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INTRODUCTION

The third time out, the Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies in its new volume brings a variety of articles that span and connect research interests in language and literature. The verbs 'span' and 'connect' are not here by chance, but rather reflect the nature of the majority of the articles in this issue – most of them exploring phenomena on the interface of the linguistic, literary and cultural. Like the two previous volumes, this one consists of three sections: Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, Literary and Cultural Studies and a Belgrade BELLS Interview.

Both the Theoretical and Applied Linguistics and the Literary and Cultural Studies sections present work by authors from a number of European countries. In our linguistics section, **Junichi Toyota** (Lund University, Sweden) adopts a new and politics-free perspective on the socio-pragmatic and linguistic practices of modern English, as he examines and follows the changes that were initiated in the language during the reign of Richard II but have been long overlooked. **Hortensia Pârlog** (University of Timisoara, Romania) sets out to redefine the semantic division between dynamic and stative verbs, motivated by the real linguistic practices researched in three different age groups of educated native speakers. **Mirjana Mišković-Luković** (University of Kragujevac, Serbia) performs a thorough analysis of the pragmatic marker *you see* against the theoretical framework of relevance theory, speculates on the origin of the marker and views it in relation to epistemic hedges. **Lech Zabor** (University of Wrocław, Poland) relies on current theories of English article meaning to demonstrate that the acquisition of the English article system depends on learners' perception of noun phrase uniqueness. The research presented in the article by **Anžela Nikolovska** (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Macedonia) shows the similarities and differences in the vocabulary learning strategies employed by male and female EFL learners. **Renáta Gregová** (Šafárik University, Slovakia) challenges the universal nature of the CVX theory of syllable, showing that in Slovak word-final consonant clusters rarely form complex sounds, but rather that the vowel length expands the number of timing slots in the rhyme pattern. **Marija Milojković** (University of Belgrade, Serbia) uses a computational collocation-based analysis to examine Philip Larkin's

reputation as a depressive atheist; she combs the entire corpus of Larkin's poetry looking for key symbols to depict his persona.

The Literary and Cultural Studies section consists of seven articles which explore the negotiations, tension and irony that occur in literary and cultural borderlands. **Adrian Frazier** (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland) presents Pat Sheeran, the Irish novelist, filmmaker, and scholar searching for answers on the important issues of modern writing and living in Sheeran's unusual character and career. **Biljana Dojčinović** (University of Belgrade, Serbia) offers a female reading of Joyce's *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, arguing that significant motifs of femaleness in both texts have usually been neglected in favour of a more traditional quest inspired interpretation. **Elżbieta Klimek-Dominiak** (University of Wrocław, Poland) deals with the hybrid identities of American immigrants of Jewish/Polish descent. She analyzes the complex textual fabric of immigrant texts seeing a new language as a space where identities are negotiated within the new culture. **Mirjana Knežević** (University of Belgrade, Serbia) looks for the manifestations of irony as endorsed by a wide range of artistic expressions in literature, music and visual arts. **Rumena Bužarovska** (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Macedonia) explores humor in Bernard Malamud's story "The Jewbird" from two perspectives, universal and socio-cultural. **Teresa Bruś** (University of Wrocław, Poland) deals with the public vs. private space of a character in Louis MacNiece's *Zoo*. Bruś explores the metaphorical possibilities of the concept of the zoo, pointing to its ethical connotations. **Ulla Kriebernegg** (Karl-Franzens University, Austria) deals with the life experience of an Arab-Irish-American citizen living in the post-9/11 world, who is a character in Updike's novel *Terrorist*. The paper describes the character's efforts to come to terms with his hybrid identity in a world where it "fits a profile of white anxiety". Kriebernegg tackles Updike's fictional representations of the life of Arab-American citizens and exposes the stereotypical and hollow depictions of Islamist terrorism.

In this Volume, **Jelisaveta Milojević** (University of Belgrade, Serbia) interviews renowned British linguist and Baines Professor of English, **Michael Hoey**.

Once again, we warmly thank our contributors and all our collaborators for helping us make this Volume what we hope it has grown into – a versatile, interesting and insightful contribution to contemporary linguistic, literary and cultural thought.

Editors

***Theoretical and
Applied Linguistics***

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RICHARD II: HIS HIDDEN LEGACY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Abstract

This article examines the possible impact of political policies on the historical changes in the English language during the reign of Richard II. It is argued that his policy to incorporate the French culture into the English court system has had very long-lasting effects on the linguistic activities in the British Isle. He has been considered a villain due to various Tudor propagandas, and his legacy to the English language has been overlooked. A fresh look at various historical events from a politics-free perspective allows us to clearly observe a link between Richard II and various sociolinguistic practices of modern English.

Key words: Richard II, language contact, language change, pragmatics, sociolinguistics

1. Introduction

The historical development of languages is often considered a gradual process, taking several millennia to complete a certain cycle of change. Since such changes are so gradual, we can see overlapping structures or functions. However, recent research on language contact suggests

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that language contacts in the past could be the major driving force for historical changes in languages, and contact-induced changes can happen only after several generations (Heine and Kuteva 2005, 2006). On top of this, it is possible to argue that specific people can affect or manipulate language change, whether purposefully or spontaneously. In this paper, we analyse the latter case concerning English, i.e. a person who has unwittingly contributed to the formation of Present-day English (PDE).¹ This is Richard II. His status has not been given much attention in English historical linguistics, but his political policies have had significant impact on the later development of the English language.

This paper is organised as follows: first, several people highly influential to the development of the English language are highlighted. These people are normally acknowledged as contributing to the establishment of the English language as a national language in England. Along a similar line of argument, Richard II is discussed next. He introduced several new social systems in England, and an attempt is made to clarify the connection between him and these changes in England. After these backgrounds, several specific structures are analysed, including a change of the second person pronoun, the oddity of verbal conjugation and the historical development of the passive voice. These structures are closely connected to the social influence of Richard II.

2. Important figures in the history of English

English is known to have been shaped by various factors apart from its internal historical changes, to the extent that OE speakers even copied pronouns from Old Norse (Curzan 2003: 133). The contact with Old Norse is perhaps one of the most significant changes, if not the most. The contact with Norman French is also influential, especially in terms of the expansion of vocabulary. Latin set the standard in the written form in earlier English, mainly due to the fact that Latin was the language of religion and learning (Townend 2006). These contacts were made by groups of speakers of different languages and no one was volitionally acting to influence the

¹ The following abbreviations are used: DAT = dative; eModE = Early Modern English; lModE = Late Modern English; ME = Middle English; NOM = nominative; OE = Old English; PDE = Present-Day English; PL = plural; PRS = present; PST = past; SG = singular.

shape of English at that time. However, there were some specific individuals who contributed to the formation of PDE.

Let us start with King Alfred (reigning 871-899). He promoted the vernacular English and encouraged translation from Latin into English. Written materials prior to his reign that survive to this day are mainly in Latin religious materials such as psalters and gospels. Some poems such as parts of *The Dream of the Road* (inscribed in runes) or *Cædmon's Hymn* are found prior to King Alfred, but we find a number of texts written in English after his reign (Blake 1996: 19; Leith 1997: 24). The use of vernacular language was powerful and many felt its influence. From the reign of Henry IV, for instance, the Church prosecuted those who criticised the Church in English, including Chaucer (cf. Section 3.5). So King Alfred's action was a corner stone in the development of English.

In the fifteenth century, the English government employed standardised English for documentation, now commonly known as Chancery English, and scribes were taught and trained to use this standard regardless of their original dialects. Standardisation might have begun but there was no guarantee of its sustenance. The Lancastrian monarch Henry V (reigning 1413-1422), was in favour of standardisation and promoted the use of English in public and official gatherings. In addition, he also ordered the official documentation to be kept in English, not in French. This was perhaps in part due to the fact that he went to war against France (in 1415 and 1417) and his campaigns were successful. This might have created English nationalism and anti-French sentiment. For whatever reason, after the reign of Henry V, the status of the French language in England drastically diminished (Corrie 2006: 111-118).

It is obvious that the above-mentioned contacts and individuals have influenced the shape and the fate of English, but it is still possible to name another individual, Richard II, as a person who contributed to shaping the base of the PDE grammar as it is. King Alfred and Henry V are often mentioned in monographs dealing with the history of English, but Richard II is hardly ever mentioned. Below, we explore how he contributed to the English language.

