of Grade 2 participants were seen in two sessions; we examined the capacity of the phonological loop (PSTM) and the central executive (CWM) and their FL vocabulary, with regard to oral comprehension and production. They were tested individually in a quiet

room on the school premises. Each testing session lasted approximately 20 minutes.

### **2.3.1 Measures of PSTM**

The phonological loop was tested via the forward digit span test and two non-word repetition ones. In the forward digit span and recall test (Wechsler 1991) participants listened to series of digits (one digit per second) which they had to repeat in the same order. Presentation began with two digits in a series; two trials were presented at each level of difficulty. With a correct report of the sequence, the length of the next was increased by one digit. Level of difficulty gradually increased, reaching a maximum of nine digits in eight trials. The test was discontinued when both trials at a given level were incorrectly recalled. All successful responses were taken into account (Μασούρα, Gathercole & Μπαμπλέκου 2004). One point was allocated for every successful response and half a point for a partially given correct response (right digits, wrong order). Maximum total score: 16 points.

Nonword repetition tasks involve the spoken presentation of artificial, void of meaning words, conforming to the phonotactics of a language. Nonword repetition is a reliable measure of PSTM capacity (Baddeley, Thomson & Buchanan 1975) and a good predictor of vocabulary learning and other language skills during the early school years (Gathercole & Adams 1994; Gathercole & Baddeley 1993; Gathercole et al. 1992; for a review see Baddeley, Gathercole & Papagno 1998). Nevertheless, what is documented is that nonword repetition tasks yield stronger relations to vocabulary scores than digit span ones (Gathercole 1999) due to the lexical unfamiliarity of the items. In this sense, they are much closer to the situation the FL learner faces in the beginning, where all verbal material is novel (Baddeley 2003; Baddeley, Gathercole & Papagno 1998).

The two tasks used were: a) The Children's Test of Nonword Repetition (Gathercole & Baddeley 1996), hereafter *Nonce\_Eng.* and b) The Test of Nonword Repetition for Greek-speaking children (Maridaki-Kassotaki 1998), hereafter *Nonce\_Gr.* Each consists of 40 nonwords which were auditorily presented to the informants. They listened to the words once and had 5 seconds to repeat each with full accuracy (all phonemes correct). Responses were recorded, coded and scored by the two native speakers (Greek, English) involved in the test. Each nonword correctly repeated was given a point; phonological deviations from the target form

(addition, deletion, or phoneme replacement) were valued as incorrect and got no point (Archibald & Gathercole 2006). When it was obvious that some children tended to misarticulate certain phonemes consistently, answers that contained these specific phonemes were scored as correct (Μασούρα, Gathercole & Μπαμπλέκου 2004). Emphasis was given on their ability to reproduce the sounds as accurately as possible and not on their ability to mimic the English pronunciation as such. Maximum total score in either test was 40 points.

### **2.3.2 Measures of CWM**

The capacity of complex WM (or the central executive) was tested by the Backwards digit recall task (Wechsler 1991) and a Listening and Recall test based on the one originally developed by Daneman and Carpenter (1980). Both tasks combine processing with concurrent storage.

- a) The backwards digit span task: The test employs the same procedure as the forward condition in all respects except that participants are required to recall the spoken digits in the reverse order (Alloway & Alloway 2010; Gathercole 1999; Nevo & Breznitz 2011). The transposition of order requires the involvement of executive-attention resources (St. Clair-Thompson 2010) and imposes a substantial WM load on both the central executive and the phonological loop (Gathercole 1999; Kormos & Sáfár 2008). Two practice trials were given to ensure participants understood the concept of *reverse*. There is a maximum of eight digits in overall seven trials. The test was run and scored the same way as in the forward condition. Maximum total score: 14 points.
- b) The Listening span and Recall task: The task is a dual measure of WM for language (Baddeley 1996). The test requires the active maintenance of information in the face of simultaneous processing and interference and thus recruits executive attention-control to combat interference (Conway et al. 2005). The task used is a modified version of the listening span test administered by Χρυσοχόου (2006) and requires the recall of semantically and phonologically unrelated words<sup>3</sup>. The test consists of six difficulty levels. Participants were told they would be presented with increasingly longer sets of sentences. One practice trial was given at

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<sup>3</sup> The list was designed by Tsimpli and Peristeri (personal communication).

the one-sentence level, to familiarise them with the task demands. On each trial, they listened to a series of sentences, judged their veracity and then recalled the lexically unrelated words at the end of each set. Permission to go to the next level was granted only when four (not necessarily consecutive) correct trials were given within each level. In all statistical analyses, we took into account the participants' ability to correctly recall the word (i.e. storage capacity). Irrespective of performance on the semantic evaluation of the sentence, one point was given for every correctly recalled word. With four such cases in a level, six points were assigned to participants. To be credited with a point in levels 2, 3 and 4, they had to correctly recall a corresponding number of 2, 3 or 4 words in each set.

### **2.3.3 The English Vocabulary Test**

FL vocabulary was assessed with two measures examining oral skills (receptive, productive) (see Appendices 1 and 2 for sample slides). A pilot test was administered to eight students, to see whether the two subtests designed were easy, difficult or confusing and accordingly make the necessary modifications. Half of them were valued as high achievers by their English teachers, while the other half was the low achievers group. The pilot tests consisted of 5 items for every skill, 10 in total. None of these items appeared in the experimental test that followed. Instructions on the task were given in Greek.

The test was designed for the purposes of this research. The two subtests measured the knowledge gained during the first two years of the learners' FL schooling; thus, the material used was based on the school curriculum of Grades 1 and 2. Among the short stories or songs that learners had been exposed to during the two years were *Winnie in Winter*, *Itsy Bitsy Spider*, *Goldilocks and the three bears*, *Hetty and the lion*, *Five little squirrels*, *Meg and Mog*, etc. What follows is only a selection of the thematic fields covered in Grades 1 and 2 in the curriculum that refer to children's environment at home, outside the home and in school: family, friends, feelings, main numerals, the school, clothes, body parts, animals, the four seasons, Christmas, main colours, food, means of transportation, sports, as well as action verbs such as *stand*, *sit*, *walk*, *turn around* found in lexical rote-learned chunks of high frequency such as *Point to (your ears)*,

*Sit down*, or formulaic expressions such as *How are you? I'm fine, thanks*, etc. The two tests were carefully designed to tap into the same thematic fields and tested whether participants could recall and produce a number of nouns (Szpotowicz 2010), action verbs (in the present progressive form), and adjectives they had been taught (Okalidou et al. 2011).

The receptive task was implemented first and comprised 15 slides. Children were asked to point to the picture that was being named (e.g. Point to the *yellow* pencil) or to do exactly what they were told (e.g. *Show me your fingers*). A digital stopwatch was used to record the time each needed to complete the test. For each individual a scoring sheet was kept on which we recorded their responses (correct, incorrect, not given) and the duration of the test (minutes, seconds).

The students' production was tested second. 15 slides displayed a number of different objects, actions, etc. The researcher asked 15 questions and tried to elicit as many answers as possible, with the help of the pictured objects or actions in the slides. 11 questions elicited a corresponding number of individual words, each credited with one point (e.g. What is this? *A horse*); the other four elicited chunks of words (e.g. Where is the boy sitting? *On the bed*) that were awarded 2 points each.

### **3. Findings – Discussion**

We examined the learners' vocabulary performance with regard to their overall achievement (aggregate score: FL\_Voc\_Total) and we also measured separately comprehension and production. First we ran correlation analyses to explore the relations between the measures and then we conducted regression analyses to define the direction of causality; these would help us answer our research question. Table 1 below displays the descriptive statistics:

[Table 1: Descriptive Statistics – Mean and Standard Deviation (SD)]

#### **3.1 Performance in the FL vocabulary test**

- a) FL\_Receptive: Maximum score for this test was 15. The scores of the participants were distributed in three categories: a) those

below the median quartile (<sup>37</sup>), b) the scores between the median and lower limit of the upper quartile (8-11; M-Q3 range hereafter), and c) those of the upper quartile (12-15). Figure 1 illustrates learner performance with respect to time duration and score, with each cycle representing one case.

[Figure 1: FL\_Receptive: Time duration and score]

What becomes clear is that 34 students (69.4%) scored in the upper quartile, 11 students (22.4%) scored in the M-Q3 range and 4 students (8.2%) scored below the median quartile.

**b)** FL\_Productive: Maximum score for this test was 19. The scores were also distributed in three categories: a) those below the median quartile (<sup>39</sup>), b) the scores of the M-Q3 range (10-14), and c) those above the upper quartile (15-19). Figure 2 illustrates participants' performance in terms of score and time duration:

[Figure 2: FL\_Productive: Time duration and score]

Figure 2 shows that only 16 students (32.7%) scored in the upper quartile, 18 students (36.7%) scored in the M-Q3 range and 15 students (30.6%) scored below the median quartile.

The findings suggest that FL production was more difficult than comprehension. Of the 69.4% of the students who scored above the upper quartile in the receptive test, only 32.7% scored equally high in the productive. The difficulty students experienced was also reflected in the time required to complete the task. While they finished the productive test in a range of 100 to 363 seconds, they needed almost half this time for the receptive task (overall range: 60-198 seconds).

**c)** Participants' combined performance in the two FL skills

Table 2 below shows the combined performance of participants in the two tests. What appears in bold, marks the number of students whose performance did not mark any difference (i.e. they performed equally poor, average, or good) in the two tests: 4 scored below median, 2 scored in the M-Q3 range, while 16 students scored above the upper quartile.

[Table 2: Participants' combined performance in the two FL tests]

Of the 11 students that scored in the M-Q3 range in the receptive test, 9 scored worse (below the median quartile) in the productive test. Also, of

the 34 students that scored above the upper quartile in the receptive test, 2 students scored below median and 16 scored in the M-Q3 range in the productive test. The chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in learners' performance between the two tests, i.e. between the cases that did not manage to go to a higher quartile with those that actually scored significantly worse in the productive test:  $\chi^2 = 33.051$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ .

The findings confirm previous studies (Lundberg & Lindgren 2008, as cited in Nikolov & Mihaljevic Djigunovic 2011) on early FL vocabulary learning. With meaning-focused interaction, spontaneous production emerges very slowly in the first two years and substantial time is needed before learners develop creative and fluent speech with reasonable accuracy and breadth (Blondin et al. 1998). Fall-backs have been reported for both comprehension and production after the first year of FL schooling, with development in the first year being faster than in the second. These have been attributed to the small amount of time spent on English (1-4 hours per week), the different didactic approaches adopted (Goorhuis-Brouwer & De Bot 2010) and/or the teachers' frequent code-switching between the native language and the FL (Lundberg 2010).

### **3.2 Correlations between the measures**

First, the internal relations found between the FL\_Total (aggregate score), FL\_Receptive, and FL\_productive were found to be significant, with coefficients ranging from .66, to .96, indicating the internal validity of the tests.

The aggregate FL score correlated strongly with Nonce\_Gr. ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .01$ ), confirming previous findings that demonstrate a link between the loop and FL vocabulary learning (Masoura & Gathercole 1999; Μασούρα, Gathercole & Μπαμπλέκου 2004). It also associated with Listening Recall ( $r = .36$   $p < .05$ ), indicating the relation between CWM and FL vocabulary acquisition (St. Clair-Thompson & Gathercole 2006).

Under closer examination, FL comprehension and production shared stronger to more moderate associations with both PSTM and CWM. FL\_Receptive correlated with Nonce\_Gr. ( $r = .42$ ), Nonce\_Eng. ( $r = .33$ ), and Listening Recall ( $r = .44$ ). This last finding suggests the direct involvement of CWM in the regulation of attention during FL comprehension (Kormos & Sáfár 2008). FL production correlated with Listening Recall ( $r = .42$ )

and Nonce\_Gr. ( $r = .41$ ), indicating the involvement of both PSTM and CWM when children attempt to produce language in the FL. This is natural, however, as this task at this early stage of FLL poses high attentional demands on learners who only possess limited language resources (Kormos & Sáfár 2008).

The fact that both comprehension and production shared strong links with the Greek-sounding nonword repetition task may be interpreted in two ways. First, that FL performance in young learners is supported by a language-general phonological loop process (Andersson 2010; Μασούρα, Gathercole & Μπαμπλέκου 2004). Seen from this perspective, PSTM serves as the foundation for FLL (Cheung 1996; Sparks & Ganschow 1991, 2001), supports memory performance and facilitates the ease with which learners acquire new lexical material (Baddeley, Gathercole & Papagno 1998; Gathercole & Adams 1994; Masoura & Gathercole 1999; Μασούρα, Gathercole & Μπαμπλέκου 2004). A second explanation is that participants, by means of their central executive, resort to their LTM phonological representations of their L1, i.e. the language to which they are phonologically more sensitive, which holds better-quality or longer-lasting phonological traces and as such they are consequently easier to repeat (Gathercole 1998; Gathercole et al. 1997; Μασούρα, Gathercole & Μπαμπλέκου 2004; Morra & Camba 2009). This, according to Masoura and Gathercole (1999) is particularly evident in the initial stages of FLL. The findings align with previous ones, that have established the reciprocal relation of STM and LTM between the ages of 5 and 8 (Gathercole et al. 1992), where the capacity of the loop promotes the learning of the new phonological patterns of the foreign words, while existing phonological knowledge of the L1 supplements the loop and influences the ease with which learners retain lexical sequences in the phonological store.

### 3.3 Stepwise regressions

We then examined whether overall performance in the FL (FL\_Voc.\_Total) or the two skills separately, comprehension and production could be predicted by PSTM and CWM.

When the aggregate FL score was the dependent variable, PSTM was a stronger predictor (Nonce\_Gr., 14%,  $F(1,45) = 8.510$ ;  $p < .01$ ) than CWM (Listening Recall, 11,3%,  $F(1,45) = 6.835$ ;  $p < .05$ ). This suggests that in order to perform well in the vocabulary test the learners relied on the loop



for the temporary storage of the phonological representations of the novel words and on their central executive for the coordination and execution of the multiple processing required during the FLL process. These findings align with those of Andersson (2010) who found an overall significant contribution of the two constructs (27%) to FL comprehension in 9- to 10-year-old Swedish learners of EFL. In Service (1992) a similar significant level of prediction (19%) also emerged between nonword repetition scores and FL vocabulary learning. Kormos and Sáfár (2008) found an even stronger association (30.25%) between CWM and FL proficiency, but with older learners (15- to 16-year-olds).

When FL comprehension and production were examined separately, CWM (Listening Recall) proved to be a stronger predictor than PSTM (Nonce\_Gr.). When we entered FL comprehension into the analysis, CWM had a slightly greater predictive value (17.7%) than PSTM (16%). The same picture emerged with FL production, where CWM explained 15.8% of the variance, compared to the 15% of PSTM. This suggests that speaking in the FL poses high attentional demands on learners (Kormos & Sáfár 2008). Since our participants were not yet literate in the FL, it is reasonable to assume that they relied heavily on their WM resources, the loop and the central executive, to encode the incoming FL information. With experience and practice this reliance is expected to gradually decrease over the years, when the FL processing will become more automatic and less effortful (Andersson 2010).

The findings confirm Kormos and Sáfár (2008), who argued that in the early stages of instructed FLL, CWM plays a more decisive role than PSTM, serving as a bottleneck in the acquisition of L2 skills; at more advanced stages, its capacity allows for the storage of verbal material in WM and the acquisition of an even wider repertoire of words and expressions.

To conclude, the findings corroborate previous ones with respect to PSTM and its close link to FLL (Alexiou 2005; Cheung 1996), while they establish a new, interesting and more powerful relation between the central executive and FL vocabulary learning. Our hypothesis was fully confirmed, with CWM being a stronger predictor of FL comprehension and production than PSTM. The large proportion of the variance in FL performance that was left unidentified suggests that FLL is a rather multidimensional process and remains highly subject to multiple other variables that were mentioned in the beginning of this article.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

The present study examined whether at a very early stage of FLL, apart from the often reported phonological loop, the mechanism of WM that is responsible for the allocation of attention, can also explain FL vocabulary learning. The findings indicate the active role of the central executive from the earliest stages of this process; this is important, since, in addition to directing attention, the central executive performs various other high-level regulatory executive functions such as planning actions, solving problems and reasoning logically (Baddeley 1986; Kimberg, D'Esposito & Farah 1997); as such, it may determine the learning potential of young children.

Regarding the FL performance of participants, the study confirmed that comprehension and production are two distinct processes that follow different trajectories; the latter is more arduous and takes more time to emerge than the former. Although the FL programme followed by the experimental school was intensive, we should keep in mind the following: a) two years of FL exposure is a rather short period as the relevant literature suggests; in incidental vocabulary learning, learners need to encounter novel vocabulary in context multiple times before sizable gains emerge (Webb 2007), b) literacy in the FL, which can accelerate FL performance (Johnstone 2009) was still absent at the time of testing, c) children as young as these, have not yet developed the full and complex range of their learning strategies (Cole & Cole 2001), to be able to further support this process. Hence, the results primarily reveal the vital contribution of critical cognitive skills to early FL vocabulary growth and not the FL competence of the young learners that is still developing.

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**APPENDIX 1: THE RECEPTIVE TEST\_SAMPLE SLIDES**



Slide 1: *The boy is having a bath*



Slide 2: *Winnie is angry*



Slide 3: *Show me the car*

**APPENDIX 2: THE PRODUCTIVE TEST\_SAMPLE SLIDES**



Slide 1: *What is the girl doing? (reading a book)*



Slide 2: *The boy and the girl are very ... (happy)*



Slide 3: *This is an ... (airplane or plane)*

**Tables**

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics – Mean and Standard Deviation (SD)

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
FL_Voc._Total	24.69	5.43
FL_Receptive	12.82	1.73
FL_Productive	12.15	3.58
Digit recall_Forward	7.05	1.46
Nonce_Gr.	34.99	3.59
Nonce_Eng.	28.51	3.96
Digit recall_Backwards	4.31	1.10
Listening Recall	7.05	3.04

Table 2. Participants' combined performance in the two FL tests

			Score Productive			Total
			3-9	10-14	15-19	
Score Receptive	3-7	Count	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
		% of Total	8.2%	.0%	.0%	8.2%
	8-11	Count	9	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	11
		% of Total	18.4%	4.1%	.0%	22.4%
	12-15	Count	2	16	<b>16</b>	34
		% of Total	4.1%	32.7%	32.7%	69.4%
Total		Count	15	18	16	<b>49</b>
		% of Total	30.6%	36.7%	32.7%	100.0%

Figures

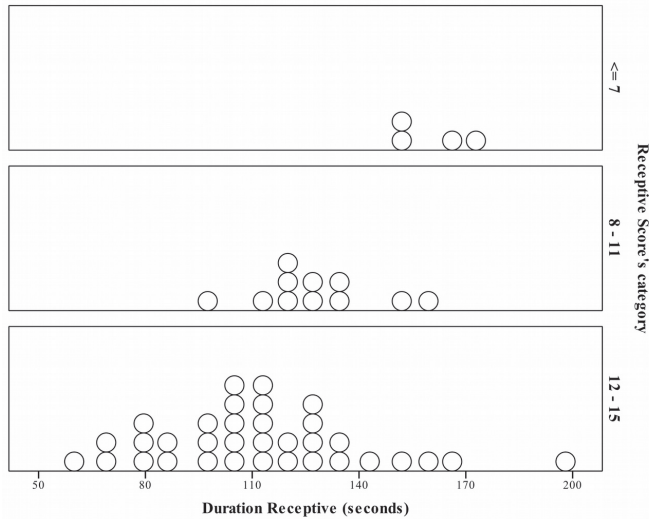


Figure 1: FL\_Receptive: Time duration and score

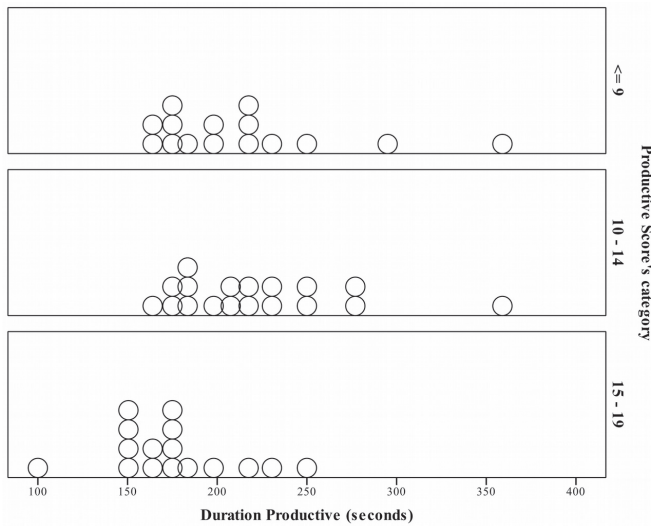


Figure 2: FL\_Productive: Time duration and score

Received: 1 August 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

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РАНО УЧЕЊЕ СТРАНОГ ЈЕЗИКА: ИНТЕНЗИВНА ИЗЛОЖЕНОСТ,  
РАЗВОЈ ЛЕКСИКЕ И КОГНИТИВНЕ ВЕШТИНЕ УКЉУЧЕНЕ  
У ТАЈ ПРОЦЕС

**Сажетак**

Овај рад бави се развојем лексике и когнитивним основама тог развоја код 49 младих ученика грчке националности (просечне старости 7 година и 8 месеци), након што су током две године били интензивно изложени енглеском као другом језику. Подаци су прикупљени у експерименталној школи за учење енглеског језика у Солуну, у којој се примењују иновативне методе наставе. Тестирање је обављено у другом разреду, када су учесници били довољно изложени другом језику (у просеку 300 сати). Мерили смо лексику другог језика (разумевање и продукцију) и радну меморију, нарочито памћење везано за фонологију, пошто је оно уско повезано са раним развојем лексике другог језика (Gathercole & Alloway 2008). Пошто је природа комуникативног приступа настави другог језика захтевна у контексту одржавања пажње, такође смо се бавили улогом централног извршиоца радне меморије током раног развоја лексике страног језика.

**Кључне речи:** рани развој лексике страног језика, интегрисано учење садржаја и језика (CLIL), фонолошко краткорочно памћење, централни извршилац





## ***Literary and Cultural Studies***

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## RECREATION OF THE SECOND DEGREE: UPDIKE'S SHAKESPEARE IN TRANSLATION

Some fifteen or sixteen years ago, as I was preparing for the translation of *Hamlet*, John Updike's recent prequel to Shakespeare's play, *Gertrude and Claudius*, was brought unexpectedly to my notice. A publisher, who had just returned from the Frankfurt Book Fair, called to ask me if I would read the novel and let her know whether it was worth translating into Bulgarian. A few days later I phoned back to say that not only would I strongly recommend the book for publication but I would very much like to translate it myself. My translation of Updike's book was published early in the next year, 2003, and my rendition of *Hamlet* appeared in 2006 to be staged six years later at the National Theatre in Sofia, where it is now approaching its hundredth performance. But for a few months in 2002 I had interrupted my work on Shakespeare's play to immerse myself in Updike's novel. In hindsight, it was only right to do the prelude before the main story. And so began my love affair with *Gertrude and Claudius*.

The task of translation is complex and problematic in principle, for it presupposes transferring a set of ideas, images, atmospheric suggestions and stylistic effects from one language into another and from one culture into another across often formidable distances in space and time. The

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difficulty however is raised to a higher power in cases when you have to be mindful not only of the immediate text you are grappling with but also of another, on which it is based and to which it keeps referring or alluding at all compositional and linguistic levels. At some points one is brought to the very brink of untranslatability.

What attracted me to *Gertrude and Claudius* in the first place was, of course, the unusual angle from which Updike looks at the *Hamlet* story and at its participants. Just as in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967) and, even more so, as in Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1991) or in Ian McEwan's *Nutshell* (2016), in this novel the perspective on Shakespeare's fictional world has been radically shifted. Here Gertrude is thrust into the limelight, not as the usual feeble-willed adulterer and possible accomplice in the murder of her husband but as a courageous feminist rebel, a new Anna Karenina, as James Schiff shrewdly observes. The prince, respectively, sinks into the background and becomes a mere spoiled, testy adolescent. As the author readily admits, "I love Gertrude, and always have... It wasn't Shakespeare who saw her as 'stewed in corruption,' it was her fastidious son."

Gertrude is definitely given the lead in the midst of a rather primitive dog-eat-dog male world. The very title of the novel prepares us for such a reshuffling: while the titles of most, if not all, Shakespeare and Renaissance plays featuring a hero and a heroine (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Antonio and Mellida*) give priority to the man,<sup>1</sup> Updike reverses the order. This radical reconstruction of the tragedy is deftly and ingeniously performed with the psychological consistency that is expected from a novel rather than from a Renaissance drama and that Tolstoy would have probably appreciated. And in spite of the radical change the prequel makes sense as an introduction to the action of the play, tinging it in an unexpected but convincing way. The significant reshuffling of *Hamlet* has to be sustained in any translation, but that goes without saying and is not what would give a translator pause. The devil, as always, is in the details.

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<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, such as Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. But in the first case the English title was borrowed from the poem's ancient precedent and in the second the heroine is a goddess while the hero is a mere mortal.

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From beginning to end, Updike's novel leans heavily on Shakespeare's play and strives not to break the connection to its source. This is done above all through multiple allusions to the text of the tragedy and paraphrases of various cues often confusingly redistributed. The heroine's maid Herda, for instance, echoes the memorable aphorism of Shakespeare's Hamlet, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,/ Rough-hew them how we will", when she says in her less elegant but no less figurative way: "There's shape in things, fiddle and fuss however we will around the edges". The narrator himself does not hesitate to borrow from the original Gertrude as he describes the "little dry spicy sausages for which the peasants have an obscene name" – a culinary echo of the Queen's more romantic reference to the "long purples,/ That liberal shepherds give a grosser name". The bathetic lowering of a key Hamlet utterance ("Man delights not me – nor woman neither") is even more striking in Horvendile's paraphrase: "I take no joy in knowing that men are garbage, and women too..." Towards the end of the novel the narrator pilfers an ample excerpt from Claudius's central soliloquy (*Hamlet*, III, iii) to describe this character's state of mind in his own words: "His offence was rank, with the primal curse upon it. Yet whereto served mercy but to confront the visage of offense." (Note how the images and the turns of phrase are taken from the play intact, retaining the archaic, Shakespearean tone.)

In the bulk of the novel direct reproduction of Shakespeare's text is rare. Here are a few examples. Corambus (Polonius-to-be) can be heard saying: "It is not Amleth whose health seems out of joint..." – adopting Hamlet's familiar metaphor to refer to the prince's own condition. And it is the old councilor again who quotes the dictum of his dramatic prototype when he harangues not his son but the heroine this time: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be...", only to continue in the same vein with borrowings from Polonius's instructions to Ophelia, and so on. However, in the closing pages of the book, where the narrated events begin to coincide with the opening scenes of the play, Updike proceeds gradually from paraphrases to ever more extensive quotations to finally step aside and let the play take over.

This continuous and ever intensified "intertextual dialogue" of the novel with the play, to use Professor Schiff's phrase, is a hallmark of Updike's prequel and its deletion would be detrimental to any rewriting of the latter. But in order to preserve it in a translation, a frame of reference

should be established as solid as the one provided for the English-language audience by Shakespeare's canonical text. In Bulgarian, in a little over a hundred years, we have accumulated seventeen different translations of *Hamlet* to choose from, and in no two of them is the wording identical. The process of translation is ongoing and the variants of the play will no doubt multiply. What can the poor translator of *Gertrude and Claudius* do under such circumstances but cast about for instances of proximity between the two or three currently most popular versions? And is it not clear that, whatever sleight of hand is performed, Updike's intertextual links will not be as apparent in the new environment as they are to his English-speaking readers schooled from their early days in Shakespeare's originals?

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The problem becomes particularly acute when we come to the transference from the play to the novel of idiosyncratic ways of speaking used to characterize various personages. Polonius's wordy, often vacuous pomposity is a case in point. And so is Claudius's speechifying officialese. These mannerisms can, of course, be reproduced in translation with a similar suggestion of affectation or self-importance, but the intertextual connection will again be largely lost. Even so, the characterizing function of the affectation will be activated. Most inhabitants of Updike's Elsinore endeavour to express themselves in the elegant courtly style of Shakespeare's age. Gerutha/ Geruthe/ Gertrude, undoubtedly, is as skillful in using this jargon as anybody else. Here is an example of her rhetorical expertise:

I must suppose your figure of speech pertains to you and me. But I already enjoy, my lord, the protection of my father's might and believe that what you flatter me by calling beauty, possessed later rather than sooner, might ripen to my benefit and to that of my eventual consort.

The narrator himself seems to have been infected by her language and continues to emulate it in his own explanation inserted into her cue: "She went on, taking courage from her presumption of having all the valor between them". At times this studied elaboration of speech approaches the preciosity of Elizabethan euphuism with its carefully balanced constructions. Here is Gerutha again:

But you seem to come to me conveniently, out of a general political will more than a personal desire.

Though the code of Renaissance courtly parlance is not something that all European nations can have recourse to as readily as the English, this is reproducible and can add the right sort of colour to the picture of life in Elsinore. The translator should not overlook it as a meaningful detail.

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One important compositional technique suggested to Updike by his source is the system of recurrent poetic imagery that provides the thematic and atmospheric unity of each of Shakespeare's mature dramas. Animal images especially are essential to these works, and so are they to the structure and impact of *Gertrude and Claudius*. Horvendile (old Hamlet) is referred to as "the blond beast". His younger brother, Fengon (the future Claudius), appears as "solid as a tree, as a rigid young bear..." When the two stumble across each other, they both behave like bloodthirsty beasts fighting over a prey:

Fengon still said nothing, just kept his gaze on his brother as the King prowled, in the lofty agitation of an inescapable predator. Horvendile saw that his brother would not share the naked spoils.

And a little later, when one of them is murdered by the other, we are presented with the following simile:

Two weeks had passed since her [Geruthe's] husband had perished in the orchard, unshriven,... like some soulless little rag of a woodland prey snatched up in sharp talons.

Here Fengon is obviously associated with the falcons he breeds for hunting. The earlier murky scene of his mews throws its threatening shadow over the whole novel.

A very important element of the novel's animal imagery is that of the snarling rapacious mouths of a series of Danish kings, gradually turning into the emblem of kingship. The first in this royal succession is old Rorik: "His mouth looked meaty and twisty and red between his mustache and his uncombed, grizzled beard." Then comes Horwendil/ Horvendile/ King

Hamlet with his “confident laugh... exposing short, neat, efficient teeth”. But the portrait of Feng/ Fengon/ Claudius is the most prominent and most interesting of all: “His teeth were irregular but seemed strong and all in place.” And again: “Feng laughed, his teeth uneven but thrilling in that red mouth, there between his triumphant mustache and pointed Italianate beard.” Later we hear that “... he arrived erect and mussed in the room, his wolfish teeth sheepishly grinning in his speckled oval beard”. And we are reminded again of the irregularity of his teeth, often described as “wolfish”, with a focus on his sharp canines.

In contradistinction to the predatory maws of the kings, Corambus’s mouth looks more like that of a sheep: “... he had one of those wet lower lips that appear slightly out of control, spraying softly on certain sibilants, drifting to one side or another when relaxed.” This tell-tale feature of the old counselor is brought back to our notice as often as he appears on the scene.

His daughter Ophelia’s lips and teeth, though markedly different, are also manifestly in view:

The girl had a lovely upper lip, turned both inward and outward like a plucked rose petal, slightly crumpled by the infusion of sweet plumpness, and it was fetching, Gertrude thought, the way it rested tentatively closed on the lower, leaving an open triangle through which her teeth dimly gleamed.

Here the aggression of the strong men is replaced by erotic lure. Gertrude, is also revealed by a telling glimpse of her mouth:

Had her beauty a flaw, it was a small gap between her front teeth, as if too broad a smile had once pulled the space forever open.

Gap-tooth has, of course, been traditionally considered a sign of sensuality and lust in women. It was Chaucer’s Wife of Bath who once said:

But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth.  
Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me weel,  
I hadde the prente of Seinte Venus seel.  
As help me God, I was a lusty oon...

The image patterns in the novel are pervasive and intricately woven. These thematic chains should be detected and diligently reproduced in translation without fail.



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Imagery or figurative language in general is the universal hallmark of poetry. Updike was a born poet and his lyrical predisposition is apparent in his prose too, where descriptive details often burgeon into genuine evocative tropes like the following: Denmark with its archipelago of tiny islands is visualized as “a realm, scattered and jagged like the broken earthenware of a dish just fallen to the floor”; Gerutha in her undress is “as white as an onion, as smooth as a root fresh-pulled from the earth”; and in her pregnancy, she poses for us naked again, “her beautiful swollen belly veined with silvery stretch marks”; the horse’s ear appears unexpectedly in vivid prurient close-up from the point of view of the rider with “its hairy exterior perked, its interior lilylike and a tint akin to human flesh”.

A fascinating detail crops up in the very beginning of the book to render the scene of medieval Denmark vibrantly palpable:

Rorik was entertaining his daughter within a small timber-floored and wainscoted oriel room recently built to adjoin the King’s bedroom, in this perpetually revised old castle of Elsinore. Lozenges of red afternoon sun lay on the broad planks of oiled fir, making good the designation of “solar” for these upper chambers devoted to private residence within a castle.

And a similar description of another, ceremonial room in the same building is sketched out in the last pages of the novel:

The day was revolving overhead, dropping rhomboids of sun upon the multi-colored finery and the hall’s broad oak planks, worn and scarred.

This recurrent radiant indoor scene, providing a strongly visual impression of Gerutha’s abode and reflecting on her character, is in turn a reflection from a much earlier Updike novel. In *Of the Farm* the narrator, who has returned to his parents’ home after long absence, wakes up in the morning to find out that he has reentered the glowing world of his childhood:

Downstairs, on the tawny kitchen floorboards scuffed and scored by dog claws, there lay, like a papery golden mat spread before the front door that gazed with its single large pane through the grape arbor toward the meadow, a rhomboid of sun mottled with

the slightly shivering shadows of grape leaves. This patch of sun had been here, just this shape, twenty years ago, morning after morning.

I cannot help thinking that the vivid picture of the sunlit wooden floor is indeed one of the author's earliest memories that keeps returning in his fictional worlds over the span of four decades.<sup>2</sup> The new readers of Updike's Shakespearean novel should be drawn to it in a similar magical way. All it takes to achieve this is the delicacy of a painterly touch in the use of language. A good translator would know how to apply it.

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Even stark abstract notions become strongly palpable in *Gertrude and Claudius* the way they often do in Shakespeare's poetic masterpieces, such as Macbeth's soliloquies or Sonnet 66 ("Tired with all these, for restful death I cry..."): "days of hurtling sun and shade like the dapples of an exhilarated beast"; "my own conscience grimaces at the least action that is not queenly"; "she had mounted to an eminence of abandon"; "they hesitated at the edge of the incestuous crime yawning at their feet"; "she could not stop seeking for what, elusively, was amiss in their circumstances, like a skipped stitch that might unravel the whole sleeve". At times the images are radicalized into strained catachresis, similar to those of metaphysical poetry – figures of a kind not shunned by Shakespeare himself: "as water will stand up in globules on a fresh-waxed table or on newly oiled leather, so her love, as she felt it, spilled down upon Amleth and remained on his surface, gleaming like beads of mercury, unabsorbed".

Play on words is also almost as characteristic of *Gertrude and Claudius* as it is of *Hamlet*: "your wise sweetness, or sweet wisdom..."; "though base, you have no base, mine is as wide as Denmark". In the process of translation, each of these figures has to be treated with minute attention, for the message of an artistic work is contained as much in its formal structuring as in its semantic content.

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<sup>2</sup> As Prof. Donald Greiner informs us, Updike revised *Of the Farm* for a new, Ballantine edition, which was going to be published in 2004. If he had already begun thinking about the revision of his early novel while working on *Gertrude and Claudius*, some details of the former may have unintentionally flowed into the latter.

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Updike's poetic mindset surfaces also in his penchant for alliteration, a device that moulds every page of his prose, starting from the very titles of his serial novels: *Rabbit, Run*; *Rabbit Redux*; *Rabbit Is Rich*; *Rabbit at Rest*; *Rabbit Remembered*; *Bech, a Book*; *Bech Is Back*; *Bech at Bay*. It is not that this is uncommon in English-language literatures, but Updike's insistence is rather exceptional. Alliteration seems to be a constant feature of this writer's work: only very few of his novels, such as *Villages* and *Toward the End of Time*, are relatively free of it, and it is as if the author has for some reason made a special effort to avoid phonetic repetition in them. But even in such a context, the alliteration in *Gertrude and Claudius* is unusually dense. This may be due to Updike's desire to emulate Shakespeare's poetic style or to imitate the embellished aristocratic language of the Renaissance. The reader will often come across intense series of recurrent sounds as in: "Fengon's **s**lightly **s**inister gift had enlisted her in a **s**ecret of **s**orts"<sup>3</sup>; "I was my father's **d**aughter, and became the wife of a **d**istracted husband and the mother of a **d**istant son"; "... to put the **s**eal on the **s**olitude and **s**ecrecy I **s**eek"; "Geruthe **l**aughed at her **f**ickle, **f**lattering **f**eelings"; "... in a **t**umble of furs, that **t**ingled and **t**ickled and were **t**ucked tight around her". Sometimes the alliterative scheme weaves together two or more different sounds, the way Shakespeare is so skillful in doing: "she and Horwendil were **f**ixed in place like **f**igures **b**eaten in **b**rass or else overanimated like actors, dancing through sheets of candlelight and **f**orests of **f**ood"; "the **m**ark of shame and **m**alice my **h**ired tongues set upon you will **m**ake your **m**urderer a **h**ero"; "her **g**aze **g**reeted, through the two-pillared window of her **s**olar, the **b**ile-colored **S**und and the **b**leak **b**eckoning **s**trip that was **S**cåne"; "the **i**mpression at any **r**ate was **u**npleasant, and **C**laudius, **c**autiously **n**odding in **r**esponse, **m**ade a **m**ental **n**ote that his Lord Chamberlain's **r**etirement must be **a**rranged". This complexity of interlaced sound patterns is reminiscent of the intricate embroidery of Renaissance tapestries. Even when not functionally related to meaning it nonetheless creates the impression of something opulent and lush, immersing us in the courtly aestheticism of the age.

Quite often though the alliterative effect has a rhetorical purpose as in the emphatic constructions: "I have trimmed my feelings to suit the **d**emands of **D**enmark", or "She **a**scribed all this to the good **c**ause of stifling **c**haos in

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<sup>3</sup> Emphasis added throughout.

the wake of calamity”. Like Shakespeare winding up an important speech, episode or scene with a rhymed couplet, Updike strikes his final alliterative chords to mark an important moment or a grave pronouncement: “to **k**ee**p** a secret from the **K**ing is treason, the most **c**apital of **c**rimes”; “only ignorance will **k**ee**p** her heart and **c**ountenance **c**lear”; “my brother was **r**ight – the Lord Chamberlain is **r**ipe for **r**etirement”.

The translator is hard put to it to render faithfully this important stylistic, atmospheric and tonal level of the novel’s text. In a language and culture that have relied on alliteration considerably less than the English tradition has, overloading the narration with dense repetition of identical phonemes would be counterproductive. On the other hand, to ignore alliteration altogether would mean to impoverish the texture of the book and deprive it of much of its poetic brilliance. As usual, the art of translation boils down to thoughtful and sensitive compromise.

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As Donald Greiner puts it, John Updike is “an artist of the highest order”. His ability to create a new language to suit the central preoccupation of each of his novels is truly astounding. The register in which *Gertrude and Claudius* is written is clearly raised above the colloquial level and it keeps the audience at an arm’s length – quite different in this respect from the Rabbit novels. Each of the three parts of the *Hamlet* book starts with the refrain “The King was irate”, setting from the first line the formal tone of the narration. The studied abstract language of generalizations strives to drown in its cerebral element all concrete observations and actions. This is how the narrator usually speaks:

They would talk, many a time of their growing daughter, the radiant fruit of one such clipping – the child’s piecemeal assumption of mobility and speech, the dropping away of treasured mispronunciations and lisped coinages as she gathered to herself more correct language and adult manners.

Here, in their own, more modest castle, they advanced with more caution, without the King’s paternal protection, attempting to domesticate the outrage their bodies were plotting.

The characters tend to express themselves in much the same rarefied conceptual manner.

*Horvendile*: Hamlet's attachments are not sentimental affairs, but matters for deliberation in the most dispassionate counsels.

*Geruthe*: I recovered a measure of contentment and resignation in my virtual solitude.