3. Little known legacy: Richard II

Richard II reigned in England between 1376-1399. For various reasons, he has received negative publicity in English history. Adjectives used to describe him include vain, megalomaniacal, narcissistic, treacherous, vindictive, tyrannical, mad and insane, among others (Jones and Ereira 2005: 203). He indeed commissioned a lifelike portrait for the first time as a monarch in England, but does this make him megalomaniac or vain? Perhaps this can be reinterpreted from different perspectives. He “saw the basis of his power not in overwhelming military force or political intrigue, but in the special authority of sovereignty. His court was a fount not of military authority but of magical power, in which the majesty of royal justice was tempered by the mercy of queenly intercession; it was a court of manners and of ceremony” (Jones and Ereira 2005: 208), filled with the arts, poetry, music, fashion and haute cuisine. This attitude may appear to be normal in the modern world, but his behaviour at the time of his reign may not have been conventional and have frustrated a number of the nobles. He tried to put an end to the Hundred Years’ War against France and preferred peace. If knights cannot go to war, they cannot earn much and increase their reputation and power. Thus, they felt that Richard II had deprived them of the chance to thrive as knights.

In this context, it may be easier to understand a common depiction of him as a mad man or megalomaniac, since his rule was against the interests of most of the nobles of that time. Consider, for instance, an earlier belief suggesting that Richard II threw a tantrum, tossing his cape and shoes out of the window, and began to act like a madman upon hearing of the rejection of his order by the king’s councillors to put John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster to death. This was repeatedly cited by historians as proof positive of Richard’s incipient madness. However, in 1953, “a scholar pointed out that the Victorian editor of the particular chronicle had misplaced the sentence about the cape and shoes, and that it was actually a friar who had pretended to be mad on realizing that his false accusations were about to be exposed” (Jones and Ereira 2005: 204). Was this a mere slip of the pen, or was it done on purpose?

History can be considered as a series of propaganda events, and people can be branded as villains or scapegoats for political purposes. Given the constant power struggle throughout medieval English history, it is possible that Richard II became a target in order to keep a balance in

this power struggle and appease those who were in power at a particular time. Not surprisingly, he has been victimised, perhaps due to the feud with his successor, Henry IV. Unlike Richard II, who was from the House of Plantagenet, Henry IV and his successor Henry V were from the House of Lancaster. It is highly likely that Richard II was considered the greatest enemy of the Lancaster branch of the family. As soon as Henry IV took over the throne, he manipulated all the historical records in English, such as chronicles kept in abbeys and major churches. “The erasures and revisions still visible in these manuscripts, the removal of criticism of Bolingbroke and his father, and the addition of anti-Richard material show that monks understood perfectly well what that meant” (Jones and Ereira 2005: 207). This trend, interestingly, can be still found later in Tudor England. In Shakespeare’s play *Richard II*, for example, Richard is depicted as an authoritarian figure concerned only with the nobles, making a sharp contrast with his counterpart, Bolingbroke (i.e. Henry IV), who is willing to communicate with different classes of people.

Due to this historical trend, Richard II’s achievement is often not given in a positive light. This is perhaps also true in the history of the language. As demonstrated below, the onset of changes can be traced back to the period when Richard II ruled England and thus set new standards in society. Negative publicity throughout the history of England may affect his status and this general false-belief might have kept him out of the frame of the history of the English language. We examine some cases below.

3.1 European court system in England and addressing the noble

In the English aristocracy, French culture and language were the norm after the Norman Conquest until the early fifteenth century. This indicates that there was close contact with the continental cultures in England. However, it was not until the reign of Richard II that several rules or practices that we can still find to this day were introduced, including: Addressing a king or queen with titles such as *Your Highness*, *Your Majesty*, etc. instead of the former *Sire*; Everyone was required to bow to the knee to the king or queen. These new practices can be interpreted as vain, and along with propaganda by Henry IV, they earned him names like megalomania. There was a social hierarchy in England before Richard II, but this new standard in English society made it more rigid or clearly visible creating a special

status for the King and Queen. Having mentioned this, it is important to note that he was merely following a standard from continental Europe and there was no selfishness or megalomania about his behaviour. “In adopting higher terms of address, such as ‘Your Majesty’ and introducing courtesies such as bowing, Richard was doing no more than importing the fashions that had been current in the courts of Europe for most of the [fourteenth] century” (Jones and Ereira, 2005: 205). Copying different cultures is observed in different parts of the world and this is perhaps one of the factors that influence language change, too (cf. Heine and Kuteva 2005, 2006).

The terms of address, such as *Your Majesty*, *Your Highness*, *Your Grace*, were introduced to England in the early fourteenth century. The examples (1) to (3) are taken from the OED illustrating the first instances listed for each phrase. However, this does not indicate the frequent use of such terms in historical records, and their frequency increased after around 1500. They were all used rather interchangeably earlier, but *Your Majesty*, originally a translation from French *Votre majesté*, was acknowledged as an official term by Henry VIII. However, “it was not until the 17th cent. that *Your Majesty* entirely superseded the other customary forms of address to the sovereign in English. Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I were often addressed as ‘Your Grace’ and ‘Your Highness’, and the latter alternates with ‘Your Majesty’ in the dedication of the Bible of 1611 to James I” (s.v. OED *majesty* n.2.).

Your Majesty (s.v. OED *majesty* n.2.)

- (1) Whanne Alisaundre..wente toward his owne contray, þe messangers..of Affrica, of Spayne, and of Italy come in to Babilon to zilde hem to his lordschipe and mageste. (a1387 J. TREVISA tr. R. Higden *Polychron.* (St. John’s Cambr.) IV. 9)

Your Highness (s.v. OED *highness* n.2.b.)

- (2) More can I not write to yowr hynesse at this tyme. (1402 PRINCE OF WALES *Let. to Hen. IV* (Nat. MSS. I. No. 36))

Your Grace (s.v. OED *grace* 16.a.)

- (3) To his lord he went a pase, And broght him tithinges from hir goode grace. (c1430 *Syr Gener.* (Roxb.) 1870)

Judging from these data, perhaps monarchs such as Henry VIII or Queen Elizabeth I may seem to be more responsible for the increase in frequency for these terms, but its onset can be attributed to Richard II. If these terms and the practice of addressing the king had been imported immediately after the Norman Conquest, one would expect the emergence of such terms in English much earlier. This suggests that the social practice of addressing people of a higher social status was a result of Richard II's introduction of the European court system where such terms as *Votre majesté* were frequently used. This introduction may be a matter of specific terms and a specific social practice, but it has significant subsequent consequences in the English language.

3.2 You as singular and plural pronoun

After the introduction of the specific terms discussed in the previous section, a social hierarchy became clearer. This raised awareness of politeness as a volitional action among people. Politeness is often achieved by so-called distancing, i.e. creating a social distance by grammatical coding, including the avoidance of direct mention of an addressee (Hill et al. 1986). There are various tactics for creating politeness, and what is commonly known in British English is a round-about expression for request. This is done in order to achieve distancing to avoid a direct request. Once there is a strict hierarchy in society, distancing becomes a very important social skill. When it is firmly established, it is rather easy to follow a common pattern, but this type of social practice is rather difficult to establish in the first instance.

In addition, the sixteenth century saw a use of *yes* and *yea* different from the PDE counterparts in relation to politeness or courtesy (Pope 1972: 195-6, cited in Kitagawa 1980: 115). The use of *yes* and *yea* earlier was based on so-called agreement-disagreement type of answering, where saying 'yes' suggests that a speaker in principle agrees with an interlocutor's underlying statement. For instance, for a negative question such as *Have you not been to the city centre?*, a reply with 'yes' can be followed by *I have not*. This system is very odd in PDE, but in the agreement-disagreement system, an underlying statement here is 'you have not been to the city centre,' and a speaker merely agrees with this statement, e.g. 'Yes, I agree with the statement, I have not been to the city centre.' In case of eModE, the use of *yes* was extended to show a sign of attentiveness, i.e. *yes* was

used as a sign of marking solidarity with interlocutors, in a sense of ‘I am listening.’ This is not necessarily politeness, but at least courtesy to others. The common answering system in Indo-European languages is a so-called positive-negative type, and this type is only concerned with the positive or negative aspect of answers. This was a common pattern in English, but only from around the sixteenth century was there a surge of the agreement-disagreement type in England, and this suggests that there was a demand for people to show courtesy to others overtly even in conversation.

Perhaps for this reason, people were rather uneasy and reacted to this standard rather radically and became really cautious about not being rude to others. The use of terms such as *Your Majesty* is an honorific action, since this is a social norm, but this raises the sense of politeness in English society beyond addressing the nobles, since not to be rude is a self-conscious, volitional action. Old English had a distinction in the second pronoun, between *thou* (casual/familiar) and *ye* (formal), as in many continental European languages. It is normally the case that the plural form is more polite than the singular form, and if there is an inclusive-exclusive distinction in pronouns, the first person plural inclusive ‘we (inclusive)’ is the most polite address (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 203), although English did not have this.