The choice of vocabulary is, of course, the main factor for the achievement of this insistent heightening of diction. The predominance of abstract notions is an important part of the author's choice. In addition, Updike uses some rare words and phrases like "the gibbous moon", "motherlessness", "marmorial gloss"; historicisms of the sort of "miniver", "surcoat", "cotte", "camise", "houppelande", "cotehardie", "brigandine", "gisarme", "glaive", "halbert", "råd", "thing", "portcullis", "barbican", "bailey", "garderobe", "solar", "flagon". His study of the twelfth-century setup in dress, armament, architecture, way of living, administration, etc. is patently scholarly. As John Bailey rightly remarks, Updike surpasses other modern rewriters of *Hamlet* in "historical weight and sobriety". *Gertrude and Claudius* displays almost professional knowledge of old crafts and sports with their special terminologies and jargons. The author's proficiency in the art of falconry is especially stunning as he makes Feng introduce Gerutha to the different kinds of hunting birds and the ways they are trained, apologizing for what may seem pedantry to her, but warning her that in this craft "there is a science of sorts that insists on its own nomenclature". And indeed, it is a full-fledged science as becomes clear in the important mews scene. Feng introduces each bird as representative of its kind and function, piling up terms like "tiercel", "eyas", "passager", "haggard", "gyrfalcon", "peregrine", "sparrow hawk", and adding words about their upkeep and breeding: "creance", "jesses", etc. Gerutha may have heard many of these, as she confidently affirms, but most of these notions were new to the Bulgarian translator and would hardly ring a bell to the readers of his translation. Falconry is an aristocratic sport and the Bulgarian aristocracy was decimated by the Ottoman invasion. Little linguistic trace of its culture has survived. Other strands of abstruse terminology include "ductia", "stem stitch", "split stitching", "recorders", "cloisonné pendant", "clerestory windows", "lancet windows", etc., lexical items for which more often than not no dictionary equivalents can be found in the language of a country with a history very different from that of Western Europe.

Obsolete or obsolescent words and phrases, some of them borrowed from Shakespeare, are also employed to give the narration the right feel of

a bygone age and further aggravate the translator: “fêted”, “porpentine”, “bodkin”, “politic”, “countenance”, “plight troth”, “put asunder” (the last two felt even by Gertrude to be “archaic”). There are also quite a few foreign-language insertions from Provençal, Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Spanish, German and Old Danish sources. To these should be added around forty Scandinavian toponyms and two dozen personal names, many of them drawn from Northern legends and mythology and often as unpronounceable and untranscribable as Jörmunrekr, Svanhildr, Yggdrasil. I had to write to the American publisher of *Gertrude and Claudius*, Alfred A. Knopf asking for clarification about some of these items. And lo and behold, a very kind and helpful personal typewritten letter from the author himself came one day to my doorstep in Sofia – something that could not have happened, unfortunately, while I was toiling over Shakespeare’s work. But more of that, a little later. Let me just say at this point that I felt obliged to compile for the Bulgarian edition a list of 78 explanatory notes, some of them fairly extensive.

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The highly literary, slightly antiquated register of Updike’s novel is achieved in a variety of ways besides the careful choice of vocabulary. One of these is the elegant variation of reporting verbs accompanying direct speech. While in contemporary English-language writings the use of such verbs is usually reduced to the basic “s/he said” and (less often) “s/he replied”, here we are regaled with a much wider choice of synonyms with the occasional addition of extended pointers to the attitude, mood and tone of the speaker: “Geruthe agreed”, “allowed Fengon”, “she asked”, “he began”, “he joined her in banter”, “Corambis prompted”, “she made herself go on”, “she hurried on”, “the Lord Chamberlain decided”, “he sighed”, “she laughed in turn”, “she shuddered”, “he explained”, “she answered in offended kind”, “said Fengon, in his soft, on-running voice”, “she said, rather loftily”, “he observed, but tentatively, as if willing to be contradicted”, “Corambis insisted gently”, “Fengon distractedly explained”, “she commanded him”, “the Queen admitted”, “Fengon warned”, “he exclaimed”, and so on. Such stylistic latitude is indeed rather exceptional in English prose nowadays and it was perhaps employed to create both a slightly dated style and a heightened atmosphere, but as it is less unusual in contemporary Bulgarian literature, the effect of the author’s technique will inevitably be reduced in

the process of linguistic transference. This is one of the irreparable losses in translation, due to the lack of symmetry between languages and their uses, and the only way of minimizing it would be to try and compensate for it elsewhere.

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The syntactical structure of the novel is particularly important to consider in this context. In another of his later works, *Villages*, Updike mentions "... four children nosing ahead like earthworms in the world's substance, encountering pebbles like bad school reports and the deaths of pets, but pushing on, growing, speaking in ever more complete and complex sentences". Maturity for this writer is, obviously, manifested in the mastering of language and above all in the command of its intricate logical organization, the ability to pack in a single sentence a great chunk of experience and thought. Long complex periods are what he endeavoured to create and control from his earliest novels on, yet their incidence in *Gertrude and Claudius* is unusually high. Here is a rather typical example of narration from the opening section of the novel:

The quiet hoops and tops and dolls of Gerutha's girlhood had no place in this male world of projectile fantasy, of hits and thrusts and "getting even" – for a strict tally was kept in the midst of all the shouts and wrestling, she observed, as in the bloodier accountings of adult warfare, much as Horwendil boasted of how King Fortinbras, in being slain, had forfeited not only the invaded terrain in Jutland but certain coastal lands north of Halland on the coast of Sweathland, between the sea and the great lake of Vänern, lands held not for their worth, which was little, but as a gall to the opposing power, a canker of dishonor.

It is amazing how far we have journeyed from the beginning to the end of this meandering sentence across a whole bustling world of event-filled geographical expanses. Another sprawling, enumerative sentence with clusters of subordinate clauses that bulge out at every point, starting with the words "O the days, the days..." and running through some forty lines, is meant to fill the time-gap of Fengon's long absence from Elsinore in a manner similar to that in which Time's choric speech bridges the hiatus of sixteen years in the middle of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. Yet another

sentence traces the entire technological process of the production of silk and its uses from the cocoon to the richly decorated tunic, and a later one roams with Gertrude through the vast castle taking account of the details of its rambling structure.

The complex sentences in *Gertrude and Claudius* are of various kinds, but the predominant type is the one including substantial, and often branching out, parenthetical components as seen in the following example:

Her own name too, the rare times he heard it issue from her lips – for our names are used for convenience by others but figure marginally in our own minds, which know ourselves as an entity too vast and vague to name – was softened to “Geruthe”.

Occasionally constructions of this type develop into long periodic sentences with multiple ramifications striving to follow each separate turn of a complex argument:

Thus isolated, visited only by Herda, who had her own reasons for grief, for Sandro was gone and her belly was swollen, and by her whispering ladies-in-waiting, whose faces were rapt with the thrill of the recent horrific event, and the castle physician, with his dropsical bagcap and bucket of writhing leeches, Gertrude played doctor to her own spiritual symptoms, wondering why her grief felt shallow and tainted by relief.

Although such structures are not confined to this particular novel, I suspect that their accumulation here is due to the author’s attempt to cultivate a way of speaking similar to that of the inhabitants of *Hamlet’s* Elsinore and above all of the prince himself in monologues such as the “Ay marry is’t” in I, iv:

So oft it chances in particular men  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty  
(Since nature cannot choose his origin),  
By their o’ergrowth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit, that too much o’erleavens  
The form of plausible manners – that these men,  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being Nature’s livery or Fortune’s star,  
His virtue else, be they as pure as grace,



As infinite as man may undergo,  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault.

Naturally, such heavy syntax can pall on the reader, so time and again Updike breaks through it with sudden outbursts of energetic short sentences when a decisive action or an intense emotional state of a character calls for such a change, as in the following account of Horvendil's descent to his death in the fatal orchard:

The King emerged from the arched opening at the base of the  
bailey wall. His robes were brilliant in the low slant of sunshine.  
His face looked bloated and weary, naked in its ignorance of  
being observed.

Or, even more noticeably, in a later cue of Gertrude:

I am his mother, yes. I know him. He is cold. You are not, Claudius.  
You are warm, like me. To my son, everything is mockery, a show.  
He is the only man in his universe...

One might wish that these breaks had been more frequent, but as the writer is intent on sustaining his staple tone, translators would do well to respect this choice and resist the temptation to make Updike's lengthy sentences more palatable by segmenting them into shorter and simpler fragments.

\* \* \*

It can be concluded that *Gertrude and Claudius* is closely related to *Hamlet* on many levels of its structure over and above the story itself. And if the novel reinterprets the action of the play and its participants in a fairly radical way (an approach that, incidentally, was characteristic of both Marlowe and Shakespeare in their dealings with classical lore), in the use of language it follows its model quite faithfully. Translators should be aware of this lifeline between the old text and the new and should try to sustain it. In my particular case, I was fortunate to have been long immersed in *Hamlet* both as teacher and translator before starting work on its prequel. It was my luck too to be able, on this occasion, to engage in correspondence with at least one of the two authors I was dealing with and to, quite unexpectedly, receive from him not just an explanation of several

dark places in his text but also an important addition of a few sentences in the closing section of the novel, which, as Professor Greiner has pointed out, is important for the central message of the work because it amounts to Gertrude's final exoneration:

She was happier wed. Like a broad-beamed ship she lightly rode in the safety of harbor. Her venture into the defiance and protest of adultery had been, like his years of southern wandering, an excursion, an exploration of her nature that, its question settled, need never be resumed.

The inclusion of this definitive comment on the heroine's character in my translation did make the Bulgarian version of *Gertrude and Claudius*, as Updike himself wrote to me, "the most authoritative foreign edition" of the novel and, in fact, even a more complete one than the original American edition, to be equaled in this respect for the English-speaking world only a decade later. It seems to me that Updike made this special gift to commemorate his romance with the "Bulgarian Poetess", whom he briefly met in Sofia back in 1964 and had not forgotten for the intervening almost forty years. Bulgaria had not forgotten him either. Whereas he was virtually unknown in my country when he happened to visit it, seventeen of his novels and a collection of short stories have been published and republished since then in Bulgarian translation. In the year of the publication of my translation of *Gertrude and Claudius* Blaga Dimitrova died at the age of eighty-one. Six years later, in 2009, I was asked by a Sofia paper to write an obituary for John Updike. A generation of important writers divided by the Iron Curtain and defying this ignominious division through their dedication to the higher principles of their art, was inevitably becoming, together with its period, part of the past.

Younger writers both east and west have a lot to learn from this brave and gifted generation. In his writing John Updike demonstrates the highest kind of professionalism that his younger colleagues would do well to emulate. His perfectionist care for the uses of language, the fine sensitivity to stylistic modulation, the ability to move with grace in an intertextual medium and spark off meanings at every turn are the distinctive qualities of his best work. And so is the meticulous study of the life material from which his literature arises.

It is sad that the bulk of critical attention devoted to Updike is confined to the Rabbit novels, with which he first came to public notice.

When, a year after the publication of my translation of *Gertrude and Claudius*, I happened to teach at a US University and mentioned this novel to a colleague conducting a course on literature and intertextuality, I was surprised to hear that she knew about the book but had not thought of including it in her syllabus. On my suggestion, she eventually did so, and was satisfied by the stir this addition created among the students. Such thoughtful rewritings of the classics are just the kind of stuff that can develop and broaden young minds in their explorations at the interface of old and new periods of literary history. For every rewriting of an immortal work is an act of its creative criticism and rejuvenation.

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Received: 14 August 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018



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## JOHN UPDIKE'S *THE CENTAUR* AND THE ARTIST DIVIDED

### **Abstract**

George Hunt observed that often the central character in an Updike novel is an unsuccessful or failed artist, a propensity that began in 1963 with Peter Caldwell in *The Centaur*. The main character, Caldwell/Chiron, is both human and centaur, and all of the characters have mythic identities, including Caldwell's adult son, Peter, who narrates the novel and is assigned the role of Prometheus. Yet, because Peter is torn between abstract expressionist ambitions and mimetic inclinations that underscore a love of detail, he is as much of a centaur, metaphorically speaking, as the elder Caldwell, and an examination of his divided artistic self further illuminates Updike's declaration that "the book as well as the hero is a centaur."

**Keywords:** *The Centaur*, artist divided, mythology, identity

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“The ordinary man puts up a struggle against all that is not himself, whereas it is against himself, in a limited but all-essential field, that the artist has to battle... Every true artist regards himself, alternatingly or simultaneously, as what he is and also as a failure.”

Andre Malraux (1953: 344)

John Updike once told *The Paris Review*, “My first thought about art, as a child, was that the artist brings something into the world that didn’t exist before, and that he does it without destroying something else. A kind of refutation of the conservation of matter. That still seems to me its central magic, its core of joy” (Plath 1994: 45). Yet, as George Hunt notes, often the central character in an Updike novel is an unsuccessful or *failed* artist (Hunt 1980: 153), a propensity that began in 1963 with *The Centaur’s* Peter Caldwell.

*The Centaur* was Updike’s tribute to his father, Wesley, a funny and popular teacher at Shillington High School who nonetheless had problems controlling his classes. Students liked him but also disrespected him, to use the current vernacular. In the novel, George Caldwell is not only a science teacher but also Chiron, the centaur. In fact, all the main characters in the novel have mythic counterparts, including Peter, who at one point lies on “his rock” (175) and we begin to understand that he is also Prometheus, who tried to help mankind by giving them fire, and whom Zeus subsequently punished by chaining him to a rock so an eagle could eat his liver, day after day. Peter, who appropriately lives in Firetown and daily feels a growing dread of his father’s mortality eating away at him, shares the narrative duties with an omniscient narrator that we come to realize is also Peter. The novel alternates between Peter’s and George’s points of view and between mythic and realistic chapters. Without the mythic component added to an otherwise essentially realistic non-chronological narrative, Updike has said that there would be no book. “It seemed to me to fit a kind of experience that I’d had: my father’s immersion in the world of Christian morality, in trying to do the right thing and constantly sacrificing himself, always going off to church meetings, and yet complaining about it all the time. There was an ambivalence that seemed to make him very centaur-like.”

The novel's title could have been plural. While Updike assigns Peter the mythological role of Prometheus, the fact that Peter is a divided artist also makes him as much of a centaur—metaphorically speaking—as the elder Caldwell. Peter is, by his own admission, “an authentic second-rate abstract expressionist” (102-103), though ironically he is drawn not to the large canvases upon which he struggles to create non-representational images, but to life's small details that show how much he exalts in the world of recognizable objects and figures.

On the simplest level, as Jack De Bellis summarizes, Peter is “a dual figure” inasmuch as he is both a Pennsylvania high school student and also a twenty-seven-year-old New York-based artist “whose recollections of his fifteen-year-old self form the narrative” (De Bellis 2000: 85). What complicates Peter's story and links it to Updike's underlying motif of death, however, is the other duality—the mythic component—for it is the classically trained artist, Peter, who is a visionary when it comes to “painting” his father and the other residents of Olinger in glorious detail as gods and mythical characters. Yet, Peter fails at creating an image vocabulary that derives exclusively from his imagination, and his “vast canvases—so oddly expensive as raw materials, so oddly worthless transmuted into art—with sharp rectangular shoulders hulk into silhouette against the light” (268). This passage from the text illuminates the ironic reason *why* Peter is a failed abstract expressionist: he sees the blank canvases and raw materials that mock him as having “sharp rectangular shoulders.” In other words, he sees a recognizable human form in those blank canvases because his orientation as an artist is to “paint” using familiar images from the world around him. His talent is not abstraction, but in pictorially and representationally describing his father's world on a grand scale that links humans to the gods in a “painted” narrative that's worthy of the enormous history paintings by Old Masters. It's precisely because his ambition and natural talent and orientation do not line up that he is divided as an artist and frustrated by his inability to achieve the artistic goal he's set for himself. Frustrated by art this way, Peter is himself a centaur, even as picturing these mythic/realistic images of his father and community make him, quite literally, the creator of centaurs. As Updike described the novel, “It's an experiment very unlike that of *Ulysses*, where the myth lurks beneath the surface of the natural events. In a way the natural events in my book are meant to be a kind of mask for the myth” (Plath 1994: 51). Updike himself is an artist divided, for his first ambition was to become a graphic artist rather than a

writer. “I am a sort of frustrated painter,” he told Jeff Campbell, “or rather I have painted a bit and was told I have a very good sense of composition. So maybe I see the book as a canvas with things disposed in it” (Plath 1994: 91-92).

As a youth, Peter was a landscapist, which Vermeer contemporary Samuel van Hoogstraten derisively referred to as “common footmen in the Army of Art” (Fuchs 1978: 104). Peter is sensitive to such dismissive assessments, for he notices, “In the narrow space of kitchen wall between the two doorways hung a painting I had done of our back yard in Olinger. My mother’s shoulder eclipsed it” (58). In the time of Vermeer, the artist that Updike and Peter most admire, the hierarchy of genres was an accepted aesthetic in which landscape paintings and still lifes were the least respected. Even Vermeer’s genre paintings of daily human activity were regarded as only slightly more serious and important. In this classical hierarchy, the most praiseworthy genre was history painting—the recording of religious, historical, allegorical, or mythological events that involved human interaction and strife on a grand scale. Although the hierarchy of genres prevailed until the start of the 20th century, by the time an adult Peter enters his chosen profession the aesthetic has radically changed (*Encyclopedia of Art* 1). As Updike told one interviewer, “The pictorial arts seem to me to be the heroic modern arts, somehow, and also they’re the most lucrative, it turns out” (Plath 1994: 218). And the type of art that was getting all the attention, the art that was appearing on giant canvases as if to shout their own importance, was non-representational abstract expressionism—an American-born style and movement so bold, powerful, and original that New York City displaced Paris as the center of the western art world. As Updike once confessed, “I was greatly moved in obscure fashion by Abstract Expressionism, the giant canvases of which were still fresh on museum walls when I was a young writer in the fifties” (LTR 1). It is no wonder, then, that Peter set out to become an abstract expressionist himself. The problem is that he is more naturally inclined to paint representational art—images that have a recognizable visual counterpart in the actual world—rather than the strictly imaginative non-representational art. Like George Caldwell, whom we see divided between the contemporary and mythic worlds, Peter lives in both the contemporary world of abstract expressionists and the classical world of art that still exalted paintings of human interaction that also celebrated the mythology of humankind.



Peter's love of detail and the play of light is evident throughout the narrative. As he watches his father in the snow at night he notices that the "streetlight touched with a row of steady flecks the curve of his knit cap: the way Vermeer outlined a loaf of bread" (149). Peter not only tends to see things as Vermeer did, he is also emotionally connected to Vermeer's way of seeing—so much so that after a 4-H Club meeting his mother forced him to attend, Peter would "plunge at home into my book of Vermeer reproductions like a close-to-drowned man clinging to the beach" (74). Details excite and reinvigorate him. Recalling a drive with his father in a snowstorm, Peter draws energy from the world around him that enables him to continue his "painted" narrative recollection: "Vases and burnished furniture stood upright around me. On a stiff tablecloth a loaf of sugary bread lay sequined with pointillist dabs of light" (78). Peter continues, "Among these images which the radio songs brushed in for me the one blank space was the canvas I was so beautifully, debonairly, and preciously covering. I could not visualize my work; but its featureless radiance made the center of everything as I carried my father in the tail of a comet through the expectant space of our singing nation" (78). Prior to this passage Peter had admitted to being a failed abstract expressionist, but songs on the radio help him to remember his past with the same kind of detail as his artistic hero, and that descriptive detail generates a burst of razzle-dazzle poetics—more word painting, if you will—that eventually leads him to feel more positive about the blank canvas in front of him.

There is another complication, though. As Updike writes, "I think that initially art was tied in with theology and has to do with an ideal world: the artist is in some way a middleman between the ideal world and this, even though our sense of the ideal... is at present fairly dim" (Plath 1994: 51-52). In *The Centaur*, readers witness Peter grappling not only with figurative versus non-figurative art, but also with the implied dialectic between that which is real and that which is only an illusion or imperfect copy of an ideal that exists in a different realm.

In his fiction, Updike has often alluded to or specifically mentioned Plato's famous analogy of the cave and its concept of shadows versus ideal forms. In Plato, shadows are the objects of the world, a false reality, and people are imperfect copies of ideals that lie in the realm of pure spirit. In Updike, a similar sense of the world's shadowy, insubstantial nature is held in sharp contrast to the world of ideals, though the unique mythic/contemporary nature of *The Centaur* adds another layer of complexity. In

the mythic chapter, a three-pointed arrow flies through the air, piercing Chiron/Caldwell's ankle; in the contemporary version, it's a paper airplane that flies through the air—one heavy and dark, the other airy and light (4, 41). Likewise, while the class laughs at Chiron/Caldwell after he's shot and limping, "Caldwell's strange silhouette"—that is, his heavy, dark, shadow self—"took on dignity" (6). Peter is sensitive to shadow as Other, for when his father picks up a dirty and rough-mannered hitchhiker and starts talking to the man about his son, Peter remarks, "I vividly resented that he should even speak of me to this man, that he should dip the shadow of my personality into this reservoir of slime. That my existence at one extremity should be tangent to Vermeer and at the other to the hitchhiker seemed an unendurable strain" (83). Later, on another drive, when George tries to get their stalled car up a hill in a snowstorm, Peter sees/says, "My father's shadow hurriedly tried all the gears" (149). And when his father's clenched fists tighten on the steering wheel, defeated once again by life, "it frightens Peter to see his father's silhouette go out of shape this way" as the "snow holds them fast in its phantom grip" (260).

In perhaps the most revealing reference to shadows in relation to light, when the adult Peter is lying next to his black mistress, he thinks back to a time when he was a teenager waking in the morning from a dream in which Penny, a classmate he found attractive, had been with him by a tree. "The top buttons of her blouse were undone," he recalls, and it's clear to readers that Peter was trying to finish the dream while masturbating and recalling an earlier incident when he found his hand "between her warm thighs which were pressed together; it seemed to dawn on her slowly that my hand was there, for a minute passed before she begged, 'Don't,' and when I withdrew my hand, she looked at me like that. Only that was in shadow and this was in brilliant light" (50). Peter's reimagined daydreams are more brilliant than reality itself. His remembered sexual incident with Penny occurs in darkness, while the reimagined scene unfolds in "full light," made more real by a corresponding fullness of language—so real that the "pores on her nose showed" before she became "unnaturally still" as Peter's mother interrupts him. But the lesson is clear: Art is superior to actuality, associated with light rather than darkness and shadow—with the ideal forms that Plato described, rather than the shadows on the wall of the cave. That notion is reinforced later in the novel when Peter thinks,

I had been admiring a section of lavender shadow under the walnut tree in my painting of the old yard. I had loved that tree;

when I was a child there had been a swing attached to the limb that was just a scumble of almost-black in the picture. Looking at this streak of black, I relived the very swipe of my palette knife, one second of my life that in a remarkable way had held firm. It was this firmness, I think, this potential fixing of a few passing seconds, that attracted me, at the age of five, to art (61-62)

In this transcendent passage, shadow acquires the same sense of solidity and realness as light. Art renders both more solid, more permanent. As Terrence Doody notes in his essay on reification in Updike, “to Updike and to his characters haunted by death, things offer a stability that may not amount to immortality, but that does seem firmer than human life” (219). Yet, while things themselves can break or deteriorate, art has the potential to extend life. In *The Centaur*, when Chiron and Venus talk about the gods, Venus quips that they are “Perfect only in our permanence.” Art for Updike and Peter is Olympian, a chance to preserve seconds, moments, lives. Though Peter’s desire to become a painter “embarrassed” his father (89), ironically that desire may have been partly fueled by a desire to keep George Caldwell alive, to give him the kind of immortality that a young boy thought his father deserved. But it is also ironic that Peter keeps him alive not by abstraction, but by painting a narrative rich and textured as anything his childhood artistic heroes painted. Though young Peter begins as a painter of landscapes and then stalls as a non-representational artist, he finally succeeds in word-painting a portrait of his father that would have been considered the highest achievement in the old hierarchy of genres: a history painting of his father and others from this small Pennsylvania town drawn mythically, on a grand scale.

*Eikons*, or images, according to Plato, are the shadows of reality. But a more recent philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, believes quite the opposite of what Plato implies to be true for art:

Far from yielding less than the original, pictorial activity may be characterized in terms of an “iconic augmentation,” where the strategy of painting, for example, is to reconstruct a reality on the basis of a limited optic alphabet. This strategy of contraction and miniaturization yields more by handling less. In this way, the main effect of painting is to resist the entropic tendency of the ordinary vision—the shadowy image of Plato—and to increase the meaning of the universe by capturing it in the network of its abbreviated signs. (Ricoeur 1976: 40-41)

Updike, it seems, would agree. Meaning is enhanced through the pictorial appropriation of recognizable signs—memesis—rather than abstraction. Because Peter’s daydreams are more vivid than the reality which surrounds him, the implication is that for Updike the “ideal” forms exist in the world of art, the world of the vivid and active imagination, rather than, or possibly in addition to, the spiritual realm of other-worldness implicit in the analogy of Plato’s cave.

When Peter recalls boyhood trips to the local museum, he remembers that the main floor, given over to scientific and anthropological exhibits, “always filled me with dread” (267). However,

The second floor was devoted to art, mostly local paintings that, however clumsy and quaint and mistaken, nevertheless radiated the innocence and hope, the hope of seizing something and holding it fast, that enters whenever a brush touches canvas... (267)

Peter thinks how “when darkness came, and the mummy and the Polynesian masks and the glass-eyed eagles were sealed in shadow,” this second-floor art room would be “lit by the moon through the skylight above” (268). That lower-level darkness and shadow versus higher-level light obviously parallels the initial description readers were given of George Caldwell, whose top half is “all afloat in a starry firmament of ideals” and whose lower half is associated with death, evocative of the plodding existence Caldwell experiences as a weary educator, where “heavily sunk in a swamp where it must, eventually, drown” (4).

Like his son, George Caldwell is unsettled by blankness. Rather than a gigantic canvas, though, it’s his students that disturb him: “I look at those dumb blank faces every day and it reminds me of death,” he says. Both father and son valiantly try to dodge the “arrows of shadow” (201) that come at them. Blankness. Shadows. Death. The three are linked in Updike’s aesthetic world—the polar opposite of detail, light, and the kind of immortality that art can provide. In a lecture on science to his students, George Caldwell explains what came after the Big Bang: “The universe became totally dark. And the dark matter—dust, planets, meteors, junk, garbage, old stones—still greatly outweighs the luminous matter” (39). In *The Centaur*, both George and Peter Caldwell seek the light, the substantial, the real—though their respective two halves and ontological questions blur the line, as the Karl Barth epigram at the beginning of the novel suggests:

Heaven is the creation inconceivable to man,  
Earth the creation conceivable to him. He  
Himself is the creature on the boundary  
Between heaven and earth.

The artist is more sensitive to this boundary than the common person, and the whole idea of boundaries and thresholds seems to have been what attracted young Peter to Penny in the first place:

I believe it was these incongruities...  
These soft and silent clashes like the  
reticulating ripples hinting in the flow  
of a stream of irregular depths, that made  
her beauty for me; this delicate irresolution  
of feature held out the possibility of her  
being worthy of me. And made her seem always  
a bit unexpected. (117)

While Peter may be serious in his attempt to paint a word portrait of his father on a grand mythological scale, and while he assigns everyone in his small town mythic roles as Greek gods and goddesses, the near-comic action of the novel is so incongruous that it nearly undermines his serious artistic attempts. History painting usually featured major historical or biblical figures engaged in actions that were high dramas, often hard-fought battle victories. In *The Centaur*, the action takes place over three days, but rather than a narrative of biblical proportions, what happens is both mundane and comical: George Caldwell is struck by an arrow, he has it removed by a local mechanic, he tries to teach his out-of-control science class, he is propositioned by a gym teacher, he gives a favorite student the answers to a test, he tries to coach the swim team, he tracks down missing basketball game tickets, he and his son get caught in a blizzard, they pick up a grimy hitchhiker who steals his gloves, George visits the dentist to have a tooth pulled, and he has a cancer scare. None of these events would have been a worthy subject for a history painting in the time of the Old Masters, but they *would* have been fitting subjects for Vermeer's genre paintings of daily human activity. Peter, whose hero is Vermeer, is so influenced by the artist that he has become a disciple, however accidental it may be.

It would be tempting to conclude that Peter should abandon his quest to be an abstract expressionist and follow his strength and inclinations in order to create traditional representational art, but that goes against the

divided structure of *The Centaur*. And Updike's fiction has displayed such a tendency toward the dialectic that to seek such an easy resolution in Updike is, as Peter senses of his desire to paint in the manner of abstract expressionists, like straining to say the unsayable.

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Received: 14 June 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

Џејмс Плат

## КЕНТАУР ЦОНА АПДАЈКА И ПОДЕЉЕНИ УМЕТНИК

### Сажетак

Џорџ Хант је приметио да је централни лик у Апдајковом роману неуспешан или разочаран уметник, тенденција коју је почео да показује 1963. са Питером Колдвелом у *Кентауру*. Главни лик, Колдвел/Чирон, истовремено је људско биће и кентаур, и сви ликови имају митске идентитете, укључујући Колдвелог одраслог сина, Питера, који је наратор и коме је дата улога Прометеја. Ипак, како је Питер разапет између апстрактних експресионистичких амбиција и миметичких склоности које наглашавају љубав према детаљу, он је подједнако кентаур, метафорички речено, колико и старији Колдвел, и испитивање његовог подељеног уметничког бића још више осветљава Апдајкову изјаву да је „књига као и јунак кентаур“.

**Кључне речи:** *Кентаур*, подељени уметник, митологија, идентитет





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## PSYCHIC SEXUALITY: MEMORY AND DREAM IN JOHN UPDIKE'S *VILLAGES*

### Abstract

Only a very few writers have explored the full gamut of middle-class suburb life, warts and all, as John Updike, and even fewer have run the whole gamut of sexual experience as he has. With his avowed preoccupation with the “three secret things” of sex, religion, and art, Updike has examined the single aspect of sexuality through varied reference frames at varying stages of life: boyhood, adolescence, manhood, and old age. *If A Month of Sundays* and *S.* offer a ritualization of sexuality, *Roger's Version* offers a scopophilic examination of sexuality in terms of the sexual phantasizings of Roger Lambert. Updike's *Villages* (2004) reemploys the use of sexuality on different spatio-temporal parameters, chronicling the kaleidoscopic ken of the old Owen Mackenzie's sexual encounters, reminisced and replenished through his memories and dreams, and operating on his psychic planes. Lured and intrigued by the “monstrous miracle” of sex, Owen experiences a thrill analogous to a conquest in his erotic adventures with a battalion of mistresses, and his wives. And yet his is not a case of gerontophilia, for in his present dotage he is more interested in relishing those libidinal experiences in his memories than in having further erotic advances. Updike deals with Owen's psychic sexuality in an artistic way that dovetails into his present old age. At once a faint autobiographical projection of Updike, and a dim shadow of his early heroes turned old, Owen prefers contemplation of the carnal carnival to direct action. Applying the insights of Psychoanalysis, this paper would seek to analyse and justify the nature of these memories and dreams to suggest how Updike reckons with sexuality with greater

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panache evinced through the psychic lens of an aged hero who remains satisfied with erotic emotions recollected in tranquillity.

**Keywords:** psychic, sexuality, sex, memory, dream, phantasizings, Updike, *Villages*, aged, autobiographical

I

Of the “three great secret things”<sup>1</sup> sex, religion, and art, it is the treatment of sexuality of which Updike was a true connoisseur. Updike has examined the single aspect of sexuality through varied reference frames at varying stages of life: boyhood, adolescence, manhood, and old age. If *A Month of Sundays* and *S.* offer a ritualization of sexuality, *Roger’s Version* offers a scopophilic examination of sexuality in terms of the sexual phantasizings of Roger Lambert. Updike’s *Villages* (2004) reemploys the use of sexuality on different spatio-temporal parameters, chronicling the kaleidoscopic ken of the old Owen Mackenzie’s sexual encounters, reminisced and replenished through his memories and dreams, and operating on his psychic planes. Updike deals with Owen’s psychic sexuality in an artistic way that dovetails into his present old age. At once a faint autobiographical projection of Updike, and a dim shadow of his early heroes turned old, Owen prefers contemplation of the carnal carnival to direct action. The fact that Updike had his divorce from his first wife Mary Pennington in 1976, and that he remarried Martha Ruggles Bernhard in 1977, make *Villages* a significant element in Updike’s second conjugal innings, as also in his oeuvre. It is at once Updike’s autobiographical journey down his memory lane to review his life after almost three decades, and an attempt to examine sexuality through the lens of an aged hero who finds an alternative for his diminished sexuality in the phantasizings, memories, and dreams of his previous erotic encounters. Commenting on Updike’s treatment of sexuality, Brian Duffy argues, “*Villages* has the added relevance of being Updike’s last extended examination of the topic, and even has a valedictory ring about it”, and examines the novel as a representation of male sexuality (Duffy 2015: 3). This paper attempts to analyse and justify the nature of these memories and dreams to suggest how Updike reckons with sexuality with greater

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<sup>1</sup> In his memoir “The Dogwood Tree: A Boyhood” Updike refers to his preoccupation with “three great secret things”, namely sex, religion and art. Interested readers may find this memoir in Updike’s *Assorted Prose* (See Updike 1979: 151-187).

panache evinced through the psychic lens of his aged hero who remains satisfied with erotic emotions recollected in tranquillity.

*Villages* elicited rather lukewarm responses from reviewers and critics. Adam Begley in his biography of the author *Updike* (2014) calls it “a doggedly autobiographical retelling of Updike’s progress from Shillington... to Beverly Farms....” (Begley 2014: 457). In his review of the novel Begley relegates it to a novel where there is no scope of novelty: “Nothing happens that hasn’t happened elsewhere in the vast *oeuvre*; no new kind of character is introduced; no new landscape limned.”<sup>2</sup> Brian Duffy in his article “Male Sexuality in John Updike’s *Villages*” contends, “One failing of *Villages* was deemed to be Updike’s returning again to the adulterous adventures of the middle-class suburban American male, with the implication that sex is not only the overbearing force but the overriding value in adult male life” (Duffy 2015: 2). While Peter Bailey refuses to consider *Villages* “among Updike’s most successful novels”, he does not fail to point out the parallels between Owen’s life and that of his author (Bailey 2013: 83). Following in the same line as Begley and Bailey, Schiff contends: “Owen’s story stands as a lightly fictionalized version of Updike’s own life, as he moved from a Pennsylvanian boyhood in Shillington, to young married life and adultery in Ipswich, to his final, more remote existence in Beverley Farms” (Schiff 2017: 82). Marshall Boswell hails the novel as “a dispassionate novel that mixes nostalgia with a cool biological fatalism that is utterly free of existential anxiety or the fear of nothingness” (Boswell 2017: 72). Aristi Trendel insists on reading it as a novel of seduction, and claims that it is “Updike’s twenty-first century contribution to Don Juan’s literary myth and an homage to the vitality of seduction in all its forms” (Trendel 2017: 102). Michiko Kakutani<sup>3</sup> in her review of *Villages* contends: “In the end, this all makes for a narrow, claustrophobic novel — a novel that amounts to a little more than a weary exercise in the recycling of frayed and shop-worn material”. Yet, what Kakutani fails to notice is that there is not a single novel in Updike’s lurid *oeuvre* where sexuality is vicariously replenished as a second-hand experience in terms of being reminisced through memories and replicated through dreams.

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<sup>2</sup> Adam Begley (2004), “It Takes a Village, or Three”. Rev. of *Villages*, by John Updike. *New York Observer* 25 Oct. 2004: 10.

<sup>3</sup> Michiko Kakutani (2004), “Another Updike Trip to His Kind of Suburbia”. Rev. of *Villages*, by John Updike. *New York Times* 22 Oct. 2004: E 33.

Interestingly, Updike himself was not optimistic about *Villages*. As Updike admits in an interview<sup>4</sup>:

This present novel that will be out— *Villages*— I several times thought it might be a bad idea and kind of abandoned it. So, it was really the habit— the habit of writing that kept me at it in the end. It was like a bad marriage....This is the wife I'm married to here, and I'm going to finish this book. Finishing it becomes the only way to get rid of it.

And yet, far from being “a bad marriage” *Villages* turns out to be an artistic novel, for Updike deals with Owen's psychic sexuality in an artistic way that dovetails into his present old age. And yet his is not a case of gerontophilia, for in his present dotage he is more interested in relishing those libidinal experiences in his memories than in having further erotic advances.

At once a faint autobiographical projection of Updike, and a dim shadow of his early heroes turned old, Owen prefers contemplation of the carnal carnival to direct action. Updike accounts for the rather tepid responses to his novel. As he contends in his essay “The Writer in Winter”: “An aging writer wonders if he has lost the ability to visualize a complete work, in its complete spatial relations.... [H]e may arrive at his ending nonplussed, the arc of his intended tale lying behind him in fragments. The threads have failed to knit” (Updike 2012: 5).

Donald Greiner<sup>5</sup> considers *Villages* Updike's “most thoroughly nostalgic novel of sweethearts, wives, and mistresses”, and this observation borders on Updike's pervasive use of memory in the novel (Greiner 2015: 47). What most of the reviewers and critics have overlooked is the exact function of dreams and memories in this novel. Among the research devoted to *Villages* it is Schiff's article “Dreams, Conflated Wives, Lingering Guilt, and Coitus Recalled in Updike's *Villages*” that comes close to my line of argument. But while Schiff enumerates on the dreams of Owen, what he has overlooked is how the very plot of this novel exhibits certain traits of a dream. My humble claim in this paper is that dreams in *Villages* are more functional than informative, more artistic than decorative. *Villages* bears ample resemblance to the mysterious nature of human psyche, the

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<sup>4</sup> John Updike (2004), “Showing Ordinary Life as Being Worth Writing About It”. Interview. Academy of Achievement. 12 June 2004. Web 18 Oct. 2018. <<http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/updoint-1>>.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Greiner (2015), “Updike in Love”. *John Updike Review* 4.1 (Fall 2015): 43-60.

fountain of human memory and dream. The plot and the narrative exhibit conspicuous resemblances to the traits of dream.

## II

Dream has fascinated human beings since time immemorial. Aristotle in *De divination per somnum*, II and *De Somniis*, III suggests that dreams offer a magnified version to the small stimuli of life. He further contends that dreams emanate not from gods, but from demons. What he implied was that the human mind, the fountain of every dream, is more demonic than divine. In his groundbreaking research *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud claims that “Aristotle was aware of some of the characteristics of dream-life. He knew, for instance, that dreams give a magnified construction to small stimuli arising during sleep” (Freud 2010: 42). Freud refers to a host of critics who helped shape his theory. In his famous *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud cites the examples cited by Delboeuf to substantiate the concept of “hypermnesic” dreams. As Freud observes: “No one who occupies himself with dreams can, I believe, fail to discover that it is a very common event for a dream to give evidence of knowledge and memories which the waking subject is unaware of possessing” (Freud 2010: 56). Thus, dreams do have some connections with reality, and contain a sense of verisimilitude. In other words, dream is another version of the same reality which is experienced by the waking subject. What the waking subject sees at the conscious level, takes the form of an impalpable dream at the subconscious level in the form of one’s dreams.

Freud refers to Strumpell (1877, 40), and quotes him to substantiate the inalienable connection between dream and memory:

The position is even more remarkable when we observe how dreams sometimes bring to light, as it were, from beneath the deepest piles of debris under which the earliest experiences of youth are buried in later times, pictures of particular localities, things or people, completely intact and with all their original freshness. (Freud 2010: 57-58)

The “deepest piles of debris” that Strumpell metaphorically speaks of are the memories buried deep in the human psyche. Another critic who intuits this connection between dream and memory is Hildebrandt (1875, 23): “I have already expressly admitted that dreams sometimes bring back to our

minds, with a wonderful power of reproduction, very remote and even forgotten events from our earlier years” (Freud 2010: 57). Striking a very similar note, Volkelt (1875, 119) argues: “It is specially remarkable how readily memories of childhood and youth make their way into dreams. Dreams are continually reminding us of things which we have ceased to think of and which have long ceased to be important to us” (Freud 2010: 58). Any perceptive reader cannot but notice that the point of commonality among all these critics is the interface between dream and memory which are inextricably enmeshed in the human psyche.

Freud divides dream theories into three categories. The first brand is espoused by critics like Delboeuf whose theories suggest that “the whole psychical activity continues in dreams. The mind, they assume, does not sleep and its apparatus remains intact; but since it falls under the conditions of the state of sleep, which differ from those of waking life, its normal functioning necessarily produces different results during sleep” (Freud 2010: 129). If the first brand believes that the mind can retain its psychical wholeness during dream, the second brand of theories is just its opposite, and these theories “presuppose that dreams imply a lowering of psychical activity, a loosening of connections, and an impoverishment of the material accessible” (Ibid.). The third brand refers to “those theories which ascribe to the dreaming mind a capacity and inclination for carrying out special psychical activities of which it is largely or totally incapable in waking life” (Freud 2010: 137). My humble attempts in this paper will be to substantiate how some of the basic traits of dream — condensation, displacement, translation of thoughts into visual images, etc. — are evident in Updike’s *Villages*, and how the novel employs dreams and memories in an artistic way.

### III

Updike had made sporadic use of dream in his oeuvre. In *Rabbit, Run* while making love with Ruth, Rabbit dreams of his sister Mim getting dissolved into his wife Janice. Haunted by the dissatisfaction of a second-rate marriage, Rabbit dreams of appearing before a court where his mother is the judge. Rabbit’s mother Mary is haunted by some horrible dreams induced by the effects of L-Dopa in *Rabbit Redux*. In *Couples*, a novel which along with *Marry Me*, can be said to be literary precedents of *Villages*, Piet dreams of flying in a luxurious plane (Updike 1968: 284-285). *Dream* also makes

its presence so valuable in Updike's poems "Dream Objects", "The Play of Memory" (in *Midpoint*) & "Dream & Reality". In the Argument of "The Play of Memory", for example, Updike claims that "[t]he poet remembers and addresses those he has loved". This is followed by a funny and erotic focus on their anatomy (Updike 1995: 81).

#### IV

Reflecting on the wantonness of the three divorcees in *The Witches of Eastwick*, Lurie Alison observes: "It is to Updike's great credit, and a proof of his long-standing ardent interest in women, that he is also interested in and deeply sympathetic to their experience of age" (Qtd. in Begley 2014: 469). This comment may be equally extended to *Villages* with the difference that his interest lies more in his aged hero than his heroines. Commenting on the differences between Hawthorne and Updike, Donald Greiner in his *Adultery in the American Novel: Updike, James, and Hawthorne* cogently points out the difference of punishment being one of the major differences among the adulterers of the two authors:

A primary difference is the punishment exacted. Hurl the charge of sexual transgression against Rabbit, Piet, Jerry, or Marshfield, and *they will retreat to the next suburb or even to their imaginations.* (Greiner 1985: 57) (Emphasis mine)

Interestingly, while Greiner made this comment almost two decades prior to the publication of Updike's *Villages*, it is all the more applicable to Owen who resorts to his imagination and memory to redress his diminishing sexual faculty, and through them recollects how he had sexual liaisons with a battalion of mistresses in three different locales of the novel: Willow, Pennsylvania; Middle Falls, Connecticut; and Haskells Crossing, Massachusetts.

In Updike's *Villages* the retired software engineer Owen Mackenzie is ensconced steadily with his second wife Julia Larson at Haskel Crossings, Massachusetts. Interestingly, Updike's *Villages* begins with and ends with Owen's recollection of his previous sexual encounters in his memory. In fact, at the very outset Owen "dreams that, he is in a house that he doesn't know" (Updike 2004: 4), and this is followed by "[t]he image of his beloved lying naked and dead in his dream", "the dream stems from

a guilty sensation” (Ibid.6). Similarly the first inkling of *Villages* being a novel about psychic sexuality, rather than its physical counterpart, is hinted at from the very outset when Owen “finds the way back to sleep only by remembering one of the women, Alissa or Vanessa or Karen or Faye, who shared with him the town of Middle Falls, Connecticut, in the ’sixties and ’seventies (Ibid.5). Contemplating everything “in his mind’s eye”, Owen delves into a series of memories and dreams which form the major narrative trope of the novel (Ibid.9). And when we come to the end of the novel we find Owen’s disrupted sleep, as he suddenly wakes up early at three in the morning, and after a futile masturbatory attempt, slides into a wistful journey across his memory lane: “in his mind’s eye he runs the images of those moist, knowing engulfments, those grotesque postures of submission, but, just when he almost has it, has it in hand, the temperature or edge or whatever it is unexpectedly slithers away....The workable parameters, once so broad there was ample room for fatigue and ambivalence, draw in. At the far extreme of his pilgrimage, the self-induced orgasms of early adolescence recede” (Ibid. 320). And between the beginning and the end the recollections of Owen’s self-projected memories of his earlier carnal carnival, his erotic phantasizings, and a host of dreams shuttle and scuttle across his psychic plane, and flesh out the corpus of the narrative of the novel.

In one of the major dreams that Owen shares with his wife Julia, “he dreamed that, standing on the sea side of their white house, he saw her go off, in her black BMW, on one of her innumerable errands to Boston”, and when he follows her in his Mitsubishi, “driven not by him but by Julia again, her pale profile preoccupied. His first wife, Phyllis, had also held her head in this tense, eye-catching way when behind the wheel— tipped slightly back as if in anticipation of the engine’s exploding” (Ibid.35, 36). In his dream he comes back to the house where he meets “a family of three Chinese, identical, blobby, like inflated dolls or swollen gray ticks”, and becomes confused as to how to receive them in Julia’s absence (Ibid. 36). If Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* suggests that dreams are capable of bringing back buried memories to the surface, Owen’s overt married life with his first wife Phyllis, looms large over his consciousness, and creates a muffled vision which flits between Julia and Phyllis in his dream vision. Later Owen is visited by a strange dream in which he finds himself in a party at Middle Falls, where the unfamiliarity of the ambience, along with the unfamiliar women, strikes him: in the dream he slowly



notices how the two female guests he is talking to, one of them seated beside him and the other standing, are both dressed in painted china, rigid carapaces with shiny sculptural edges, as if they are eighteenth-century figurines” (Ibid.115). When discomfiture overtakes him for being “ill-dressed”, Owen finds to his amazement that the party was hosted in “his house” on Patridgeberry Road, Middle Falls, and that he happens to be “the mysterious host, humiliatingly ill-clad with a porcelain suit” (Ibid.116). If Freud talks about the displacement in a dream, Owen’s house provides the displaced space for the party. In his next major dream Owen is haunted by an apprehension of losing his wife Julia:

Somewhere in his thick net, the dream, there is his rapidly burgeoning relationship with Julia, compact, firm, decisive, surprisingly sexy Julia, but he keeps losing her, it is just too hard to keep up the precarious secret connection— the hurried, hard-breathing phone calls, the panicky trysts where the edges of this town merge with the edges of another— and weeks go by, in his dream, without any connection being made, and his love object sinks deeper and deeper beneath the surface of the everyday.. (Ibid.189)

At a deeper level, it hints at Owen’s subconscious fear of losing his first wife Phyllis, and *ipso facto*, may be related to Updike’s loss of his first married life with Mary. If Phyllis is physically killed, and replaced by Julia, Mary is metaphorically obliterated from Updike’s conjugal cosmos and actually replaced by Martha. In the final major dream of the novel Owen is whisked off to “some kind of classroom setting, he was delegated by the teacher to take a pencil or a textbook to Barbara Emerich, who is sitting alone in a corner, at one of those chairs with a broadened arm of yellow oak to write on” (Ibid.306). Sensing her unresponsiveness when Owen went closer, he felt “out of the shadowy space between her lap and her downturned face, that she was willing to have him kiss her. She expected it but acted on the expectation only by maintaining a stubborn stillness, her mouth clamped shut on her sunny smile, with its single grey tooth” (Ibid.307). The dream stimulates his memory of his first wife Phyllis, and brings back to his mind how at MIT, he would date with her, prior to their marriage (Ibid.307). That said, dream is also a strong stimulant of memory, and this is amply attested to by this dream.

Apart from forming the texture of this novel, the dreams and the mellifluous memories of Owen’s sexual encounters, serve some aesthetic

functions in *Villages*. The narrative itself exhibits resemblances to the nature of a dream: condensation, displacement, and so forth. If displacement is a prominent feature of any dream, the narrative gives ample evidences of spatio-temporal dislocations, both in the life of Owen and his author. In fact, the very plot of the novel may be read as a displaced autobiography. Interestingly, Owen's life is but a faint shadow of his author, inasmuch as the three fictional places roughly dovetail into the author's boyhood, married life, and second married life, respectively. Owen's stay at Willow corresponds to the author's boyhood days in Shillington. Updike's girlfriend in the fifth grade Jackie Hirneisen<sup>6</sup> who also appears in his short story "The Alligators", and Nancy Wolf, popularly known as Nora, whom Updike calls "my only girlfriend"<sup>7</sup>, serve as the fictional counterparts of the fictional Elsie Seidel, Owen's mistress at Willow. Owen's stay at Middle Falls corresponds to the author's stay at Ipswich, Massachusetts. During this phase Updike's conjugal life with his first wife Mary Pennington was tossed and buffeted because of his adulterous liaison with Joyce Harrington. In the novel Owen is seen to have a liaison with Phyllis Goodhue whom he eventually marries. The final phase, Owen's stay at Haskells Crossing with his second wife Julia, corresponds to Updike's stay at Beverley Farms with his second wife Martha. Updike's own life gets reshaped, reoriented, displaced in this novel where spatial displacement plays a vital role, as we find in dreams. Thus Ipswich is displaced by Middle Falls, Beverley Farms by Haskells Crossing, and Harvard by MIT. Adam Begley puts it in the author's biography: "The hero, Owen Mackenzie, emerges from an idyllic small-town boyhood that is essentially indistinguishable from Updike's. Owen escapes his beloved Willow with a scholarship to MIT rather than Harvard; works at IBM rather than *The New Yorker*; and makes a modest fortune, after going freelance, writing software rather than literature" (Begley 2014: 468-469).

If *Villages*, more than any single Updike novel, deals with the human psyche, the storehouse of dreams and memories, it is Updike's tripartite setting that strikes our interest. Like the Freudian division of the human psyche into conscious, subconscious and unconscious, the novel has a tripartite setting: Willow, Middle Falls & Haskells Crossing.

If Freud talks about the three key features of the human unconscious, namely the Id, Ego, and Superego, the three settings at three different

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<sup>6</sup> For a more informed analysis of Updike's affairs with women, see Donald Greiner (2015), "Updike in Love". *John Updike Review* 4.1 (Fall 2015): 43-60.

<sup>7</sup> John Updike (1989), *Self-Consciousness* (New York: Knopf), 37.

phases of Owen's life loosely correspond to it. During his liaison with Elsie Seidel, at Willow, Owen's libido stemming from his Id, overtakes him, and he nibbles at the slight opportunity of enjoying the deliciousness of her anatomy: "Now, with Elsie in the car, he had real nakedness to deal with", and "[w]ith each date she gave him an inch or two more of herself that he could claim as his henceforth; there was no taking back these small warm territories" (Updike 2004: 64). This phase of Owen's life at Willow bears resemblance to what Freud calls Id. Owen's affair with Phyllis Goodhue takes a realistic turn— or what comes close to the play of Ego dominated by reality principle— when he marries her. Thus his life at Middle Falls loosely corresponds to Ego. And his final phase of married life with his second wife Julia at Haskell Crossing loosely resembles the state akin to the Freudian concept of the Superego. If Superego is guided by a morality principle, at their mature conjugal life Owen becomes more compassionate, more considerate, and more careful about his wife Julia than he used to be earlier. A sensitive and sympathetic husband, Owen, shares his dreams with Julia, and "wants to describe all this to Julia, to make her laugh" (Ibid.36). He becomes so much dependent on her that when he "discovers that Julia is out of bed, he goes forth in search of her" and becomes agog with impatience to put up with her absence (Ibid.34). Similarly when he dreams about "something dangerous in her (Julia's) speed", he grows anxious about her, and his heart leaps "in fear that she might slip on wet leaves and fatally crash" (Ibid.36, 37). Chastened and matured by the mellowness of his ripe age, he becomes sobered and mild, at least in his act, if not in his thoughts. Thus, one may be tempted to compare it with the Freudian phase induced by Superego. The younger Owen driven by the libidinal drives of Id, finds his Ego dominating his conjugal life with his first wife Phyllis, leading to their separation through her death, until he finds his Superego predominating and acting as a balancing force to lead him a complacent and relatively stable relationship with his second wife Julia in the final setting, Haskells Crossing. As Updike puts it: "Phyllis had hoisted him up into Cambridge and the snob life of the mind, and Julia into Haskells Crossing and the life of the bourgeois repose" (Ibid.317). Hopping from woman to woman, from bed to bed, Owen finally finds his solace in and settles down with his second wife Julia.

Furthermore, if the nature of dream is always intangible, and, somewhat mysterious, the same holds true of the very concept of village. Owen's previous admission that "the villages he has lived in have been sites

of instructions” (Ibid.41), and his later realization that “A village is woven of secrets, of truths better left unstated” (Ibid.209) conceal more than they reveal. These comments border on the inexplicable nature and ways of the village, which may be interpreted as a symbolic correspondence to the mysterious nature of the human psyche in general, and to the secret ways of human dreams in particular. These villages show a strange conflation of primitivism & modernism, i.e., of both the libidinal drives of Id & the conscious balancing of Ego, both latent unconscious pulls and conscious checking.

“The first thing that becomes clear to anyone who compares the dream-content with the dream-though”, observes Freud, “is that a work of condensation on a large scale has been carried out”(Freud 2010: 371). In this novel condensation is evinced through Updike’s concept of what he calls “generic wifeliness”: “Often in his (Owen’s) dreams the wife-figure is ambiguous, misty-faced, and could be either woman. Phyllis, a stately dirty-blonde, had been taller, retaining from her student days a certain bohemian insouciance, and Julia, a compact, long lashed brunette, with controlled passages of frosting in her sleek coiffeure, is snappier in her dress and in her way of moving: but both acquire in his dreams a recessive generic wifeliness” (Updike 2004: 38). Similarly, rather than being an individual, Owen may be treated as a generic Updikean hero in whom we find traits of his early young heroes turned old, and whose dreams give us certain sparks of his earlier heroes like Rabbit in the Rabbit novels, Piet Hanema in *Couples*, Jerry Conant in *Marry Me*, the computer wizard Dale Kohler in *Roger’s Version* or the artistic seducer Darryl Van Horne in *The Witches of Eastwick*. Owen seems to be a loose dream-like condensation of these characters put together.

For Updike, sex is becoming; self is being. Dream becomes just another means of a re-enactment of sexuality which is typically Updikean. In keeping with Owen’s old age, Updike artistically deals with Owen’s sexuality through contemplation rather than direct physical action. Philip Roth in *The Dying Animal* comments: “Sex isn’t just friction and shallow fun. Sex is also the revenge on death” (Roth 2001: 69). In the final chapter of *Villages*, “Village Wisdom” (an evolution from “Village Sex”) upholds sex as a bulwark against death. Sex has a redemptive aspect and serves as man’s desperate defense against ageing and impending death. A wry rehash of Updike’s cult novel *Couples*, almost three decades on, he takes up in *Villages* where he left in *Couples*— the same suburban adultery, but

this time enacted on the psychic planes. But although less intense than his literary predecessors, Owen's sexual encounters are "programmed", so much attuned to his career in computer technology<sup>8</sup>.

## Conclusion

Little wonder then, despite the unfavorable reviews of reviewers, and lukewarm responses of critics and scholars, *Villages* certainly deserves acclaim for being one of the novels in which sexuality has been given a new mould and examined from a new angle. Given the ageing of both the hero and his author, Updike's shift from the physical to the psychic also bespeaks his artistic panache and finesse. Furthermore, the dreams and memories which form the matrix of the novel are more than textural and decorative, for they serve a host of artistic purposes suited to the protagonist's temper and to the unfolding of the plot. *Villages* also resembles the Freudian tripartite structure of the human psyche, and shares some of the inexplicabilities of human psyche, the fountain of these dreams and memories. Like Tennessee Williams's play *The Glass Menagerie* which has been hailed as a "memory play", one may be tempted to suggest that Updike's *Villages* be hailed as a "memory novel", as Owen looks back in wonder on his previous sexual encounters. Updike's *Villages* turns out to be Owen's romantic ballad emanating from a spontaneous and retrospective overflow of powerful sexuality, and sung by an old man who finds solace in Eros recollected in tranquility.

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<sup>8</sup> One may be reminded of the computer wizard Dale Kohler in Updike's *Roger's Version* (1986). In this novel Rogert Lambert resembles Owen in his common penchant for indulging in sexual phantasizings. Roger's phantasizings detail Dale Kohler's putative sexual gymnastics with his wife Esther. Both these novels exhibit sexual encounters in an organized way, very much like programming of software in computers.

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Received: 19 October 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

Прадипта Сенгупта

ПСИХИЧКА СЕКСУАЛНОСТ: СЕЋАЊЕ И САН У СЕЛИМА  
ЏОНА АПДАЈКА

**Сажетак**

Само неколико писаца истраживали су целокупан опсег живота предграђа средње класе, њихове вредности и остало, на начин како је то у својим делима урадио Џон Апдајк, а много је мање оних који су истраживали сексуално искуство. Будући да је носио у себи „три тајне” (секс, религија и уметност), Апдајк је испитивао појединачне аспекте сексуалности кроз разноврсне склопове референци у различитим фазама живота: дечаштву, адолесценцији, зрелости, и старости. Ако *Један месец недеља* и *С. нуде* ритуализацију сексуалности, *Роџерова верзија* нуди скопофилично истраживање сексуалности у погледу сексуалног фантазирања Роџера Ламберта. Апдајкова *Села* (2004) поново уводи термин сексуалност са различитим просторно-темпоралним параметрима, и даје преглед каледиоскопског видокруга сексуалних сусрета старог Овена Мекензија, које поново оживљава кроз сећања и снове, а која делују на психолошком плану. Привучен и опчињен „монструозним чудом” секса, Овен доживљава узбуђење које је аналогно освајању у његовим еротским авантурама са батаљоном љубавница, и својим женама. Па ипак, није у питању геронтофилија, јер га у тренутку старачке изнемоглости више занимају уживања у либидиналним доживљајима у сопственим сећањима него у новим еротским освајањима. Апдајк се бави Овеновом психичком сексуалношћу на уметнички начин. У тренутку када бледа аутобиографска пројекција Апдајка и нејасна сенка његових раних јунака остари, Овен више воли да размишља о телесном карневалу. Примењујући психоанализу, у овом раду ћемо покушати да анализирамо и оправдамо природу ових сећања и снова да бисмо показали како Апдајк гледа на сексуалност са великим еланом који се препознаје кроз психичка сочива остарелог јунака који је задовољан еротским емоцијама којих се у спокоју сећа.

**Кључне речи:** психички, сексуалност, секс, сећање, сан, фантазирање, Апдајк, *Села*, остарели, аутобиографски





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## REVOLUTIONARY VIBES OF 1968 AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

### Abstract

One of the key questions to be discussed in the context of the 1968 protests is that of the American Dream. It has been woven into the fabric of everyday life, playing a vital role in who Americans are, what they do, and why they do it. It has always had the strongest influence on American individual and collective life. The focus of this paper will be to what extent it really exists and to what extent it is a product of the American imagination. How far has its imaginative territory reached? How much has the changing face of the Dream informed politics, everyday life and even the nation's identity itself? How have Americans created themselves through an idea that no one can completely define but everyone wants a piece of?

The notion of the American Dream can be traced back to the Depression and WWI when it ironically also faced its biggest threats. Here, the focus will be on the counterculture years of the late 1960s and 1970s, when it was put to the greatest test since this idiom was coined. Finally, the Dream will be followed from the year 2000 up to today, showing that it is as powerful and relevant as ever. It seems that the Dream will not only continue to be a compelling part of the American landscape, but is also taking a global form. It will most probably serve as a central guiding force for both Americans and others across the globe in the years to come.

**Keywords:** American Dream, counterculture, 1968 protests, genres, Cyberspace, global view

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*Harlem*

*What happens to a dream deferred?  
Does it dry up  
Like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore-  
Etc. And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over-  
Like a syrupy sweet?  
Maybe it just sags  
Like a heavy load.  
Or does it explode?*

By Langston Hughes

## **Introduction**

What is the American Dream? Does it still exist? Is it perhaps only a product of American imagination? If it is only imaginative, how far has its imaginative territory reached? If realistic at the same time, what role does it play in defining American identity, and the choices Americans make? Has it still a strong influence on American individual and collective life? What can its history tell us? More specifically, what role did it play 50 years ago? How far and in what ways have revolutionary vibes been reflected through the American Dream since then? How much has the changing face of the Dream informed politics, everyday life and the nation's identity itself? How have Americans created themselves through an idea that no one can completely define but everyone wants a piece of? What is it like NOW? Is it only American? European? Global? Human? Ethical?

Our common response to the questions raised would be that the 1968 revolutionary vibes are reflected in different environments, across both geo-political and genre borders, from literature, through film, to art. They challenge the policies of gender, race and ethnicity and at the same time leave a legacy that inspires a new way of thinking and writing about society and culture. The American Dream sheds light on virtually every major definition of American culture, past, present, and future. Revolutionary vibes have always been there reflecting themselves strongly through the American Dream both locally (USA) and globally. Somehow the very essence

of the Dream itself kept reminding many in the US of the need for protest and change whenever it was threatened with destruction or corruption. The strongest and most alarming crisis happened in 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, and this was followed by the eruption of anti-war and student protests in the US, the UK, and across the world. The responses in the light of the American Dream kept coming from many genres in literature, film, theatre, performing arts, visual arts and music. They have never stopped creating their own history to become increasingly relevant and very strong today targeting, among other things, some of today's most challenging issues, such as the environment, economics, and the changing relationships between the US, UK, and Europe. What they never ceased to do is to raise the old question:

### **What is the American Dream?**

The American Dream takes the position of an umbrella covering some of the 1968 revolutionary vibes, such as the environment, place and protest of the titled topic. It challenges the policies of gender, race and ethnicity and inspires a new way of thinking and understanding society and culture. It corresponds to Lawrence R. Samuel's statement that the American Dream sheds light "on virtually every major definition of American culture, past, present, and future." (Lawrence 2012: 1-2)

Revolutionary vibes have always been there reflecting themselves strongly through the American Dream both locally (USA) and globally. Somehow, the very essence of the Dream itself kept reminding many in the US of the need for protest and change whenever it was threatened with destruction or corruption. The strongest and most alarming such threat happened in 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, followed by the eruption of anti-war and student protests in the US, the UK, and across the world. The sixties kept reiterating "the necessities of change" (Wagner-Martin 2013: 47-79), and the dream through its various emanations has never stopped creating its own history since, to become again very strong NOW targeting, among other things, some of the questions, such as the environment, economics, and the changing relationships between the US, UK, and Europe.

However, a short survey of the definition of the American Dream shows its complexity being reflected in the definition itself. Lawrence R.

Samuel points out that the Dream is not real but “the guiding mythology of the most powerful civilization in history.” (Lawrence 2012: 1) It is, as he believes, the best way to understand America, and, most probably, its social, historical, political, and cultural roots and routes of the current moment, and its potential futures. Real or not, a quick Google search done in 2012 returns 67 million hits. Current debates on health insurance and Social Security, the role of government, and the personal loss that comes “with a foreclosure are certainly stepped in the dynamics of the Dream, a proof of its resiliency and enduring relevance.” (2) The twenty-first century only followed the previous one with the American Dream serving as the backbone of great social movements (New Deal, the Great Society). It was also the backbone in the cases of the counterculture and feminist and civil rights movements with its grounding in the ideal of equal opportunity, and it will play an important role in any major economic, political, or social encounter. It promises, especially with the rise of multiculturalism and global migrations, to become “a key denominator and unifying force.” (3)

## **History**

The American Dream is as old as the world, and it can be traced back to the birth of civilization. However, as it is well known, it was defined in 17<sup>th</sup> century America and formally articulated in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution. The concept of the American Dream included many things: meritocracy versus aristocracy, the position in life which is earned not inherited, key words and concepts such as opportunistic, self-reliant, pragmatic, resourceful, aspirational, optimistic, entrepreneurial, inventive. The Dream encompasses many desires ranging from some of the oldest such as owning a piece of land to that famous desire of the Great Gatsby: to reinvent oneself. The list of successful and unsuccessful dreamers is long. James Truslow Adams is credited with first using the phrase while Dale Carnegies, Newman Vincent Pale and Horacio Alger have served as some of the loudest spokesmen. Some historical figures such as Jefferson, Franklin and Lincoln, and among a myriad of illustrious characters who made the American Dream come true and became the embodiment of the Dream: Babe Ruth, Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Irving Berlin, Sam Walton, Ray Kroc, Mickey Mantle, the Jackson Five, Henry Ford, Walt Disney, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Hugh Hefner, Oprah Winfrey, Donald Trump and Barack

Obama. Some iconic works (from *Death of a Salesman* to *The Sopranos*, as well as the works of Frank Capra and Norman Rockwell) are considered to be definite manifestos of mythology and it can be accepted that the American Dream is “as American as Mom, apple pie, and Chevrolet, the purest, boldest expression of who we are as people”. (4)

However, despite its constant presence, the American Dream has never been a straight line. It has experienced its ups and downs, and has adapted its meaning to the cultural environment (independence, a new Cadillac, a good health insurance plan). It has been equally adopted by the Right and the Left (the Republican and Democratic principles); radicals and conservatives, spiritual and secular, it is mutable and amorphous, and thus “the Zelig of mythologies, able to transform itself to fit virtually any situation or cause”. (4-5) Its history has shown how astounding its breadth and scope are! Many of the American desires and expectations are embedded in the Dream (hope for a better tomorrow, the entrepreneurial spirit, the sacredness of home, the seductiveness of wealth, the pressure to succeed, American fascination with “hope” and “change”, and belief that “anything is possible”). It is also seen as American civil religion, or as a success story and a dream of consumption. Still, it is more coherent than it looks at first sight, and Samuel Lawrence concludes that its scope only contains various incarnations (equal opportunities, limitless possibilities, a better and happier future, a home of one’s own, going from “rags to riches”, to be one’s own boss, to achieve more than one’s parents), which are but variations of one and the same theme and its progressive, utopian character. At the core of the American Dream there is a hope that tomorrow will be better than today.

The history of the American Dream discovers its many complexities starting from upward mobility, which has embodied the essence of the American Dream for many in both the working class and the middle class. However, recent studies show that upward mobility is even a greater myth than the Dream itself. They point out the loss of faith in themselves and in their country that millions have recently experienced which is “the saddest part of the American Dream, every bit as tragic as the heroic stories of success.” (7) The stories of success also remind Americans that they live in a “land of opportunity offering all citizens an even playing field, on a grander level”, the fact that they are a “chosen people assigned a unique and special purpose.” (7)

The American Dream has been employed in a variety of ways by a variety of individuals and institutions: it has often been used to challenge American idealistic principles, especially those concerning the issues of immigration, race, gender and religion; the Government has also employed it as a tool of propaganda, a powerful ideological weapon of persuasion both at home and abroad; it served as a convenient counterpoint to Communism (the famous “Kitchen Debate” between Vice President Nixon and Soviet Premier Khrushchev in 1959); finally, some use “the relative health of the Dream as a key social barometer, a way to determine if the country is moving forward or backward.” (8)

It is not only individuals and institutions which employ it: it is embedded in almost every layer of American popular and consumer culture. American movies have responded to their times by presenting American myths with its important mythmakers: Walt Disney and Frank Capra. TV and radio have also presented the Dream, “with every sitcom family from *The Goldbergs* to *The Jeffersons* to *The Simpsons* trying to climb the ladder of success while facing the trials and tribulations of modern life”. (8) Advertising, being appropriated by corporate America as a principal marketing strategy, plays the same role. Political speechwriters have used the American Dream very often and effectively, as well as many board games such as Monopoly, and sports themselves, which are often portrayed as metaphors of and for the Dream. Samuel Lawrence rightly concludes that the landscape of American popular culture from Jay Gatsby to Jay-Z “has been strewn with fragments of the Dream, the desire to beat the odds by making full use of our God-given talents perhaps our most compelling story.” (9)

It has been present in American culture and in almost all of its genres offering its bright side but also carrying its dark side, its evil doppelganger just as powerful as its positive side. The negative side is easier to interpret as it opens up a plethora of questions. It points to the close connection between the rise of the self in the last eighty years and the American Dream as “the shift from civic and communitarian interests to personal and private ones has swung the mythology toward individual concerns.” (9) It was during the Reagan years that the Dream shifted from “we” to “me”. Over the next couple of years American dissatisfaction continued to grow and by the 2000s, the American Dream was now almost by definition unattainable. Its foundation in the Protestant work ethic and self-improvement eroded and was replaced by an ethic of self-preservation, social survival, and individualism. The new markers that conveyed the realization of one’s

Dream were: acclaim, admiration, envy and public recognition, concludes Samuel Lawrence. He is supported by one of its strongest critics, Noam Chomsky, who defined “the 10 principles of concentration of wealth and power” which were first presented on film and then in the book *Requiem for the American Dream* (Chomsky 2017: 1-151).

The cultural history of the American Dream can be followed through six major eras of mythology since the phrase was coined in 1931. It can be started with the Depression, to be continued with the postwar years, to be tracked through the counterculture years of the late 1960s and 1970s, “when the nation’s idealistic faith in itself was put to the greatest test since the phrase was coined.” (Lawrence 2012: 11) The 1980s are discussed along the dividing line of “haves” and “have-nots” while the Dream of the 1990s is seen as the decade when the mythology was expected to turn real for many, although it largely did not. Finally, the sixth era discusses the period from the year 2000 up to now, and shows that the Dream’s power and relevance have remained as strong as ever into the 21st century.

## **1960–1970**

The history of the American Dream is long and exciting. Nevertheless, the focus will be on the counterculture years of the late 1960 and 1970s which witnessed an intense investigation of the state of the American Dream. Revolutionary times worked together on developing the American Dream but now people were more independent and it became more of a solitary affair. The standard of living was lower, and “combined with the social and political chaos of the past few years, was a clear sign that the American Dream was in decline.” (73) The key question often raised at that time waited for an answer if it would recover, when and how? That is why the sixties put protest in its focus both as a weapon and a metaphor (Вукчевић 2018: 481-485).

One of the answers came from President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, who proposed to create a “Great Society” while emphasizing the democratic foundation of the Dream. J. R. Wiggins, editor of the *Washington Post*, just two weeks after Lyndon B. Johnson’s 1965 State of the Union message wrote:

The most persistent American dream, originating with the Founding Fathers and periodically recurring for 200 years, has been that of creating on this continent a Great Society resting upon a people made politically free, economically secure, universally literate, culturally sophisticated, politically wise, morally right and naturally good. (Lawrence 2012: 73)

It seems that after a series of wars, depressions, and other crises, America was ready to return to the original Dream.

Many believed that his vision could come true but not everybody. Some unoptimistic responses came from writers such as Norman Mailer and his great novel *American Dream*, a social critic of the crashing and burning of the American Dream. Not only did writers respond to the new possibilities of the American Dream but debates and other forms of hidden or open protest were also constantly going on. The clash between William F. Buckley Jr. and James Baldwin in 1965 is worth mentioning in which they were supposed to prove whether “The American Dream is at the expense of the American Negro” with Baldwin taking the “for” position (544 students voted for him) and Buckley the “against” (164). This ideological division reflects the split between the Left and the Right (against the idea of “Great Society”) regarding the American Dream in the mid-1960s. Samuel Lawrence further widens this division by claiming that the representatives on the Left understood liberalism in the spirit of the American Dream by quoting Staughton Lynd who claims that the “New Left” (the liberal and sometimes political movement focused on social activism) was “a legitimate descendant of the American Revolution and the United States Constitution, something conservatives would dispute.” (75) At the Yale Socialist Symposium in 1966 where he defined the Vietnam War as more “un-American” than his politics he said: “It is precisely the distinctly American Dream that all movements should be subordinated to human rights.” (76) He was followed by many non-radicals in the mid-1960s.

Like many times before, such as during the Vietnam War, the protests for civil rights re-examined the very definition of the American Dream: what it was about and who could share it. In 1966 there were a few instances of racially motivated violence where white mobs attacked civil rights demonstrators protesting against segregated housing (Chicago). The conflict was based on the right to the American Dream: one group trying to preserve it and the other to win it. The blacks continued to fight for it for another couple of years – “using violence in cities across America to



protest their exclusion from the American Dream.” (77) Robert T. Pickett, “a twenty-year-old prelaw student at Kent State took advantage of the opportunity to share the information with Vice president Hubert Humphrey when he visited the university in 1968.” (76) Humphrey, a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination along with Senator Robert F. Kennedy (NY) and Eugene McCarthy (MN) referenced the American Dream in his speech before eight thousand students, during which many black “militants” and one hundred Vietnam War protesters walked out. As Samuel Lawrence quotes: “You say you believe in the American Dream. I do not believe in the American Dream simply because the American Dream does not believe in me. If it did believe in me we wouldn’t have had any riots in Newark or Watts... the American Dream to me is the American nightmare...What will you do to restore my faith and my people’s faith in America and the American Dream if you are elected?” (77) Some conservative political leaders interpreted racial unrest and violent war protests as signs that the country was out of control. Samuel quotes the words of George Romney in early 1968, the governor of Michigan and Republican presidential candidate who said that America was facing “a crisis in the American Dream at home and the American mission in the world.”(77)

Two leading voices, two men who deeply believed in the American Dream were soon assassinated: Martin Luther King Jr, who preached in Memphis the night before expressing his faith in the Promised Land, and Robert Kennedy, committed to the American Dream principles (individualism, self-reliance, self-discipline and unending self-improvement). Their deaths made many fear the threatening death of the American Dream. However, this did not happen. Samuel Lawrence quotes the comic description of the changes in the American Dream, by saying that instead of dreaming rich, they “began to dream hip”, and suggested that the mainstream was adopting the counterculture’s mantras to find him/herself and “do their things” instead of defining themselves by the things they owned. The quintessential American Dreamer was now the bearded hippie, “the realization that one was a member of the bourgeoisie a major bummer.” (79) They wanted to liberate their “wild, free *avant-garde* persona from sodden prosperity ... the nouveau-riche generation having given birth to the nouveau-avant generation.” (79)

Nevertheless, Samuel Lawrence argues that this was not an easy task for many individuals, for the pursuit of the persona is but a version of the American Dream, and many simply did not know how to become flower

children, and quotes Morton who concludes that “for at least a segment of the adult population and a good many young people, the upwardly mobile, materialistic American Dream was decidedly out, replaced by a modern hedonistic and spiritual version.” (79) In spite of many dystopian, negative and tragic voices, many optimistic still prevailed either as a call for a utopian paradise or a place of a happy, united and serene America.

Many responses to the idea of the American Dream came from the film industry. Samuel Lawrence singles out the role of John Wayne (*True Grit*, *The Cowboys*, *The Green Berets*) describing him as a “soothing tonic for the decade long nightmare that was Vietnam.” (89) This was not the case with some of the greatest films of the late 1960s and 1970s which the American Dream turned upside down; “by featuring criminals as antiheroes, the Anti-Paradise of the counterculture years was an ideal climate for cinematic outlaws to pursue wealth and power” (*Bonnie and Clyde*, 1967; *The Producers*, 1968, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, 1969; *The Sting*, 1973; *Paper Moon*, 1973; and *The Godfather* trilogy). (89) Some other films (*The Graduate*, 1967; *Easy Rider*, 1969) glorified brave characters who broke the norms of the establishment while the Dream spinning out of control, a corrupt system encouraging individuals and institutions to do whatever necessary to succeed, was depicted in films like *Nashville* (1975) and *Network* (1976). Finally, he singles out *Rocky*, the film which redeemed them all, as its hero fights against all odds to reach the top, “endorsing the traditional values of the Dream along the way.” (90) It is a celebration of the American Dream, and like many other films from this period it served as a stabilizing force for a “severely shaken” American Dream. It came as a remedy after “the angst of the early seventies—Vietnam, Watergate, the Arab oil embargo, economic ‘stagflation’, a fading but lingering countercultural movement, rise in crime and civil unrest, and demand for minorities to have their voices heard—Americans were more than ready for narratives that reaffirmed their faith in the nation’s ideals.” (91) Thus, *Rocky*, released five months after the nation’s bicentennial (1976) reminded the people (immigrants most of all) that the American Dream could still come true: it celebrated it.

It was very much alive for the white ethnic groups (Jews, Irish Catholics, Italians, Poles and Germans) who had higher incomes than the Episcopalians. The American Dream was also true for the “eastern and southern European Catholics—for whom by definition it was not supposed to work well.” (100) The door of multiculturalism was more widely open

as 37% of Americans now approved of interreligious marriage, compared to 20% of a decade earlier. Still, many efforts were made to have the American Dream updated and refined like that expressed through the exhibition *America Dreams On* organized by the California Museum of Science and Industry in Los Angeles in 1976-77. The visitors were exposed to the voices of the people “who captured its essential spirit (including not only John Wayne but also the Beach Boys, Paul Simon, and the Beatles)” (101), and they were invited to write down their own American Dream. They only confirmed the old truth: the more things changed, the more they remained the same.

Samuel Lawrence concludes that traditional understanding of the American Dream was on the rise at the end of the 1970s. Television began changing its tune by producing *Taxi*, based on a story about the American Dream. CBS news aired *American Dream, American Nightmare—the Seventies* (1979), which looked back at the Vietnam War, Watergate, and the bicentennial celebration. The show suggested that the government played an important role in their loss of idealism, and that the American Dream was not compatible with the optimistic view of the future. Economic woes, an energy crisis, government scandal, racial tension, two assassinations, and an unpopular war “did major damage to the ideals of both the great Society and the counterculture, and, correspondingly, the ideals of the Dream.” (103) American society was moving backwards.

It was moving backwards, but not for a long time. The early eighties brought what reporter Ted Green called “national catharsis” thanks to the victory of the US Olympic hockey team over the Soviet team at Lake Placid. The Dream was revived by reminding Americans that “traditional values of hard work, dedication, and team spirit had not been completely thrown into the dustbin of history and that dreams could really come true.” (105) The demand for more myth-makers had become stronger and it was clearly expressed by Herbert I. London and Albert L. Weeks in *Myths That Rule America*. They believed that the answer to the development of the American Dream was in re-memory of the American past and its myths of Eden, industry, achievement, individual freedom, and optimism. They believed in its revival but not everybody was optimistic: pros and cons kept changing places. (107)

Negative answers came from popular culture as well. Rock music continued to sing of love and sex, unemployment, poverty and loss of hope in the American Dream. The blues was sung for the American Dream

among the working class hitting the economic wall by Bruce Springsteen (*Darkness on the Edge of Town; The River, Nebraska*) with the saddest and most serious album about the American Dream *Born in the U.S.A.*, about economic hope, security, and community. TV also responded to the tough times of the early 1980s. In the era of *Dallas*, *The Waltons*, and *Soap*, a new realistic show called *The American Dream* (ABC, 1981) addressed money issues, unplanned babies, and sick relatives. Film reacted to the American Dream by reinforcing the domestic orientation in Steven Spielberg's 1982 *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*, as well as in *The Wizard of Oz* and *Scarface*. The search for the American Dream in this decade is best expressed in two films about baseball: *The Natural* (based on Bernard Malamud's 1952 novel) and the 1989 *Field of Dreams* (based on W. P. Kinsella's 1982 novel *Shoeless Joe*).

A good way for women and people of color was franchising while other minorities (Koreans and other Asian-Americans) were defining their American Dream in more traditional ways. They were not concerned with the future the way many American intellectuals were, such as Philip Moffitt who asked if the dreams of Generation X would be any different from baby-boomers' dreams, and suggested re-articulation and redefinition of the American Dream which would answer the postmodern promises, embrace American traditional values but also adjust to the "new self-image—a view of tomorrow that reflects the lessons of the last fifty years." (122) This is only one of the voices in pro and con discussions constantly reexamining the place and definition of the American Dream in the 1980s. Perhaps the strongest voice came from the TV show *thirtysomething*, a major hit for ABC in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially popular among "young urban professionals who related to the characters' 'yuppie angst'". (133), the generation which was fighting with uncertainty and alienation while pursuing the American dream. It was not easy to find out how real it was but for Thomas Cangelosi of the *New York Times* it was easy to conclude that intellectualism was boring, idealism impractical, and emotionalism self-destructive, so that "his generation has decided to swallow a pill delivering a heavy dose of conservatism and simplicity." (134)

The 1980s made the American Dream cross the borders of the US and enter the space of Europe and the question is asked if the American Dream should be renamed the European Dream. Many Europeans enjoyed a lifestyle resembling the standard of the American Dream, while many Americans did not. The American Dream became more and more privatized,

illustrating the concentration of wealth and widening gap between the rich and the poor. The myth was still present but “the reality greatly different, especially among the middle class for whom the Dream meant so much.” (135) One of the omnipresent moments: rethinking and re-creating the American Dream was waiting for its time at the very end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The very end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century learnt from the very successful production of Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* (1999), with its 274 performances and a number of Tony Awards, that the American Dream was still the American guiding mythology in everyday life. Still, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it was an elusive, slippery thing, coming and going like a thief in the night. (137)

The beginning of the last decade brought creativity, compassion and connection as hallmarks of the 1990s. The early 1990s did not bring prosperity and abundance as people expected. The implosion of the American Dream was best illustrated in film, especially by Michael Moore’s 1990 *Roger and Me*, which was described more as a social commentary than a documentary. (138) Moore said that the film is about the American Dream:

The dream itself isn’t good because it’s a dream, it’s not reality. Being able to own your home and own your car is not the reality of being in control of your own life, because they can snap it from you just like that. I don’t want you to be angry about the dream being gone. I want you to be angry about the lie of the dream, the illusion that’s created, the illusion that by having a few things of wealth that somehow you’ve made it and you’re secure for the rest of your life. (Moore in Lawrence 139)

It was becoming clear that the American Dream was an illusion that the Americans had created for themselves, and the discovery that upward mobility was “difficult if not impossible for a big chunk of Americans was a devastating blow to belief in the American Dream”. (139-140) An old demand for its restoration reentered the scene. Many voices for its affirmation were heard. The voice of protest came as a result of the fact that the American Dream started to mean an ideal of prosperity – not liberty!