Judging from the chronology of the terms in (1) to (3), the reign of Richard II seems to have made the difference between *thou* and *ye* more obvious by introducing the European court system, and people became wary not to be rude. This created an environment where people were oversensitive concerning politeness and when in doubt, they chose to use the polite form *ye* (Toyota 2005: 336 fn. 5). This resulted in the overuse of *ye*, consequently contributing to the loss of *thou* from English, although some dialects still maintain this distinction, e.g. *H’art tha doing?* [how art thou doing] ‘How are you doing?’ in Yorkshire (Upton 2006: 326).

The avoidance of *thou* grew to the extent that the singular pronoun was used as a sign of contempt. This pronoun often “co-occurred with terms of abuse, threats, and other negative associations” such as lying (Nevalainen 2006: 195). In addition, it could be even used as a verb, e.g. “to use the pronoun ‘thou’ to a person: familiarly, to an inferior, in contempt or insult, or as done (formerly universally, now less frequently) on principle by Quakers” (s.v. OED *thou* v). Some examples are shown in (4) to (6). Notice that in (6), a formal pronoun *you* is also used as a verb, as a sign of expressing politeness.

- (4) None of hyghenesse schal thou another in spekyng. (c1450 in Aungier *Syon* (1840) 297)
- (5) Avaunt, caitiff, dost thou thou me! I am come of good kin I tell thee! (c1530 *Hickscorner* (1905) 149)
- (6) He thous not God, but you[s] hym. (1564-78 W. BULLEN *Dial. agst. Pest.* (1888) 5)

As mentioned earlier, politeness can be achieved by means of certain distancing activities, and this can be also understood in relation to the social level. When interlocutors are at the same social level, their social distance is not wide, but communication between two from different social levels can force an increased social distance. In the change of the second person in English, it can be argued that speakers were manipulating this social distance by creating different levels. In creating respect, a speaker can make the status of an interlocutor higher than his own (cf. Figure 1a), but a speaker can also lower his own status to show humbleness. When addressing the nobles, one was forced to be both respectful and humble, creating a maximum social distance (cf. Figure 1b). These relationships can be schematically shown in Figure 1. What is noticeable is that the dotted line is a normal distance between two interlocutors, and after being either respectful (raising the status of interlocutors) or humble (lowering the speaker's status), more distance between interlocutors is created. The use of *thou* as a sign of contempt is a variation of distancing, although in this case the operation deals with the lowering of interlocutors, as represented in Figure 2, making a sharp contrast with Figure 1a for respect.

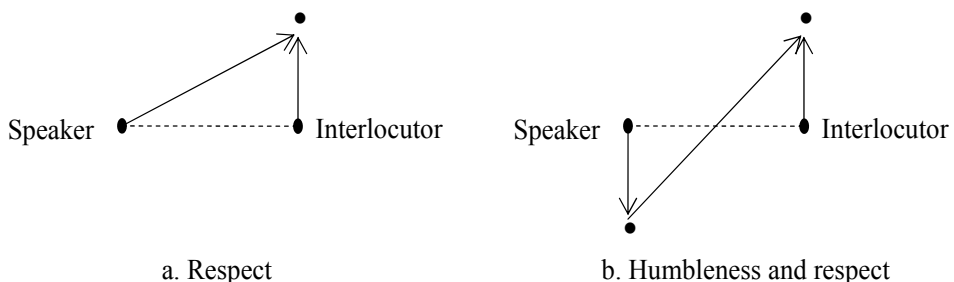


Figure 1. Schematic representation of politeness
(based on Toyota 2005: 322-323)

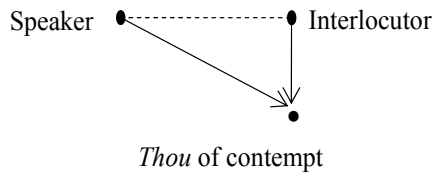


Figure 2. Schematic representation for *thou* of contempt

What the new rule set by Richard II did was to introduce the pattern shown in Figure 1b. This makes common people aware of social differences, but they must have been somewhat reluctant to lower themselves much. However, even with the refusal to lower themselves, thus omitting the lower part of Figure 1b, common people could still raise the status of the hearer. This led to the use of *ye* as a standard after ME, and its total opposite, i.e. Figure 2, is easily achievable by turning *thou* into a sign of contempt.

The single second person pronoun *you* for both singular and plural use stems from various issues concerning politeness. This change bears various consequences in the later development of English. Thus, the legacy of Richard II does not stop here, but also spreads to different parts of the grammar.

3.3 Oddity of 3SG -s in PDE

The use of the second person plural pronoun is not the only effect derived from Richard II, and it has yet another effect on the grammatical structure, i.e. verbal conjugation. It has not been much noted, perhaps because it is not obvious when English is analysed on its own. However, in comparison with other languages, the verbal conjugation in PDE is very peculiar, as described below. This is simply an historical accident, but it is a result of social change induced by Richard II. Let us first analyse why the conjugation in PDE is peculiar from historical perspectives.

Old English (OE) has a more complex conjugation than that in PDE, but even at the stage of OE, the verbal conjugation was somewhat simplified. Consider cases of strong and weak verbs in Table 1. What was unique was the simplified conjugation for the plural form. Unlike the singular form where each person has its specific ending, the plural form does not differentiate persons. Slight differences in the singular forms for strong

verbs are dialectal, but nevertheless different forms for each person are maintained. This type of conjugation is totally lost in PDE, and as a result, it appears to be simplified. As shown in Table 2, the only marking of a verb is on the third person singular, where a suffix *-s* is added.

Table 1. OE verbal conjugation

		Strong	Weak
INF		bindan ‘bind’	hīeran ‘hear’
PRS	1SG	binde	hīere
	2SG	bindest/bintst	hīerst
	3SG	bindeð/bint	hīerð
	PL	bindað	hīerað

Table 2. PDE verbal conjugation

	SG	PL
1 st	bind	bind
2 nd	bind	bind
3 rd	binds	bind

In verbal conjugation, it is important that each language distinguishes between first and second person in order to clarify who is speaking to whom (cf. Croft 2001: 315). Thus, they normally carry some overt markings (such as specific endings). The third person, on the other hand, can be unmarked, since its identity can be unknown to interlocutors and can remain unspecified. As for the number, the plural form (as well as other numbers such as dual, paucal, etc.), not the singular, has a marker for the number unless both singular and plural forms are equally marked (as in, e.g. Latvian).² The combination of person and number yields the third person singular the least marked in the conjugation, as schematically represented in Table 3 (cf. Toyota 2005: 332; Comrie 1977: 11; Silverstein 1985: 243). Thus, the third person singular form often behaves as a stem

² Note that Modern Breton seems to have developed a system by which older plural-cum-singular nouns can be singularised now by adding a singular suffix, indicating that the plural form can be a base for a singular form. There are, however, only a handful of nouns that behave like this and such cases are clearly marked even within the lexical category noun.

for conjugation or as a base for infinitive, as in the case of Macedonian, since it is the least marked for both person and number.

Table 3. Markedness patterns in terms of person and number

	SG	PL	
1 st	*	*	√
2 nd	*	*	√
3 rd			√

Notes: * = markedness for person; √ = markedness for number

In the case of OE, the third person singular is also marked (cf. Table 1), but the first and second persons were at least distinguished earlier in English. The conjugation became simplified in English through history, perhaps due to the contacts with Old Norse earlier and with other dialects later (Nevalainen 2006: 184-185, 196-197). What makes PDE a peculiar language in terms of conjugation is that only the third person singular present indicative form has a suffix *-s*, i.e. *binds* from *bind*. This is supposed to be the least marked combination of person and number, but instead this is the only combination marked for person and number in PDE, as shown in Table 2. This conjugational pattern is extremely rare in the world and no language operates like PDE.³ When attention is paid to different dialects in PDE, some have no marking for any person and number (East Anglia, e.g. *He do his work*) or the *-s* marking for every person and number (West Yorkshire *I does my work* or *We does our work*). Their systems, although non-standard and often stigmatised, are more logical or conform to a typologically common pattern. How did the typologically unnatural pattern happen in PDE, then?