In the meantime, while fighting for its traditional meaning the American Dream made an emotional bond with sports, baseball most of all!

However, even greater was the one it shared with movies. The documentary *Hollywoodism* that aired on A&E in 1998 “wonderfully captured the intimated relationship between movies and the American Dream, showing how much DNA they had in common.” (153) Hollywood’s Jews expressed the Dream’s longing for happiness, success, and acceptance (producers: William Fox, Adolph Zukor of Paramount, Louis B. Mayer, Jack Warner, etc.). The spread of capitalism and the global economy had much to do with the transnationalism of the Dream which, for those staying in the US, meant more hard work to achieve it. It was illustrated by Linda Schaffer’s 1996 documentary *American Dream* with celebrities (Michael Jordan, Mel Brooks, Gloria Steinem and Maya Angelou) who showed that they still had not made it. Neither have many of the interviewed minorities, first of all Native Americans or Asian Americans.

The American Dream kept rising and falling, proving to be too perfect to happen although America was more prosperous in 1995 than 1945. Quoting Robert J. Samuelson, Lawrence writes: “That the ‘Good Society’ of the 1950s and ‘Great Society’ of the 1960s (as well as the counterculture, it could be said) never fulfilled their full promises—continually rising incomes, stable jobs, and the end of poverty, racism, and crime—was disappointing if not traumatic to the nation ... exposing the American Dream as a fantasy”. (157) The gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” kept growing as well. Self-reliance once again became a key marker of the American Dream while individual initiative, personal responsibility and talent became the new necessities. The American Dream came to a full circle from its origins to the personal freedom.

Politicians found it a useful device to get elected, Democrats and Republicans equally. Thus, both Bill Clinton and Bob Dole, 1996 candidates for President “were clearly trading on Martin Luther King’s concept of the Dream, specifically his ‘The American Dream’ speech made in 1961 at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech made in 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial”. (159) Clinton and Dole relied on King’s use of the American Dream having in mind that its power relies on the nation’s well-known founding principles (“that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness”).

The end of the century (1997) brought “the good old days” with prosperity, the end of recession, while many families “were catching up to where they had been in terms of their standard of living, the American

Dream once again in their sights.” (162) However, the end of the century opened another arena for its realization – cyberspace. It opened many things the dreamers had wished for: freedom, success, prosperity, it became the place of limitless opportunities. Cyberspace opened itself to the many all around the globe and as Kenji Sato said in 1997, it “has become the ultimate embodiment of the American Dream.” (163) This new promised land, relevant for people around the world, incorporated the same values of the United States at its best. (Trump as the embodiment of the 1990s). The Americans themselves were not just creating but they were living it. (165) As soon as they crossed over into a new century, they started living the American Dream in a way they did not expect or foresee.

Even with the economy crashing in the early 2000s (much like in the early 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s), Americans were determined to keep their Dream alive. Both the advantages and the disadvantages of being born in the United States were greater than in many other countries with “the polarity of class here making social mobility more possible in parts of Europe”. (171) Still, both classes needed it even as an illusion, which was a very useful and valuable one. That is why “the mythology of the American Dream persisted, with a Bill Clinton or Bill Gates taken as incontrovertible proof that the country was a level playing field on which anyone could potentially rise to the top.” (171)

It was true that the American standard of living was the highest in history, but it was not without social problems, including high rates-of divorce, teen suicide, violent crime, prisoners, and depression. (172) Making more money was not a strong substitute for happiness, some of the authors point out (Myers, Schwartz), while others like Rifkin compare the European choice of happiness over money with the American, illustrating it by saying that Americans “live to work” while “Europeans work to live”. The question Rifkin raises asks who was better suited to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (173) Still, he understands the “European Dream” as superior to the American Dream (paid vacation, maternity leave, free or cheap health care, housing assistance, and tuition reimbursement from the government). He insisted that the American model of success and values (religious, patriotic, independent), that the tradition of isolationism, individualism, and self-sufficiency were not in “sync with where the world headed, he went further, with Europe’s more communitarian approach better designed for the world of tomorrow.” (174)

The American Dream, as it has previously been pointed out, was slowly changing its color: it was becoming more and more the dream of

Latino Americans, Asian Americans and others. Soon it was very present in popular culture. The rise of television news helped to popularize the American Dream (Peter Jennings's 1998 book *The Century*; Tom Brokaw's 1999 book *The Greatest Generation Speaks*). In 2001 Dan Rather produced *The American Dream Stories from the Heart of Our Nation*, which was even more of an ode to American mythology. The American Dream was expressed in TV shows like *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* and *Survivor* but it was the 2002 *American Idol* "that most compellingly expressed the essence of the American Dream in the first decade of the twenty-first century ...tapping into a cultural nerve that reflected many aspects of the Dream, including our unabashed worship of celebrities and that we all perhaps had the potential of becoming one." (181) In 2006 it became ripe for parody with the film *American Dreams*, the show which turned the American Dream upside down. It was not the same with the TV show *The Sopranos*, that revealed the depth and range of the American Dream. It had a wide reception (5 books of criticism from different points of view), and in one of them it is said that "no other TV show had gone to the dark side of the Dream like *The Sopranos*... the series palpably illustrating what could and did go down when ambition lost its moral footing." (181)

Popular music (especially hip hop, with its adoration of money and the luxuries it could buy) was also a central repository of the American Dream in the media of the 2000s. Among many, Bruce Springsteen was now recognized as an authentic national treasure. Over the course of three decades, he created answers to the American Dream through his responses to 9/11, the 2002 album *The Rising*, "solidified his role as 'America's conscience, questioner and consoler.'" (182) Many books were written about him and he and his music were almost synonymous with the American Dream. Jimmy Guterman's *Runaway American Dream*, Robert Coles's *Bruce Springsteen's America*, and Jim Cullen's *Born in the U.S.A.* "each expressed this point in different ways, canonizing Springsteen as the Boss not just of pop music but, for a whole generation, of the American Dream as well." (183)

Bruce Springsteen sang about the working class, many white collar workers also saw the American Dream vanishing "as corporate America slashed staff to cut costs or for more urgent reasons." (183) The gap between the richest and the poor was widening and dragging the Dream down "with the big bulge in the middle falling further behind the top percent of income earners and doing everything they could to avoid becoming part



of the bottom 20 percent.” (187) This made Zuckerman compare the early twenty-first century with the Gilded Age. 15% of Americans now possessed 85% of the nation’s wealth, “with the bottom half accounting for just 2.5 percent of total household net worth.” (187)

Hip Hop music is another example of how perceptions of the meaning of the American Dream have changed over the decades from its socially and racially aware protest songs in the 80s to a “Get Rich or Die Trying” vision of the American dream in the new millennium. Over the decades capitalism dulled hip hop’s razor sharp social and racial criticism, pushing it into the mainstream’s grip. At present time, hip hop music is the mainstream in the true sense of the word (especially in the USA) – all global pop stars collaborate with Hip Hop rappers and producers, it is the quick formula for success. It is an interesting phenomenon that hip hop is at the moment the most popular music genre, even though the messages that mainstream hip hop conveys are devoid of deeper meaning and focus solely on material and corporeal pleasures, comforts and gain, which is an indicator of the Zeitgeist of the American Dream.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the drawn-out war in Afghanistan, the economic downturn of 2008, myriads of political scandals, the international immigration crisis, racial tensions, and marginalized citizens have all set the stage for events that have people trying to capture the illusive American Dream. Protests are on the rise in the US. Some recent examples are:

- Colin Kaepernick and other US football players who knelt during the national anthem to protest police violence against African-Americans, they were making a gesture of humility, of pain and distress but these players have been strongly criticized for disrespecting the flag and fallen service members.
- Recent women’s marches (in the US and abroad) have been in response to inequality that women (of all ethnicities) face in the workforce and in society.
- The March for Our Lives, in March 2018, drew record numbers of people protesting against gun violence (especially in schools) and for gun law reform. It is important to point out that these marches were completely organized through social media within a short amount of time.

The protests are different in nature to the protests of the 1960s, namely these are non-violent, non-threatening. For example, kneeling during the national anthem is a gesture of humility, not ominous ire like the Black Power salutes raised by Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics. What do all of these have to say about the state of the American Dream today? Do they not also express what the previous generations kept asking for: the good old humane American Dream? Is not this same need being constantly expressed not only in the US but all over the globe – thus turning the American Dream into a global one?

## **Conclusion**

It is almost impossible to give a definite answer to the question of the definition of the American Dream. Research has shown that it still depends a lot on what one believes. Some believe that they have lived it, which makes the mythology real. Still, living the American Dream can also have nothing to do with mythology itself but rather being in the right place at the right time. Another definite answer has been strongly confirmed: the American Dream has constantly played the role of an umbrella, embracing many genres, which keep giving their responses to their time. Its impact on Americans and the nation as a whole is enormous. It is a part of every aspect of American culture. It plays different roles: a utopian ideal functioning as a beacon of hope; a common denominator which helps bring Americans together (multiculturalism); a user-friendly vehicle for assimilation (to be an American and retain one's own ethnic identity at the same time); a masterpiece embraced by many.

The American Dream keeps coming and going, and seems to be living in the past and future more than in the present, with its best days behind it. Its crashing and burning in the late sixties was a predictable phenomenon for many. The wave of economic boom crashed and the American Dream with it! Due to a strong connection between happiness and the American Dream (family and economic security), most Americans still want to reach it and believe that doing so will make them happier people. However, rising inequality and falling real wages have exposed upward mobility, making many of them realize the US is not the “opportunity society” they have always believed it to be.

The question to be raised in the conclusion concerns the millennial generation and their chances of living the American Dream. The answer

is positive as long as they compare it with the other parts of the world where it has a strong impact. It is also positive as long as they protest while asking who stole their American Dream (the 2011 documentary *Who Stole the American Dream?*) or organizing protests like the Occupy Wall Street movement and the civil protest at the Wisconsin Capitol in early 2011. It is now being studied retrospectively as well: the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy; gay rights, women's rights and civil rights; the Black Panthers and the Vietnam War; the New Left and the New Right. The Year 1968 has been studied from the vantage points of its historical, political and social legacy. Special attention has been focused on how protest itself has transformed in the US, from Students for a Democratic Society and the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1960s, through the Women's Movement in the 1970s, towards the contemporary visibility of the Tea Party and the Occupy movement. (See: *Reframing 1968: American Politics, Protest and Identity*).

The very cultural history of the American Dream supports American optimistic beliefs reminding us that the American Dream would always recover in the past. The incessant waves of immigrants to the US will breed ground for the American Dream as they believe in the mythology most strongly, while politicians will continue to employ it in their campaigns. This optimism is supported by a 2010 survey in which it is said that 34 percent of Americans believed that in spite of the bad economy they had achieved it. Above all, it must be pointed out that creativity is the most important social and economic currency, and one's imagination to develop new and original ideas and things is the best recipe for success, which will never go out of fashion!

The American Dream will survive and perhaps even flourish in the US in the future because the American Dream is not solely American. It will be shared with other countries. The Americans have invented and mastered the fine art of the American Dream, but many countries globally enjoy their own interpretations of it. As the world plunges further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the American Dream is on the way to becoming the Global Dream as it embodies the most essential issue such a dream should contain – to be crowned as an ethical Dream!

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Received: 30 November 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

Радојка Вукчевић

### РЕВОЛУЦИОНАРНЕ ВИБРАЦИЈЕ 1968. ГОДИНЕ И АМЕРИЧКИ САН

#### Сажетак

Протести 1968. године отворили су много питања од којих је једно од најзначајнијих Амерички сан. Будући да је уткан у сваки сегмент свакодневног живота, он игра виталну улогу у дефинисању америчког идентитета, индивидуалног и колективног живота Американаца. Много тога се претпоставља о његовој улози, због чега је рад поставио себи за циљ да истражи меру његове присутности у реалном и имагинативном свету. Испитивање његовог присуства у реалном свету отворило је и питање улоге политике не само при његовом дефинисању, већ и при дефинисању појединачног и националног идентитета. Испитан је и процеп у потешкоћи давања његове заокружене дефиниције и константне жеље сваког појединца да узме макар комадић сна.

Иако се трагови Америчког сна могу пратити далеко раније, рад је ставио акценат на контракултуру с краја шесте и седме деценије двадесетог века, када се сан нашао на највећој проби од тренутка када је скован. У раду се даље пратио историјски преглед развоја Америчког сна и посебан акценат стављен је на период од 2000. до данас да би показао да је Амерички сан и даље снажан и релевантан. Истраживање је исто тако показало да ће Амерички сан и даље трајати не само у Америци, већ глобално. Највероватније ће имати централну и водећу улогу и за Американце и за многе друге становнике овог света у годинама које су пред нама.

**Кључне речи:** Амерички сан, контракултура, протести 1968, жанр, *Cyberspace*, глобални поглед



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## **NARRATIVES IN THE VISUAL FIELD: LEGACY OF 1968 IN BELGRADE AND THE ART OF PERFORMANCE**

### **Abstract**

In the spring of 1968 a wave of revolt spread across the world. Although problems were different from society to society, people from Europe to America to Africa and beyond seemed to have some shared concerns – the repudiation of the dominant regimes and mainstream ideologies at all levels of society and culture. The paper deals with the impact of the ideas of '68 and generally the spirit of the '60s which produced some profound changes in society and art. The special focus is on the impact of the global spirit of change on the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia from the perspective of the artistic endeavors of young artists in Belgrade who were committed to initiating a new artistic language through the art of performance.

**Keywords:** 1968, politics, ideology, art, performance, language

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There has never been a year like 1968, and it is unlikely  
that there will ever be one again.  
(Mark Kurlansky).

In the year 1968 the spirit of social discontent fueled riots against the dominant political and social ideologies worldwide. Mainly young people felt the necessity to act against social injustice and conservative patterns of behavior at many levels of social life, political, educational, artistic, to name but a few. Although the problems of the world communities were various and different, the spirit of rage and the sense of commitment were globally present. In his comprehensive study about that period, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* Mark Kurlansky explains that “at a time when nations and cultures were still separate and very different... there occurred a spontaneous combustion of rebellious spirits around the world” (2004: 9).

Certainly, the wave of revolt had been accumulating all through the decade of the sixties. Speaking about the situation in America the historian Randall Bennett Woods claims that, “[t]he fundamental cleavages in American society and basic flaws in the nation’s approach to international affairs came to the surface” (Woods 2000: 16). There were many issues which plagued the social life at the time: the cold war agenda, the war in Vietnam, the brutality of the Soviet regime after the Prague Spring events, among others. The societies responded through the rise of the civil rights movements, liberal activism in Western societies and various movements against racism, totalitarianism and ignorance on the global scene. Kurlansky writes, “[w]here there was communism they rebelled against communism, where there was capitalism they turned against that” (2004: 9).

Apart from political and economic agendas, the voices calling for change affected other spheres, too. In the artistic sphere the demands were for a radically different approach to creation and interpretation. In the literary world, John Barth published an essay in 1967 entitled “The Literature of Exhaustion”. Barth wrote about conservatism in the literary approach, both at the level of representation and that of interpretation. In England at about the same time David Lodge published “The Novelist at the Crossroads” (1969) in which he also posed questions on the limits of representation. Lodge saw the traditional way of writing as incapable of accommodating new ways and perspectives. “[Worldwide] people were rebelling over disparate issues and had in common only that desire to



rebel, ideas about how to do it, a sense of alienation from the established order, and a profound distaste for authoritarianism in any form” (Ibid.).

Protests were famously concentrated round university buildings and campuses. The unofficial symbol of 1968 were the events at the Parisian universities. The well-known events of May 1968 actually began in March the same year at the suburban university of Nanterre. The protesting group at first included some 150 students, along with some poets and musicians. However, later they were transferred to various locations, most significantly to the central university of the Sorbonne. All through April that year students protested with sit-ins at many spots in Paris. Ultimately in June they were supported by the 6000 workers all round France and the protest became general.

One of the famous slogans of the Parisian protests, “under the cobblestones, the beach”, indicated the degree of the rage of the protesters, while the saying “kill the cop in your head” reveals its true nature. They fought for new critical practice, and the critical interrogation of the notion of freedom which they considered a part of the bourgeois ideology, that is a product of liberal capitalism. Contemplating the revolutionary 1968, art professor Sami Siegelbaum cites the claim of Louis Althusser, one of the favorite philosophers of the 1968 protests. Siegelbaum explains that through the notion “all men are free, so the laborers are free this ideology exploits, blackmailing them with freedom so as to keep them in harness, as much as the bourgeoisie’s need to live its own class rule as the freedom of those it is exploiting” (Althusser in Siegelbaum 2012: 69). The sense of alienation from society stemmed from the abstract nature of social relations. For instance, society offered some abstract “freedom”, without being really free to think, contemplate, interrogate and create. Demonstrators felt that the procreator of that social lethargy was the regime. This general idea backed the thoughts and actions in various spheres of social life, like education and art. French artists desperately explored new ways of dealing with the reality. Siegelbaum further explains that, “artists in May ’68 had largely been defined by escalating attempts, beginning around 1965, to formulate a collective critical practice, in their capacity as painters, capable of overturning the modernist emphases on heroic individual creation and formal innovation” (2012: 65).

All through the sixties artists took dramatic and radical actions as they explored new ways of artistic expression. They were generally against formalist artistic movements, abstract art and the thoughts locked in symbols

as they were not enough to express new ideas and relations. That April in Paris, on the eve of the student revolt and the general strike, a French artist Daniel Buren produced a photograph of his own street installation that he had placed some days earlier on a corner next to the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The photograph showed a billboard plastered with overlapping posters with his own poster of vertical stripes on top. Buren placed around 200 such posters at various Parisian locations so as to show his disgust with the institutional gallery and museum spaces with the intention to show the incongruity between socially acceptable art and its true autonomy.

There were many examples of how new artistic language interrogated old cultural concepts and strived to engage the audience in a cultural dialogue about the values of society. Here is an example of an artistic way to deal with gender policy. At the peak of the riots, on May 4<sup>th</sup> the 24e Salon de Mai opened at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. In a dominantly conservative gallery the artist Lea Lublin displayed her baby son Nicolas who was born the year before. The work was called simply *Mon fils* (My Son). The explanation was simple, “[This is] a moment of my everyday life in an artistic site ... I exhibited myself with my son” (Lublin in Spencer 2017: 68). In the gallery space he was shown along with his crib, nappies, clothes, and toys. The tension between the domestic and public, womanhood and patriarchy, acceptable and shameful summon the narrations of motherhood and femininity in general in an array of readings – feminist, Marxist, psychological, among others. This simple installation which has seemingly nothing to do with anger and rage was a powerful statement of feminism and the right to a voice.

The rise and formulation of the new artistic practice entertained thoughts, ideas and stories inside the artistic space. The emerging genre of performance akin to the art of installation proved from the start to be able to accommodate narratives in various lingual, acoustic or visual forms, “acknowledges that writing is somehow related to inscription” (Freeman 2007: 4). In the center of the performance was the performing artist as the originator of meaning which is created in front of the audience. In such a way from the start the genre of performance has developed into “a moving laboratory in which to develop and test radical ideas, images and actions, a conceptual territory that grants us special freedoms (aesthetic, political and sexual)” (Gómez-Peña: 2000).

In Belgrade, the capital of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia at the time, 1968 was the year when rebellious sentiments from the global

community touched and to a certain degree shattered the stable social routine. In the realm of politics and ideology the main event were students' demonstrations which were carried out in certain university buildings and followed the events at Parisian universities. The uprising in the artistic sphere came as an aftermath of the political upheaval. Several performance artists advocated new art and a fresh way of dealing with the reality of socialism. They were known as the "group of six". The group included Marina Abramović, Raša Todosijević, Era Milivojević, Neša Paripović, Gera Urkom and Zoran Popović. Some of them later won international acclaim. Back then though, they strived to establish a new cultural dialogue through art and to start a new artistic practice. To achieve this, their performances gave voice to various manifestations of anger.

Young artists from the group-of-six were also students at the time and participated in the students' protests. Marina Abramović was one of their leaders. Apart from the students, the revolutionary energy took up intellectuals of many sorts – university professors, film directors, writers, and such. The students' demands included a multi-party system and freedom of the press. They defined their requests as "Thirteen Freedoms". Out of thirteen they gained three. One of the gains was the STUDENTS' CULTURAL CENTER (SKC).

The setting up of the Students' Cultural Center proved to be crucial for establishing an atmosphere which would welcome new art. And through the new art revolutionary ideas were expressed. SKC afforded both a venue and a forum for the exchange of ideas. It most generously welcomed all sorts of experiments, exhibitions, panels and workshops. The first artistic director was Dunja Blažević, who had just graduated from the Art History School. She remained responsible for the artistic development of SKC all through the '70s, the time generally considered the center's heyday. As she was attentive to the new ideas, she invited the "New Artistic Practice" into the art gallery. About the character of SKC the American professor of theatre and performance Branislav Jakovljević writes that, "Dunja Blažević, ... insists that this institution captured and carried into the 1970s, the emancipatory political and artistic ideals of 1968 ..." (2016: 145).

As a tribute to the general spirit of change the first show that SKC hosted was full of promising change to the accustomed artistic style. It was called *Drangularium*, literally trifle objects. Around thirty artists, among whom was the "group-of-six", were asked to bring to the gallery everyday objects that were for some reason significant for their art.

Someone exhibited an old blanket with holes, another, the door to his studio. Raša Todosijević exhibited his beautiful girlfriend as an artifice. Marina Abramović exhibited a peanut in its shell. That peanut as an art object marked her artistic transformation, as she confessed later. As it protruded from the wall it left a tiny shadow. She called the piece *Cloud With Its Shadow*. About the piece she wrote: “As soon as I saw that little shadow I realized two-dimensional art truly was a thing of the past ... that piece opened a whole different dimension,” [implying that the shadow was a part of its being], “being there and not there, changing with the sun, making it alive” (Abramović 2016: 39). In the years to come the space of the SKC along with the surrounding streets and parks would become the artistic arena for the young art.

If one compares the artistic-social dialogue in Belgrade with the Parisian one it is clear that, regardless of the approach, the concerns were pretty much the same. Buren’s billboard that was made illegible by many layers of posters exposed the illegibility of old art. Art historian Hal Foster “viewed it as a riddle, asking, ‘How are we to mediate these image-events?’” (Foster in Sigelbaum 2012: 53). By accentuating the incommunicability, that is the alienation of old art, Buren as many others at that time called for a new creative language and along with it a new concept of space to both house and produce such art.

Belgrade artists fervently discussed, “the art that was changing dramatically” (Abramović 2016: 37). They debated conceptual art, art povera, body art, or just “complain[ed] about the art [they] were being taught” (Abramović 2016: 36). In her memoir Marina Abramović writes:

My little group of six talked about the Conceptualists in the United States (where people like Lawrence Weiner and Joseph Kosuth were making pieces in which words were as important as objects); the Arte Povera movement in Italy, which was turning everyday objects into art; and the anti-commercial, anti-art Fluxus movement in Germany, whose stars were the provocative performance and Happening artists Joseph Beuys, Charlotte Moorman, and Nam June Paik. There was a Slovenian group called OHO that rejected art as an activity separate from life: any part of life at all, they believed, could be art. They were doing performance art as early as 1969: In Ljubljana, an artist named David Nez did a piece called *Cosmology*, where he lay inside a circle on the floor, with a lightbulb suspended just over

his stomach, and tried to breathe in tune with the universe. Some members of OHO came to Belgrade to speak about their beliefs; (Abramović 2016: 37)

The art of the six artists was loosely connected by their repudiation of conservatism in art. In that again reminiscent of the French revolutionary activities of 1968. Rejecting formalist aesthetics as static and unproductive, ill-adapted to express social tension. It was these artists that presented art “swaying between idealisation and alienation, criticism, irony and aggression” (*Becker* in IRWIN 2006: 394). Most influential from the group-of-six were Marina Abramović and Raša Todosijević. Together they formed the nucleus of the avant-garde activity in Belgrade. They also worked within the broader context of performance artists who were active at that time and whose works SKC also welcomed in their famous Happy Gallery.

So, the new artistic scene in Yugoslavia started to gain shape. The young artists created performances in which they expressed the frustration and confinement which they felt living and working with the socialist restrictions. One of Raša Todosijević’s performances was entitled *Decision as Art*. The very notion of decision as refers to art recalls socialist paradoxes – the idea that everything is calculated, decided in advance and imposed on the citizens. The performance includes the static female model, several plants and a fish in its pool. It also contains inscriptions on a banner: “decision as art”, “salt” and “fish”, written in several languages. First, the artist paints the plants, while his partner in the performance is just passively sitting. Then he pulls the fish out of its pool, as the fish is slowly dying from the lack of water, the artist drinks water until he is sick, then he vomits and drinks again. The fish expires while he stands upright holding a torch until he cannot hold up his arm any longer. The performance is about suffering and endurance. He shares the agony of the dying fish. His absurd martyrdom stands for the absurdity of understanding art as a calculated act, a decision, a closure. This could serve as a powerful metaphor for the misery of living under the regime where everything is a matter of decision, where there is no humour, no freedom to create. Defining his endeavor Raša Todosijević said in an interview:

My performance is not based on the wish to demystify anything, it rather seeks to irritate an individual by addressing its negative side in order that he becomes aware of it – your anger after the performance is that negative side of yours. (Todosijević 1990: 160)

As the performance exposes the negative, or “other” side of the people in the audience it at the same time repudiates the traditional role of art in socialism – to support established values and a positive perspective of reality.

However, in comparison with other socialist countries, in Yugoslavia art had relative freedom from state control. As a consequence, Yugoslav artists were allowed to follow certain global artistic trends. For example, throughout the '60s certain groups experimented with installations. Galleries welcomed artists experimenting with contemporary artistic techniques and started bringing the general environment along with its various narrations into the artistic space. Conceptual art, art povera, abstract art, surreal art and such were all present on artistic scenes in Yugoslavia. Although they had nothing to do with the then dominant aesthetic of social realism, those movements remained strictly in the aesthetic zone and did not aim to interrogate the social and political system. Therefore, they were considered harmless to the state. Contrary to this, the group-of-six artists challenged various social and cultural practices, from the system of values to cultural discourse, to education and gender policy. Marina Abramović wrote later in her autobiography that, “all my work in Yugoslavia was very much about rebellion” (Abramović 1998: 16). As Mary Richards points out, her anger was addressed both “against the family structure as well as the state and systems of art” (2010: 20).

As opposed to the alienated and abstract art, young artists promoted unavoidable presence, interaction with the audience, sometimes even obsessive action. The focus of the new art was on everyday reality, not on its symbolical sublimation in traditional art. Artists like Abramović and Todosijević mostly dealt with the nature and production of art, and also with its limits and relations to reality. For Todosijević “art [is] a productive and socially responsible discipline whose aim is not to create the work of art as an isolated aesthetic object, but to open an immediate dialogue between art and living reality” (Sretenović 2002: 11). The reality of bodies and the focus on the artist as the generator of meaning were central to the new art production.

The reasons why performance art, as opposed to painting and installation, was considered threatening for the socialist society were numerous. First, they provoked the audience and questioned their beliefs. There were other reasons, too. As opposed to the collectivism which was emblematic for the cultural practice in Socialism, performance artists insisted on individualism.

In the article entitled “Performance” (“Performans,” 1981) Raša Todosijević writes that in performance art an artist “establishes an address explicated in the first person... [while in theater the artist’s (actor’s)] subject, his true self, his beliefs about the world’s meaning, in the moment of performance and recedes into the background” (Todosijević 1983: 60). According to Todosijević, “it is this focus on subjectivity that distinguishes performance art from traditional performance genres” (Jakovljević 2016: 142). In other words, in performance, spectators are challenged as individual people, both as citizens and as persons – their views, their perspective of reality and “their negative, hidden side”. It is this focus on the individual act as opposed to the collective enterprise which was a dominant worldview within the socialist paradigm that the young artists were trying to establish in the cultural dialogue. Further still, performances with their incessant voices which gave rise to many alternative interpretations promoted the lack of closure. With this they questioned the narrations of authoritarianism – the backbone of socialism. The performance introduced the feeling that there is not one meaning of reality, that reality depends on our perception and that art is about “a galaxy of signifiers, not a network of signifieds”, (Barthes 1974: 5) as Roland Barthes put it. Ultimately, “the term performance suggests the body, even at times clichés of the body: naked, self-referential, blooded or abused” (Freeman 2007: 10). Body, martyred body, tortured or torturing, self-injured, provocative, violated, as symbol, concept, or tradition, marginalized, or objectified initiated the narrations and with it constructed the space of the performance.

During the performances artists explore numerous ways of involving the audience in the play. Raša Todosijević exemplified the aggressive and obvious, ideologically charged performances. One of these, *Was ist Kunst?*, was performed several years after the revolutionary 1968 in Edinburgh in 1973. It refers to suppressed individuality under the Socialist regime. The performing artist incessantly repeats the question to a female model. She is indifferent to his tyrannical behavior. The performance resembles police interrogation. The sadistic insistence of the torturer and the meekness of the woman conjure up narratives of domination, surrender and resignation. They problematize fixed concepts of gender in patriarchy as well as the female contribution to the patterns of behavior. While the female model is locked in her role, so is the male artist with his incessant bullying. The performance stages the general enslavement of subjects under a totalitarian regime. It remains Todosijević’s emblematic work and certainly one of

the most important works in the twentieth-century Serbian art. Today Todosijević's work is exhibited in the Tate Modern Gallery in London.

The socialist manner of control and imposition inspired the performances of the artists, irrespective of their styles and personal languages. In a dramatically different manner, Marina Abramović strived to involve her audience in a dialogue with her and their own selves, respectively. Her reaction to socialism is grounded in her personal story. It starts from her family background. Marina Abramović was born into a communist family. Her parents were very brave partisans, war heroes. They fought against the Nazis and were true believers in the communist cause. In her autobiography significantly entitled *Walking Through Walls* she writes that her own physical endurance has been inherited from her partisan parents – their stamina and their tolerance of pain. Their bravery brought them high military ranks and a significant amount of social privilege after the war. Despite her luxurious living conditions, Marina Abramović's childhood was burdened with the outcomes of a family drama, that is the divorce of her parents, and the social bleakness which she as an artist-in-the-making found difficult to bear, "Communism and socialism ... is a kind of aesthetic based on pure ugliness", she admits in her autobiography (Abramović 2016: 8). On the other hand, the social system which was supposed to be classless and just towards all social groups was actually grounded in injustice. While her family was privileged on account of their war heritage, there were people who for various reasons lived in poverty. Furthermore, there were people who were prosecuted for their political and religious beliefs. As the suppression of all religions was a part of the communist agenda, religion was duly marginalized in Yugoslavia. However, Marina's grandmother from her mother's side, who brought her up, was a true believer so Marina surreptitiously gained some spiritual knowledge. Later on these narratives of belief would merge with her ideologies of general revolt against the communist society.

Her attitude towards Communism was ambiguous. On the one hand she lived those socialist practices, trying to decide on the "for and against" of Communism, on the other she wanted to leave her upbringing and childhood behind. That is why the narratives of the socialist cause, equality, morality and generally the style of living are in Marina Abramović's aesthetic interwoven with the narratives of growing up and the troubles of adolescence. The walking-through-walls metaphor describes many aspects of her lifelong artistic practice. She explains in her autobiography:



“That killed me. The endurance artist in me, the walk-through-walls child of partisans, had so wanted to go to the very last second, until the end” (Abramović 2016: 256). Finally, the metaphor implies how she survived and surpassed the widespread spirit of misunderstanding of her work at home – without being discouraged in what she was doing.

Arguably, in the scope of Marina Abramović’s world the metaphor could be read with reference to the walls of words and cultural symbols. In her oeuvre, Marina Abramović has never stopped before the walls which would limit expression and ban signification. In this respect, the walking-through-walls metaphor sums up various aspects of her artistic agenda – to go deeper into the realm of meaning, to explore the silence which lurks behind the labels and symbols of the dominant (socialist) culture and society, that is to puncture its walls. She actually tried to push the walls which guard the all-too-familiar meaning of the words we know, actions we perform and rituals we undertake. The anger led the way through the wall as the despair of the limited meaning led Beckett’s Molloy, the agony which he feels before the walls which limit the signification of the words of the language. In that, many of Abramović’s strivings were reminiscent of Beckett’s words, “All I know is what the words know”. Thus, the aim to efface the cultural symbols was sometimes achieved by repetition, at other times by re-contextualization, or reflection, but the effect is always the displacement of the original signification so that it produced new readings.

In the mid-seventies, Marina Abramović performed *Lips of Thomas* (1975) on a public square in Belgrade. She stood with her navel exposed and a carved five-pointed star around it. Apart from being a symbol in its own right, a five-pointed star was central to the Yugoslav flag. As it is both a communist and religious (pagan) symbol it evokes narrations of both communism and faith. Her ritualistic, silent martyrdom contains several allusions. First of all, the star, then the act of martyrdom and the name of Thomas. St. Thomas, also called “Doubting Thomas”, does not believe in the actuality of Christ’s suffering. The performing artist showed her genuine wounds and she truly suffered and endured her suffering in a ritual reminiscent of a religious act. Besides, her suffering was silent, in an act which dissociated body and voice, in the way that socialist society used to deprive its people of their own voice, speaking in their person. The fragmentation of soul created passive personalities. The artist’s martyrdom stood for her “religious” readiness to redeem their humanity for them. She

performed this piece, with some variations, a couple more times during her long career.

The symbol of the five-pointed star appeared to inspire and intrigue Abramović in this period with its many-faceted reality and heavy emotional charge. A year earlier, 1974, Abramović performed one of her Rhythm series, Rhythm 5, in the courtyard of SKC with the famous contemporary artist Joseph Beuys in the audience. That time Abramović used fire. Beuys actually warned her that fire is highly risky in a performance. However, she placed two wooden frames in the shape of a five-pointed star. Filled them with wood shreds which she soaked with gasoline and set them aflame. First she walked around the outer frame as in a ritual. Then as if to cleanse her body before some mystic initiation she cut off her hair and nails and threw them into the fire. Next, she just lay in the inner frame. Her body just fitted in the frame so she looked as if she was crucified. Her symbolic sacrifice on that occasion proved to be almost deadly as she fainted from the lack of oxygen. She was symbolically sacrificed, as the young people were sacrificed under the socialist regime. Like her own, their martyrdom was meaningless.

In 1975 Marina Abramović performed *Lips of Thomas*, or *Thomas Lips* again, in Innsbruck. That second performance was more complex. It had several stages. The audience was offered the instructions,

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ

THOMAS LIPS

Performance.

I slowly eat 1 kilo of honey with a silver spoon.

I slowly drink 1 liter of red wine out of a crystal glass.

I break the glass with my right hand.

I cut a five-pointed star on my stomach with a razor blade.

I violently whip myself until I no longer feel any pain.

I lay down on a cross made of ice blocks.

The heat of a suspended heater pointed at my stomach causes the cut star to bleed.

The rest of my body behind to freeze.

I remain on the ice cross for 30 minutes until the public interrupts the piece by removing the ice blocks from underneath me.

Duration: 2 hours

As everything is clear and ordered in performing a ritual, the written list of the steps of the performance underlines the ritualistic nature of the act. The performance goes as follows, first she eats a kilo of honey and drinks a bottle of wine. Then, she cuts the glass bottle, takes the razor blade and cuts a five-pointed star in her stomach. Then she flogs herself. It is after the over-indulgence in eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ that she flogs her body and submits to the cross of ice. When she lies there after a while her skin gets stuck to the surface of the ice. Above her there is a heater and the heat causes the blood from her wounds to flow intensively.

This ritual suffering in the performance referred again to the oppressive practices of communist societies symbolized in the shape of a five-pointed star. However, here the suffering was more concrete: she had to be punished, as religion rituals were banned in a socialist society her over-indulgence in honey and wine – Christ's body and blood – were to be duly punished.

At that time she performed her Rhythm series. The first of Abramović's Rhythm performances which she delivered at the Edinburgh festival in 1973 was Rhythm 10. It re-enacted a Russian roulette game as a sound installation/performance. The performance included 10 sharp knives that the artist would thrust and control their force at the same time. She placed her left hand on a white cloth on the surface and stabbed between her outspread fingers. The audio-tape recorded the sounds of throbbing and the noise she made when she cut herself in the process. Her groan would signal a change of knives. After completing the series of 10 knives, she would play the game again trying to hit the knives in tune to the first recording.

The video from the performance shows that she was able to re-enact her original actions so as to perform the second round with the minimum risk of cutting as she could predict where and when the knives would hit the ground. The precision and concentration would give her the power and control over her own acts in the performance. To gain control over something, anything in a socialist society was a difficult task. The performance exposed ways of gaining control through the power of will and endurance.

Those performances were challenging for the viewer as well as for the performing artists. The performances demanded the personal involvement of viewers and in due process reflected something of their hidden narratives,

fear, anxiety, dissatisfaction, revolt against the reality, helplessness and so on.

The significant verbal agents, slogans like *Was ist Kunst? Decision as Art; Lips of Thomas*, or *Thomas Lips* indicated in a most obvious way the narratives of the performances. Those simple, clear, unambiguous questions or statements serve to encourage the audience to accept a dialogue with the performing artist under the umbrella of the work. Are these labels offered as contribution to the meaning of the performance, or simply as a provocation, do they illuminate the meaning, offer the main narrative of the performance, or channel our thinking? Do they offer a reading of the work? Or do they just bring to mind the cultural markers in order to destroy their symbolical value? All these questions and many others can direct the reading of the work and question the perception of the viewer and interpreter. Is it not its main purpose to challenge?

With reference to the socialist Yugoslavia, revolutionary ideas and the passion for change were sublimated in the artistic endeavor of the young artists of the revolutionary 1960s and 1970s. Exploring the limits of freedom in society and art in Belgrade among other Yugoslav cities they effectively caused turmoil on the artistic scene – at least for a while.

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Received: 24 December 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

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НАРАЦИЈЕ У ВИЗУЕЛНОМ ПОЉУ: ЛЕГАТ ИДЕЈА РЕВОЛУЦИОНАРНЕ 1968.  
У БЕОГРАДУ И УМЕТНОСТ ПЕРФОРМАНСА

**Сажетак**

У пролеће 1968. читав свет био је захваћен таласом протеста. Иако су проблеми били различити од земље до земље, изгледало је да народи од Европе до Америке и Африке и даље деле неке заједничке фрустрације које су их ујединиле у фронт непријатељства према владајућим режимима и доминантним идеологијама на свим нивоима друштва и културе. У раду се расправља утицај идеја протеста 1968. и уопште духа шездесетих из којих су потекле неке корените промене у друштву и уметности. Посебна пажња посвећена је утицају који је глобални дух промене имао на Социјалистичку Републику Југославију из перспективе уметничких истраживања тада младих уметника који су стварали у Београду у намери да пронађу нови уметнички језик кроз жанр перформанса.

**Кључне речи:** 1968, политика, идеологија, уметност, перформанс, језик

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## MORAL CORRUPTION IN SHAKESPEARE'S *MACBETH*<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The paper deals with the notion of moral corruption in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. It hopefully proves that the roots of the protagonist's moral corruption stem from diverse social and historical circumstances rather than from his innate capacity for evil, as some critics suggest. By offering the chronicles of crimes and portraying the relationships with the female characters, Macbeth's pangs of conscience are utterly exposed. The paper also includes a detailed account of the notion of guilty conscience and what it uncovers about the protagonist's psyche and the nature of his supposed wickedness.

**Keywords:** moral corruption, conscience, guilt, society, psyche

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared as a part of the project *Modern Trends in Researching English Linguistics and Anglophone Literature and Culture*, conducted at the University of Niš – Faculty of Philosophy (183/1-16-1-01).

## Brief Introductory Remarks

The paper deals with the notion of moral corruption in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and its roots. Our research has the aim of showing that despite his undeniable villainy Macbeth was not born destined to perform evil deeds but that he rather became corrupted under diverse external influences. We will offer a detailed analysis of the play with respect to four key points: the chronicles of his crimes, the role of the female characters in the play, the consideration of the feelings of guilt and the origin of their moral corruption. Bearing this in mind, the theoretical background of the paper is mostly, but not solely, based on Bloom's *Shakespeare – The Invention of the Human* (1998) and Freud's postulation of the psychoanalytical theory – *Some Character-Types Met With In Psychoanalytic Work* (1916).

## Macbeth's Wrongdoings

As Kamčevski points out in his work '*Stars, hide your fires...*' – *A Study in Shakespeare's Psychological Method* (2010), two very different Macbeths can be perceived at the beginning and at the end of the play. Namely, Macbeth undergoes a tremendous psychological shift during the course of the play. In order to appreciate the extent of his change it is important to sketch a portrait of Macbeth as he is shown prior to all the crimes he eventually committed.

Macbeth himself appears on the stage for the first time in the third scene of Act I. The play opens with the appearance of the three witches, the weird sisters, who inform the audience that they intend to meet Macbeth upon a heath 'When the battle's lost and won' (I, i, 348). Knights notes in his work *Macbeth as a Dramatic Poem* (1933) that these words signify the kind of metaphysical pitch-and-toss that is about to be played out with good and evil (Knights 1933: 191). Likewise, the weird sisters here utter the words which will echo through the entire play: 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair' (I, i, 348). Their words imply confusion and contradictions. Knights comments yet again on the witches' words in his work *Some Shakespearean Themes* (1960) and states that they suggest the reversal of values which will mark the entire play and which are associated with the premonitions, disorder and moral darkness into which Macbeth will plunge himself (Knights 1960: 122). The supernatural opening of the play is succeeded by



a scene in a camp near the battlefield where the audience learns something about Macbeth's character for the first time. We glimpse Macbeth from the account of the unnamed sergeant who gives the report of the ongoing battle to King Duncan and his two sons. He states that Macbeth killed the rebel Macdonwald and describes him as follows: 'brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name –' (I, ii, 348). He goes on to say that the two generals, Macbeth and Banquo, continue to fight vigorously against the unexpected assault by the Norwegian army. Thus, the image we get of Macbeth at the very beginning of the play is that of a courageous warrior, loyal to his king and devoted to the destruction of his enemies. The Sergeant conveys the image of Macbeth's warlike skills in combat against the traitor by saying that Macbeth 'unseam'd him from the navel to the chaps / And fix'd his head upon our battlements' (I, ii, 348). Moreover, the king learns from the Scottish nobleman Ross that a final victory over the Norwegian intruders has been won and decides to award Macbeth with the title of the Thane of Cawdor. Such an image of Macbeth as an epic hero begins to waver and alter from the very first time he appears in the play and as the audience sees him interact with the witches.

Macbeth appears on the stage for the first time accompanied by Banquo and they meet the three witches. The witches hail Macbeth with three titles, the Thane of Glamis, the Thane of Cawdor and the king-to-be. After such an address, Banquo's words reveal Macbeth's reaction: 'Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear / Things that do sound so fair?' (I, iii, 348) The very fact that Macbeth winces at hearing the witches address him as the future king could be seen as the first manifestation of his guilty conscience. We may guess that he has had thoughts of kingship before the encounter with the witches and thus was startled at hearing his secret desire verbalized. The witches then prophesy that Banquo shall not himself be king but shall be the father of many kings and then they vanish into thin air. Macbeth and Banquo rejoin the king and other noblemen and the first prophecy comes true as the king greets Macbeth with the title of the Thane of Cawdor. The king shows sincere gratitude and favor to the two generals and promises them advancement in their positions and success and they all start towards Macbeth's castle. Once the first prophecy comes true, Macbeth's mind begins its toil to decide whether he should act towards its final fulfillment or not. However, at this point, he is still far from the fatal decision.

If left to himself and to the dilemma that the witches have produced in his mind, Macbeth would, quite possibly, have refrained from committing

the crime of regicide. However, straight from the influence of the witches' prophecy, he moves to the influence of his ambitious wife, Lady Macbeth. Booth states in his work *Macbeth as Tragic Hero* (1951) that Macbeth should have simply waited for the third prophecy to come true, without doing anything himself, for if the witches were right about the two titles he gained, then the third and most desired title would also have become his (Booth 1951). However, he is urged to act by his wife from whom we learn something more about Macbeth's nature:

...Yet do I fear thy nature.  
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great;  
Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,  
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win. (I, v, 350)

Thus we learn that Macbeth is just and kind though admittedly ambitious. However, his wife is there to corrupt his better nature and convince him to murder the king.

It is stated in *Bloom's Shakespeare Through the Ages: Macbeth* (2008) that, in addition to his many crimes, Macbeth also committed a crime against the ancient law of hospitality when he killed a guest in his house whom he should have dutifully protected (Bloom & Marson 2008: 29).

However, the taunts of Lady Macbeth on the account of his masculinity and the urgings of his own ambition overrule his finer judgment in the end and he murders the sleeping king in his chambers. He murders him with the daggers of the king's own guards (who were at the time fast asleep due to intoxication with wine arranged by Lady Macbeth) and then frames them for the deed. In the morning, when the deed is discovered, Macbeth slays the guards allegedly in his blind fury caused by the beloved king's death. Duncan's sons flee the court after the murder fearing that whoever killed their father will try to kill them as well. Their escape arouses suspicion of their guilt and thus Macbeth is crowned the king of Scotland.

Having gained the crown does not bring Macbeth peace and ease of mind. Given that the prophecies made to him by the witches all come true, then the same must go for Banquo who is promised to be the father to the line of kings.

Bloom states in his work *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1998) that the possible cause of Macbeth's moral demise is his childlessness. The sterility of the Macbeths as a possible explanation of their moral degradation shall be discussed in the part of the paper dealing with the roots of Macbeth's moral corruption. For now, it is important to state that Macbeth is led to commit his second crime in order to make sure that Banquo's heirs will not be kings after him. Namely, he hires assassins to murder Banquo and his son Fleance. Banquo is killed on Macbeth's orders; however, Fleance manages to escape. At the feast in his castle following Banquo's death, Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo and loses his temper due to fear and guilt. Given Macbeth's unusual behavior and the two murders that occurred unexpectedly, two noblemen, Ross and Macduff become suspicious and flee to England to join Duncan's eldest son Malcolm and plead with the English king to help them rid Scotland of the 'tyrant' Macbeth.

Tortured by his conscience and ambition, Macbeth decides to seek out the witches and ascertain his destiny. The witches perform a spell and Macbeth sees a number of apparitions who warn him against Macduff (of whom Macbeth was by that time suspicious himself) and prophesy that '...none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth' (IV, i, 354) and 'Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him' (IV, i, 355). However, to the burning question troubling his mind, whether Banquo's heirs shall indeed be kings the apparitions offer no consolation. Instead, Macbeth sees a procession of eight crowned kings, the last of whom carries a mirror, with Banquo's ghost walking at the end of the line. Before Macbeth manages to ask for clarification, the witches once again vanish into thin air.

By this time in the play, Macbeth's great change has already occurred. Indeed, Knights notes that after killing Duncan, there is something compulsive in his other crimes and that he is no longer a free agent (Knights 1960). It can be perceived how Macbeth decides more easily to order Banquo's and Fleance's murder without the moral dilemmas that preceded the murder of Duncan. After the second encounter with the witches, he decides, yet more easily, to order the murder of Macduff's wife and children.

The murder of Macduff's wife and children is the next crime added to the list of Macbeth's wrongdoings. However, after convincing him to kill Duncan, Lady Macbeth ceases to be his accomplice as he no longer seeks

her council or informs her of his plans so as to spare her the knowledge of his bloody intentions. Thus, Lady Macbeth's demise begins and she commits suicide by the end of the play, tortured by her awakened conscience.

Macbeth does not stop, however. He is somewhat appeased by the assurances of the apparitions of his invincibility. However, all that comes to the test when Malcolm and Macduff, aided by the English king, return to Scotland with a besieging army. Having already committed the fatal mistake of trusting the witches, Macbeth begins to lose himself and appears half-mad near the end of the play. Knights notes that '...it is not only the besieging army that hems him in; he is imprisoned in the world he has made' (Knights 1960: 140). Macbeth's adversaries cut down Birnam Wood and use the boughs and leaves to camouflage the approaching army. Thus, Birnam Wood indeed comes to Dunsinane Hill. In Act V, scene VII, Macbeth commits the only murder in the play which the audience actually sees; he slays the son of Lord Siward. It is significant that the only murder committed by Macbeth the audience gets to see is the one that can be justified, as it happens during the battle. This was cleverly arranged by Shakespeare so that the audience could feel sorry for Macbeth and attempt to justify his conduct. According to Sir Quiller-Couch in his work *Shakespeare's Workmanship* (1918) the only way the audience can sympathize with Macbeth is if we suppose that his crimes proceeded from the deadly influence of hallucinations (Sir Quiller-Couch 1918: 178). The play ends with Macbeth dying at the hands of Macduff who informs him that he was not born by woman but '...was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripp'd' (V, viii, 357). At the very end of the play, Macbeth is killed by the man born through Cesarean section and his reign comes to an end. Malcolm reclaims the usurped throne of his father with the promise of the new age for Scotland.

Macbeth is the shortest tragedy written by Shakespeare. Knights states that there is nothing superfluous in this play and that the action moves directly and quickly to the crisis and from the crisis to the full working out of plot and theme (Knights 1960: 122). And yet, short and direct though the play is, it proved to be sufficient to show the downfall of the man that could have been great.

## **Macbeth and the Female Characters of the Play**

The Weird Sisters are the characters who open the play. It has already been stated how their chants and the usage of contradictions such as 'fair is foul, foul is fair' and 'when the battle's lost and won' (I, i, 348) symbolize the moral confusion that pervades the entire play. Moreover, they inform the audience that they are about to meet Macbeth, so we get the impression that they have already mediated some sinister plan. The logical question that rises is who or what these witches actually are. In the play they are referred to as 'the witches' and 'the weird sisters', however, we should note the meaning of the word 'weird' more closely as it used to mean something quite different in Shakespeare's day. According to Mabillard in her article *The Weird Sisters* (2000) the word 'weird' in this play comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'wyrð' meaning 'fate' which makes them the foretellers of Macbeth's destiny (Mabillard 2000). Furthermore, the word 'fate' immediately raises the association with the Fates, the three mythological women, the personifications of destiny, who were believed to have supremacy over human fate, with the power to control or cut the threads of life.

The witches are thus wrapped in a veil of mystery and their physical appearance does not help us much in interpreting them. The dreary appearance of the witches, according to Kamčevski, reflects the darkness of Macbeth's intentions and their chanting signifies the loss of the moral compass (Kamčevski 2010: 155). They can be interpreted as temptresses that awaken Macbeth's ambition and his hidden desires. Their temptations continue when they next appear on the stage accompanied by Hecate, the Queen of Witches, and produce from their cauldron a number of apparitions that further mislead Macbeth.

Shamas compares the witches with the Great Goddess in her book *"We Three": The Mythology of Shakespeare's Weird Sisters* (2007). Namely, they correspond to the third form of the goddess – the hag. As such, they represent femininity and the powers of the Goddess banished from the patriarchal societies. It can be noted that the witches appear during the battle and that they address the two generals, representatives of the patriarchal world. The witches then represent the feminine aspect which is marginalized and banished from this hierarchal system and which abides in the world of nature and the elements. According to Holderness, Potter and Turner in the book *Shakespeare: The Play of History* (1987), the witches are in rebellion against this patriarchal system and all the taboos

and distinctions that sustain it (Holderness, Potter, Turner 1987: 134). The temptation of the witches is carried on by another representative of the feminine in the play, Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth appears for the first time in Act I, Scene V when she receives a letter from Macbeth informing her of the witches' prophecy. In the soliloquy cited above she mentions the kind nature of her husband which she fears and she decides to convince him to act towards the fulfillment of the prophecy. The hypothesis that Macbeth and his wife already had dreams of attaining the throne or even murdering Duncan is once again made quite possible. Just as Macbeth winced at hearing the witches name his hidden desire, Lady Macbeth proceeds to making plans for manipulating her husband into murdering the king the moment she reads the letter. Lady Macbeth prepares to act, and in order to do so, she must set aside her conventional, feminine role, and must make use of masculine characteristics, much like Queen Margaret in *Richard III*. Thus, she invokes the spirits of murder as follows:

...Come you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here  
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full  
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose nor keep peace between  
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,  
Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief! (I, v, 350)

By this ominous request, Lady Macbeth expects to be ready to act and exert influence which would not be possible if she kept her role as a female. However, this 'unsexing' of her own will does not bring her the complete fulfillment of her wishes as we will further show. Moreover, Sandra Gilbert states in her article '*Unsex Me Here*': *Lady Macbeth's 'Hell Broth'* (2016) that Lady Macbeth was, in a way, dehumanized by her unsexing as she stepped out of the natural order in which 'the milk of human kindness' nurtures moral feeling. Likewise, through this dehumanization, Lady Macbeth further aligns herself with the three witches (Gilbert 2016). From the moment of her unsexing, Lady Macbeth begins her fatal urging of Macbeth

towards the completion of the bloody deed. As soon as he arrives, he is under her compelling influence.

Upon learning that Duncan will spend the night in their home with the intention of leaving the following day she states: 'O, never / shall sun that morrow see!' (I, v, 350) Lady Macbeth is now at the height of her power and influence and she expresses stunning confidence and mettle. Her husband, even now tortured by doubt and guilt, appears powerless under her will.

Lady Macbeth assumes the male role in her relationship with her husband and exerts her power over him. She constantly taunts him by making reference to his manliness and putting his reputation at stake. When Macbeth exhibits signs of a change of heart or, due to his feelings of guilt, decides to quit their vile scheme, Lady Macbeth touches upon his courage as follows:

...Art thou afeard  
To be the same in thine own act and valour  
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that  
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life  
And live a coward in thine own esteem,  
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would'  
Like the poor cat i' the adage? (I, vii, 351)

Macbeth answers as follows in defense of his valor:

I dare do all that may become a man;  
Who dares do more is none. (I, vii, 351)

By his words we know that Lady Macbeth hit the spot. Macbeth defends himself and his courage, which means that he does feel they are being brought into doubt. Once he begins to doubt himself, Macbeth becomes an easy victim and is soon led on to agree to commit the deed he dreads. Lady Macbeth continues in the same manner:

When you durst do it, then you were a man,  
And, to be more than what you were, you would  
Be so much more the man. (I, vii, 351)

She goes on exaggerating her own courage and making him seem an even greater coward by comparison:

...I have given suck and know  
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me –  
I would, while it was smiling in my face,  
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums  
And dash'd the brains out had I so sworn as you  
Have done to this. (I, vii, 351)

We shall recall this passage again when we consider the childlessness of the Macbeths. A claim of such ruthlessness does seem unreal, but to Macbeth it signifies that a woman has more nerve than he does, and with this she defeats his moral considerations. He states:

Bring forth men-children only,  
For thy undaunted mettle should compose  
Nothing but males. (I, vii, 351)

Lady Macbeth thus succeeds in convincing her husband to murder the king. This is what Wayne Booth states in his work *Macbeth as Tragic Hero* (1951) about her taunting:

...she shifts the whole ground to questions of Macbeth's valour. She twits him for cowardice, plays upon the word 'man', and exaggerates her own courage. Macbeth's whole reputation seems at last to be at stake, and even questions of success and failure are made to hang on his courage: 'But screw your courage to the sticking place / And we'll not fail.' So that the meaning of his past achievements seems to hang on the decision to murder Duncan. (Booth 1951: 189)

She proceeds by making sure that Duncan's guards are heavily intoxicated and Macbeth kills the king. After the deed is done, he feels such remorse and guilt that he needs to be ordered around by his wife who does not lose her composure. She is as yet in full command of the situation and she even states that 'Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had done't.' (II, ii, 351) We will get back to these words shortly. It has already been noted how Macbeth committed all the other misdeeds far easier after he had killed Duncan. The same cannot be said for his spouse. Her steady downfall begins once Macbeth starts to act completely independently of her, and when she is no longer his accomplice.

Macbeth does not tell her that he hired assassins to kill Banquo and his son Fleance, but he states: 'Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, /



Till thou applaud the deed' (III, ii, 353). The last time we see Lady Macbeth onstage before her mental breakdown is at the feast when Banquo's ghost appears. Upon seeing the ghost (and as he is the only one who sees it), Macbeth is overridden with guilt and he behaves strangely in front of the other noblemen. Lady Macbeth appears yet again composed and aids him by saying that his behavior is but a fit he has been having since his youth and bids the noblemen pay no attention to it. She says apart to Macbeth yet again: 'Are you a man?' (III, iv, 354).

This is the last we see of Lady Macbeth before her illness and eventual suicide. It seems that she was firm in her intent and strong in will until she achieved her goal. Having gained success, her downfall followed almost instantly. This peculiarity of Lady Macbeth was noted by Freud in his work *Some Character-Types Met With in Psycho-Analytical Work* (1916) and he used her as an example of people ruined by success.

Freud notes how there are people who seem to fall ill at the moment when they reach the fulfillment of a long-harbored wish. At the bottom of such a paradoxical occurrence lies a deep-rooted feeling of guilt which stems from their infantile sexuality. That is why, when their long-yearned-for, forbidden wish comes true, they undergo a complete mental breakdown. We should now recall Lady Macbeth's words of how she would have murdered the sleeping Duncan had he not resembled her own father. It is possible that this was a hint at her infantile sexual feelings towards her father that were not resolved and which have tortured her ever since, culminating with her demise. A sexual wish towards a parent of the opposite sex is normal for infants in the process of sexual development according to Freud. At this stage, they already feel that this desire is shameful and thus must not be expressed, which is why they feel guilt for harboring it. When the infantile sexuality is not resolved and a person experiences a fulfillment of another forbidden desire, it evokes the troubling memories from this early developmental phase which can then cause psychological damage.

The last time we see Lady Macbeth in this play is in her sleep-walking scene. She has gone mad and in her sleep she begins to walk the castle and attempt to wash her hands which she claims are blood-stained. There will be more talk of this occurrence in the next segment dealing with guilty conscience in *Macbeth*. For now, it is important to state that Lady Macbeth who has previously been observed to say: 'A little water clears us of this deed' (II, ii, 351) now makes a complete shift to the following words: 'All

the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this / little hand. Oh, oh, oh!' (V, i, 356) After this, the audience learns that Lady Macbeth committed suicide as the culmination of her illness.

The fact that the Macbeths had no children is very significant. Some commentators claim that the issue of childlessness pervades the entire play and indeed it plays a very prominent part. Macduff's wife and children are slain on the orders of the childless Macbeth. If we recall Lady Macbeth's mention of how she has known the love a mother feels for her child we can only conclude that their child died or that she has had a child or children by a prior marriage. However, we have no way of finding that out. If we next consider Lady Macbeth's taunting on account of Macbeth's manhood, it does not seem far-fetched to assume that he may have been either impotent or sterile. It would also seem reasonable to assume that Lady Macbeth came to regret her urging of the spirits to unsex her. This is what Freud says about her illness:

I believe Lady Macbeth's illness, the transformation of her callousness into penitence, could be explained directly as a reaction to her childlessness, by which she is convinced of her impotence against the decrees of nature, and at the same time reminded that it is through her own fault her crime has been robbed of the better part of its fruits. (Freud 1916: 3018)

It is important to state, however, that even though Lady Macbeth, to use Kamčevski's words 'tipped the balance to the other side of the scales' (Kamčevski 2010: 156) in convincing Macbeth to murder the king, she cannot be taken as fully responsible for this crime. Indeed, as Gordić Petković states in her foreword to Stefanović's translation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: 'The female influence, presented through the characters of the witches and Lady Macbeth, cannot create ambition where there is no ambition, but it can awaken it and move it to action.' (Gordić Petković 2003: 18). Macbeth has all along had a wish to attain the throne as well as the ambition to raise his position in society. The female characters merely led him on into following his secret, corrupt desires. Given that Macbeth himself was aware of his own vaulting ambition, during the course of the play he can be perceived to be suffering from severe pangs of conscience almost from his very first appearance on the stage.

## **Guilty Conscience in *Macbeth***

Bloom states that 'Macbeth suffers intensely from knowing that he does evil, and that he must go on doing even worse' (Bloom 1998: 517). From his shudder at the witches' mention of his kingly prospects we are aware that Macbeth is not void of ambition, however, at the beginning of the play, he is still far from being set on committing the crime.

At this point, murder is to him scarcely imaginable, and it can be concluded that what unfixes his hair and makes his 'seated heart knock at my (his) ribs' (I, iii, 350) is precisely his conscience, the one that made him shudder upon hearing the prophecy. Unfortunately, the thought of murder is not destined to remain 'fantastical' (I, iii, 350) to Macbeth for long, since he swiftly moves to the persuasive influence of his wife.

Once Macbeth arrives with Duncan to his castle, the struggle to decide whether he should or should not commit regicide begins. Macbeth is perceived to be constantly changing his mind, and Lady Macbeth taunts him incessantly as we have shown in the previous segment. Here we should bear in mind that in Elizabethan England, conscience was viewed as an instrument of providence. Thus, Macbeth fears damnation for the mortal sin he is about to commit. Not only is Duncan the Lord's anointed ruler, his own cousin and guest, but there are also his undeniable virtues to consider.

Duncan's virtues and the goodness he expresses towards Macbeth are, according to our protagonist, bound to cause his eternal damnation. Likewise, Macbeth here admits that it is his own ambition that tempts him and drives him towards the unpardonable crime. After further consideration he tells his wife: 'We shall proceed no further in this business' (I, vii, 351). He appears to be on a moral see-saw, constantly moving between two options none of which he deems acceptable. In the previous part we have given an account of the fierce tauntings of Lady Macbeth and her iron will to convince Macbeth to perform the deed, thus, it is not the least surprising that she should succeed. Macbeth eventually claims: 'I am settled, and bend up / Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.' (I, vii, 351). His mind is made up to follow her advice. Lady Macbeth instructs him to '... look like the innocent flower / But be the serpent under it' (I, v, 350). He begins to act adhering to her instructions and the following words echo her sinister advice: 'False face must hide what the false heart doth know' (I, vii, 351).

The first act ends with these words and the next act will see a new, changed Macbeth – Macbeth the regicide.

Once resolved to murder Duncan, Macbeth experiences his first hallucination. Namely, he perceives a floating dagger leading him on to Duncan's chamber. The dagger appears in the first scene of act two, and when the second scene commences the deed has already been performed and thus not shown in the play. It has already been stated that Duncan's murder is not shown on the stage so that the audience can feel pity for Macbeth. According to Gordić Petković, the act of murder has been omitted, but not so Macbeth's struggle before and after it (Gordić Petković 2003: 20). The sense of mental agitation roused by this inner struggle pervades the entire play. Thus, the feeling of guilt is present through it all and it provokes the hallucination of the dagger. The following is stated in *Bloom's Shakespeare Through the Ages: Macbeth* (2008): 'Macbeth has no powers of introspection, so it is ironic that he frames this illusionary weapon as a "dagger of the mind, a false creation." It demonstrates once again that there is a constant undercurrent of self-doubt, that he is tormented on a deep and unconscious level' (Bloom 2008: 31). It is indeed evident that Macbeth is constantly in doubt and insecure concerning his actions and decisions but he rarely pauses to examine them in detail. This lack of introspection on Macbeth's part makes it possible for Lady Macbeth to sway him from his decision to let go of his bloody intention.

Macbeth appears on the stage after the murder of Duncan badly shaken. He tells Lady Macbeth how the chamberlains awoke once and before going back to bed said their prayers. Macbeth wanted to say 'amen' with them, but could not, the words remaining stuck in his throat. This is another example of the divine concept of guilt; being that he killed his king, he can no longer partake in prayer as the act of murder is a direct violation of God's law. Moreover, Macbeth claims that he heard a voice cry out '...Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep" (II, ii, 351). The voice is yet another hallucination he experiences and the ensuing insomnia an additional harbinger of his tormenting feeling of guilt. In his agitation, Macbeth forgot to leave the chamberlains' daggers next to Duncan's body and informs his wife that he cannot return to the scene of the crime. He cannot stand to behold his hideous crime. Lady Macbeth, irritated by his shrinking and repenting goes to the chamber to frame the chamberlains. Macbeth examines his bloody hands with the feeling of guilt culminating.

The symbol of dirty hands appears several times throughout the play. It signifies the guilt which stains the soul. The need to wash his hands and

make them clean again represents Macbeth's yearning to be absolved of the crime he committed. Xu, Bègue and Bushman studied the connection between the feeling of guilt and hand washing and in their article *Washing the Guilt Away: Effects of Personal Versus Vicarious Cleansing on Guilty Feelings and Prosocial Behavior* (2014) they state that such cleansing can be found in various religious rituals, such as baptism, where water is used to wash away sin and make the person clean and pure (Xu, Begue, Bushman 2014). This is then another link of conscience and providence, as religious rituals are used to rid an individual of the feelings of guilt. Unfortunately, Macbeth does not achieve redemption although he heartily regrets murdering Duncan which he openly states: 'To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself / Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst! (II, ii, 351)

Macbeth's guilt gradually accumulates as the play progresses. 'O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!' (III, ii, 353) Macbeth states. And indeed, to his troubled conscience is added a new worry, the promise of the witches that Banquo's heirs shall be kings in the future. That is why Banquo becomes his next victim. However, unlike Duncan, Banquo reappears as a ghost at the feast in Macbeth's castle and drives Macbeth into a fit. It is very significant that Macbeth is the only person who can see the ghost being that it is a projection of his throbbing feeling of guilt; however, Banquo's ghost serves another function as well. According to Stoll, his errand is plain: 'it is prophecy, retaliation, vengeance. He sits in Macbeth's royal chair as a token that none the less his seed shall sit here hereafter.' (Stoll 1907: 206) The knowledge that a dreadful crime has been committed in vain, for somebody else's issue is unbearable to Macbeth, which is why the audience begins to perceive him as deranged in the ghost scene.

Macbeth muses how the dead can rise from their graves unlike in the past when the death of the body was absolute. He estimates this illogical occurrence as a breach of the natural order. What he does not perceive is the underlying meaning of this 'rising'. According to Knights, the dead rise in the murderer, that is, in his troubled mind, given that murder is not natural between men and as such represents a violation of his essential humanity (Knights 1960: 134). Macbeth lives in dread of his conscience and thus, to him, there is no scarier sight than that of the ghost of his victim – the very personification of his guilt.

His ever present pricks of conscience leave no doubt as to his guiltiness and Macbeth is aware of this as much as the audience. Unfortunately,

Macbeth sees no alternative and no way back. He likewise continues his bloody reign and progressive downfall until his death, which he meets at the hands of Macduff. He states: ‘...I am in blood / Stepp’d in so far, should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o’er.’ (III, iv, 354) He does not return and carries on guilt-ridden to the very end.

Lady Macbeth vanishes from the audience’s sight quite abruptly. After she intervenes and endeavors to provide an explanation for Macbeth’s unusual behavior when he sees Banquo’s ghost, she disappears and we do not see her sane again. When she reappears on the stage, the audience sees her sleep-walking and obsessively washing her hands. This is deeply contrasted to her previous claim to Macbeth which she used as a consolation after he murdered the king, and that is: ‘a little water clears us of this deed’ (II, ii, 351). In the madness scene, she proves that her encouragements and reassurances made to Macbeth are not valid and cannot apply to either of them. From her ramblings we gather that she is referring to past events, which means that she is experiencing flashbacks. In her article *Mental Illnesses in Macbeth* (2017) Tandon states the following:

This scene indicates that while she is sleepwalking, Lady Macbeth is flashing back to memories of deeds that still haunt her. Although she seemed to be poised in front of Macbeth, her flashback proves that she has a guilty conscience, and her treacherous deeds have a deeper effect on her than she shows. (Tandon 2017)

Lady Macbeth’s breakdown goes to show that even seemingly unflinching and ruthless minds can eventually suffer under the blows of conscience. Macbeth, who is no stranger to those blows, asks of the doctor attending on Lady Macbeth:

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,  
And with some sweet oblivious antidote  
Cleanse the stuff’d bosom of that perilous stuff  
Which weighs upon the heart? (V, iii, 357)

However, there is no surgical solution for the guilt one experiences which is a lesson that the Macbeths learn the hard way. Lady Macbeth’s lapse into madness is followed by suicide and Macbeth himself is referred to as mad and deranged until the end of the play.

The atmosphere the play produces is that of trouble, dismay and haunting unease. There are numerous references to and invocations of darkness and night and the majority of the plot happens in the dark. Knights states:

Both Macbeth and his wife willfully blind themselves ('Come, thick Night', 'Come, seeling Night...'), and to the extent that they surrender the characteristically human power of intellectual and moral discernment they themselves become the 'prey' of 'Night's black agents', of the powers they have deliberately invoked. (Knights 1960: 139)

However, their attempt to blind themselves to their crimes and thus fool their conscience evidently fails. Thus, our protagonist, according to Hazlitt, rushes towards the goals of his ambition and recoils from them betraying the harassed state of his feelings. We perceive him as perplexed and absent in thought, sudden and desperate in act from distrust of his own resolution throughout the entire play (Hazlitt 1955: 14).

### **The Roots of Macbeth's Moral Corruption**

Macbeth has been compared with Doctor Faustus by many critics and likewise termed an over-reacher. His ambition is, of course, undeniable and evident throughout the entire play. As we have already shown, there is an eerie link between Macbeth's shudder upon hearing the prophecy of the witches and the readiness with which Lady Macbeth starts making plans for Duncan's murder the moment she reads her husband's letter. This behavior indicates premeditation; it appears that both of them have had dreams of attaining the throne and quite possibly of murder. Such an interpretation sheds a new light on the events of the play. Gordić Petković claims the following: 'If we accept such an interpretation, we perceive quite differently the prophecy of the three unusual women: the witches could then be a projection of Macbeth's desires, that is, a fantasy or a hallucination that reflects his hidden urges' (Gordić Petković 2003: 22).

Once a person loses control of their ambition and lets their desires and urges overshadow their better judgment, they are in danger of losing themselves in the process, much like Macbeth. Kamčevski warns us: 'We saw the dark side of the ambition and how, unless controlled by the use of

the moral code and humane means, it can come to control the ambitious one' (Kamčevski 2010: 161). Thus, we can say that Macbeth is guilty of succumbing to his own ambition, aided by his wife's taunting and the misleading prophecy. If we consider now the influence of the witches and their prophecy, one would be justified in remarking that Macbeth should simply have waited for the third prophecy to come true on its own, without his intervention and that the prophecy does not excuse him. However, Booth states: '...it is also true that almost any man could be thrown off his moral balance by such supernatural confirmations. His misunderstanding is thus obvious and dramatically effective and at the same time quite forgivable' (Booth 1951: 188-189). Dismissing the influence of the prophecy will not do, for in a situation such as the one Macbeth experienced, where one is faced with forces beyond human comprehension, it is not surprising that one should be misled and eventually succumb to the lowest urges.

While the evil in Macbeth is undeniable, it should be more closely defined. Like Faustus who signed his doom with his own blood, Macbeth parts with his better nature through his greed. Knights states that 'Macbeth defines a particular kind of evil – the evil that results from a lust for power' (Knights 1960: 120). It can be learned from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* that ambition, which in itself does not necessarily imply vileness, can easily reach proportions harmful to one's humanity. Macbeth is easily swayed throughout the play as he does not engage in introspection and show a faulty perception of his own personality which is just as dangerous as his vaulting ambition.

We should recall Macbeth as we first saw him in the play. He is described as a great warrior, fearless in battle and loyal to his king; we should remember Duncan's gratitude towards Macbeth and the honors he bestows on him. However, this positive image of heroic Macbeth vanishes from the audience's memory the moment he begins to plot Duncan's murder. But it is undeniable that this too is a part of Macbeth's character. It is hard to imagine such valor and devotion in a man predestined to be evil. If we set aside what he becomes at the end of the play, we would be justified in saying that Macbeth was indeed an honorable thane fighting for the king he pledged to follow. His reputation and past achievements are very important to him and thus we should recall how Lady Macbeth used to make all this depend on him murdering Duncan, as if it would all have been in vain if he spared the king. Booth rightly notes how she shifts the whole ground to the question of his valor and how she makes it appear that



his whole reputation is at stake (Booth 1951: 189). With this in mind, we perceive a new significance of Duncan's murder. It was done not only for the sake of the throne, but as a matter of personal reaffirmation. Kott states that 'Macbeth has killed not only to become king, but to reassert himself. He has chosen between Macbeth, who is afraid to kill, and Macbeth, who has killed.' (Kott 1986: 73) The fact that he feels such a strong need to prove himself uncovers his lack of self-knowledge and insecurity.

Macbeth as we see him in the play is a fully-grown man and a thane. He is in a position to rule and influence other people and as such it is expected of him to have a sense of direction and set principles and goals. However, his insecurity and the ease with which he is swayed from his track by his wife and the witches indicate the contrary. This is the fault George Held finds with Macbeth in his work *The Difference Between Macbeth and Richard III* (2014). He states:

...he lacks that quality which one associates perhaps above all else with great political leaders: a sense of direction. In mid-life he still has not worked out for himself the relative values of things. Not knowing what he wants for himself, he can hardly know what he wants for others. It is for this reason that he is so easily imposed on by others, such as his wife and the witches. He seeks direction from them since he does not find it in himself. (Held 2014)

That Macbeth is not constituted to be a ruler proves true once again when he becomes the king. His short reign was marked as a dark period in Scottish history and he was termed 'a tyrant'. Yet another possible source of his insecurity has to do with his childlessness and it will be elaborated later on in this paper. In order to consider Macbeth fully as a character, we shall now take into account Macbeth's personality prior to his encounter with the witches. Based on his resistances to the pressure of his own ambition and the manipulation of his wife and his constant feelings of guilt, we can conclude that he is not thoroughly vile. Had it not been for the prophecy and subsequently the influence of his wife, we can imagine how he would have lived out his life as an honorable thane, loyal to the crown. According to Booth, the victory of evil over potential goodness is a prominent element of this tragedy. He states:

His crimes are thus built upon our knowledge that he is not a naturally evil man but a man who has every potentiality for

goodness. Indeed, this potentiality and its destruction are the chief ingredients of the tragedy. Macbeth is a man whose progressive external misfortunes seem to produce, and at the same time seem to be produced by, the parallel progression from great goodness to great wickedness. (Booth 1951: 184)

We can agree with Booth that Macbeth indeed was not a ‘naturally evil man’ but that he nonetheless committed certain fatal errors that caused his devastating corruption.

One of his errors undoubtedly is the fact that he succumbed to his worst impulses. This is directly linked to his faulty self-awareness and a certain gullibility exemplified in his swift surrender to his wife’s will. Booth sees Macbeth’s errors as follows:

His tragic error, then, is at least three-fold: he does not understand the two forces working upon him from outside; he does not understand the difference between ‘bloody execution’ in civilian life and in military life; and he does not understand his own character – he does not know what will be the effects of the act on his own future happiness. (Booth 1951: 189)

The effects on his psyche are devastating and lead to his ultimate demise. However, such insecurity, self-doubt and moral confusion somehow do not fit the character of Macbeth, the great and courageous thane from the opening of the play. It seems as if we are missing a crucial piece of the puzzle in viewing his disposition. The solution has been offered by many critics (Bloom and Hughes among others) who found the answer to the central problem of the play in the childlessness of the Macbeths.

It is evident that the Macbeths have no children, unlike Duncan, Banquo and Macduff. At the very beginning of the play, what first incites Macbeth’s anger towards Duncan is him naming his son Malcolm the Prince of Cumberland. Macbeth states: ‘The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step / On which I must fall down, or else o’erleap, / For in my way it lies.’ (I, iv, 350) Though it does appear logical that if he is to be the new king, Duncan’s heir is an obvious obstacle, there is something more sinister in his cry ‘The Prince of Cumberland!’ (I, iv, 350). Macbeth is likewise a nobleman of Scotland, and yet he does not have an heir. The significance of a male heir for rulers is a known fact and throughout history many kings and their queens anxiously awaited the birth of a son. Usually, the blame for the lack of male heirs or childlessness was cast upon women. However, in the case

of the Macbeths we have Lady Macbeth's testimony that she is or was a mother, for she states: '...I have given suck and know / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me' (I, vii, 351). Here we must once again engage in speculation. We might conclude that the Macbeths had a child that died; on the other hand, such an interpretation seems unlikely as Lady Macbeth emphasizes that she has known the love a mother feels for the child which strikes as if she were contrasting her knowledge of the parent's love to Macbeth's ignorance thereof. If they had had children, she would probably have alluded to their common knowledge of the love parents feel for their children. It appears, however, that Macbeth is excluded from her statement and that she alone experienced parenthood. A more likely interpretation then would be that Lady Macbeth has or had a child (or possibly children) by a prior marriage. This would then prove her fertility and put the blame for their childlessness on Macbeth.

According to Hadley and Hanley in their article *Involuntarily Childless Men and the Desire for Fatherhood* (2009), the burden of childlessness bears huge psychological consequences on men, including a sense of loss, depression, exclusion, isolation, among others. The desire for posterity is an integral characteristic of human beings as a species and so the suffering caused by childlessness transcends historical periods. Macbeth must have likewise felt all those dreadful feelings mentioned in this modern-day study despite the difference between historical periods. After all, the question whether Lady Macbeth has had children or not and whether they were Macbeth's children as well is irrelevant when faced with their evident childlessness during the course of the play. Bloom is one of the critics who emphasized Macbeth's infertility. He states:

Freud, shrewder on *Macbeth* than on *Hamlet*, called the curse of childlessness Macbeth's motivation for murder and usurpation. Shakespeare left this matter more uncertain; it is a little difficult to imagine Macbeth as a father when he is, at first, so profoundly dependent on Lady Macbeth. Until she goes mad, she seems as much Macbeth's mother as his wife. (Bloom 1998: 522)

Macbeth expresses dependence on his wife as if she were his mother, and Lady Macbeth states that she would have killed the sleeping Duncan herself had he not resembled her father as he slept. Based on these occurrences, the play gives out a strong sense of unresolved infantile sexuality and palpable sexual tension. That is why Bloom likewise notes that killing becomes a

mode of sexual expression for Macbeth; given that he is unable to father children, he slaughters them (Bloom 1998: 529).

Bloom also points to the similarities between *Macbeth* and Shakespeare's narrative poem *The Rape of Lucrece*. In this poem, a Roman soldier Tarquin enters the chamber where chaste Lucrece is sleeping and rapes her. The comparison between Macbeth and Tarquin is made by Macbeth himself who says that he '...with Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design / Moves like a ghost' (II, i, 351). He then enters, much like Tarquin, the chamber in which his victim is sleeping. The fact that we do not see Duncan's murder on stage only intensifies our imagination; if we take murder to be Macbeth's mode of sexual expression, then the stabs he inflicts on Duncan's body seem like thrusts. This, however, is not the only sexual allusion in the play. Another one is made in the only scene which offers comic relief in this play – the porter scene.

The aforementioned comic relief occurs in the third scene of act two. In this scene the porter goes to answer the knocking at the gates grumbling comically along the way. He says that he was up late carousing and that alcohol causes red noses, sleepiness and urination. He also remarks the following: 'Lechery, sir, it provokes and unprovokes: it provokes / the desire, but it takes away the performance.' (II, iii, 351) According to Bloom, this scene offers far more than just a comic interval in an otherwise dark plot. It possibly offers the clue for the better understanding of the protagonist. Bloom states:

Drunkness is another equivocation, provoking lust but then denying the male his capacity for performance. Are we perhaps made to wonder whether Macbeth like Iago, plots murderously because his sexual capacity has been impaired? If you have a proleptic imagination as intense as Macbeth's, then your desire or ambition outruns your will, reaching the other bank or shoal, of time all too quickly. The fierce sexual passion of the Macbeths possesses a quality of baffled intensity, possibly related to their childlessness, so that the porter may hint at a situation that transcends his possible knowledge, but not the audience's surmises. (Bloom 1998: 528)

If we take this to mean that Macbeth's sexual capacity is impaired, then Lady Macbeth's taunting can be seen in a new light. It would be much easier for her to impose domination over Macbeth if his confidence was shaken by a

sexual impairment. Furthermore, all Macbeth's self-doubt and insecurities could be explained by his inability to perform. According to Kott, in this childless union Lady Macbeth plays the man's part and demands murder of Macbeth as a confirmation of his manhood, almost as an act of love (Kott 1986: 71). Thus, to prove his manhood and spare himself the humiliation, Macbeth is induced to commit the dreadful deed.

Freud likewise saw the issue of childlessness as the central problem of our protagonist. The whole play seems to revolve around fathers and sons. It does seem like too big a coincidence that Macbeth should hear of his kingly prospects from the witches and at the same time hear them name somebody else's children as the kings-to-be. Not only do they place a 'fruitless crown' on his temples, but they also mock him when the apparitions show the procession of eight kings followed by Banquo's ghost holding a mirror. For a man enduring the sorrow of childlessness, this is enough to incite in him anger and vengefulness.