The loss of *thou* as the second person singular pronoun triggered the loss of the marking for the second person, e.g. *thou* normally carried the *-st* ending as in *thou tellest*, *thou may'st*, *thou dost*, etc. Along with the earlier third person singular ending (i.e. *-s* or *-th*), singular persons were all clearly distinguished as shown in Table 1. The lack of *thou*, along with the assimilation of the plural form into the first person singular form, made the conjugation somewhat crippled, leaving the third person singular the

³ Note, however, that some Papuan languages, such as Fasu or Hua, can behave against the common pattern shown in Table 3, although not like PDE.

only marked form in PDE. This change would not have happened without the loss of *thou*. Otherwise, the second and third person singular form would have retained some markings. Thus, it is possible to claim that the peculiarity in the conjugational pattern in PDE was initially influenced by the awareness of politeness and the loss of the second person singular pronoun *thou*. This trend was set by Richard II and therefore, the oddity of conjugation in PDE was indirectly created by him.

3.4 Passive and politeness

As observed in the change of pronouns, people in England became increasingly aware of politeness after the reign of Richard II. This may have had an impact on another grammatical structure, i.e. the passive voice. The passive voice allows speakers to refer to events without mentioning a doer, which allows them to achieve various social and pragmatic functions, such as avoiding responsibility, keeping the identity of the agent ambiguous, as well as keeping a distance from events and implying objectivity in statements. What is prominent among them is commonly known as impersonalisation and this is often considered as the main function of the passive voice (cf. Keenan 1975; Comrie 1977; Shibatani 1985; Brown and Levinson 1987: 273-275). This can be considered as one of the grammatical features indirectly influenced by Richard II's reign.

In the history of English, impersonalisation could previously be achieved by several different tactics, and the most common one in OE was the use of indefinite pronouns or generic nouns such as *man*. They are collectively called indefinite pronouns here. Six different ones have been used for impersonalisation throughout the history of English: *man* (until the 15th C), *thou* 'you (SG)' (until the 16th C), *we* (from the mid 10th C), *one* (from the 13th C), *they* (from the 14th C), *you* (from the 16th C). Figure 3 summarises the chronology of these indefinite pronouns. *Man* was perhaps the most common pronoun for impersonalisation among them, as demonstrated in (7) and (8) until it gained a new sense, 'male person' (Mustanoja 1960: 222). This shift happened around the late ME period. However, what was characteristic in earlier English was that many personal pronouns, although referential in nature, were often used as indefinite pronouns on purpose. One such case is illustrated in (10), where *we* can be referential, but used as an indefinite pronoun for impersonalisation.

Similar to this case, the pronoun *you* we saw earlier was chosen on purpose not to be rude and is closely related to impersonalisation, i.e. the plural form is easier for achieving impersonalisation than the singular form, and it can be used as an indefinite pronoun, as shown in (10).

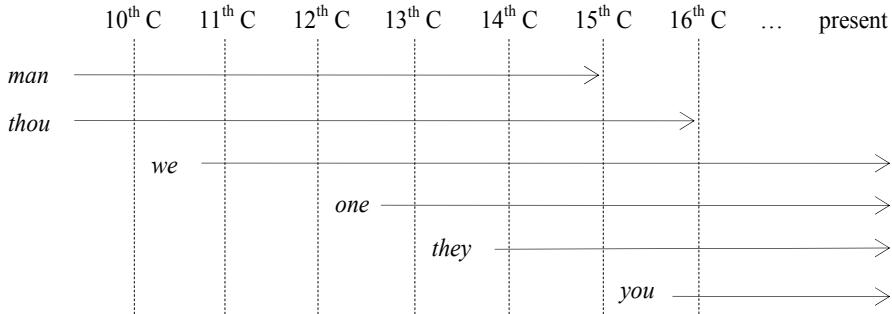


Figure 3. Diachronic change of indefinite pronoun or generic noun in English (Toyota 2005: 329).

- (7) þæt mon his winedryhten wordum herge.
 thatone.NOM his lord.and.friend word.DAT.PL
 honour.3SG.PRS
 ‘that one honours his lord and friend in words’ (*Beowulf* 3176)
- (8) Man brohte þa his heafod on anum disce.
 one bring.PST then his head in alone dish
 ‘And his head was brought in a charger.’ (*West Saxon Gospels: Matt.* (Corpus Cambr.) xiv. 11)
- (9) Beowulf mæpelode ...: We þæt ellenweor ... feohtan
 fremedon
 Beowulf spoke we that valorous.deed with.battle
 performed
 ‘Beowulf said: valorous deed was performed in the battle.’
 (*Beowulf* 958)
- (10) You shall sometime have one branch more gallant than his
 fellowes. (1577 GOOGE *Heresbach’s Hush.* 11. (1586) 87)

Speakers may want to hide the identity of others, for various reasons. It is possible that the identity is not known and impersonalisation has to be employed. However, it can be a sign of politeness if it is done purposefully. In real-life situations, it is common to see impersonalisation in gradience, and it is often up to hearers to measure the degree of politeness with this gradience (Watts 2003: 68). In addition, impersonalisation can be more closely associated with politeness in a culture where politeness plays an important role in social interaction, e.g. Asian countries (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987). As already seen in Section 3.2, there was a change in the social practice in England and impersonalisation can be an important linguistic tactic in verbal communication.

Generally speaking, this type of volitional choice to be polite or rude was common in earlier English, but not in PDE, and a number of earlier choices are now grammaticalised as a social norm, i.e. politeness has turned into honorific. The address to the noble, for instance, was a social norm set by Richard II, and this was one of the first changes in this domain of social interaction. As the English language developed, speakers faced the lack of manipulatable constructions for politeness, but politeness still played a major role in the society. This was perhaps the social force for speakers to search for a new structure.

The passive voice is known to be used for impersonalisation, but the history of the passive voice in English is reasonably recent, and it was fully grammaticalised around late Middle English or early Modern English, i.e. it is only ca. 400 to 500 years ago, although the onset of changes can be detected even in Old English. The earlier passive was a perfective aspectual construction. This aspectual structure was defective, since only the undergoer (patient) was allowed as the overt grammatical subject. Thus, examples like (11) from OE are not necessarily instances of the passive voice. In addition, these examples often translate as a perfective aspect in PDE, and thus, the translation in (11) is ‘had brought’, not a simple past tense ‘brought’. Ambiguous cases like this are persistent; some even claim that examples can be found even in the nineteenth century (Rydén and Brorström 1987: 24). In addition to this aspectual change and actor-undergoer orientation, there is another important change in the copula. The earlier passive-like sentence was stative, since its aspectual reading is derived from the copula verb, which is inherently stative. In other words, the aspectual representation of the whole sentence depended on the copula *be*. However, this has changed and after the late ME period,

the whole clause became predominantly dynamic, which indicates that the aspect at the clause level represents the one from the past participle, i.e. there was a semantic bleaching on the part of the copula, and it has lost its verbal nature and has become an auxiliary (Toyota 2008: 51-59). After all these changes, the entire clause can be considered to have been grammaticalised. In statistical analysis, it has been claimed that the aspectual shift was more or less completed around the late ME/eModE period, as demonstrated in Table 4.⁴

(11) Old English

Ða him ða ðæt sæd broth wæs, ...
 when him then the seed brought was
 ‘When someone had brought him the seed, ...’ (*Bede* 4
 29.366.30)

(11) Late Modern English

Our hopes are again revived of seeing the Viceroy of Mexico. (1797
 Nelson, *Letters*, ed. Naish (1958) 190 p., 328 (30 Jun.))

Table 4. Aspectual change in the English passive (Toyota 2008: 17)

	OE	ME	eModE	lModE	PDE
Dynamic	395 (34.5%)	1033 (67.5%)	2458 (72.2%)	7121 (77.5%)	8632 (79.4%)
Stative	661 (57.2%)	368 (24.1%)	701 (20.5%)	1406 (15.3%)	1762 (16.2%)
Ambiguous	99 (8.6%)	128 (8.4%)	232 (6.8%)	661 (7.2%)	478 (4.5%)
Total	1155 (100%)	1529 (100%)	3418 (100%)	9188 (100%)	10872 (100%)

The grammaticalisation of the passive involves various different factors, but its use relating to politeness cannot be overlooked. It has been argued that the decrease of these indefinite pronouns correlates with the emergence of the passive (Toyota 2005). Notice that the PDE translations for (8) and (9) use the passive voice. From the perspective

⁴ Corpora used for this statistical result are: Helsinki corpus (for OE, ME and eModE); ARCHER corpus (for lModE); London-Lund corpus (for PDE spoken data); Lund-Oslo-Bergen corpus (for PDE written data).

of PDE, earlier indefinite pronouns are a substitute for the passive, e.g. “the idea [of the passive voice, J.T.] was expressed by the impersonal *man* ‘one’ with the active voice” (Mitchell and Robinson 1992: 111; see also Mustanoja 1960: 226-227, 438). The result shown in Figure 3 and Table 4 also suggests that the decrease of the indefinite pronoun *man* and the increase of frequency of the passive happened around the same period. It may take several centuries for these changes to happen and there are some functional overlaps during this time, but what unites them is most likely impersonalisation. The functional motivation seems very strong in the grammaticalisation of the passive voice.