Next we shall consider the murder of Macduff's wife and children. Macduff did run away to join Malcolm in England, but his wife and children need not have paid the price of his betrayal. Macbeth is, however, contrasted with Macduff when the apparitions warn him against this man. Macduff turns out to be his chief adversary and the man destined to kill Macbeth. Macbeth's childlessness becomes evident when he is brought into comparison with Macduff, an accomplished father. This observation does not evade Macbeth and his jealousy of Macduff's posterity is enough to make him order such a gruesome crime. Upon hearing that his wife and all his children have been killed, Macduff cries: 'He has no children' (IV, iii, 356). Freud interprets these words as follows:

There is no doubt that this means: 'Only because he is himself childless could he murder my children.' But more may be implied in it, and above all it might lay bare the deepest motive which not only forces Macbeth to go far beyond his own nature, but also touches the hard character of his wife at its only weak point. (Freud 1916: 3018)

Macbeth is indeed guilty and not only of murdering Duncan and ordering the deaths of Banquo and Macduff's family. He is guilty also of usurping the throne and robbing his country and countrymen of the time of peace, ushering them instead into a turbulent, violent period which lasts until his demise. Freud sees an instance of poetic justice in Macbeth's childlessness, for he states:

It would be a perfect example of poetic justice in the manner of the talion if the childlessness of Macbeth and the barrenness of his Lady were the punishment for their crimes against the sanctity of generation – if Macbeth could not become a father because he had robbed children of their father and a father of his children. (Freud 1916: 3018)

## Conclusion

In his works, Shakespeare brilliantly presents human nature and the key problems we still face to this day. Though the modern world as we know it differs greatly from the time in which Shakespeare wrote his plays, human nature in essence has not changed. That is why in reading Shakespeare we learn about ourselves and the world around us. Severe moral corruption represents an acute problem nowadays, so it is important to understand the true origin of moral degradation and endeavor to prevent it. The atrocities of the two World Wars, the horror of the Holocaust and the ever-present threat of nuclear destruction are indicators of the ever-present possibility of evil and violence, and thus the need to know the origin of moral corruption and how to prevent it is still a burning problem for the human kind.

The example of Macbeth shows that generalizations and demonization of individuals do not solve the problem. To understand evil as being innate is a deception which serves the function of concealing its true origin. It is important to realize that moral corruption mostly stems from the society and its fixed norms. *Macbeth* reminds us that we are all human and as such are subjects to flaws and vice. Rather than bring out the worst in each other, we should endeavor to enhance and encourage one another's virtues and potentiality for goodness.

Freud's theory of psychoanalysis tells volumes about the nature of our mental development and the significance of love and understanding for the development of healthy individuals. Thus, we should note the importance of showing love and affection to the people around us, for the power to corrupt and induce evil lies in our hands and so does the responsibility for its prevention. Rather than simply note the corruption in others and ponder its origin and the question of whether it could have been prevented, we should learn from the great works in literature and ultimately be humane.

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Received: 14 May 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018



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## МОРАЛНА ИЗОПАЧЕНОСТ У ШЕКСПИРОВОЈ ТРАГЕДИЈИ МАКБЕТ

### Сажетак

У раду се проблематизује појам моралне изопачености у Шекспировој трагедији *Макбет*. Корени моралне корупције главног јунака ове Шекспирове драме траже се у разноврсним друштвеним и историјским приликама насупрот прилично заступљеним алузијама појединих књижевних критичара на Макбетову урођену склоност ка злу. Кроз разоткривање Макбетових злочина и детаљан опис његових веза са женским ликовима, у раду се такође посебна пажња поклања појави гриже савести. Стање свести, као и природа наводне моралне изопачености главног јунака се потом детаљно критички преиспитују.

**Кључне речи:** морална изопаченост, савест, свест, кривица



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## FACES OF EMPIRE IN GRAHAM SWIFT'S *WATERLAND*

### **Abstract**

Aside from being Graham Swift's most famous piece of writing and probably one of the most praised British novels of the 1980s, *Waterland* is considered by many critics to be the embodiment of the postmodernist novel. Linda Hutcheon used it as an example to illustrate what she defined as "historical metafiction" and when one thinks of *Waterland* it is usually in connection with history and the role it plays in the life of ordinary people. It is interesting how, at first glance, the particular kind of history Graham Swift is addressing in this novel seems to escape both reader and critic. On further investigation, however, what does not escape is the underlying presence of Empire in the novel, which is the reason why this paper examines its versatile role in Tom Crick's version of history.

**Keywords:** Waterland, Empire, Graham Swift, postcolonial, postmodern

### **Introduction: *Waterland* in the Network of Interpretations**

When one thinks about Graham Swift, it is difficult to decide whether to categorize him as a modernist or postmodernist author. Critics who engage in reviewing and investigating Swift's work do not always agree on this point, which has remained moot for several decades (just to give a couple

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of examples, in their respective studies of contemporary British fiction, Malcolm Bradbury would identify Swift as a modernist author (Bradbury 2001: 6) while Nick Bentley would categorize him as postmodernist (Bentley 2008:31)). Swift's complex work can definitely be interpreted from these two different standpoints, but the most challenging one is perhaps to study it within postcolonial discourse, an endeavour which we have undertaken (Gledić 2016; 2018). However, aside from adding the postcolonial aspect of his work to the aforementioned binary list, we are more inclined to agree with those authors who would not define Swift as a postmodernist author, but still recognize such elements in his work (some examples of like-minded scholars interested in Swift would be Daniel Lea and Peter Widdowson who are in agreement with this view in their studies on the author (Lea 2005: 4, Widdowson 2006: 4-6) or Catherine Bernard who categorizes Swift's style as quietly rebellious, resembling the waters of the Fens. (Bernard 1991: 8)).

In her ground-breaking work on postmodernism, Linda Hutcheon declared the former "centre" a thing of the past and stated that "our culture is not really the homogenous monolith (that is middleclass, male, heterosexual, white, western) we might have assumed". (Hutcheon 1988: 12) This, naturally, implied a re-evaluation of the past as presented to a modern-day audience and Hutcheon assessed the issue of the past in contemporary postmodernist literature. In a way, she propelled Graham Swift into the spotlight of postmodernism by including the example of *Waterland* in her definition of it (Swift's work has also been discussed as falling in line with Brian McHale's postmodernist theory as expressed in *Postmodernist Fiction* (Tollance 2011: 109)). Historiographic metafiction, which Graham Swift makes use of in this novel, is, according to Hutcheon, a very important aspect of postmodernism, it proves its connection to history and denies claims of it being dehistoricized or ahistorical. (1991: 57) In her discussion on *Waterland*, Hutcheon states that "What historiographic metafiction like *Waterland* or *I the Supreme* ask, as we have seen, is whether the historian *discovers* or *invents* the totalizing narrative form or model used." (1991: 64) The unreliability of both the source and the content are what Swift himself addressed in *Waterland*, but along with this he presents the stand that learning, teaching and acknowledging history is both obligatory and essential:

... history is that impossible thing: the attempt to give an account, with incomplete knowledge, of actions themselves undertaken

with incomplete knowledge. So that it teaches us no short-cuts to Salvation, no recipe for a New World, only the dogged and patient art of making do. I taught you that by for ever attempting to explain we may come, not to an Explanation, but to a knowledge of the limits of our power to explain. Yes, yes, the past gets in the way; it trips us up, bogs us down; it complicates, makes difficult. But to ignore this is folly, because, above all, what history teaches us is to avoid illusion and make-believe, to lay aside dreams, moonshine, cure-alls, wonder-workings, pie-in-the-sky – to be realistic. (Swift 1984: 94)

This, certainly, is what is reflected in the “real world” we populate as we have frequently asked ourselves, within these past decades, whether all of history is just a story, and “his” story at that. However, one should never forget that even though it all may indeed be just a story, we should try to get to the bottom of it, to explore it, to see what is missing in it, to find all its different versions.

### ***Waterland* in the Chains of History**

We are of the opinion, and in this we join *Waterland's* main protagonist Tom Crick, that to ignore history or to cast it aside as pure fabrication would be a mistake. In Hutcheon's opinion, postmodernism suggests “no search for transcendent timeless meaning, but rather a re-evaluation of and a dialogue with the past in the light of the present”. (Hutcheon 1988: 19) Furthermore, postmodernism “does not deny the *existence* of the past; it does question whether we can ever *know* the past other than through its textualized remains”. (Hutcheon 1988: 20) Consequently, postmodernism calls for all voices to be heard. As if following the same line of thought, Tom Crick keeps asking himself throughout *Waterland* whether history is nothing but another story. As a history teacher, he relies on stories to teach his students, but at some point he starts telling them random stories that have nothing to do with “real history” and it becomes hard for the reader to discern what the actual “truth” of it all is. During this endeavour, we encounter one of Tom's students, a boy named Price, who is fixated on the present and thinks that instead of being focused on things past, history classes should dwell on issues in connection with “Afghanistan, Iran, Northern Ireland, the ills of this worn-out Great Britain of ours.” (Swift

1984: 143) With this character, Swift presented Crick with an opponent in the battle on the meaning of history, but not in the form of Crick's superiors, who want to abolish the school subject of history, but as part of a new generation, the one that will inherit the world from the likes of Crick and his ancestors. Price is the founding president of "The Holocaust Club – the Anti-Armageddon League" and Crick holds that Price's pessimistic view of the future is nothing new, it is the feeling that Saxon hermits felt, that the people who built the pyramids felt, that Crick's father and grandfather felt, that Mary felt: "It's the old, old feeling, that everything might amount to nothing." (Swift 1984: 233) Regardless of this fact, Crick does not seem to believe that it was his generation's responsibility to save the next one. (Swift 1984: 223) He understands Price's concerns, but holds his ground when matters of history are concerned, because "we move in circles" (Swift 1984: 118), not knowing where salvation lies, and no one can really know which way to turn. Crick is painfully aware of the fact that history causes us to advance and retreat, but one should not let go of it all the same. Furthermore, although he grew up in a place where "nothing is hidden from God" (Swift 1984: 248) with the coming of adulthood he abandoned the idea of a higher might and guiding force (Swift 1984: 203-204; 232) so there is nothing else to comfort him but his own never-ending curiosity and inquisitiveness.

What *Waterland* undoubtedly seems to illustrate is that personal stories contribute to our perception of history as much as an official account does. This would again draw our attention to the voices unheard and it could be argued that Tom Crick has articulated this new approach to history in the postmodern text. (Jovanović 2012: 194-195) In the words of Linda Hutcheon: "Tom Crick is in some ways an allegorical representation of the postmodern historian who might well have read, not just Colingwood, with his view of the historian as storyteller and detective, but also Hayden White, Dominick La Capra, Raymond Williams, Michel Foucault, and Jean-François Lyotard." (1991: 56) Tom appears to have been infected with all the contemporary ailments of pessimism: "And there's no saying what heady potions we won't concoct, what meanings, myths, manias we won't imbibe in order to convince ourselves that reality is not an empty vessel." (Swift 1984: 35) Furthermore, when compared to history, which has proven to be a constant companion, "... the Here and Now, which brings both joy and terror, comes but rarely – does not come even when we call it. That's the way it is: life includes a lot of empty space. We are one-tenth living tissue,

nine-tenths water; life is one-tenth Here and Now, nine-tenths a history lesson. For most of the time the Here and Now is neither now nor here.” (Swift 1984: 52) Adding the aforementioned moving in circles, Tom’s view of the world and people’s place in it appears sombre, although he keeps pushing history to the foreground as a virtual life jacket. In attempting to save his own life by recounting his personal history, Tom occasionally loses his way in being temperate and objective. For this reason, he may appear to the reader to be unjustifiably taking up space in the novel, playing the role of the be-all and end-all of his own personal quest for answers. In the words of Pamela Cooper: “Although Tom—as a contemporary version of (a fictional representation of) a Victorian entrepreneur—works into his story a provisionality and doubt which question the stability even of narrative itself, he clearly admires the imperialist values of his ancestors”. (1996: 378) Tom’s narrative style is so dominating that his dedication to history and pursuit of curiosity have been deemed “essentially imperialistic” (Lea 2005: 91), he “silences women’s histories” in the story (Orr 2016: 86), he is the “star” of his own show (Bernard 1991:101) and his story pervades over the past “like the Atkinsons did over the Fens”. (Meneses 2017: 140)

In the realm of postmodernism, where history is viewed in a new light, chapters that used to be considered closed are being reopened and re-examined. Still, as our access to history is “conditioned by textuality” (Hutcheon 1988: 16) one cannot escape the painful fact that every document ever written in the course of history was written by someone who at a certain point of time had their own fence of circumstances and personal point of view. There can be no “unpositioned centre” (Jenkins 2009: 82) from which one can view history and “we only have representations of the past from which to construct our narratives or explanations” and even though the past did exist, it “exists *for us – now* – only as traces on and in the present.” (Hutcheon 1991: 58; 73) We deal with traces that have been left as such, and those that were always written from a certain point of view. No account is ever unbiased, and it is for this very reason that Hayden White equates the historian with the storyteller. (1978: 82) Historians can be viewed as individuals who have chosen certain elements and presented them from their own point of view. Every individual adds a certain nuance to their own version of the past. This stems from people’s personal obsessive relationship with the past that never leaves them; as William Faulkner put it: “... time is a fluid condition which has no existence except in the momentary avatars of individual people. There is no such thing as *was*

– only is. If *was* existed, there would be no grief or sorrow.” (Cowley 1965: 141) Tom Crick is achingly aware of this fact, and throughout the novel he mentions it several times, first in connection with his mother’s death: “And though, indeed, it only happened once, it’s gone on happening, the way unique and momentous things do, for ever and ever, as long as there’s a memory for them to happen in ... ” (Swift 1984: 237-238) and “Yet it is as it was, was as it is. *Is*was. It’s the past! What stops but remains.” (Swift 1984: 273), and then in the context of losing what he believes is his unborn child: “But then we’ve already stepped into a different world. The one where things come to a stop; the one where the past will go on happening... ... We’ll be here for ever.” (Swift 1984: 263) In order to cope with the passing of time, people are forced to compartmentalize the feelings and experiences from their personal pasts. It could be that the selective view of collective or national history stems from this necessity, in addition to it being intentional at times.

In the context of Graham Swift’s novels, the storylines of which heavily rely on the past and its role in people’s lives, it is of vital importance to take into account what kind of history paved the way for any kind of activity that takes place in them. The lives of characters whose ancestors lived in the disputably glorious time of the British Empire cannot be viewed in the same light as we would view, for example, characters who belong to nations that used to be colonized or oppressed in any other way. Neither can it be said that Swift is an active critic of imperial policy, as the main focus of his novels is not open criticism of such a societal structure and idea of progress, but it is in the subtlety of his descriptions where one can find, if one looks carefully enough, mild but visible criticism of all that Great Britain used to stand for in the course of the centuries preceding the time frame of his novels. According to Hutcheon, *Waterland* is “a didactic fictive lesson or a meditation on history – or both. No historical characters populate this book, but it is a profoundly historical work none the less, in both form and content.” (1991: 54) The “real” history is constantly interlaced with Tom’s and other characters’ personal stories: “Imperial myths and yarns, ghost stories, narratives of progress, and delusions can all be contrasted with material facts and counter narratives of failure. The grand narrative of British glory and progress ends in the failures of the 1940s. ... But in all this, it should be noted that these illusions and these yarns have effects. They shape history, events, and actions just as reality does.” (Malcolm 2003: 93) Taking into account all the above said, imperialism will play a pivotal role in reconstructing the history of this novel and its characters.



## Empire on the Stage

As *Waterland's* story spans several centuries, one should fully acknowledge the fact that the British Empire and its imperial policy will be part of the package that we call "history" in this novel. Consequently, it is inevitable that we try to treat this novel in the light of postcolonial theory, in addition to the postmodern aspect. With the aim of taking into account all the various bits of the "whole story", it is the role that Empire plays in Swift's work that we find particularly interesting and worthy of closer examination. To Hutcheon's suggestion that, in *Waterland*, "[i]n the opposition between the history-teacher narrator and his present-oriented students are enacted the conflicts of contemporary historiographic debate" (1991: 72) we would add that this opposition also reflects the changes that have come about in British society after the disillusionment the end of Empire brought to Great Britain. It is this sense of disillusionment and reflections on the British nation as a whole that various Swift scholars have noted in their studies of him. For example, Daniel Lea wrote that Swift's "... abiding diagnosis of British society in the second half of the century is of a chronic melancholia that mourns the lost stabilities of the past with a lachrymose nostalgia. The sense of dislocation and alienation that bedevils the subject springs from a systemic abandonment of institutional authority and its replacement by an ideological and ethical free-for-all that champions its democratic relativism even as it disavows collective responsibility." (2005: 10-11) Pamela Cooper compared Swift's *Waterland* and *Last Orders* with Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* in the sense that they depict "... a postwar British society in which the power of empire has dwindled and the country's historical mission is profoundly unclear" (2002: 19) and we presented, as part of our PhD research, how most of Swift's novels could be interpreted within the postcolonial discourse (Gledić 2018). Furthermore, Stef Craps noticed that "At one level, Swift's novels can be read as 'condition of England' novels." (2005: 18) and David Malcolm states that "... throughout Swift's fiction, one has a sense that he is describing and discussing aspects of the nation". (2003: 21)

When we interpreted the work of Graham Swift in the postcolonial discourse, one of our main points was that he was an author living and writing in a postcolonial Great Britain. We are of the opinion that, in addition to every historical document being written under certain circumstances and from a certain point of view this is also true of novelists and other

artists – they are always influenced by the moment in time in which they are creating. As Edward Said put it: “I do not believe that authors are mechanically determined by ideology, class, or economic history, but authors are, I also believe, very much in the history of their societies, shaping and shaped by that history and their social experience in different measure.” (1994: xxiv) The end of Empire in the wake of which Graham Swift was born has to have had a deep impact on his formative years, as a person and as a novelist. Great writers always seem to be more deeply aware of their surroundings than everyone else, so the overall sense of disillusionment probably did not escape him. Yet, however talented, every artist is still human, and people “cannot avoid representation”. (Hutcheon 1991: 54) What could be categorized as a drawback in Swift’s overall work – the absence of a more “realistic” view of contemporary British society – could in fact be the representation of a certain segment of British society the world of which looks exactly as it is described. Graham Swift himself has said that “It’s true that in a fundamental sense all fiction writing is autobiographical, since where else does it come from but from within the author?” (2009: 1) and when discussing one of Swift’s other novels, *Last Orders*, one critic noticed that the world as presented in Swift’s fiction is the world his narrators would see. (Malcolm 2003: 19) *Waterland* falls under this category in its failure to openly address the pressing issues of the British colonial era and its legacy.

Great Britain, as a country and a nation, has changed a lot during this past century. The disappearance of the spirit of imperialism, along with other, minor factors, was the driving force behind this change. After the Second World War and the end of Empire, it was necessary to re-awaken a renewed sense of the nation. As Stuart Hall put it, “National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about “the nation” with which we can *identify*; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it.” (Hall 2000: 613) The construction of English identity is visible in the stories of Tom Crick, and the story of some of his ancestors and their fellow countrymen in a way tell the story of England (or Britain) itself. Nevertheless, and in spite of the abundance of stories that *Waterland* presents, it is in the untold stories of this novel that we look for the attitude toward Britain’s questionable past. The silence in *Waterland* has been recognized as one of the key elements of the novel’s impact on the reader and the value of the novel as a whole (Bernard 1991: 108), the silence can

be interpreted as an anti-narrative which stops Tom Crick from being in fact what he is speaking against (Meneses 2017: 147) and it can also be viewed as an act of resistance, as unhappening is also a form of happening. (Orr 2016: 92) We have already mentioned that certain scholars who interpret the work of Graham Swift find *Waterland's* main protagonist too dominating and/or egocentric, and this is an additional reason why it is useful to carefully inspect what is not being said in the novel.

According to Graham Swift himself, *Waterland* “among other things, deals with nostalgic, grandiose notions about British power, empire, influence in the world”. (Craps 2009: 642) Throughout the novel “hints of a national dimension to the action continually intrude” and the history presented throughout the novel resembles that which is taught in history books. (Malcolm 2003: 79; 103-109) Perhaps the best connection of *Waterland* and postcoloniality is presented in Pamela Cooper’s paper on *Waterland*, in which she states: “Written in the aftermath of empire and self-consciously enmeshed with its legacies, *Waterland* engages the colonialist motifs of propulsion and escape with the aggrieved, derisive passion of a postcoloniality enthralled by the imperialism it critiques.”. Furthermore, “In *Waterland*, as so frequently in postcolonial literature, the processes of psychic individuation effectively model the trajectory of imperialist enterprise—with its dynamic of conquest, its imagery of borders and migration, its hallucinatory anxiety about contact and separation.” (1996: 372-373) Associating *Waterland* with postcolonialism is not so frequent among scholars, although it was interesting to find that one scholar interpreted Swift in light of the Commonwealth of Nations and new trends in literature inspired by a wish to engage in an attempt to transcend a past that oppresses and requires self-reflection, using an inward glance. According to this author, Graham Swift’s novel is the complete opposite of other novels written at the same point in time which expressed longing and nostalgia for the *Raj*. (Jain 2010) We share the opinion that Swift is not nostalgic in terms of Great Britain’s colonial past, but it is definitely there, in the novel’s charged silences.

## **The Many Faces of Empire**

When we interpreted almost the entire opus of Graham Swift within postcolonial discourse as part of our research (Gledić 2018), these were

some of our most prominent findings of postcolonial elements in this novel (we did not dwell on the fact that Tom Crick is perhaps an imperialist at heart): When Tom Crick was a boy, he read the literature typical for the peak of the colonial period – G. A. Henty's novel *With Clive in India*, books that contained a certain amount of propaganda placed in popular reading materials. In her cottage, which will be a place of doom for Tom and Mary, Martha Clay keeps a yellowed newspaper clipping photograph of Winston Churchill. (Swift 1984: 263) When Tom talks about land reclamation, he equates the conquering of land in the East Fens with the British Empire because the zenith is where decline begins. (Swift 1984: 80) In chapter 49, titled "About Empire-building" Tom warns his students that taking back land, reclaiming what was lost, is a model of progress that should not be confused with the building of empires. (Swift 1984: 291) Tom refers to Empire as a fairy tale, one which his contemporaries are ashamed of, and during his childhood Empire Day was celebrated with enthusiasm, but so is Bastille Day in France. (Swift 1984: 155-156) The last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the subsequent rule of King Edward, respectively labelled as prosperous and dear in collective memory, Tom holds to be a period of economic deterioration that England never recovered from. (Swift 1984: 137) When Tom talks about his pupils, we get a glimpse of the multicultural society Great Britain has become after the fall of Empire – Tom mentions Judy Dobson and Gita Khan. (Swift 1984: 168) Perhaps the most notable mentions of Empire in *Waterland* are those connected with the Atkinson family, and this is a connection most papers on *Waterland* deal with. Progress is equated with Empire, and the Atkinsons piously follow the idea of progress. Beer from the Atkinson brewery was sent to Bombay, for the British soldiers to drink, and it was called "Atkinson India Ale". (Swift 1984: 79) The Atkinsons paid their debt to the Empire by opening numerous establishments, like an orphanage, a town newspaper, a public meeting-hall, a boys' school, a bath-house, a fire station. As a private empire, they paid their dues with regards to the National Interest. Their beers were frequently named in honour of Empire: "The Grand '51", "The Empress of India", "The Golden Jubilee", "The Diamond Jubilee". (Swift 1984: 80) This does not come as an unusual fact to the reader because Arthur Atkinson is presented as a big supporter of imperialism and imperial policy. (Swift 1984: 90) Tom tells his students that Arthur did not know what disappointment the Victorian Age would bring, and the early twentieth century brought only loss and regret with regards to Arthur

Atkinson's "confident sentiments". (Swift 1984: 81) Arthur's son Ernest was not of the same opinion as his father. He was an avid opponent of building the Empire and praising the progress of Great Britain. (Swift 1984: 186) Sarah Atkinson, who seems to have foreseen numerous events, according to the narrator may also have predicted the end of Empire because he views her as resembling the figure of an intrepid Britannia, with a helmet, trident and shield, sitting on a sea-girt rock and staring in an unknown direction. (Swift 1984: 81)

After more detailed consideration of these findings, which was not part of the initial round of research, more possible interpretations emerged – the seemingly imperialistic plot of *Waterland* might, in fact, be interpreted as subdued criticism of Empire. In this sense, the face of the British Empire is present in different forms in the novel and its role is versatile. The abandonment of a grand narrative implies the abandonment of any straightforward tale of Empire, and even though *Waterland* describes, in minute detail, the eternal conflict between the land (the solid soil on which Empire rests, represented by the Atkinsons) and the water (the muddy whirlpool that benefits no one, represented by the Cricks) it could be that the tale of Empire is in fact contained in the untold story of *Waterland*. If it is not the land, but the water that symbolizes Empire, what seems like chaos and disorder could in fact be the underlying state of affairs which is always there, lurking in dark waters, waiting to return. The water occasionally rises, as does the desire to rule, it drowns everything in its wake, but it is forced to return where it came from, only to get ready for the next wave of attacks. When the Empire retreats, the land goes back to the people. In this sense, *Waterland* could be another name for Great Britain because Great Britain will forever be connected to the great Empire it once was.

*Waterland* could be interpreted as a novel about everyone; as one critic noticed, the names of three important protagonists are Tom, Dick and Harry (Gallix 2003: 84) as in "every or any Tom, Dick and Harry, anyone, indiscriminately" as the saying goes. And if it truly is so, as this same critic writes, that like Conrad's Marlow, Tom remains in the shadows so that we can get a better look at the other characters (82), then it is precisely those characters who are on the margins that carry this possible hidden meaning the novel could hold. One face of Empire could be that of Dick who, according to Daniel Lea is "trapped between the past and the future", and is "a hybrid" because he is not completely "human". (2005:

90) According to the same author, Dick also “personifies the instinct to flow backwards”. (2005: 90) We would agree to a certain extent with both statements from the former sentence, but not the latter one. Dick is indeed a hybrid, and trapped between yesterday and tomorrow, but not for the reasons stated in this study; we believe that he is a symbolic product of both worlds, the world of Empire and that of “regular folk” and that his way of communicating is unintelligible for many because he is the keeper of secrets and the key to a different world. In our opinion he is not flowing forwards because he is a constant reminder that the idea of Empire will never die. This could further be illustrated by John Schad’s equating Dick with “posthistorical ‘Nostalgia’” which is “‘Too Big’ for the hole or void that is the novel’s postmodern world”. (1992: 912)

Dick is a silent presence for most – Tom, the little man, the regular person, confronts him and reminds him what he is a product of. The little people may not always win, but sometimes they see reality in a different way. In this sense, Tom would be one of those people who could have predicted the inevitable end of Empire and colonial policies. Dick could also be the face of Empire because, even though he does not talk, he has a hidden message, which is obvious because he speaks to his motorcycle. This could be just a coincidence, were it not for the fact that when Dick disappears at the end of the novel it is this very same motorcycle that remains behind like a silent, haunting presence the wheels of which will keep on turning, even though someone else will be riding it. Dick, though interpreted by the regular folk as someone not quite normal, could in fact be the indecipherable policies and stands which were the product of a few men which then took root in the masses. Even though Dick is described as mentally challenged, his brother is forbidden to help him, which would be very strange were it not for the fact that Dick is practically deified through this act (in addition to repeatedly being referred to as “the saviour of the world”, which equates him with God or Jesus Christ). His real name, Richard (the middle name of his biological father), perhaps resonates as that of Richard the Lionheart or other great English kings, while his nickname, even though usually interpreted as pertaining to his sexuality, could perhaps be indicative of all the qualities a phallic symbol carries with it – manhood, power, courage, strength. The past, conveniently locked in a chest, belongs to Dick and Dick is the only one who has a key. At the end of the novel, Dick disappears, and one cannot be certain what has happened to him. Perhaps one might conclude that, as a face of Empire, Dick could

not live in isolation, misunderstood, so he disappears, symbolically taking the Empire with him, but it is still in the waters, it is all around, but it is elusive. François Gallix compared Dick's disappearance in the deep waters of the Ouse with Arthurian legends about the return of the King (2003: 96), but it could also imply the dateless but certain return of Empire.

When examining the opus of Graham Swift as a whole, one can claim with certainty that female characters in his works are depicted in less detail and are smaller in number than their male counterparts. However, even though their roles are often small, they are quite memorable. The women in *Waterland* follow this pattern. A few papers have been written in connection with *Waterland's* female character's and they are connected to suspected misogyny and unfair treatment of the female body. But what if those characters, like Dick's silence, carry within them a certain undercurrent of power? What if the women of *Waterland* too can be viewed as the faces of Empire? Let us start with Sarah Atkinson, the beautiful wife of Thomas Atkinson, who on that fateful night of 1820 suffers a blow to the head which renders her speechless and virtually unconscious. She lives to be over ninety years old, but she spends more than half a century sitting in the same place, in the same blue velvet chair in the upper room of the family home, looking through the window, watching over Water Street, "keeping her watch over Nothing". (Swift 1984: 78) Her husband will die still trying to speak to her but without success. But what if Sarah was the essential notion of Empire which got hit in the face? What if the idea of a truly great Great Britain was betrayed by the personal interests of certain individuals? Individuals like Thomas Atkinson. Thomas Atkinson and his peers could be viewed as having betrayed the basic idea of Empire which did become warped by the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this sense, just like Dick, Sarah could be perceived as representing Empire, but also God in the shape of a woman. She is a merciless judge and she can see the future. Like a deity, she seems to control the waters because after her death floods arise and rain keeps pouring for days. In these floods, Arthur Atkinson's heir Ernest Atkinson is born, the man who will be a herald of change as far as the attitude towards Empire is concerned. After the floods, Atkinson beer will never be the same, and the aforementioned heir was born three weeks premature, prompting us to think that the waters of history called him to join them. In Catherine Bernard's interview with Graham Swift, she mentions Sarah Atkinson who "embodies a kind of grotesque allegory of England" (Morel 1996: 11) but we would dare to

venture beyond the grotesque and see in Sarah, just as we do in Dick, one of the many faces of Empire.

Ernest Atkinson, born in the floods of 1874, will be the complete opposite of his grand ancestors, and people generally did not approve of him. (Swift 1984: 140-141) Ernest shied away from politics and after the brewery burnt down on Coronation Day in 1911 Ernest slowly withdrew from public life, leaving Gildsey altogether in 1914. This, coincidentally, corresponds with the beginning of the First World War which Ernest was strongly opposed to. During the war, Ernest makes only one, fateful, public appearance with his daughter during a military parade in the spring of 1915. The parade could not be carried out because of the commotion his daughter Helen's beauty caused. The story turns incestuous from this point – the father falls in love with his daughter and begets a son who he believes will be “the Saviour of the World”. (Swift 1984: 197) Pamela Cooper holds that: “In Ernest's regressive passion for Helen the trajectory of imperialism is reversed; its expansive energies are redirected towards an interior space of desire, neither subjective nor objective, but abject: the body of the daughter. ... this redirection aborts the narrative of self-consistent individuation which shapes the plot of imperialism.” (1996: 380-381) But what if Ernest Atkinson's genuine love for Britain is embodied in his love for Helen? What if Helen is all the forgotten beauty of a once great country, and imperialism in its purest form is what he is striving towards? What if he was hoping that by begetting a son, he would save what once was sacred and unmarred? After all, Ernest had a special relationship with his heritage, he could drink the Atkinsons' famed beer and not get drunk. (Swift 1984: 186) He initially appeared to be the most sober and reasonable one in all his family. However, the original idea of Empire appears to have turned in on itself in the figure of Ernest Atkinson and he himself seems to have foreseen its end, killing himself and leaving his son a farewell letter in which it is evident that he has his misgivings about beauty and Empire (in it he tells Dick that he should not have children but that this is of no importance because he will save the world (Swift 1984: 279-280)).

Almost like a commodity which belongs to everyone, Helen will be passed on from the Atkinsons to the Cricks, moving from one class to another, from a rich house to a poor one, keeping her kindness and her poise in the process. She will bring up her sons by telling them beautiful stories and she will maintain her special relationship with her firstborn. Henry Crick's very existence seems to depend on this beautiful woman



who once again, like a powerful deity, rules the household like a silent force to be reckoned with. Like the Empire, Helen was beautiful but she perished and following her death her husband will cut ties with national identity – he will claim not to remember anything about the war that he took part in. For his part, Henry produces a son who questions History while Helen will be the last to speak to her special son, giving him the key to his (grand)father's chest and with it the key to the past. This chest, containing some of history's well-kept secrets, will disappear in another episode of epic flooding which will take place in 1947 and also claim the life of Henry Crick. The lock keeper's cottage will also disappear and the dam which was a guard against the intrusion of history will become a thing of the past.

The third important female character in the book, and perhaps the most memorable one, is Mary Metcalf, Tom Crick's childhood neighbour and friend whom he subsequently marries and takes to London to be his life companion. Mary and the little gang of friends, who had fun in their little corner of the world while a war was raging in other parts of Great Britain and Europe, are of vital importance to the story's core. Freddie Parr, Tom's neighbour, could be considered an ordinary boy, Dick, Tom's brother, was different and special in every way, while Tom was somewhere in between, neither here nor there, neither plain nor special. As one of the little people, Freddie played no role in the workings of Empire, and the baby Mary carried was most probably not his. He lost his life, presumably at the hands of Dick, but this could perhaps have been an imaginary scenario Tom had come up with due to the fear and jealousy he felt with regards to his older brother. He was both afraid of him and unable to understand him, so the story of Dick being a murderer could have been nothing but a fabrication. Additionally, since we never really find out who the father of Mary's unborn baby was, Mary's story about her telling Dick that Freddie was the father of her baby could also have been a lie. But, if that scenario did indeed happen, perhaps Empire killed the little man. On the other hand, even though Tom is not as special as Dick, and has no secret undertakings, he still does play his role in the realm of Empire by taking up the space of the novel and of the main character in the story, which becomes His-story. He and Mary both *grow up* without a *mother*, which could be taken to mean both their literal, biological mother, and their motherland which experienced the beginnings of its end as Tom and Mary reached their formative years. Mary's baby, whose father we cannot

be certain of, could be taken to mean the future of Great Britain as a great imperial force. While Tom and Mary are walking towards the secluded hut, planes are flying to Germany on their newest bombing spree. Mary's baby meets its end in Martha Clay's hut, adorned by a yellowed newspaper clipping with a photograph of Winston Churchill. And even though Tom is instructed to stay outside, he stumbles into the cottage mid-procedure and looks in the pail at the remains of the dead foetus, realizing that is what the future looks like. Mary's very name lends her the echo of sacredness, presents her as the Holy Mother of God. She attends school in a convent, she is educated by nuns, when she attempts to kidnap a baby in later life Tom describes her as resembling the Holy Mother. She too is mystified, when she disappears after the abortion of her baby, nobody knows how she spent her time, not even her husband. There is a chance that she was visited by Sarah Atkinson, which would imply a secret bond between the women in *Waterland* (Mary will also be the one to nurse Tom's father after the death of his wife Helen). Women are often presented as mysterious in Swift's fiction, but in this novel perhaps even more so. In the course of her lifetime, Mary loses not one, but two babies, one biological and one imaginary, which was never hers to begin with. If we follow Mary's life story, with the thirty-six years in between the two incidents, it becomes obvious that there will be no Second Coming. All her attempts to bear a child are futile, and if she can be viewed as a face of Empire her role would be to present its barrenness, she cannot give her husband (a man who questions history) what he needs and she is empty.

### **Conclusion: Empire as a Silent Presence**

What we have presented could be but a few possible postcolonial readings of the role of Empire in *Waterland*. In the character of Dick, it is puzzling, mysterious, out of reach, inarticulate, but on the other hand loyal, passionate, hard-working, persistent. In the character of Sarah it is mysterious, dominating, foreboding, unforgiving. In Helen, it is beautiful, innocent, eloquent, mesmerising. In Mary, it is both smart and naive, both knowing and innocent, both lively and barren. In *Waterland*, Empire takes on many forms to show just how versatile and complicated the idea of it can be. The author, like the reader, seems to have a love-hate relationship with it. This all falls in line with the political aspect of postmodernism, as

viewed by Linda Hutcheon: "...it (postmodernism) is certainly political, but it is politically ambivalent, doubly encoded as both complicity and critique, so that it can be (and has been) recuperated by both the left and the right, each ignoring half of that double coding." (1991: 168) Adding postcolonial discourse into the study of *Waterland* allows us to see the entire picture. This novel can sweep over the reader with its overwhelming tales of progress and doubt, and at the next minute it can retreat into the horizon, not promising to ever come back. The role Empire plays is similar – one minute it enthral readers with its grandeur and longevity, only to shock them with the devastation it leaves behind the next. But it is important not to lose sight of the fact that it is always there, lurking in the dark waters of the text. As critics, we must embrace it in order to expose it; this much we owe to the society at large because: "Criticism cannot assume that its province is merely the text, not even the great literary text. It must see itself, with other discourse, inhabiting a much contested cultural space, in which what has counted in the continuity and transmission of knowledge has been the signifier, as an event that has left lasting traces upon the human subject." (Said 1983: 225) We would not agree with the statement that Tom Crick shies away from Empire and that the Fenlands are his microcosm. (Đerić 2015: 71; 94) With his dominating nature and sharp eye, he is fully immersed in all that Empire is. It has been said that some stories are told because of something the narrator wanted to keep quiet about or at least forget, and Tom's story is one of those stories (Đerić 2015: 99 citing Paunović 2006: 168), but to this we would add that perhaps it is the story of Britain's imperial past and its implications and legacy that Swift wanted to address in this novel in order to keep quiet about them or to forget them through his character Tom Crick.

Finally, due to the versatile role that Empire plays in *Waterland*, both because of the position it takes up between a glorious, imperial past and a gloomy, postcolonial future, and its constant rotation between fact and fiction, perhaps the best location to place and examine this novel in is Homi Bhabha's Third Space. As Pamela Cooper put it: "If we read the configurations of landscape in *Waterland* through Bhabha's spatial formulations of alterity, the Fens (and by extension their closest human analogue, the phlegmatic and amphibious Dick) become the terrain of hybridity; the marsh simultaneously fixes and dissolves the frontiers of its own conquest under the aegis of imperialism." (1996: 383) Furthermore, the binary oppositions of water and land present in the novel's title "are

caught within a mutually negating tension that threatens ultimately to propel both into non-meaning in the search for a fixed referent” (Lea 2005: 81) but they cannot exist one without the other. As a postmodern novel, *Waterland* does not have to have fixed referents, it is important to examine all their possible combinations, and we have mentioned a few in this paper. Silt, on the other hand, does not have a binary opposite and exists as a “free-floating signifier” which “seems to occupy a third space outside binary definition” and “is integral, therefore, both to the novel’s symbolisation and to the undermining of those same symbols”. (Lea 2005: 81-82) Dick controls the silt, so he controls the Third Space. If he could be taken to represent Empire, all falls into place. In other words, the postmodern nothingness of doubt is juxtaposed with an outwardly glorious colonial legacy, and these binary oppositions will forever be circling the Third Space, haunted by images of Empire. For some, the story of *Waterland* will always be oppressing, while for others it will be liberating.

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Received: 1 December 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

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## ЛИЦА ИМПЕРИЈЕ У МОЧВАРИ ГРЕЈАМА СВИФТА

### Сажетак

Поред чињенице да представља најпознатије дело Грејама Свифта и вероватно један од најцењенијих британских романа осамдесетих година прошлог века, многи критичари *Мочвару* сматрају отеловљењем постмодернистичког романа. Линда Хачн је искористила пример овог романа да би приказала оно што је дефинисала као „историјску метафикцију“<sup>6</sup>, и када човек помисли на овај роман то обично бива у контексту историје и њене улоге у животу обичног човека. Оно што је интересно јесте чињеница да на први поглед и читаоцу и критичару може промаћи о каквој врсти историје Грејам Свифт говори у овом роману. Када се роман подробније испита, међутим, не може се избећи сусрет са империјалним које вреба испод површине. Из наведеног разлога, овај рад бави се вишеструком улогом империјалног у историји каквом је види Том Крик.

**Кључне речи:** Мочвара, империја, Грејам Свифт, постколонијално, постмодерно

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## **ROLE OF PARATEXTS IN MEDIATING IDEOLOGICALLY ADAPTED TRANSLATIONS IN THE SOVIET UNION: THE CASE OF ROBERT BURNS**

### **Abstract**

The main aim of the current research is to demonstrate how the communist regime established in the Soviet Union after the October revolution and characterized by a centralized state control over all social discourses, including literature, functioned in practice. The paper focuses on reviews, prefaces and articles that accompanied Soviet translations of Robert Burns, one of the most famous and beloved foreign poets in the Soviet Union, their impact on readers and relevance for supporting the official ideology. Due to the variety of materials on Burns published by the Soviet press, the focus of the article is on those works that appeared in the 1930s-1950s when the official image of Burns was initially promoted. Similarity among paratextual devices used by the authorities in the 1930-50s to promote an ideologically favourable image of Burns included above all adaptations and even fabrications of the poet's biography and ideologically favourable interpretations of Burns's poems. The role of manipulative paratextual devices is significant, considering that the target readers' access to the world of foreign culture was limited on the whole to literary translations.