In conjunction with *man*, the second person pronoun was no longer an obvious sign of politeness, and impersonalisation could not be easily achieved by pronouns. It is possible to assume that the passive voice would have evolved on its own in the course of natural development. However, due to its structure, which allows speakers not to mention the agent, the use of the passive voice was convenient for the purpose of politeness and it would not have been established so firmly without changes in the indefinite pronouns. This co-relation of different structures reflects the awareness of politeness in earlier English society, and it can be argued that the passive voice would not have been so firmly established without this trend.

3.5 Gender shift in earlier English

Apart from the politeness-related issues, it seems possible that Richard II somehow influenced various linguistic issues concerning gender distinction in England. The court of Richard II was a manifestation of refinement and sensitivity. This is when a particular literary tradition in England emerged, e.g. Geoffrey Chaucer. During Richard II’s reign, the Church was more open-minded and allowed various activities, including satire and lampoon in the name of arts performed by minstrels to which Chaucer himself belonged. Note that this openness was only possible under Richard II, and once he was murdered and Henry IV took over the throne, the status of the Church was reinstated as an authority and they started prosecuting people who criticised the church, especially in the vernacular language. This put Chaucer in a difficult position and it is likely that his works were considered heretic by the new Church regime. This shift in politics might have killed one of the greatest English poets (Jones et al. 2003).

This type of open-mindedness during Richard II's reign also extended to difference in sexes. His court was unique at that time in the sense that women enjoyed a high profile: There was a clear existing social division based on gender, and certain roles were normally associated only with males and others only with females. It was Richard II that tipped this balance, and these gender roles became somehow obscured under his reign. In addition, Richard II was the first king to appoint a duchess, Margaret Marshall in 1397, which is a sign that he acknowledged potential in the female. "Women also took on important roles in government; and Richard II's queen, Anne of Bohemia, was seen as a crucial restraining hand on the implacable justice of the king" (Jones and Ereira 2005: 182).

By the end of the fourteenth century many women were in positions of considerable power, and courtly society in England had become increasingly feminised, quite similar to the court created by Richard II. This was partly aided by the Black Death during the twelfth century; this disease left a catastrophic impact on the British Isle as well as the rest of Europe, wiping out a considerable proportion of the population. By the mid twelfth century, due to the shortage of manual labourers, women were forced to do what had been previously considered male jobs. This 'improved' the social status of women in general, since they were given more responsibility. However, once the country had recovered from the impact of the Black Death, this trend soon met a backlash of male dominance in society, and by the mid fifteenth century the suppression of women's status was in full swing, aided by the Church reemphasising the sin committed by Eve in the Garden of Eden.

These social movements are observable in different aspects of Medieval English society, including the language. One instance illustrating Richard II's influence on the grammar is the meaning shift in the generic personal noun, *man*. This was originally used to refer to people in general, i.e. "As a designation applied equally to particular individuals of either sex" (s.v. *OED man*, n. (and *int.*), 1†a.) and it is sometimes considered even as a pronoun (s.v. *OED*, †*man*, pron.). From the Modern English period onwards (cf. Figure 3), its semantic referent became restricted to a male person, perhaps due to the intensification of meaning 'a male person' as contrasted with 'a woman' (Meier 1953). This was not the intention of Richard II, but it is possible to claim that the system in his court created a ground where women could be suppressed later, i.e. the status of women after the reign of Richard II would not have been affected much if it had not been elevated so much during

his reign. Nevertheless, it is true that female referents are more likely to be subjected to pejoration and more terms derogatively referring to them are found after ME (Curzan 2003: 136-158; see also Kleparski 1997 for examples), and this was even more clearly visible towards the Renaissance period to the extent that the grammatical gender was also manipulated as part of socio-political propaganda. For instance, a passage from a seventeenth century grammar book reads “The masculine gender is more worthy than the feminine” (Poole 1646: 21). Some residues can be still seen to this day, e.g. female referents normally carry negative connotation in sex-based pairs such as *master v. mistress*, *bachelor v. spinster*.

There seems to be a general pattern of semantic change concerning referents of both males and females. “Words have shifted their primary meaning almost exclusively from ‘child’ – male or female – to ‘servant,’ and from there, often to a morally or sexually deprived person” (Curzan 2003: 144). For instance, PDE *knight* is derived from OE *cniht* ‘a boy, youth, lad’ (s.v. *OED*, *knight*, n. I.†1.). It went through a stage of ‘servant’, but its servitude was restricted in a sense of military, i.e. a military servant to people of high rank, including a king. This is a case of male referents and *knight* normally does not have a negative sense. Female counterparts such as *maid*, *wench*, *slut*, *trull*, etc. used to mean simply ‘girl’ without any extra implication, but now they all have a negative connotation of varying degrees. In addition, some social changes also influenced the meaning shifts. OE *wif* ‘woman (of a low degree)’, often forming a compound *wifmann* ‘woman’, shifted its meaning to ‘a domestic servant.’ This shift follows a common pattern, but it coincided with the Norman Conquest. This event imposed the feudal system in England, which makes a sharp contrast against Anglo-Saxon social practice. In Anglo-Saxon times, men and women normally shared more equal rights, but this system was completely abolished, and a married woman in England lived in complete submission to her husband (Fell, Clark and Williams 1984; Norberg 1996: 120-21). Thus, OE *wif* became ‘a servant to her husband’, i.e. the origin of ‘wife’ in PDE. This social change might have contributed to the meaning change and solidified new meanings as found in PDE.

This type of example does not explain the grammatical structure itself, but it reflects on social attitudes towards women after the reign of Richard II. He inadvertently changed social practices concerning women, which triggered a later backlash suppressing their status. There were some socio-historical accidents affecting women’s status, but it seems plausible

to assume that without the changes made by him, the pejoration of female referents may not have been this extreme in English. In this sense, the current gender inequality at the grammatical/lexical level may owe its existence to the reign of Richard II.

4. Legacy of Richard II

Some grammatical features in PDE are taken for granted, but they can appear very peculiar once compared with other languages. The case of the third person singular present indicative suffix *-s* is a good example to illustrate this point. These grammatical features may be a result of naturally occurring spontaneous changes, but features analysed in this paper so far are hardly such cases. One possible reason for change is language contact, and English was indeed influenced largely by contact with Old Norse, concerning the loss of case marking, simplification of verbal conjugation, etc. (Toyota forthcoming). However, a kind of contact that influenced structures we have seen is the contact with the European court system, which was first introduced by Richard II to England. The subsequent social changes brought up by the introduction of this continental culture are responsible for the various grammatical changes observed in this paper. This point has not been noted in linguistic studies.

The legacy of Richard II may not be so visible in PDE, but it is clearly found in historical changes. He was unique in many senses in the fourteenth century, but “Richard has created a new vision of royalty in England, in which the king was a majestic figure in a court that was as concerned with the arts of peace as those of war. The function of majesty was to create a focus of authority that would be as effective in times of peace as of war. Henry IV and each succeeding sovereign would, in fact, attempt to build on what Richard had done” (Jones and Ereira 2005: 208). Due to propaganda, he has been given a negative reputation, but his achievements and political policies are still influential across English society and the language. Without his reign, the structure of PDE would be totally different.

5. Summary

This paper has presented how a single person can influence the development of English even after his death. Richard II set some standards in Medieval English society, and although he has gained negative publicity, the standards he set, such as a court of manners and of ceremony, persisted. For instance, some parts of the English grammar have been taken for granted and have not been studied in detail, and as this work has shown, some aspects of change can be related to the social changes Richard II introduced. The introduction of awareness of politeness indeed created a significant impact on English society, which consequently affected the language.

His legacy on grammar can be seen as a chain-effect, one change effecting the next one. The first change is the change in the second person pronoun, when the polite plural form *ye* overtook the paradigm of the familiar singular form *thou*. This change in pronouns (the loss of *thou-ye* distinction) made conjugation in English typologically very odd, with the third person singular the only marked combination of person and number. Also, due to the increasing awareness of politeness, the change in the indefinite pronouns caused a problem, since they became less indefinite and more referential. This change caused speakers difficulties, which helped the passive voice to be firmly established as a replacement for the earlier indefinite pronouns. Richard II also made some fundamental changes in the status of women during his reign, which had significant consequences in a later gender shift concerning female referents, i.e. females are more prone to pejoration. This was not his intention, of course, but it seems that his court created an atmosphere to breed a backlash against improvement of the status of women.