**Key words:** paratexts, ideology, Robert Burns, Soviet, translations

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## I. Introduction

The totalitarian regime established in the Soviet Union shortly after the October Revolution of 1917 was characterized by centralized state control with power over all aspects of private and public life, including the economy, politics and the arts. From the first day of their rule, the Bolsheviks saw the free word as a moral threat to their power. New ideological propaganda dictated harsh restraints on literary production, aiming to purge Soviet society of all expressions regarded as destructive to the new order. All literature published in the USSR had to meet specific state-derived standards, as the political situation created a highly controlled atmosphere with the edicts of socialist realism. Censorship became a primary mechanism of control; henceforth, literature and translations lost some of their public identification with civil society and gained a formal place in the official culture of the Soviet era. Following the new propagandistic role of literature, Soviet writers were expected to advocate the six main virtues of the official communist ideology: collectivism, discipline, love of work, patriotism, proletarian internationalism and atheism (O'Dell 1978: 16-18). Soviet censorship severely suppressed any criticism of the current regime which proved to be the longest lasting and the most comprehensive system of state censorship in the twentieth century.

Bearing in mind the significance of literature for the promotion of socialist values, the Soviet authorities considered literary translations as ideological tools, inevitably influenced by an institution of censorship and strict centralization. According to Gorjaeva, “political censorship had one more, perfect and unmistakable, method, i.e. ideologically corrected translation /.../ which enabled a falsified projection of a development of literature always interpreted according to Marxian-Leninian ideology.” (Gorjaeva 2009: 363) Similarly, Witt claims that,

To the field of translation studies the Soviet case generally provides rich material for the discussion of topical matters linked to issues of ‘translation and power,’ ‘translation and ideology,’ ‘translation and empire,’ etc. In particular, Soviet practices developed within the field of indirect translation, producing such paradoxical entities as “original interlinear trots” and “secondary originals,” supplies new perspectives on such key concepts as source language, target language, authenticity, and translational agency. (Witt 2001: 168)



Consequently, translations, though flowering in the Soviet period and celebrated as an important vehicle in the service of the people, were also subjected to censorship as the essence of the Soviet state's ideological strategy consisting of forcing the public to read what was officially allowed, while isolating people from any other sources of information outside state control.<sup>1</sup> Translators were expected to promote ideological values by changing and adapting the source texts according to the newly established ideological demands.

Though Soviet readers were offered limited access to literature, especially to foreign literature, the authorities also used various paratextual devices, including reviews, criticism, interviews and prefaces, which played a significant role in mediating, guiding and controlling readers' engagement and interpretation. Unfortunately, the authority of subordinated, usually non-professional, commentators to discuss literature was inherent in the limitless executive power of the Soviet system. Paratexts attached to translations were supposed to explain the merits or defects of various authors' works to the readers. As most of them were unfamiliar with the real political and cultural situation in foreign countries, there was always the possibility of a potentially problematic or ambiguous interpretation.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how this stage of control functioned in practice by analyzing reviews and prefaces that accompanied translations of Robert Burns, one of the most famous and beloved foreign poets in the Soviet Union, their impact on readers and their relevance for supporting the official ideology. Due to the variety of materials on Burns published by the Soviet press, the focus of the article is on those works that appeared in the 1930s-1950s when the official image of Burns was initially promoted. Paratexts, which appeared later, followed the established canon closely.

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<sup>1</sup> Russia's long history of censorship has been well documented in numerous publications both by Russian and Western experts. However, the actual records of the vast number of books and newspapers that were subjected to strict censorship in Imperial Russia and the USSR are still only accessible in special collections, the Russian language manual catalogue card archive and printed lists deposited in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg (pre-revolution period) and the Russian State Library in Moscow (the USSR period).

## II. Censorship and control of the publishing process in the Soviet Union: *Glavlit*

Since, in the Soviet Union, censorship was based on reasons of power, and used by governments to force the public to read what was prescribed for it, people were cut off from any other sources of information outside state control (Stelmakh 2001: 145). According to Blyum, this method of keeping a group of people, or the whole nation, ignorant by isolating them from the outside world, has historically been the most successful way of maintaining totalitarian government (2003: 3). In the Soviet Union, official censorship on various levels became a necessary agent for the maintenance of the Soviet State and the Communist Party, regulated by the authorities and organized as a complex, though efficient mechanism (Lauk 1999: 19). The highest decision-making level was represented by the Secretary General of the Communist Party, the Politbureau (central governing body of the Communist Party), the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee in Moscow, and the KGB structures, including the Fifth Department, which determined most of the topics and issues to be banned in publications.

The publishing process in the Soviet Union, monopolized by the state, was also subjected to censorship and strictly controlled. Thus in 1919 all publishing houses were united and subordinated to the major publishing body initially called *Gosizdat* (State Publishing House) and established in order to create a single government organization for printing. *Gosizdat* acted as the Central Committee's main book publisher and was afforded special privileges, including large state subsidies and freedom from external ideological censorship. In August 1930, a new, centralized publishing conglomerate, the Association of State Book and Magazine Publishing Houses known as *OGIZ*, was established. *Gosizdat* remained the core of *OGIZ*.<sup>2</sup>

In 1922, in addition to *Gosizdat*, the official censorship office,<sup>3</sup> named *Glavlit* (General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press

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<sup>2</sup> Even after this time, it was not uncommon for Soviet sources to use the term *gosizdat* to describe the Russian Republic's main publishing operation, regardless of its official name at the time.

<sup>3</sup> Publications of the Communist Party, *Gosizdat*, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, and scholarly writings of the Academy of Science were exempt from censorship.

under the Council of Ministers of the USSR) was established to regulate the Soviet book market. Editors and censors employed at *Glavlit* formed a united filter against authors, received instructions directly from the Party and edited texts, including translations, to serve ideological purposes. The editors-in-chief of periodical publications such as *Innostrannaya literatura* (Foreign literature) and all publishers were accountable to controls led by *Glavlit* and were obliged to provide censors with the plans for texts to be published over the following months (Lauk 1999: 22). *Glavlit's* primary function was to carry out preliminary inspection of nearly all manuscripts and printed material (including translations) as well as photographs, drawings, and maps intended for publication and distribution, and radio programmes (Ermolaev 1997: 3). It had a right to prevent the publication and distribution of any piece of writing, above all, those which:

- (1) contained propaganda against the Soviet regime, the Soviet Union, particular political bodies and figures (a censor had to be aware of the political platform of an author and his/her loyalty towards the Soviet Union and Communist Party);
- (2) divulged military secrets;
- (3) stirred up public opinion through false information;
- (4) aroused nationalist and religious fanaticism, propaganda of fascism, violence or terror;
- (5) were pornographic (Ermolaev 1997: 3-4).

Generally speaking, everything that did not fall under Socialist Realism was forbidden (Richmond and Solodin 1997: 585). Printing facilities and the distribution network were also subordinated to *Glavlit*, which was technically part of the Commissariat of Enlightenment, though in practice it answered directly to the Communist Party's Central Committee, which appointed its board of directors, reviewed editorial appointments, and monitored its work. *Glavlit* was also responsible for purchasing and censorship of foreign literature, registration or shutting down of new publishing houses, regulating print runs, approving publishers and editors, and compiling lists of politically harmful literature that had to be removed from the book market (Clark and Dobrenko 1999: 122).

Thus, in 1922 the Department of Russian Literature denied registration to sixteen publishing houses and twelve magazines in Moscow and Petrograd (Ermolaev 1997: 5).

According to Blyum, *Glavlit* occupied the middle place in the five-level pyramid of control. Below it were filters provided by authors and

editors, above it the directives of the police and the Party, which had to be carried out rigorously (Blyum 2003: 7-8). The product of this system was supposed to be a “pure”, ideologically transparent text that conformed in every respect to the Party’s ideological aims and demands. Above *Glavlit* stood the figure of the Party General Secretary, the head of the Soviet Union, who presented the final level and whose verdict was beyond further discussion (Blyum 2003: 8). Renamed several times, *Glavlit* functioned until the 1990s.

In such an environment, “reading between the lines” and searching for hidden meaning became crucial for the writing and reading process. In order to justify their existence and to demonstrate their cautiousness to prevent any suspicious text from being published, editors scrupulously examined every line. According to Vladimir Solodin, chief Soviet censor, editors’ demands of any kind (additions, comments, erasure) had to be strictly followed. In his own words, he was trusted with tremendous power over the fate of books and the fate of authors, and the writers feared him (Stelmakh 2001: 583). In the case of political or economic publications, it was easier to separate a harmful publication from a “good” one, taking into account only ideological reasons. In the case of fiction, it was more difficult for censors to judge.

The authorities also strictly centralized, censored and controlled the publication and distribution of translations of foreign literature, as a part of the publishing system. Translations of foreign materials had to pass a special censorship control at the Foreign Literature Committee (Committee for the purchase and distribution of foreign literature in the Soviet Union) subordinated to *Glavlit* and were not permitted either in small local libraries or even in private book collections.<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of Culture had the right to coordinate publication of translations by the Publishing House of Foreign Literature (*Izdatelstvo inostranoi literatury*), set up in 1946 to publish Russian translations of foreign literature and also books on social and scientific topics. The publishing house was linked to the All-Union State Library of Foreign Literature, founded in 1948. It selected material from the library and purchased a large number of foreign books and journals from abroad, which were always censored by *Glavlit* (Gorokhoff 1959: 156-157).

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<sup>4</sup> There were one or two notable exceptions such as the Library of Foreign Languages in Moscow.

The choice of texts was strictly regulated. Translators had to obtain at least two recommendations for their translation from scholarly institutions or specialists and secure the agreement of the appropriate chief editorial office in the State Committee for Publishing. Only after this could they submit details of the work for “coordination” to the State Committee or (in the case of scientific and technical works) to the State Scientific and Technical Library (Sherry 2012: 15).

The selection of translators, and of authors to write any notes or introduction, had to be approved by a senior editor or the head of an editorial office. Working with foreign publications the censors had to be very knowledgeable and to possess some special abilities. They were tasked “to protect the minds of the Soviet people from the harmful influence and infection of the West” (Sinitsyna 1999: 36).

It was difficult, in most cases even impossible, to get access to foreign literature in the language of the original. Bookstores, small local libraries and private collections could not purchase literature published in Western countries. Professors and students of foreign languages at the state universities could get access to the original works, but even in this case, the lists of permitted works were controlled. Censors strictly controlled foreign books and periodicals, which reached the famous Library for Foreign Languages,<sup>5</sup> a unique example of this kind in the Soviet Union, or the Academy of Science or the Russian State Library. Politically incorrect books were forbidden. A triangle meant that the publication could be stored in the main stacks and was accessible to the public (1999: 37). *Inootdel* (The Department for Foreign Literature) held a catalogue of books and periodicals that had already undergone censorship with notes on the censors’ decision.<sup>6</sup> The censor checked this catalogue before reading a given item, and noted the previous judgment in his or her report (Goriaeva 2009: 358). This catalogue helped the censors to define the items accessible to the public.

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<sup>5</sup> According to Sinitsyna, The Library for Foreign Languages received books only twice a year and each one bore a special mark on the title page with the personal number of the censor.

<sup>6</sup> By the end of the 1980s, this card catalogue held more than one million records but was destroyed upon the liquidation of *Glavlit* owing to a lack of computers onto which the information could be recorded and the absence of a suitable archive into which it could be placed. However, what remains of the *Glavlit* archive is currently held by the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GA RF) but in its original form it would undoubtedly have held a huge amount of useful information on the current topic.

A hexagon meant that the publication should be kept in the special stacks and access to it should be strictly limited. The publication could have two or even three hexagons on the title page, indicating that it might be ideologically harmful (Sinitsyna 1999: 36-37) and could be kept only in what was called “the restricted access collection”, in special sections known as *spetskhran* (an abbreviation for a Special Storage Section) regulated by *Glavlit*. A huge number of texts were placed in *spetskhrany*. Thus, the Lenin Library held more than one million items (Goriaeva 2009: 358). Access to these *spetskhrany* was limited to those in possession of special permits, such as specialist researchers and translators, and was on a reference-only basis. Thus, it was only when a translator got a permission for and a contract to translate a foreign book, that a working copy of the text from the *spetskhran* could be made. The “fate” of a foreign book depended on a number of factors, but above all, “the censor had to be aware of the political platform of an author and his [sic] loyalty towards the Soviet Union and Communist Party” (Sinitsyna 1999: 38).

### **III. Mediation of Robert Burns in translation: the role of reviews and prefaces**

Clearly, we cannot talk about a free, market-oriented selection of translated literature in the Soviet Union, since the beginnings in the 1930s, the primary assessment criteria for Western literature became its usefulness, appropriateness or at least non-harmfulness to the Soviet regime.<sup>7</sup> The choice of translated works was politically motivated, while numerous censors and editors ensured that the texts were suitable for Soviet consumption. Once the text was selected for translation and distribution, the process of ideological framing by means of accompanying “educative” paratextual devices started.

Similar to translations of other Western authors, translations of Robert Burns, though highly popular, were not exempt from ideological interpretation. In the 1930s when the pressure on literature to sanction the official image of Soviet society increased, translations of Robert Burns

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that in the Soviet ideological environment, the term “usefulness” far exceeded any poetic qualities.

from the nineteenth century<sup>8</sup> could no longer fulfil the new aesthetic function of literature as a vehicle for ideological propaganda. Translations of Burns's poetry made in the Soviet Union would have to follow the main ideological doctrines and include such features as a positive revolutionary hero, heroic acts, optimism, references to communist slogans, omissions of religious and erotic connotations and so forth. Following the official ideological demands and striving to satisfy vigorous censors, Burns's only official Soviet translator, Samuil Marshak,<sup>9</sup> significantly intervened with the originals by deliberate omission, substitution and modification.<sup>10</sup>

Once Marshak began translating Burns's poetry, the process of the poet's canonization started with a number of reviews and articles that accompanied Marshak's translations. Brian Kassof notes, in relation to the early editions of the *Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia* (Great Soviet Encyclopedia) that "the Bolsheviks were intense readers of signs of all types, including paratextual cues" (Kassof 2009: 59), and the use of paratexts in the Stalin and post-Stalin era confirmed this statement. According to Safiullina, "canonization means a set of obligatory norms for creativity" (2012: 559) and canonization of selected foreign writers in the 1930s formed an important part of official policy regarding translated literature. In contrast to the canonizing process in Western art, a canon in the Soviet Union was based on the official policy of Social Realism and had strongly normative functions (Ibid., 559). In the canonizing process, writers' biographies were often adapted and used as a means of ideological propaganda. Safiullina also states that canonization was not a result of "any debate" but the leading role in the canonization process of the 1930s-1940s belonged to Stalin, who personally decided which Western authors could be translated and mediated in the Soviet Union (Ibid., 559).

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<sup>8</sup> In the nineteenth century, most of Burns's love and nature lyrics were translated, but his satires, democratic lyrics, which contained appeals to the sentiments of freedom and citizenship, patriotic songs and ironic epigrams remained unknown to Soviet readers.

<sup>9</sup> However, the undeniable literary quality of Marshak's translations raises the question of the potential to combine literary value with purely ideological formations.

<sup>10</sup> Ideological changes made by Marshak are thoroughly analyzed in Kaloh Vid's researches *Ideological translations of Robert Burns' poetry in Russia and in the Soviet Union* (Maribor: Zora, 2011) and "The reception of Robert Burns in Russia" In *The reception of Robert Burns in Europe*, ed. Murray Pittcock. (Bloomsbury: London, New Delhi, New York, Sidney, 2014).

The process of “Burnization” started with a short review published in 1938 in *Literaturnaya gazeta* (Literary newspaper) by one of the most famous Soviet poets, V. Lebedev-Kumach, who proclaimed Burns’s poetry useful for a new socialist culture by stating that “we may learn a lot from Burns, as he made national poetry his own and his own poetry national.” (1938: 5) To emphasize the necessity for new translations, Lebedev-Kumach mentioned that “we know little about a famous Scottish bard” (Ibid., 6), ignoring the fact that Burns was already translated in the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik, one of the most prominent Russian translators of the time, translated a number of poems. Lebedev-Kumach estimated Shchepkina-Kupernik’s translations to be “poor and unable to transfer the flavour of the originals.” (Ibid., 8) In other words, previous translations were not ideologically adapted. In what follows Lebedev-Kumach stated that the Soviet reader needed new translations and the work had already begun, “I am certain that all of you who love poetry will be happy to learn that a great master, Samuil Marshak, has already started translating Burns.” (Ibid., 15) Lebedev-Kumachev’s text comprises regular features of Soviet reviews, which usually appeared in the press before the translations were published. Firstly, a reviewer intensified the “usefulness” of the author for a new, progressive, socialist art; secondly, he/she stated that previous translations were not good, faithful, useful or appropriate, and finally informed the readers that new translations were coming.

Mikhail Gutner’s propagandistic article about Burns’s life entitled “Robert Burns”, the first biographical note about Burns published in the Soviet Union, appeared in the same issue of *Literaturnaya gazeta*. As all great Western writers were supposed to emerge from the most revolutionary class, the working class, first of all Gutner drew the readers’ attention to the fact that Burns was born into the poor family of a common farmer, which had nothing to do with the aristocratic circles strongly criticized in Soviet literature. Gutner’s emphasis on Burns’s roots is not accidental, as one of the most important aims of paratextual material was to present prominent Western authors as supporters of the communist doctrine and to assess them by applying the same criterion as was used for Soviet writers. Among other issues, Soviet critics advocated the use of biographies as a means of ideological adaptation. In this process, the background was one of the most important issues aimed at establishing the authors’ “proletarian spirit,” regardless of their poetic talent. Thus, it was of special importance



to interpret not only Burns's poetry but also his biography according to ideologically acceptable standards, which meant, above all, to intensify his "proletarian" background.

The importance of the term "proletarian" should be clarified here. In 1934, the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers placed on record that the future belonged to the international revolutionary literature, for it was linked up with the struggle of the working class for the liberation of all mankind.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in the Soviet Union, the proletarian (almost the synonym of lower class) family origin was considered not merely "trustworthy" but absolutely necessary for acquiring a job, getting permission to travel abroad and even simply avoiding imprisonment. In a similar manner, most foreign writers translated in the Soviet Union either belonged to the working class, or at least sympathized with it (e.g. London, Dreiser, Dickens, etc.).

Following this pattern, in a pathetic description of Burns's early life, Gutner intensified the poet's origins. Thus, Burns's father "the poorest of Scottish farmers" was fighting "the ghost of poverty his entire life" and finally died "broken in this unequal fight." (Gutner 1938: 5) As Burns needed to help his father, Gutner stated that "the young boy had to work as hard as slaves on ships" (Ibid., 5), using an overly expressive vocabulary to stress the conditions of Burns's early years and to demonstrate how "proletarian" the poet's family was.

Apart from this, Burns's poetry was once again pronounced "useful" (Ibid., 5) for a new socialist culture, while the poetic qualities of his work were ignored. The critic also reminded Soviet readers that the main reasons Burns could not assert himself successfully as a poet in England were his sympathies for the French Revolution, or as Gutner states "revolutionary passion and aggressive humanist pathos" (Ibid., 7), which demonstrated Burns's open protest against the English aristocrats.

To stress Burns's connection with the poor and with revolutionary circles, Gutner permitted himself a few invented "facts" in his biography. For example, he asserted that Burns first gave his poems with revolutionary contexts to his countrymen, who were impressed and dismayed by his brevity. In fact, no dates exist that confirm that Burns really did give his poems to his countrymen. Moreover, ignoring the fact that Burns's first

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<sup>11</sup> "Resolution on the Report of Maxim Gorky, the co-Reports of S. Y. Marshak and the Report on the Literature of the National Republics. (Adopted at the Morning Session on August 23, 1934)," Marxists Internet Archive 2004, accessed June 15, 2014. [http://www.marxists.org/subject/art/lit\\_crit/sovietwritercongress/resolutions.htm](http://www.marxists.org/subject/art/lit_crit/sovietwritercongress/resolutions.htm)

poems were devoted to his sweetheart (“Handsome Nell”), Gutner made another interesting addition: that Burns started his poetic career with satires on the church and priests. As Soviet ideology rejected any kind of religion and church as an independent institution, it was important for Soviet critics to present Burns as anti-Christian. Gunter observed that Burns considered priests “brothers of bourgeois exploiters.” (Ibid., 7-8) As an example of an anti-Christian poem, he mentioned “Holly Willie’s Prayer”, a satirical poem free of any ideological grounds (Kaloh Vid 2014: 161). Another Burns poem “Jolly Beggars”, a cheerful cantata, was taken to illustrate the poet’s revolutionary spirit and seen as an “appeal to the national revolt.” (Gutner 1938: 7) The beggars in the poem were also supposed to be happy primarily because they were free “of the burden of property” (Ibid., 7).

While briefly mentioning Burns’s numerous love affairs, which “contradicted written puritanistic morality” (Ibid., 8), and caused the poet numerous troubles, Gutner devoted a whole paragraph to Burns’s political views, which were patriotic and democratically oriented, though sometimes “unstable” and “ambiguous.” (Ibid., 9) Gutner found Burns’s sympathy towards the royal dynasty of Stuarts problematic, but it should be noted that, unlike the paratextual materials accompanying other Western authors, those related to Burns almost never pointed out potential “failings” of his poetry. Thus, Gutner explained and justified the poet’s sympathy for the royal dynasty by stating that some “unfortunate poems on this subject” (Ibid., 9) should be interpreted as the only forms in which Burns was able to express his democratic patriotism. Jacobitism in Burns’s poetry was “not real but imaginary, created under circumstances” (Ibid., 9) as otherwise Burns hated royalty, aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. The critic somehow forgot to mention the fact that the poet had many friends who belonged to the upper class and introduced a strict delineation between Burns as a representative of the working class and his “enemies” exemplified by the bourgeois, Jacobites, aristocrats, and priests.

As one of the principal Soviet ideas espoused in literature and other forms of art was that of individual sacrifice for the common good, willingness to become integrated into the community and a wish to subjugate personal welfare to collective interests, Gutner concluded by stating that “Burns’s poetry was hostile towards individualism and contrary to other romantic poets, he believed in the nation and its spirit.” (Ibid., 10) It also seemed necessary to mention that the poet had already been “approved” by one of

the founders of the communist ideology, Karl Marx, who “enjoyed reading Burns’s poetry to his daughters.” (Ibid., 10)

Clearly, Gutner presented Burns as ideologically correct and made an extensive and liberal use of ideologemes and lexical items that contained reference to ideology or cultural norms in order to insert his evaluation of Burns as a man and a poet.

Hence, Burns’s new role in Soviet translated literature required further induction and transformations. In 1939, the first translations of Burns by Samuil Marshak were published in *Molodaya gvardiya* (a literary newspaper), accompanied by Alexander Anikst’s article “Robert Burns”. Similarly to Gutner’s, this paratext made heavy use of ideologically marked statements to describe Burns’s life, implicitly framing it in Soviet terms and imposing the “correct” interpretation. In the introduction, Anikst once again stressed Burns’s origins. The fact that Burns was a poor farmer’s son was presented as one of the key factors in the development of the poet’s “democratic spirit.” (Anikst 1939: 107) Further establishing the role of Burns as a poet of revolution, Anikst emphasized his sympathy with the French revolution. It is true that Burns admired the courage of French revolutionists in the poem “The Tree of Liberty”, however, the statement that his entire poetical heritage was denoted by the French revolution is a huge exaggeration. The critic also mentioned the Scottish circle of those who approved and supported French revolutionaries, supposedly led by Burns (again a completely fabricated claim). It is not surprising that in what follows, Burns was called “a poet of revolutionary democracy who fought for lower classes.” (Ibid., 107)

Placing Burns among the most progressive strugglers for democratic rights, Anikst emphasized his importance in the development of romantic English literature – which is partly true. However, his statement that Burns should be considered one of a few truly progressive romantic English poets seems exaggerated. The term “progressive Romantic poet” (Ibid., 108) is also problematic, as Anikst did not bother to explain what he actually meant by this.

As Western authors translated in the Soviet Union were often presented as victims of a capitalist system, shifting the focus of the analysis from Burns’s poetic achievements to his social status, Anikst presented Burns as a victim of the upper classes. In an attempt to add ideological cohesion to this part of Burns’s biography, Anikst stated that the main reasons for the poet’s alcohol problems were poverty and the suffering of the poor, which

forced him to start drinking. As Burns saw himself as helpless and unable to change anything or to improve the life of the lower classes, the “ugly reality of bourgeoisie society destroyed the life of a genius, and was responsible for his early death.” (Ibid., 108) Grief and society’s cruelty were the main reasons for the poet’s early death, but as a canonized poet he could not be presented as a complete pessimist and sufferer, Anikst stressed the cheerful nature that helped Burns to cope with all obstacles with a smile on his face. The last “strike” was the statement that Burns was successfully married (only once), adored his wife, and could be praised for his exemplary family life. (Ibid., 108) For obvious reasons, Anikst forgot to mention the fact that Burns married Jean Armour when they already had several illegitimate children and had numerous mistresses before marriage.

The canonization of Burns was further fostered by constant repetition and consolidation of the same pattern. When the first collection of Marshak’s translations was published in 1947, it was accompanied by a preface by M. Morozov. While continuing the pattern already established by Anikst and Gutner, Morozov introduced a new ideologeme, the image of enemies, “anti-revolutionists”, who “continue to hate Burns and do everything they can to diminish his importance.” (Morozov 1947: iii-viii) It is not surprising that throughout Soviet history one of the ideological means of unifying the people was the creation of the image of the enemy who was presumably responsible for all misfortunes. Implying a familiar ideologeme, Morozov presented Burns as a victim “haunted by his enemies who spread lies about his life.” (Ibid., iv) Presumably, those fabricated claims about Burns were later used by Scottish anti-revolutionary movements to slander the image of Burns as a progressive revolutionary poet. Thus by drawing upon a recognizable metaphor of the enemy, Morozov established the Soviet Union as the only country that not only understood and appreciated Burns but was also responsible for protecting his good name against the “enemies”.

Morozov’s preface also differs from the others in structure. Instead of emphasizing Burns’ origins and the poor life conditions of his family, Morozov stated that many Scots were forced to leave Scotland because of impossible life conditions in the country with no freedom and democracy (Ibid., iii). Clichés focused on the poor treatment of workers and economic problems in Western countries were often to be found in the Soviet discourse and served to confirm Soviet criticism of the West in contrast to the prosperity of the proletarian class in the Soviet Union. In Morozov’s perception, many of those who left Scotland carried the image of Burns

in their hearts and continued reading his poetry in exile. He mentions “shepherds from Australia and miners from California” (Ibid., iii), signifying that only common workers could appreciate Burns’s poetry.

Morozov’s interpretation of Burns’s poems leaves no doubts about the critic’s intention to continue a well-established interpretation of Burns as a revolutionist and a democrat. The main problem is that, similar to Gutner and Anikst, Morozov discovered revolutionary sub-tones in poems free of any such context. Thus, the poem “John Barleycorn”, which depicts the process of making whiskey, a national Scottish drink, was supposed to express the “unconquered strength of people.” (Ibid., vi) While in the original, John Barleycorn represents the crop of barley harvested in autumn and symbolizes whiskey, in Morozov’s perception the metaphorical John is set as one of the revolutionists who encouraged people to start a revolt against capitalist oppression. Following the pattern established by Gutner, Morozov draws the link between Burns and the French revolution by stating that “Jolly Beggars”, the poem mentioned above, clearly expressed “people’s rage similar to that which destroyed the Bastille.” (Ibid., vii) The poem “Scots Wha Hae”, which comprised an appeal of the Scottish king, Robert the Bruce, to fight for Scotland at the famous battle of Bannockburn in 1314 was interpreted “not merely as a historical poem but above all as an appeal to Scots to fight against English aristocrats here and now.” (Ibid., vii)

Those poems by Burns which could not be interpreted as humanistic, democratic or revolutionary were criticized. Thus, Morozov briefly mentions that Burns’s early poems did not sufficiently reflect the poet’s subsequent revolutionary ideas. As an example, he mentions “Cotter’s Saturday Night”, an idyllic, pastoral “empty and completely useless” poem. Hence, Morozov immediately finds an “excuse” for Burns, as it was one of his first poems written in the years when “the poet’s revolutionary mentality was not yet fully established.” (Ibid., vi) In the end, Morozov states that the Soviet translations of Burns were the best in the world, far from “primitive attempts by bourgeoisie translators to transfer Burns’ spirit” (Ibid., viii).

The process of Burns’s canonization continued in the 1950s when the Soviet translator Rait-Kovaleva, published an article “Robert Burns about himself”. Following the ideas about misinterpretation of Burns by Western critics, she emphasized in the introduction that little was known about Burns’ life, as biographies written in England and Scotland degraded the image of the national poet and never succeeded in revealing the democratic, revolutionary essence of his poetry. According to Rait-

Kovaleva, English biographers of Burns attempted to present him as an alcoholic and uneducated peasant poet in order to lower his significance for world literature. All previous biographies<sup>12</sup> were proclaimed “bourgeois perversions” that did not reveal the democratic and revolutionary essence of Burns’ poetry (Rait-Kovaleva 1959: 187). Rait-Kovaleva carefully used Burns’s letters and quotations from his poems to illustrate a concept of his life and poetry, following the already established patterns (Kaloh Vid 2014: 162).

Among other highly propagandistic articles about Burns published in the 1950s were also Gerasimov’s article “Scottish Poet”, in which Gerasimov claimed that the Soviet Union was the only country in which Burns was properly understood, honoured and loved (Gerasimov, 1959: 20), Samarin’s “Robert Burns”, Rogov’s “The Singer of Freedom”, and Elistratova’s “Robert Burns”. All of them emphasized similar, carefully adapted, aspects of Burns’s life and poetry: proletarian origin, patriotism, revolutionary spirit, and neglect of his revolutionary poetic importance by Western, especially British, critics.

## Conclusion

Considering the enormous power of censorship, translations made in the Soviet Union represented products of collective, enforced cooperation between translator and the state. As an important part of this process, institutionalization of paratextual devices, including reviews, prefaces and critical articles, inevitably effected the translations’ mediation and interpretation. The main purpose of paratextual devices was not merely to recommend the text to the attention of readers but to recast a book as something it was often not and to put an ideological spin, more or less imperative, on a suitable candidate. As a result, the reader was offered a clear pattern, repeated in various forms, which left little space for any other interpretation but the official one.

The discussion above outlined the ways in which the textual apparatus employed by the Soviet state promoted the translations of Robert Burns to readers, though we can only guess to what degree ideologically derived

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<sup>12</sup> There were two adapted biographies of Burns published in the Soviet Union: Elena Elistratova, *Robert Berns* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1957) and Rait-Kovaleva, *Robert Berns* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardia, 1965).

reviews and prefaces influenced the readers' perception since almost no material on the readers' authentic response is available. Hence, we assume that ideological influence may be especially strong and effective in paratextual devices that accompany literary translations because they represent one of the most common and sometimes the only way of connecting and mutually informing divergent cultures.

Similar paratextual devices used by the authorities in the 1930-50s to promote Burns illustrate that unfortunately, within the totalitarian ideology, literary criticism became one of the means of manipulating reality and forcing it to conform to the propagandistically correct ideas. Indeed, whereas all ideologies tend to present the logic of an idea as scientific, totalitarian ideology was unique in the sense that it ignored reality (Kaloh Vid 2014: 160).

The role of manipulative paratextual devices was important because, in a country behind the iron curtain, literary translations offered the target Soviet readers almost their only opportunity to become familiar with the world of foreign culture. Totalitarianism not only isolated people from the outside world, it enclosed them in an artificial universe in which they had no standards of comparison. Thus, paratextual devices that accompanied translations were supposed to construct and lead target readers' conceptions and presumptions not only about a particular author but also about the foreign cultural environment in general, which could be positive or negative, depending on the ideological purpose.

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Received: 21 May 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018



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## УЛОГА ПАРАТЕКСТОВА У ПОСРЕДОВАЊУ ИДЕОЛОШКИ ПРИРЕЂЕНИХ ПРЕВОДА У СОВЈЕТСКОМ САВЕЗУ: СЛУЧАЈ РОБЕРТА БЕРНСА

### Сажетак

Главни циљ овога истраживања јесте да покаже како је комунистички режим успостављен у Совјетском Савезу после Октобарске револуције и оличен у централизованом државној контроли над свим друштвеним дискурсима, укључујући и књижевност, функционисао у пракси. Овај рад се бави приказима, предговорима и чланцима који су пратили совјетске преводе Роберта Бернса, једног од најпознатијих и највољенијих иностраних песника у Совјетском Савезу, њиховим утицајем на читаоце и значајем који су имали у пружању подршке званичној идеологији. Захваљујући томе што је совјетска штампа објављивала разноврсне материјале о Бернсу, тежиште овога чланка је на радовима који су се појавили у периоду између 1930. и 1950. године, када је званична слика Бернса први пут представљена. Паратекстуална средства која су власти користиле између 1930. и 1950. године да би промовисале идеолошки подесну слику Бернса укључују највише адаптације и чак фабрикации песникове биографије, и идеолошки подесна тумачења Бернсових песама. Улога манипулативних паратекстуалних средстава значајна је када се има у виду да су читаоци могли да упознају свет стране културе највише кроз књижевне преводе.

**Кључне речи:** паратекстови, идеологија, Роберт Бернс, совјетски, преводи



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## THE MIRROR AND A GUN: NARRATIVE ASPECTS OF NICK CAVE'S "O'MALLEY'S BAR"

### **Abstract**

Considering the chosen ballad paradigmatic of Cave's verse narration, this paper presents a close reading of the song's lyrics that results in an analysis of narrative techniques and strategies concerning mainly the aspects of voice and perspective. Three types of narration can be recognized as systematically employed in the poem, building generically multilayered text, and pointing toward various traditions in dialog – from popular folk ballad, via Milton, Blake, Coleridge and Poe, to film and news narration.

**Keywords:** ballad, murder ballad, Nick Cave, narrative analysis, narrator, focalization

### **1. Introduction**

*Murder Ballads*, a conceptual album by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds from 1996, their ninth in a row, is notorious of its death count – the highest in Cave's oeuvre, already abundant in death and dead. Let the numbers talk: some 65 men, women, teenagers and children, as well as one dog – they all die in many different ways. Statistically processed, it appears that every

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minute of music leads to one death (Groom 2013: 81), which brings us to 6.5 persons perishing per song, or 7.2 persons per murder ballad (the last song on the album, Dylan's "Death is Not the End", fortunately is not a *murder ballad*).<sup>1</sup> With regard to the brutality of the sung deaths, having in mind the impasse of the ballad narrator who enhances the roughness of the utterance, and that the verbalized scenes provoke the visual imagination of the listener, the album could easily be "X" rated due to the pornography of death, one cannot resist inquiry into why and how this particular album launched its author into the orbits of MTV fame<sup>2</sup> and commercial success.<sup>3</sup> Browsing various articles and comments concerning this question we arrive at a number of answers and explicative hypotheses that can be sorted out into several groups. One of the hypotheses is profoundly cynical: the duet with at-the-time enormously popular Kylie Minogue was relentlessly played over all imaginable media, giving it the classical status of a hit; the supposition goes that hordes of listeners rushed to buy a vinyl or a CD, on the assumption that the song was representative and expecting the whole album to be of a similar ilk. This assumption is founded in the superficiality and lack of musical expertise of the average commercial-pop consumer; Cave himself, commenting on his albums one by one for the Australian edition of *Rolling Stone*, suspected that those who purchased the CD for Kylie would cry upon listening to it: "What the fuck have I bought this for?" (Dwyer 1998). In another type of explanation the audience seems to be treated with somewhat more respect, but not overestimated: here commentary is based on the coupling of the source – traditional folk murder ballads, orally transmitted as a mix of history and journalistic report, and printed broadside and broadsheet murder ballads, analogous to the crime pages in penny papers – and the appetite for specific narratives, fed by all those media forms acquiring an audience by elaborate and embellished naturalistic displays of violent death in its corporeal appearance and visceral effect. This link, pointing towards the inherent perverse attraction to depictions of death, seems primal as well as contemporary in its form of spectacle, a timeless *danse macabre* or *memento mori* intended for the

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<sup>1</sup> Displayed statistics – nonetheless easily calculable – can be found on Wikipedia's page concerning the album.

<sup>2</sup> Cave's letter of rejection of the MTV award for the "best male artist", stating that he does not comply with putting his art in the competitive context – "My Muse is not a horse" – has been widely cited.

<sup>3</sup> *Murder Ballads* had been the best selling album of the band until *Dig, Lazarus, Dig!*

triumphalism of lucky survivors. Buyers of *Murder Ballads* are, according to this explanation, a mass hungry for thrills, blood and sympathy that is the murder ballads' instrument for awakening dormant emotionality and adding spice to a monotonous life. The third type of explanation digs deeper into the domain of human needs, taking into account not only the affective and instinctual aspects of audience psychology, but also the religious and theological, spiritual and philosophic, as well as the aesthetic motives that make this album intriguing<sup>4</sup> and hence desirable in a world of consumption and possession.

## 2. Overview

The ballad chosen to be closely analysed and interpreted here has all of the abovementioned elements or aspects: a sensationalist and shocking event, an exhaustive display of a dismembered body, inexplicable violence, and a symbolical plane where themes of freedom and morality meet, domains where God and the Devil collide, and all that in an opulent referentiality and intertextuality. More to that, this ballad exploits various narrative techniques in an intriguing manner, so that averting our eyes from the 'what' to the 'how' of the poem indicates interesting interpretive pathways and strategies.

Apart from being the longest, "O'Malley's Bar" is also formally the last *murder ballad* of the album. Nevertheless, it is seminal in a certain way: it was composed during the recording of the album *Henry's Dream*, during the tour for the next album *Let Love In*, and Cave himself, in an interview for the Australian radio station Triple J, declared that the song could not have been used for any of the existing albums, so the band "had to make a record, an environment where the songs could exist" (Walker 1995). In popular, critical or academic writing emphasis was unambiguously placed on the traditional "Stagger Lee", on the duets "Henry Lee" and "Where the Wild Roses Grow", as well as on "The Song of Joy" that was seen as a continuation of the Red Right Hand theme<sup>5</sup> – while "O'Malley's Bar"

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<sup>4</sup> See: McCredden 2009, Rose 2013.

<sup>5</sup> A phrase from Milton's *Paradise Lost* had been used in a somewhat mystic and prophetic way in a song of the same name from the previous album: the song did subsequently gain cult status in live performances, and the Red Right Hand became one of the most interpreted images and concepts in Cave's poetry.

did not provoke any serious interest. The only exception is a quite recent text about Nick Cave and the murder ballads tradition written by Nick Groom, who reserves almost two whole pages in the final part of the text for examination of “O’Malley’s Bar” in greater detail (2013: 91-92). He assumes this song to be archetypal for Cave’s treatment of the genre: this assessment approximates my estimate that “O’Malley’s Bar” is paradigmatic of Cave’s narrative mode in poetry that agglomerates various poetics from romanticism to postmodernism, together with the traditions of folklore, satire and film narration, and is also paradigmatic for a myriad of themes recurrent in his poetry. Furthermore, this ballad – being the last on the album – concludes an important phase of Cave’s artistic work:

In the recent work there has been a turning away from the theatricality and the savage irony that characterizes so much of the earlier work. The sense of splitness and fragmentation has also been lost – in terms both of the music and the lyrics – as Cave has embraced a new aesthetic. In this new work, voice is no longer something that is explored Gothically, in terms of Gothic personae, instead the voice has become that of ‘authentic’ Cave, crudely determined to express himself according to a half-baked understanding of the imperatives of the Romantic Lyric. (McEvoy 2007: 80-81)

The ballad “O’Malley’s Bar” is a story about a mass murderer, a man who enters a bar in his hometown, among familiar faces, orders a drink, and then starts killing – O’Malley, his wife, and their daughter Siobhan, then Caffrey, Mrs. Richard Holmes, as well as Mr. Richard Holmes himself, bird-face Mr. Brookes, young Richardson, Jerry Bellows, Henry Davenport, Kathleen Carpenter, and finally fat Vincent West. Triumphant in his fearful power, while he screams “Fear me!” he can no longer be seen or heard – no one is left alive. Meanwhile, fifty policemen have besieged the bar, and the killer, who had just for a moment lifted the pistol with the last bullet toward his head, obeys police orders, drops the gun, exits the bar and is shoved into a police car. While the vehicle is moving away from the crime scene, the killer finger-counts... And reaches number four. That is the number used to define a mass murderer (at least in American criminology) – a person who, in a relatively unified space and not a long stretch of time, kills more than four people.<sup>6</sup> Needless to say, there are *twelve* victims – as

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<sup>6</sup> [http://crime.about.com/od/serial/a/killer\\_types.htm](http://crime.about.com/od/serial/a/killer_types.htm)

many as the hours in the length of daylight, months in a year, signs of the zodiac, Olympians in the Pantheon, deeds of Heracles, tribes of Israel, Christ's apostles, gates guarded by angels in New Jerusalem, books in a final version of *Paradise Lost*, jurors in the court...

### 3. Word by word

In a formal aspect, "O'Malley's Bar" deviates somewhat from the traditional ballad norm – alternation of iambic trimeters and tetrameters as an organizational principle of the poem is not consistently followed: verses vary in length, some catalectic and some several syllables longer than the ballad measure. However, logico-grammatical organization is based on segmentation into quatrains, and the rhyming scheme, as well as the frequency of leonine rhymes, undoubtedly connect the form with traditional balladry. On the other hand, this song does not have the refrain or incremental repetitions typical of the ballad – unless we take into account the inarticulate mumbling that five times through the song intercepts the eloquent narrator's event sequencing. The poem is autodiegetic<sup>7</sup> – narrated in the first person – which is quite unusual in popular ballads.<sup>8</sup> In *The New Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics* an interesting comment relates to the issue: even when the ballad is sung in the first person, the singer is fixed to his or her position of *vox populi*, whereas displayed dispositions, attitudes or prejudices do not pertain to the individual but to the community (Preminger and Brogan 1993: 116). In Romanticism, the transformative and modifying processes that the ballad endures in Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* are essentially related to the narrator: in ballads such as *Simon Lee* or *The Idiot Boy* the narrator tends to be personal and intrusive, even self-conscious, relating his individual assumptions and affections, creating distinct dynamic and dialogic tension within the ballad

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<sup>7</sup> The narratological terms and concepts used in this paper could be traced through Rimmon-Kenan 2002, Prince 2003, and *The Living Handbook of Narratology*.

<sup>8</sup> Although the ballad narration is (in glossaries, handbooks and encyclopedias) defined by an impersonal heterodiegetic (third person) narrator, the truth is that even in the standard, canonical ballad anthologies, such as Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* or Child's collection, ballads narrated in the first person can be found.

discourse. This present, visible 'I' of Romantic poetry and, subsequently, of Romantic balladry, emerges in the initial verses of "O'Malley's Bar"<sup>9</sup>:

I am tall and I am thin  
Of an enviable height  
And I've been known to be quite handsome  
In a certain angle and in certain light.

In the first quatrain the hero-narrator introduces himself to the reader/listener: this is, no doubt, an exposition of the narrative and therefore the conventional beginning of the narration. What, in fact, is out of the ordinary is that the hero presents himself as a body without a name, and does it by means of someone else's gaze. Being "quite handsome" and of "enviable height", qualifications coming from the eye outside of the (re)presented body, and including the attitudes or evaluations of the observer. The last verse bears special interest in setting forth the parameters of the image – of photography or film – positioning of the body at a certain angle in regard to the observer, as well as illumination that fashions the spectacle. The name of the hero will stay unrevealed to the reader/listener to the very end, replaced by the strong "I am" that enters the song as if taking the stage, observing oneself with the eye of the audience or with the camera eye, obviously satisfied with the sight.

As usually happens in the scant economy of ballad narration, no time is wasted on preparation or peripheral activities – action cannot wait. The protagonist enters the bar and in the next two quatrains the usual exchange of words and liquor between the bartender and the guest takes place: the bartender smiles indifferently pouring the drink, the guest smells the booze and crosses himself. The last gesture of the hero can hardly be ignored. According to the point of the action progress, as well as the setting of the event, crossing oneself is merely an automatic, habitual act pertinent to the ritual of drinking, devoid of any religious investment. But, having in mind the development of the poem in general, along with the evolution of the themes of evil, free will and morality, angelic nature and God himself in

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<sup>9</sup> It might be a stretch, but the repeated "I am" in Cave's song almost resonates with Coleridge's exemplification of Imagination in chapter XIII of *Biographia Literaria*, as the universal creative principle within the finite mind recognized as a repetition of the eternal creative act in the infinite 'I AM'. The consequences of the thus grasped concept of subjective power and freedom, in conjunction with the affirmation of the Self through imagination, are radically different in Coleridge and Cave's hero, as is to be shown.



the statements of the hero-narrator, this gesture cannot possibly be artless. Before all else, the gesture is performed with one hand, the same hand that is emancipated in the next line, starting to generate the plot of the song.

My hand decided that the time was nigh  
And for a moment it slipped from view  
And when it returned, it fairly burned  
With confidence anew.

The hand decides – it has a will, it slips from view: it seems appropriate to ask who does actually look, by whose gaze does the narrative become visualized and from whose view does the hand disappear? When it returns, it is revived with self-confidence. The hand possesses a psychological and operational centre of its own and thus constitutes a grotesque synecdoche – a part detached stands for the whole. The grotesque implies the emotional qualities of fear and laughter: in this moment of the song it seems that the frightful prevails, although in the continuation “the wild irony” (McEvoy 2007: 80) and peculiar diabolic laughter shall accompany further cases of grotesque dissociation of the body. The hand that “burned with confidence” overwhelmingly resembles the Red Right Hand of the mighty avenging God, Jehovah of The Old Testament who restores the world order after the insurgence or the deluge.<sup>10</sup> In the next line of the song, the hand becomes “a steely fist” that releases thunder – mark of Zeus’s divine power – so another supernal leader contributes to the potential meaning of the hand as the vehicle of tyrannical power.

Finally, the hand kills the first victim – O'Malley personally, and the execution returns the narrator's gaze up to himself. At this point it might be useful to clarify the narrative situation in narratological terms. As occurs in every instance of first-person narration, here we see dissociation of the narrative 'I' into two narrative figures pertaining to different narrative levels. One is the figure of the narrator – ‘narrator I’ or *erzählendes Ich*, while the other is the figure of the protagonist – ‘character I’ or *erlebendes Ich* (Štancil 1987: 59; Prince 2003: 13, 27, 67). Both represent the same persona,

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<sup>10</sup> In Milton's epic, the “red right hand” appears in Book II, 174, in the words of the angel Belial who announces serious repercussions for the rebellion in Heaven. Milton took the image from Horatio, where *rubente dextra* stands for Augustus's hand that reestablished Rome after the Tiber had flooded it and denotes his imperial power (*Carmina* I, 2). The Red Right Hand is thus a hand that – although frightening – brings back structure and balance into the world.

although there might be considerable temporal disjunction between the narrating and experiencing I. This ballad employs simultaneous narration – the distance between the act and the word tends to be wiped out, so the illusion of simultaneity between the event and the reporting of it is accomplished. However, the narrator is not defined within narrative only by his temporal position and discursive activity, but also by the category of knowledge or viewpoint concerning the narrated: this issue reveals some of the compelling narrative constellations within the ballad. The narrator aims to cancel out the temporal distance toward himself as a character, so that the acting I is the same figure as the singing I. It represents an important aspect of the theatricalization of the song and its stage performance where the positions of the narrator-performer, the protagonist-killer, the victim and the observer overlap, multiply and exchange between the frontmen, the band and the audience (Groom 2013: 91; McEvoy 2007). There is a noteworthy singularity in the discursive rendering of the story in “O’Malley’s Bar” and it is related to the mode of focalization. The question “who sees?” already addressed here, is intended to locate the centre from which the materiality of the fictional world is perceived or observed. It would be only natural in a first-person narration that the viewpoint is situated within the temporally located consciousness (placed at a veritable point of fictional history) that possesses certain cognitive features, scope and potential of knowledge, specific verbal ability, style and norm of narration: the point of view would refer to a narrator designed as a natural (in a way also corporeal) human being, in accordance with the natural laws of the referential world or reality. The narrator of this murderous ballad does not comply with this scheme, primarily because his perception is not located within his body.

Groom also notices the division of the narrating subject – that “the killer is also physically disembodied [...] as well as being mentally disembodied”, and the reason is not because “he is some sort of supernatural being” – but he recognizes all those acts of dissociation as an act of alienation from the self (2013: 91).<sup>11</sup> The first killing provokes a repeated look at himself in action, and also a repeated observation about handsomeness – “in a certain angle and in a certain light”. The narrator-focalizer watches himself

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<sup>11</sup> Wolfgang Kayser, in his endeavour to define the grotesque as an aesthetic phenomenon and a structure, whether defining grotesque as a compound or mixture of incongruous elements, or as a disturbed relationship between the whole and its parts, always emphasizes that the grotesque is an alienated world (Kajzer 1987: 258).

– a killer – on the stage or on the screen as the Other. This act of self-affirmation in thunder, beauty and light – all three being traits of Milton's Lucifer – has been additionally strengthened by the bang of the fist and address to the present audience in a heightened tone, calling them friends and neighbours, in a speech that reasserts the principle of love for thy neighbour, or at least absence of anger and resentment ("I bear no grudge against you!"). The appeal is accompanied by an erection, described again as a division of the phallus from 'I'. Leaving the sexual pathology of capital offenders out of the discussion, the whole scene could be interpreted as an autoerotic experience that causes an overflow of love upon the neighbours, in a sort of triumphant discovery of one's mission. Anyway, the mission is not the vengeance upon fellow-citizens for something reproachful they have done to the ballad hero and it makes an important constituent of the story-logic. The protagonist has no 'mundane' reason for his killing spree. It could be confirmed by succeeding lines, where the dismembered body reassembles itself to become a man:

I am the man for which no God waits  
But for which the whole world yearns  
I'm marked by darkness and by blood  
And one thousand powder-burns.

A Messiah who obviously recognizes no god and preaches in the name of none, yearned by the world, represents an emblem open for interpretations that tread the lines concerning absolute freedom – freedom from logic, purpose and motivation, freedom from responsibility and from enslavement to an imposed order. The sphere of unchained individual free will, rebellion against authority, gratuitous action and hypertrophied selfhood is the domain of the Prince of Darkness, so the analogy with Milton's Satan extends. But, it needs to be clarified that this is Satan read from Milton by William Blake – marked by blood and scorched by gun-powder: he is a revolutionary, a rebel against tyranny. Anyhow, it should never be out of sight that the first-person narrator – the mighty 'I' of the speaker who addresses the guests in the bar, and indirectly readers/ listeners – is painting a self-portrait. In the seventh stanza of the ballad the second introduction of the protagonist occurs: the first was executed by the narrator communicating exclusively with the narratee/audience, painting the body by means of distanced sight, perspective and lighting, while the second is the discourse addressed to the characters in the fictional world, whereby the 'I' is situated

inside ‘great chain of beings’ with some additional identification marks on his bodily image.

The story proceeds as a sequence of murders, and each murder is specified by the killer’s naming of the victim and adding some individualizing detail, so that the description of each killing is doubled with the murderer’s knowledge about his fellow-citizens, along with observations concerning a pictorial – mostly metaphorical – aspect of the scene. O’Malley’s wife looks like a fish that feeds on debris from the ocean bed, while her head, following a bullet to the chin, ends up in a sink, among the dirty dishes. The killer then swooped on the trembling Siobhan, the daughter of the barman and the local object of ridicule who spends her days in drafting the best beer in town, attacking her with sheer physical force and strangling her – while comparing her with a painted Madonna from the church wall. Caffrey was shot in a split second while he was trying to rise from the chair. Mrs. Holmes distinguished herself with a scream, so she got a vast bullet hole. The episode with Mrs. Holmes is a rare occasion where the narrator explicitly addresses the narratee (“she screamed/ You really should have heard her”), reminding us not only that a live audience is inherent to the ballad, but also that the quality of represented events requires imagination and empathy in order to be actualized as narrative fiction.

The killer now, after another passage of mumbling, starts to sing; “he is composing his ballad in the very instant of murder, the separation between representation and reality dissolves” (Groom 2013: 91). All of the agents are now present – in the text, as well as in performance: the performer who ‘plays’ the narrator who is also a killer, characters who are the victims, the fictitious listener of the ballad and the real audience watching the performer (and, notwithstanding, Nick Cave as the real author). The narrator-performer starts to break down, laughing, screaming, weeping and gasping. He starts a conversation with the next victim, the husband of the last fatality, who accuses the protagonist of being evil. The killer retracts:

If I have no free will then how can I  
Be morally culpable, I wonder.

This segment could be considered a philosophical phase of the killing spree: the singing slayer, devoid of free will, logically infers his own innocence in a deterministic universe. The grotesqueness and sarcasm of this scene extend into a sort of nonsense humour – of the Monty Python breed –

when Mr. Richard Holmes, shot in the abdomen and knocked down on the floor, whispers an apology, surprising even the gunman who nonetheless politely accepts the apology and then calls off the conversation (turned already into a blood-choked gurgle on the side of the casualty) with a shot to the head.

After that, the assassination of another two wretched bar-lovers takes place: Mr. Brookes, whose physiognomy reminds the killer of St. Francis with the sparrows, and then Richardson whose youth suggests association with the image of St. Sebastian pierced with arrows. The metaphorization of the victims through Christian iconography styled in Medieval and Renaissance painting intensifies the pictorial aspect of the ballad that heavily operates on the framing, pose, gesture, cadre and lighting. Situating the casualties in the field of artistic interpretation of myth seems to be analogous with self-observation in the same context. Before he kills Brookes and Richardson, the protagonist continues the self-introduction that begins to acquire the form of fragmentary autofiction, disrupted by occasionally loading the gun<sup>12</sup> and forthcoming slaughter, finally completed somewhere at the middle of the song with the shouting out of his name:

I've lived in this town for thirty years  
And to no-one I am a stranger  
[...]  
I said, „I want to introduce myself  
And I am glad that all you came”  
And I leapt upon the bar  
And shouted out my name.

The performance is at its culminating point. The narrator's biographical self, the one that lives in the town and is known by every fellow-citizen, the mundane, the historical and temporal self, the one that is determined by a point in space and time in the Cartesian universe, now is being replaced by a new identity. A likely narrative that could be laid out might be about an ordinary guy squeezed by existential needs, pressed by laws and customs and overwhelmed by the structure that controls him: in such a context the lack of free will of a man in a predesigned universe, where events previously scripted take place, comes as a natural belief. The protagonist

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<sup>12</sup> Principles of probability and *vraisemblance* are astoundingly respected: after six bullets fired (Siobhan was strangled, but Richard Holmes took two), the gun should be reloaded.

of the song, entering the bar, unleashes a libertine voluntaristic experiment – like Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner* or Andre Gide’s *Lafcadio*, he undertakes gratuitous killings, showing either that he possesses will and is apt to be morally judged, or that – as he himself says – he has no free will, so cannot be culpable. The will is, it is widely acknowledged, a devil’s deed – it represents rebellion against the system, and finally a rejection of the humble self that proclaimed himself a stranger to no one. Therefore, it is inevitable for the hero to climb onto the stage, introduce himself and thank the audience for turning up for such an exquisite function. The sitting guests, along with the sprawled ones, have a rare opportunity to witness the birth of a new man, one who gods do not like, for whom the world yearns, and who reveals himself in darkness and blood, beautiful at a certain angle and under convenient light.

Please allow me to introduce myself:  
I’m a man of wealth and taste  
I’ve been around for a long, long year  
Stole many a man’s soul and faith  
[...]  
Pleased to meet you,  
Hope you guess my name.  
But what’s puzzling you  
Is the nature of my game.  
[...]  
Just as every cop is a criminal  
And all the sinners saints  
As heads is tails  
Just call me Lucifer.<sup>13</sup>

In Cave’s case, as well as in the case of Jagger and Richards, Lucifer is a Mephistophelean figure who does “always wish Evil, and always works the Good”, who corrects the absolute tyranny of law and order, who can be aligned with the Romantic – or rather Blakean – figure of Milton’s Satan, with the functions of Prometheus and Christ juxtaposed within; that is the phase of man who rises against the father and the king, bringing along the revolution and the apocalypse that end the old world. The name of Cave’s protagonist we, as an audience, do not hear – it has been reserved

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<sup>13</sup> The Rolling Stones, “Sympathy for the Devil” (*Beggar’s Banquet*, 1968)

exclusively for the guests of O'Malley's bar (and every one of them has also been named). The question remains – to whom this revelation of identity above the carnage is intended: to a few left alive in the story- world, to the narratee who populates the same discursive level as the narrator, or to the audience who watches the performance or reads the lyrics. Possibly, to the murderer himself? In other words, in what degree is this ballad just a soliloquy overheard by the audience through the fourth wall?

The basic thought that the ballad, whose dominant narrative nature should not be questioned, transmutes into lyric appears after this last self-introduction of the hero – mainly in statements concerning the emotional and psychological status of the killer during the smashing of Jerry Bellows's head with a giant ashtray, in the smiling observation of the weird scene where the bullet in the chest of Henry Davenport un-seams his belly, along with the shooting at divorced Kathleen Carpenter, and before the last murder marked by another dialogue between the assassin and the victim. But, lyric fullness is finally reached in a scene where the killer kneels by the edge of a "steaming scarlet brook" sprung from Jerry Bellows's shattered head along the counter – in tears. The imagery and the lyric tone are obviously a shift from the narrative norm of the former course of the song. The space, a moment ago ruled by the murderer – dominated by his appearance and the sounds – by thunder and gunfire, by the din of breakage and smashing, by shrieks, falderal, laughter, screaming and strange, pre-linguistic, inexpressive "hhhhh mmmhm" – now becomes a *locus* of epiphany:

Well, the light in there was blinding  
Full of God and ghosts of truth...

The divine light and the spectres of truth, whatever they might be,<sup>14</sup> initiate the theme of insight, plunging into the soul of the murderer in which the first signs of remorse are perceived. The step inside and into the depths of the central subjectivity of the poem is clearly marked by contrast to the indifferent outlook of the killer who steps from the counter in cold blood and kills Kathleen Carpenter showing no remorse – although remorse overflows within him. The pangs of conscience are represented

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<sup>14</sup> The already established analogy to Coleridge could be extended, perhaps, by drawing to mind the 'machinery' of spirits and angelic hosts in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner": they appear as inhabitants inherent to Nature revealed in her true form by the imaginative eye.

in a somewhat peculiar way – as an emotion (“remorse I felt”), as a possession or an illness (“remorse I had”), as a form of matter (“it clung to everything”) and finally as a personified figure (“remorse squeezed my hand in its fraudulent claw/ with its golden hairless chest”). During these six mysterious verses remorse develops into the image of the encounter of two persons – one of the killer, with raven black hair and wings, and the other – perhaps female – with the smooth golden breast and the deceitful claw. And those tears of the kneeling killer, pausing for a moment in his spree: are those tears of fraudulent remorse? Or tears of sincere remorse overpowered by the automatism and inertia of the slaughter? The gold-breasted figure controls the black angel by coercion, so in these verses the hero becomes not only an angel (or a bird), but also the victim. There is another tiny signal of the killer’s metamorphosis into an angel and his ascent over the material world: he “*floated* down the counter” and “*glided* through the bodies” – his movements become even, continuous, weightless and ethereal – not broken and rhythmical, as the heavy human body requires. The killer soars above the earth he strode a moment ago, and his last victim, chubby Vincent West, who did not know they live in the same street, looks at him as if he sees a lunatic, before the bullet lodges in his forehead. The killer has never been recognized as crazed and deranged until this moment – it might be that Vincent West is able to see the remorse-induced eclipse in his executioner.

Apotheosis, however, does not transpire. What gets in its way is – a mirror. The killer hunts for his sight in the mirror (he literally sees his eye), and that is the continuation of the interrupted thread of metonymical dismemberment of his own body, along with the dual observation of the self-as-the-body (external focalization) and self-as-the-mind (internal focalization). The killer, who watched himself *as in the mirror* at the beginning of the song, now gazes at his own reflection, like a child before the Lacanian mirror-stage, for a long time, inquisitively, and lovingly – as beyond recognition. The autoeroticism of the first murder now culminates, as well as self-adoration, and deepens into a *mise en abyme* figure of the killer who looks at himself looking at the mirror.

There stands some kind of man, I roared  
And there did, in the reflection.

Just like the Ancient Mariner, the killer stands in the midst, surrounded by dead fellow-citizens and neighbours, but – unlike the Ancient Mariner – he



does not see the dead as beautiful, but himself. There are no more eyes to confirm his power and his will, so the mirror takes over the function of the other's gaze. And in the mirror stands a portly man – hair like raven wing, muscles firm and tense, with a curl of smoke in the shape of a question mark protruding from the pistol. The gun is a legitimate part of that mighty body endowed with a powerful will and dark beauty. The helix of smoke repeats in the later circular, swivelling motions of the killer, motions that resemble dancing – ritual appropriation of territory by means of the body. He advances, saturating the void with the voice:

Fear me! Fear me! Fear me!  
But no one did cause they were dead.

Alone as a god, the stern and severe owner of the vindictive red right hand, he screams until the police sirens and loudspeakers overcome. A voice modulated through the microphone repeats like a machine the phrase that appertains to every potential offender caught *in actu*. In a cinematic denouement, the last tension shall be produced again by the *hand* that raises the pistol to the head and seems almost human in that act. The bestial angel full of wrath, the dark-side Messiah, finally does not leave the scene in a blast and blood commanded by the red right hand, but – after one “long and hard think about dying” – submits himself to the will of the megaphone.

#### 4. Types of narration

The prominent narrative features of the song have mainly been exposed through the previous analysis, and we will now up in a more systematic way. The story is rendered in a prominently episodic manner, by the consistent chronological sequencing of executions in a single physical space and in a short stretch of time. The *sjuzet* is encircled by the expositional self-presentation of the narrator-protagonist, followed by the unpromising non-dramatic and trivial action set out at the beginning, and with the public scene of an arrest placed outside the main story space at the end. The action of the song begins with the hero's entrance into the bar, and ends with his exit out of it. Naming the ballad after the location of events is not merely conventional. The interior of O'Malley's bar is a privileged space where something out of the ordinary takes place – not only the slaughter

and corporeal disintegration, but also an inexplicable destructive conquest of a seemingly impassionate killer who has not previously given away any signs of pathological behaviour. This ballad is not just a rhymed article from the newspaper crime pages about an event that increasingly frequents contemporaneity, an occurrence of metamorphosis where a meek and plain individual turns into a monster, enters a public space and liquidates everyone indiscriminately at gunpoint. What happens inside O'Malley's bar is "a theological experiment investigating moral culpability and free will" (Groom 2013: 92), endowed with precise choreography and elaborate direction. The experimenter carefully notes the experiment, along with the reactions of all the participants, paying particular attention to himself. The narrator-protagonist is at the same time a scientist and a guinea pig, he acts while perceiving what is going on around him and inside him, and in the thus obtained simultaneity, he reports. The action he performs is dual: it consists of its physical aspect – killing and moving through space from victim to victim, and its vocal aspect – the discourse composed of speech and certain other modes of vocalization, articulate and inarticulate. The main characteristic of reporting is the shift of focalization modes within the same focalizer (that is – narrator), so that the narratorial voice comes fractured into several narrative types.

One of the layers concerned with narrating the events could be characterized as objective and neutral narration that tends to render a lot of details with forensic precision, without evaluation and judgment, and subsequently with no signal of inclination or idiosyncrasy on the narrator's part. This type of narration is traditionally linked to a heterodiegetic narrator, and when it appears in autodiegesis, as is the case here, it draws attention to the narrator himself.<sup>15</sup> The first-person narration is habitually considered more subjective, because it comes as 'natural' that the narrator should mould the story with a significant axiological, ideological and emotional imprint. Obviously, a common or habitual choice of narrative manner marks only tendencies in literary practice, usually linked to certain tradition or genre: subjectivity is only a potential and privilege of the first-person narrative, not a necessary outcome. On the other hand, when the first-person narrator generates impersonal, neutral and mechanically precise discourse (especially if it resembles focalization by means of a technical device rather than the human eye – as in *camera-eye* narration),

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<sup>15</sup> Narrators of several of Poe's stories ("The Black Cat", for instance) and Meursault of Camus's *L'Étranger* come to mind.

it tends to be interpreted as dehumanized or alienated discourse, usually rendered by the pathologically damaged anthropomorphic figure of the narrator.<sup>16</sup> To be completely accurate, even in the described mode of narration, on several occasions in the narrative the qualifiers revealing the narrator's attitude sneak in: qualifying Mrs. O'Malley's face as "raw and vicious" or calling Caffrey "motherfucker" are the cases where hostility and aversion stand out from an otherwise neutral and indifferent report of the killings.

The detached and apathetic tone of narration that creates an impression of reliability<sup>17</sup> is combined with content that is not rendered from the neutral observer, but from an associative, imaginative consciousness that rewrites supplements and modifies empirical data with its own sediments, establishing analogies or contrasts, and constituting metaphorically or metonymically transformed or revised images of objective reality. If we describe the first narration type as naturalistic or forensic, this would be romantic or lyric. Various fragments of imagery pertain to it – not only the young Siobhan as the Madonna painted in whale's blood and banana leaves or those two casualties that are associated with the saints, but also O'Malley's wife as a scavenger-fish, or the gush of blood as a mountain spring. It is a highly poetical and imaginative style of narration that builds upon the tropes used for the expansion and complication of the clinically presented action by the relations it provides with the objects of nature and culture and their semantic or symbolic potential.<sup>18</sup>

The third type of narration, or discursive narrative style, could be described as autofictional – although the whole ballad could be deemed autofictional. The term<sup>19</sup> has recently gained wider popularity in literary

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<sup>16</sup> More on the topic can be found in Ann Banfield's texts about the empty deictic center.

<sup>17</sup> Neutral discourse suggests reliability by resembling the discourses of science, especially the empiric variety, as well as the discourse of the witness in court, who is to mediate specific and exclusive directly acquired knowledge.

<sup>18</sup> Combination, intertwining, and submersion of these two opposite styles of narrative discourse is a remarkable feature of several stories of E. A. Poe – notably "The Black Cat", "The Imp of Perverseness" and "The Tell-Tale Heart" – all about murder in first-person account by the killer. In "The Purloined Letter" detective Dupen describes his method as expanding and surpassing the logic by poetry.

<sup>19</sup> The term was introduced by Serge Dubrowski 1977, and since then it has entered increasingly broad usage for a variety of autobiographical subgenres. It encompasses diverse works such as Montaigne's *Essais*, Rousseau's *Les Confessions*, Wordsworth's *Prelude* and Sartre's *Les Mots*.

studies, replacing the term autobiography, referring to the wider scope of narratives which tend toward auto-scripting the self as mind, soul, consciousness, selfhood or identity – thus transcending the mere autobiographical sequencing of life episodes. In “O’Malley’s Bar” the narrator-protagonist with his direct speech addressed to the people (and corpses) in the bar, as well as in his narrative discourse, in a fragmentary way, constitutes a fiction about himself that has its own fabula, juxtaposed upon the ballad story about the murder(s). First he constructs himself as a stately self who, helped by the pistol in the right hand, develops into a messianic figure expected and awaited by his fellow-men, branded in a certain way, and performing in specific postures, heroically, singing, laughing, screaming and mumbling, and who embraces his task – to activate his will to power and rebel against the order of things. In a sense, he acquires new, superhuman identity – from an insignificant fellow-citizen with no free will to the persona who, being reborn has to present himself in this new aspect. This is the figure of the thunderer, whose cold sardonic wrath culminates in the spectacle when, erected upon the counter, he promulgates his name: this image, profoundly grotesque, satirically dethronizes the prophetic display and ironizes the theological conundrum in the scene of epiphany. The absolute control that the hero has gained and displayed in that scene breaks from the inside – kneeling over the stream of blood, he wipes away the tears of remorse – a feeling that gushes beyond his control. He tries to restore the hypertrophied sense of self, boosting himself by the image in the mirror, so he sees fear in an empty, depopulated space, alone, in anti-climax, vain and void. Designing the self-portrait of ‘the handsome’ – the beautiful and powerful body – by means of describing his own appearance through the other’s eyes or through the reflection from an inanimate object (when there are no eyes to watch and see), he circumscribes and frames the central grounding of diabolic identity via prophetic discourse – the word of the seer or the bard.<sup>20</sup> Finally, with only one bullet left – that is, with the possibility of free choice of how to end this autofiction – he abstains from active participation in the denouement.

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<sup>20</sup> It is hard not to draw parallels with those of William Blake’s speakers who stand for the qualities of Orc.

## 5. Coda

Groom's opinion is that this hero, like other protagonists of Cave's murder ballads, leaves his story without closure: "resolution is let to the legal system, to a place beyond the end of the ballad, outside the text" by which he "effectively shifts the entire literary and ballad tradition into a world governed by legal institutions and moral values rather than one oblivious of the law and humanity" (2013: 93). Other sources claim that Cave's characters are in a quest for sanctity, reaching for the sacral dimension – "the holy, divine, hierophantic, epiphanic" – in a space of human corporeality, eroticism and violence, and therefore in his songs recurrently appears "the dark, lonely figure of a man caught up in desire for a divine source or balm". The sacred then might be "part prophetic Jesus, part father in the Christian tradition, part old testament force of retribution, part metonym for human love and sexual energy, part violent power with unknown capabilities, part absence, part extension of the Cave ego" (McCredden 2009: 167, 168). The resolution of the evil hero's fate is in both types of interpretation seen as a resignation of individual power and free will, and surrender into the arms of either institutions and principles of human society, or to divine power. Either way, the origin and the nature of evil remain unquestioned, along with the satirical touch that lurks behind the dethroned spectacle presenting the battle of good and evil in an egotistic, consumerist, media-frenzied and pornophilic society. Therefore, "O'Malley's Bar" could be easily seen as a Blakean satire about the fallen man's illusion that light and darkness are somewhere outside himself, or as an ironic clash in which a tall, dark and handsome prince of darkness, "self-begot and self-raised" by his narrative, examines whether it is "better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven".

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Received: 1 July 2018

Accepted for publication: 28 December 2018

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ОГЛЕДАЛО И ПИШТОЉ: АСПЕКТИ НАРАЦИЈЕ У БАЛАДИ  
"O'MALLEY'S BAR" НИКА КЕЈВА

**Сажетак**

С полазиштем у хипотези да је одабрана балада парадигматична за Кејвово песничко приповедање, у овом раду се прво, посредством методе подробног читања, анализирају и описују приповедни поступци везани пре свега за аспекте приповедачевог гласа и погледа. Они се потом систематизују и разврставају у три типа нарације који оперишу у песми, градећи жанровски вишеслојан текст, те упућујући на различите традиције с којима се успоставља дијалог – од народне баладе, преко Милтона, Блејка, Колриџа и Поа, до нарације у филму и информативним медијима.

**Кључне речи:** балада, murder ballad, Ник Кејв, анализа нарације, приповедач, фокализација





## Contributors

**Ksenija Bogetić** obtained a BA in English at the University of Belgrade, an MA in English at the University of Oxford and a PhD in English Linguistics at the University of Belgrade. She was a Visiting Scholar at the Department of Linguistics, University of California, Santa Barbara in 2011, conducting research in corpus linguistics and language and gender (recently reprinted in the ten-year research overview book *Queer(y)ing Language, Gender and Sexuality*, Milani 2018). She has taught at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade since 2014. Her research interests include language ideologies, metaphor, youth and digital media, and language, gender and sexuality. She is the winner of the Christina Alm Arvius Award (Metaphor Festival Conference) for work on direct metaphor in argumentation.

**Andrijana Bročić** is a junior faculty member at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, where she works as a language instructor at the English Department. Her research interests include cognitive semantics, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural study of metaphor, with a focus on metaphor and emotion. She gained her PhD from the University of Belgrade.

**Lia Efstathiadi** works as a Special Teaching Staff for the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH). She holds an MA in Theoretical & Applied Linguistics and a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, School of English, AUTH. Since 2009 she has taught English Language courses to 1st year students, the Introduction to the Linguistic Research Paper (3<sup>rd</sup> year) and the Special elective: Variables affecting Second Language Learning (4<sup>th</sup> year). She is also an academic tutor in the core course “Practice in teaching EFL”. Research interests: Second Language Acquisition (Early FL Learning, The role of cognition in FLL), Bilingualism, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Modality. For further information about publications and

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**Bojana Gledić** works as a language instructor at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. She obtained her undergraduate degree in English Language and Literature at this institution in 2002 and has been employed at the English Department ever since. At the moment she is teaching literary translation to first-year students, but her greatest love is contemporary literature, British and American. She pursued her graduate studies in the field of literature, obtaining her MA and PhD degrees at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. Both theses included the study of the works of Graham Swift: the MA thesis was titled “*As I Lay Dying and Last Orders – A Comparative Analysis*” while her PhD thesis dealt with “*Hybrid Identity in Novels by Graham Swift and Hanif Kureishi*”. She has published articles on contemporary British and American literature in foreign and domestic journals and has taken part in academic conferences at home and abroad. In addition to work in the field of literature studies, she has written several handbooks for vocational school English teachers and is one of the authors of a series of English language textbooks for elementary school.

**Aleksandra V. Jovanović** is a Full Professor of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. She graduated from the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade and she gained MA and PhD in English Literature at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade. The title of her PhD thesis is *Greek Mythology in the Novels of John Fowles*. Her research interests are mainly in the field of the postmodern literature and literary theory. She teaches English, Irish and Canadian literature at all levels of studies: undergraduate course, Contemporary British Novel; MA course, Literary Theories and Movements in 20<sup>th</sup> century British Literature; PhD courses: Postcolonial Literature in English; English Literature through the Theory of Genre; Women’s Studies in Anglophone Literature.

Her published work includes essays about modern British, Irish, Canadian and American literature and three books: *Priroda, misterija, mit – romani Džona Faulsa* (Nature, Mystery, Myth – the Novels of John Fowles, 2007), *Glasovi i tisine* (Voices and Silences, 2013) and *Dinamika pripovednog prostora* (The Dynamics of the Narrative Space, 2016).

Apart from English she speaks Spanish and Greek.

**Milena Kaličanin** is Assistant Professor in the English Department in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Niš, Serbia. She is the author of the books *The Faustian Motif in the Tragedies by Christopher Marlowe* (2013) and *Political vs. Personal in Shakespeare's History Plays* (2017). She is also the co-editor (with Sona Snircova) of the book *Growing Up a Woman: The Public/Private Divide in the Narratives of Female Development* (2015). Her academic interests include Renaissance English Literature and British (especially Scottish) Studies.

**Natalia Kaloh Vid** is an Associate Professor at the Department of Translation Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Slovenia where she teaches various courses in literature, culture and translation studies as well as an elective course on the Russian language. She holds a PhD degree in English Literature and Translation studies which focuses on the influence of ideology on literary and translation production. Her second PhD degree is in Contemporary Russian Literature and focused on Mikhail Bulgakov's literary works. She is the author of the books *Ideological Translations of Robert Burns's Poetry in Russia and in the Soviet Union*, published in 2011, *Rol' apokaliptičeskogo otkrovenija v tvorčestve Mihaila Bulgakova* (The Role of Revelation in Mikhail Bulgakov's prose), published in 2012, and *Sovietisms in English Translations of M. Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita* published in 2016. She is also the co-editor of the book of translations of Mikhail Lermontov's poetry and prose *M. J. Lermontov. Sanje: izbrano delo* (M. J. Lermontov. Dreams: Selected works) (2015) as well as the editor of a scientific monograph *Творчество М. Ю. Лермонтова: Мотивы, темы, переводы* (The work of M. J. Lermontov: motifs, themes, translations) published in 2015. The list of her publications includes articles on different aspects of literary translations, above all on the influence of ideology on literary translations, translating culturally-specific elements and retranslations which she published in *Meta*, *Slavistična revija*, *Slavic and East European Journal*, *Cadernos de Tradução*, *International Research in Children's Literature*, etc.

**Branislava Miladinov** was born in Kikinda in 1965. She completed her elementary and secondary education in Belgrade. She graduated from the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, with a degree in Comparative Literature and Literary Theory. She earned a PhD at the same university with a doctoral thesis on narratological analysis of William Wordsworth's poetry. She worked as a radio-journalist, taught English at a people's

university and was a PR manager at a bank before she was employed as a teaching assistant at the Comparative Literature and Literary Theory Department of the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. She was also the editor for literary theory features in the magazine *Reč*. At the moment she is an independent researcher. Her research interests include narratology, Romanticism, 18th and 19th century fiction, literary theory and cultural studies.

**Nina Miladinović** was born in Niš in 1993. In 2016, she attained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English language and literature and in the same year she began her Master's studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš. Given that she has always shown interest in literature, she chose Shakespeare studies for her Master thesis. In April 2018, she attained a Master of Arts degree after having written a thesis titled 'Moral Corruption in Shakespeare's Tragedies *Richard III* and *Macbeth*'. Over the years, she has worked in a number of private language schools and she continues to learn and perfect her skills as a teacher.

**James Plath** is the R. Forrest Colwell Endowed Chair and Professor of English at Illinois Wesleyan University, where he has taught journalism, creative writing, film, and American literature for the past thirty years. He is one of the founders and president of The John Updike Society and past president of the Illinois College Press Association, one of the largest organizations of its kind. Recently he has appeared on radio and panels to talk about the problem of fake news and the problems facing American journalists today. Involved in Updike criticism and scholarship since the Eighties, his essays on Updike have been included in four critical anthologies. In addition to editing *Conversations with John Updike* (1994) and *John Updike's Pennsylvania Interviews* (2016) he has written or edited two volumes on Ernest Hemingway and one each on Raymond Carver and the film *Casablanca*. His most recent publication is the poetry chapbook *Everything Shapes Itself to the Sea*.

**Pradipta Sengupta** is an Associate Professor of English at M.U.C. Women's College, Burdwan, West Bengal, India. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on "The 'Hawthorne Novels' of John Updike" from the University of Burdwan. He also completed a Postdoctoral research project on "Recasting Contemporary America: A Study of John Updike's 'Rabbit Tetralogy'" as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow from Osmania University Center for

International Program, Hyderabad during September-October 2013. He has published national and international articles on Keats, Hawthorne, Tagore, Dickens, Robert Frost, Peter Carey, Joseph Heller, W. B. Yeats, Emerson and Updike, including publications in such journals as *The Belgrade BELLS* and *The John Updike Review*. Sengupta has prepared study materials on the select poetry of W.B. Yeats, Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost for M.A. students of Directorate of Distant Education, The University of Burdwan.

**Alexander Shurbanov** is a distinguished Shakespeare scholar who translated Updike's novel, *Gertrude and Claudius*, into Bulgarian. Now Professor Emeritus at the University of Sofia in Bulgaria, Shurbanov corresponded with Updike while translating the *Hamlet* "prequel" and was also a longtime friend of Blaga Dimitrova, the prototype for Vera Glavanakova from Updike's O. Henry Award-winning short story "The Bulgarian Poetess". Shurbanov, who also taught at the University of London, UCLA, and SUNY-Albany, has translated 14 texts ranging from Chaucer, Shakespeare, and the Magna Carta to Tales by Beatrix Potter and poetry by Milton, Coleridge, Dylan Thomas, Ted Hughes, and Rabindranath Tagore. As a poet and essayist he is also the author of 18 collections, including three bilingual Bulgarian-English titles: *Frost-Flowers* (Princeton, 2001), *Beware: Cats* (Sofia, 2001), and most recently *Foresun: Selected Poems* in Bulgarian and English (Sofia, 2016).

**Milica Vitaz** works as a language instructor at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. She obtained her PhD in 2017 in the field of language teaching. The focus of her thesis was using ELT games with young adults. Upon request, she presented part of her research at the Association of Young Linguists in November 2017. Her other interests include error correction and analysis, testing, data driven learning, etc. She has been an active ELTA member since 2010. She is the chief editor of the ELTA Journal for 2018 and one of the editors of the ELTA Newsletter. Milica has presented papers at a number of international conferences, such as the conference organized by the MGIMO University in 2015, titled "The Magic of Innovation: New Trends in Language Research and Teaching Foreign Languages". Most recently (September 2018) she attended a conference at the University of Turin that dealt with the topic of Data Driven Learning.

**Radojka Vukčević** is Professor of American Literature in the English Department at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. She has

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## **Notes to contributors**

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*Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies (Belgrade BELLS)* is an annual peer-reviewed academic journal issued by the Department of English Language, Literature and Culture, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia.

The aim of the journal is to provide an international forum for current investigations in English theoretical/applied linguistics and anglophone literary/cultural studies.

The journal welcomes original research papers, book reviews, scholarly interviews, conference reports, and commentaries.

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CIP – Каталогизacija y publikaciji  
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

811.111+82

**BELGRADE English Language & Literature Studies** / editor-in-chief  
Nenad Tomović. – Vol. 1 (2009)– . – Belgrade : Faculty of Philology,  
University of Belgrade, 2009– (Belgrade : Čigoja štampa). – 24 cm  
Godišnje. – Drugo izdanje na drugom medijumu:  
Belgrade English Language & Literature  
Studies (Online) = ISSN 1821-4827

ISSN 1821-3138 = Belgrade English Language & Literature Studies  
COBISS.SR-ID 170838540