The passive voice and the change of the second person pronouns have been a common topic for researchers, but the typological oddity in the conjugation of PDE is hardly ever mentioned. All these grammatical features, whether commonly studied or not, have not been connected to the influence made by Richard II. As demonstrated throughout this paper, although little is acknowledged, Richard II is an important figure in the formation of PDE and his legacy should be given more attention in the field of linguistics.

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Јунићи Тојота

РИЧАРД II И ЊЕГОВО СКРИВЕНО НАСЛЕЂЕ У ЕНГЛЕСКОМ ЈЕЗИКУ

Сажетак

Чланак разматра могући утицај политичких дешавања на историјску промену енглеског језика за време владавине Ричарда II и заступа мишљење да је његова политика увођења француске културе на енглески двор произвела дуготрајан утицај на језичку активност Британских острва. Захваљујући свакојој пропаганди коју су спроводили Тјудори, Ричард II сматран је за зликовца, а наслеђе које је оставио енглеском језику је дуго било пренебрегнуто. Један другачији поглед на историјске догађаје тога времена из неполитичке перспективе пружа нам могућност да јасно сагледамо везу између Ричарда II и разнолике социо-језичке праксе у савременом енглеском језику.

Кључне речи: Ричард II, језички контакти, језичка промена, прагматика, социолингвистика

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PROGRESSIVE ASPECT TODAY: THE STATIVE VERBS

*I'm Wishing
I'm wishing for the one I love
To find me today.*

(From "Snow White and the seven dwarfs"
Music and Lyrics by Frank Churchill and Larry Morey)

Abstract

Linguists have been aware of the imperfections of the semantic division of verbs into dynamic and stative, which has been used in teaching grammatical aspect. Stative verbs are frequently used in the progressive aspect nowadays, so one wonders about the necessity of this classification, since it does not reflect actual usage. A verb is not inherently stative or dynamic; it is *often* stative or *often* dynamic depending on the lexical and grammatical context in which it appears. The paper discusses some of the stative verbs and gives the results of a survey on the degree of acceptance of "unusual" progressive uses of such verbs by three different age groups of educated native speakers of English.

Key words: progressive aspect, stative verbs, language use, meaning, context

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1. Introduction

The opposition between progressive and non-progressive tense forms in English was aptly characterized forty years ago by Leech (1969:148) as “notoriously problematic, and a major difficulty for foreign learners of English”.

The progressive aspect marks actions and states that are in progress at a given, limited period of time (present, past or future). The use of the progressive aspect is traditionally discussed by taking into account the semantics of the verbs; all books of grammar (e.g., Leech 1971, Quirk et al. 1972, 1985, Comrie 1981, etc.) provide examples of verbs considered *stative*, that “are normally incompatible with the progressive” (Leech 1971: 19), that “cannot normally occur with the progressive aspect” (Quirk et al. 1985: 204), for which progressive “is generally excluded” (Leech 1971: 23). The hedging used in their definition points to the fact that linguists have been aware of the imperfections of the semantic division of verbs into dynamic and stative.

The classes of stative verbs that grammars discuss are the following:

1. Verbs denoting mental states and processes (or verbs of cognition): e.g., *agree, believe, differ, disagree, disbelieve, distrust, feel* (= “be of the opinion”), *find, foresee, forget, imagine, know, mean, realize, recall, recognize, recollect, remember, suppose, think* (= “believe”), *trust, understand*;

2. Verbs denoting emotions or attitudes: e.g., *adore, abhor, astonish, desire, detest, dislike, displease, forgive, hate, hope, like, love, mind* (= “object to”), *please, prefer, want, wish*;

3. Verbs denoting perception: e. g., *behold, feel, hear, notice, observe, see, smell, taste, recognize, watch*;

4. Relational verbs: e.g., *apply* (to sb.), *appear* (= “seem”), *be, belong, concern, consist, contain, comprise, cost, depend, deserve, equal, find, fit, have, include, involve, lack, matter, need, owe, own, possess, remain, require, resemble, result, seem, sound*, etc.

All grammars discuss cases when these verbs can, however, be used in the progressive. Learners of English are told that this happens

▷ when verbs suffer a change of meaning, e.g.

- (1) Who is seeing to [‘taking care of’] the arrangements?
- (2) He is always differing [‘quarrelling’] with his father.

▷ when they denote an action taking place gradually, slowly, by degrees, e.g.

- (3) I'm not hearing as well as I used to.
- (4) He is finding that English is rather difficult.

▷ when they denote a voluntary, deliberate action, a conscious effort of perception, e.g.

- (5) I'm tasting the cake to see whether it is sweet enough.
- (6) He was feeling my arm to see whether it was broken.

▷ or when they refer to a repeated action, e.g.

- (7) He is constantly doubting my word.
- (8) What's she wanting this time, I wonder?

The number of exceptions seems, however, to be much higher nowadays, so high in fact, that Romanian learners of English, in whose native language grammatical aspect is poorly represented, wonder about the necessity of this verb classification into stative and dynamic for their study of the progressive aspect, since it does not reflect actual usage. In the Romanian grammar, an action in progress can be suggested only for the past time, by the tense called *imperfect*, which can be used with all verbs, e.g.

- (9) Când m-ai sunat, mă gândeam la tine.
When me-have called, me thought at you.
'When you called, I was *thinking* of you.'

A brief search on the Internet and a questionnaire were used in order to gather information on the use of stative verbs in the progressive aspect by native speakers of English; their results are given in what follows.

2. The Internet search

The use in the progressive aspect of the following thirty three verbs has been checked by carrying out a Google search on the Internet. The choice of verbs was random; they were grouped afterwards, according to grammar prescription, as follows:

a) mental states and processes: *agree, believe, differ, doubt, feel, find, foresee, forget, guess, imagine, intend, know, mean, mind, realize, recall, recognize, recollect, remember* (19);

b) emotional states: *adore, desire, detest, dislike, forgive, hate, impress, want* (8);

c) perception: *hear, see* (2);

d) relational verbs: *appear, contain, seem, weigh* (4).

Dictionaries like *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, by A. S. Hornby, fifth edition, Jonathan Crowther (ed.), OUP, 1995 or *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, 2002, give information about the use of these verbs which does not always coincide. Thus, in Hornby, the following twelve verbs in my list are marked as “not used in the continuous tenses”: *adore, believe, contain, desire, detest, forget, recognize, recollect, realize, remember, see, seem*. In Macmillan, a distinction is made between “never progressive” (*adore, hear, see, seem, know*) and “not usually progressive” (*agree, believe, recognize*) (a total of eight verbs). One can notice that it is only for five verbs (*adore, believe, recognize, see, seem*) that the two dictionaries give approximately similar information.

2.1. The thirty three stative verbs in the present, past and future progressive

The results of my Internet check on the use of the thirty three verbs in the present, past and future progressive can be seen in Appendix I. Most of these results are corroborated by the data stored in the British National Corpus (BNC), whose latest edition, the third, was released in 2007. Its written part, “(90%), includes ... extracts from regional and national newspapers, specialist periodicals and journals for all ages and interests, academic books and popular fiction, published and unpublished letters and memoranda, school and university essays, among many other kinds of text” (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml>).

Only two of the verbs (of the 33) are never encountered in any of the tenses of progressive: *differ* and *feel* (the latter in the sense of ‘to be of the opinion’). The BNC search, however, provides several examples for the verb *feel* with this meaning as well:

- (10) The majority of women (...) *are feeling* that they must start protecting family life. (<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)
- (11) I *am feeling* that I must hold back. (<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)

The most resistant to the use of these verbs in the progressive is the future tense: 16 of the 33 verbs have never been found to occur in this tense and another 4 appear only rarely in the future progressive (*believe, foresee, forget, mind*):

- (12) If they believe something today, there is no general guarantee that they *will be believing* it tomorrow. (books.google.com/)
- (13) All races (Nations Cup and Sicily Grand Prix) will be scored for the whole event and different Rankings *will be foreseeing* as follows... (www.albaria.it/wwf/wwf97/501.htm)
- (14) they (...) help people forget their daily worries. Thus, half of British (55%), French (51%) and Spanish (51%) adults *will be forgetting*, while... (graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/world/.../20090626-ihl-poll.pdf)
- (15) I can actually see our profitability increasing [...] and I don't think the MD *will be minding* that at all (books.google.com/).

In BNC, a single sentence illustrates the use of the verb *to believe* in the future progressive, while the other three verbs do not appear in this tense at all.

Six verbs never occur in the past progressive (*differ, feel, mind, recall, adore, appear*) and four in the present progressive (*differ, feel, mind, mean*), while in each of these two tenses, two verbs are rarely used (*imagine, appear* - in the present, *imagine, believe* - in the past):

- (16) I *am imagining* that it is raining outside and very cold... (explore.twitter.com/ben_alfac/status/1893897975 -)
- (17) Is it a cultural difference, or *was I imagining* that he was attracted to me? ([www.dearcupid.org/...](http://www.dearcupid.org/))
- (18) This whole tragedy *is appearing* very suspect as some type of cover up... ([www.democraticunderground.com/...](http://www.democraticunderground.com/))

- (19) i just didnt like how he *was believing* you when it wasn't even true
(profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction)

The BNC contains no examples for *differ*, *feel*, and *adore*, while *mind* occurs in the progressive only with the meaning 'to take care of', 'look after'; there is no illustration for *imagine* in the past, and only one example for *imagine* in the present, and for *believe* in the past; on the other hand, there are thirteen examples for *was recalling*, two for *were recalling*, and thirty four for *are appearing* (against one only for the first person singular, *am appearing*, where the verb has the meaning 'to go to a court of law'):

- (20) He told me (and I believe him) that he *was recalling* the dry cadences of a famous essay by the great economist. (<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)
- (21) It is difficult to improve further, younger rivals *are appearing*, contemporaries in other fields are in settled careers. (<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)

Several interesting uses must be commented upon; they concern the (non)association of some of these verbs with a certain grammatical person, a certain sentence type, or a certain tense form.

Thus, *recall* in the present progressive and *mean* in the past progressive were found to occur only in the first person:

- (22) there is an internal sensation of 'I *am recalling* something'.
(books.google.com)
- (23) I accidentally marked an e-mail as junk when I *was meaning* to mark it as safe (windowslivehelp.com/community/t/60377.aspx).

If used with other persons of the present progressive than the first, *recall* has a different meaning (= 'to withdraw from the market'):

- (24) Toyota *is recalling* 436000 hybrid cars worldwide
(news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8505402.stm)

- (25) records of information that will help other businesses and the public to identify and return the food you *are recalling* (www.foodstandards.gov.au/)

On the other hand, *find* in the past progressive never occurs in the first person singular:

- (26) Researchers *were finding* flaws in the new browser's coding within an hour of its release (www.informationweek.com/)

BNC, however, has three examples for *recall* in other persons than the first, with no change of meaning, and eight examples for *find* in the first person:

- (27) the narrator *is recalling* his father's days as a medium and healer
(<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)
- (28) The area suggested that there could be earlier finds but I was not too disappointed with what I *was finding*. (<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)

In the present progressive, *forget* is most frequent in questions, but BNC offers only texts in which this form occurs in declarative sentences:

- (29) Banks *are forgetting* lessons of crisis already, warns Turner –
(wallstreetblips.dailyradar.com)

My search on the Internet has yielded no results for *want* in the present progressive; I have only come across messages with the verb in the present perfect progressive:

- (30) *I've been wanting* a pair of TOMS shoes for a long while now.
(www.ecosalon.com/)

BNC, however, has thirty two sentences in which *want* is employed in the present progressive as well:

- (31) What else is it that you *are wanting* to do? (<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)

- (32) The companies *are wanting* to recover development costs.
(<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)

2.2. Complementation

The preferred type of complementation taken by the stative verbs analysed is the monotransitive one: twenty five stative verbs used in the progressive aspect are frequently followed by a Noun Phrase, and, of these, fifteen also take a finite clause object in the surface structure (a THAT or a WH-clause); fourteen of the verbs take no complementation, being intransitive or being used intransitively (see Appendix II). For example:

▷ + NP

- (33) I *am agreeing a compromise agreement* to leave employment.
(www.justanswer.com)
- (34) if they believe something today there is no general guarantee that they *will be believing it* tomorrow. (books.google.com/)
- (35) Thus by knowing them, He *is knowing Himself*. There is no separation whatsoever. ([www.chabad.org/library/...](http://www.chabad.org/library/))
- (36) Banks *are forgetting lessons of crisis* already, warns Turner
(wallstreetblips.dailyradar.com/)

▷ + clause

- (37) I *am recognizing that* the voice inside my head is urging me to be myself and never follow someone else... (www.plurk.com)
- (38) I *am finding that* being better dressed than the rest of the team (amongst females) creates mixed feelings. (talentegg.ca/incubator)
- (39) I *am hearing ... I am hearing what* you are saying
(www.english-test.net/forum/ftopic1066.html -)
- (40) It was clear that the surgeon *was seeing what* he or she believed.
(www.ctlab.org/documents)

▷ Intransitive use

- (41) When I *am doubting*, I cannot doubt that I *am doubting*.
(books.google.com/)

- (42) If I *am recalling* correctly, Andrew Wyeth was found to have a mistress.
(message.snopes.com)
- (43) The first is for people who *aren't remembering* well enough. The second is for people who *are remembering* too well. (www.ucop.edu/sciencetoday/)
- (44) When you *were hearing*, did you know any deaf or hard of hearing people? (deafness.about.com)

3. The questionnaire

A questionnaire made up of 22 sentences was administered to 24 educated native speakers of American English, who were asked to judge their grammatical correctness. Ten of the sentences had predicates expressed by stative verbs in the progressive aspect; the other sentences were not all correct (see Appendix III); the sentences were “authentic” (i.e. taken from the Internet or very slightly adapted).

The twenty four respondents were divided into three groups: they were nine students aged 18 – 24, ten persons aged 30 – 50, and five aged 51 – 70. Nine of them, of whom three teachers of English, had a PhD.

The results of the survey are expressed in percentages in the tables below.

Table 1. Overall results (24 subjects)

Verbs	OK in the progressive	Not OK
Hear	22 – 91.7 %	2 – 8.3 %
Remember	18 – 75 %	6 – 25 %
Seem	17 – 70.9 %	7 – 29.1 %
Adore	17 – 70.9 %	7 – 29.1 %
Intend	16 – 66.7 %	8 – 33.3 %
Doubt	14 – 58.3 %	10 – 41.7 %
Foresee	13 – 54.2 %	11 – 45.8 %
Believe	13 – 54.2 %	11 – 45.8 %
Detest	8 – 33.3 %	16 – 66.7 %
Know	5 – 20.9 %	19 – 79.1 %

Table 2. Results calculated for each of the three groups

	Age 18 – 24 (9)	Age 30 – 50 (10)	Age 51 – 70 (5)
	Not OK	Not OK	Not OK
Hear	-	-	2 – 40 %
Remember	1 - 11.1 %	4 - 40 %	1 - 20 %
Seem	1 - 11.1 %	5 - 50 %	1 - 20 %
Adore	-	5 - 50 %	2 - 40 %
Intend	1 - 11.1 %	4 - 40 %	3 - 60 %
Doubt	-	6 - 60 %	4 - 80 %
Foresee	2 - 22.2 %	6 - 60 %	3 - 60 %
Believe	-	9 - 90 %	4 - 80 %
Detest	2 - 22.2 %	9 - 90 %	5 - 100 %
Know	6 - 66.6 %	10 - 100 %	3 - 60 %

The results expressed in percentages show that native speakers of English do not seem to agree among themselves as to the (in)correctness of the progressive use of a certain verb. Of the three groups of informants, the students (aged 18–24) were more lenient in their judgement of grammatical correctness; they objected mainly to the use in the progressive of the verb *know* and only occasionally to some of the other verbs. The respondents in the other two groups were less tolerant of the mistakes, but, except for their reaction to the verbs *know* and *detest*, they were not one hundred per cent against the use of *all* the stative verbs in the progressive.

The progressive forms of the verbs most objected to were, besides *know* and *detest* (judged by more than half of the respondents as incorrect), *believe*, *foresee* (11 each), *doubt* (10), *intend* (8) and *adore* (7). Seven of the progressive verb forms were considered correct by more than half of the respondents, which means that those verbs are no longer regarded as stative. The use of *hear*, *remember*, *seem* and *adore* in the progressive is ok for a large majority of the respondents (more than 70 percent; the verb *hear* in the progressive was accepted by 22 respondents).

The three teachers of English were the only ones to also make some unsolicited written comments on several of the sentences, which I would like to mention here, because they might make one wonder about their acceptability in class:

→ “OK or NOT OK, depending on what “at the moment” is intended to modify.” (sentence 18, *We’re hearing a lot about war crimes at the moment*);

→ “This would be a vivid present progressive.”(??) (sentence 14, *One moment I am adoring you, and the next I am shaking my fist at you*);

→ “Here the progressive tense can work, depending on the writer’s meaning.” (sentence 21, *For many, the American dream is seeming more like just a dream*);

→ “This is a bit awkward” (idem);

→ It is “a bit more conversational in tone than the simple present” (idem);

→ “The progressive doesn’t work well here.” (several of the sentences).

4. Conclusion

Both Leech (1971:19) and Quirk et al. (1985:202, Note) admit that meaning is not the only factor that explains the constraints of the progressive. Both discuss the relational verb *resemble*, which, they say, may admit the progressive if accompanied by a word in the comparative degree. This is not confirmed by the data collected from the Internet messages or the BNC, where not one example of such use was found. However, examples containing the comparative degree were found for the relational verbs *cost* and *matter*:

(45) Basic needs of families in state *are costing more*
(seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html)

(46) But in 1985 it *was mattering less* whether it was true or not
(books.google.com)

(47) ... at each assessment period, Newham Services *were costing more*.
(<http://bnc.bl.uk/>).

Leech (1971: 26) also points out that the verb *hear*, even if referring to a process of communication (i.e. ‘to receive a message’), cannot be used in its past progressive form in questions (“*Were you hearing about that terrible accident?”). Still, one can find two examples in the BNC:

- (48) *Was she hearing*, in the gentle wind, eddying along the purpling coastline, the ghost lamentations of the thousands of *sgitheanachs* that had ended up against their will in her country over the Big Water? (<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)
- (49) *Was she hearing* things? (<http://bnc.bl.uk/>)

Native speakers may be inconsistent in their use of stative verbs in the progressive aspect, but it is clear that the forms stigmatized a few years ago are now judged as acceptable by native language users, and that the number of dynamic uses of stative verbs is obviously on the increase. Mair (2006) states that “ ‘stative’ progressives are ... not the recent innovation they are considered to be by many commentators” (2006: 94), demonstrating with well chosen examples from Evelyn Waugh, George Eliot, Jane Austin, that the phenomenon is not new, and regarding it “as an instance of contextually/pragmatically licensed rule-breaking for specific rhetorical or expressive effect.” (2006: 92). Still he admits that the reasons for this change are difficult to explain (cf. Mair 2006: 88).

I am aware that my study cannot claim to be rigorous, but it is meant to draw, once more, the attention to an area where some changes in the grammar taught to learners of English as foreign language must take place. ‘Deviant’ uses as those presented leave the foreign learners very insecure about the validity of the normative rules which they have to learn, and which are taken into account in their evaluation in class or when they sit for the very conservative Cambridge or TOEFL exams.

There is an obvious gap between these rules and actual language use; one must become aware that a verb is not inherently stative or dynamic; it is *often* stative or *often* dynamic, depending on the lexical and/or grammatical context in which it appears, or on the speaker’s/writer’s meaning. That means one cannot have some systematic rules to learn and apply automatically.

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Appendix I

Stative verbs in the present, past and future progressive

Verb	Present	Past	Future
agree	+	+	+
believe	+	few	few
differ	no	no	no
doubt	+	+	no
feel ('be of the opinion; have an opinion')	no	no	no
find	+	+ no 1st person sg.	no
foresee	+	+	very few
forget	+ frequent in questions	+	very few
guess ('suppose')	+	+	no
imagine ('suppose, believe')	very few	very few	no
intend	+	+	+
know	+	+	+
mean	no	only 1st person	no
mind ('object to')	no	no	very rare
realize	+	+	+

recall (remember)	+ usually 1 st person	no	no
recognize	+	+	+
recollect	+	+	no
remember	+	+	no
adore	+	no	no
desire	+	+	+
detest	+	+	+
dislike	+	+	no
forgive	+	+	+
hate	+	+	+
impress	+	+	+
want	+ (present perfect only)	+	+
hear	+	+	no
see	+	+	+
appear	very few	no	no
contain	+	+	+
seem	+	+	no
weigh ('have weight')	+	+	no

Appendix II Complementation

Verb	intransitive	+ NP	+ clause
agree	+	+	
believe		+	+
differ			
doubt	+	+	+
feel			
find		+	+
foresee		+	+
forget	+	+	+
guess			+
imagine			+
intend			
know		+	+

mean		+	+
mind		+	
realize	+	+	+
recall	+	+	+
recognize		+	+
recollect	+	+	+
remember	+	+	+
adore		+	
desire		+	
detest	+	+	
dislike		+	
forgive		+	
hate	+	+	
impress		+	
want		+	
hear	+	+	
see	+	+	+
appear	+		
contain		+	
seem	+		
weigh	+		

Appendix III
Questionnaire

OK Not OK

=====

1. Help me solve this.
2. I am believing you guys will get through this.
3. He didn't think this would happen again.
4. They wish I just wasn't there.
5. So she was doubting the AF447 crash was due to weather.
6. Did you talk to her yet?
7. I am foreseeing a further collapse in credit cards.
8. I wish I had a job as you've got.
9. Here is a list of films I am intending to see this year.
10. They are knowing deep down in themselves they are not fully prepared for it.
11. If you promise to do it, I would believe you.
12. Your presentation started from a description, isn't it?

13. I think you guys are remembering incorrectly.
14. One moment I am adoring you, and the next I am shaking my fist at you.
15. Hardly did we stop talking when a knock was heard on the door.
16. His best friend was detesting him, which was sad.
17. How do you dare to say that?
18. We're hearing a lot about war crimes at the moment.
19. Did you use to go there by yourself?
20. I am going to be 30 next month.
21. For many, the American dream is seeming more like, well, just a dream.
22. She told me he invited her the previous week.

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Хортензија Парлог

ПРОГРЕСИВНИ АСПЕКТ ДАНАС: СТАТИВНИ ГЛАГОЛИ

Сажетак

Лингвисти су свесни несавршености семантичке поделе глагола на динамичке и стативне, која се користи у настави граматичког аспекта глагола. Стативни глаголи данас се често употребљавају у прогресивном аспекту, тако да се поставља питање потребе за оваквом класификацијом, будући да она не одражава стварну употребу језика. Глагол није инхерентно стативан или динамички; он је *често* стативан или *често* динамички у зависности од лексичког и граматичког контекста у коме се јавља. У раду се разматрају одређени стативни глаголи и представљају се резултати испитивања степена прихватљивости „неуобичајених“ употреба тих глагола у прогресивном аспекту код три различите старосне групе образованих изворних говорника енглеског језика.

Кључне речи: прогресивни аспект, стативни глаголи, језичка употреба, значење, контекст

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THE MARKER YOU SEE: COGNITIVE-PRAGMATIC AND SOCIO-PRAGMATIC OBSERVATIONS

Abstract

This article sets out to explore various aspects of the linguistic existence of the pragmatic marker *you see* in order to take a general understanding of its role in communication. The article is organised in the following way. The first part focuses on the aspects of relevance theory that are crucial for a semantic-pragmatic analysis couched within this theoretic framework. The second part presents the data that served as input to my subsequent argumentation and conclusions. The third part speculates on the origin of the marker, and discusses its relation to the so-called *epistemic parentheticals*. The fourth part deals with the linguistic semantic meaning of the marker, which is then checked against two different types of context: the context of mood indicators (part five) and real life co-text (part six). The final section summarises the findings.

Key words: higher-level explicature, implicature, mood indicators, perception verbs, pragmatic markers, relevance

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1. The relevance-theoretic underpinnings

Although this paper presupposes familiarity with the main tenets of relevance theory, in what follows I roughly sketch two important relevance-theoretic distinctions in order to smooth over transition to the ensuing exposition.¹

The first is a cognitive semantic distinction about the relation between a linguistic form and its role in interpretation. This forms the *conceptual-procedural* axis. In a nutshell, a linguistic form can map onto two types of cognitive information – concepts and procedures. Words with conceptual meaning are constituents of mental representations (e.g. the so-called “content” words such as *frame*, *install* and *user-friendly*). Words with procedural meaning tell us how to manipulate these representations, or how to constrain the processes of pragmatic inference (e.g. discourse connectives such as *but*, *moreover* and *so*, or discourse particles such as *kinda* and *sorta*). The conceptual/procedural distinction does not coincide with the truth-conditional/non-truth-conditional distinction; for example, conceptual sentence adverbials such as *seriously* and *unfortunately* do not contribute to the truth-conditions of the proposition expressed by an utterance while procedural pronouns do.

The second is a pragmatic distinction about the way assumptions are ostensively communicated. This forms the *explicature-implicature* axis. If a propositional form is inferentially developed from a logical form encoded by an utterance, it will be explicitly communicated; otherwise it will be (conversationally) implicated in the form of implicated premises and conclusions. The pragmatically enriched propositional form of an utterance (the base-level *explicature*) can further be embedded in a higher-level description such as a speech-act representation in (1a) or the propositional attitude representations in (1b) and (1c):

- (1) Eric: Did Jean-Louis attend the Quality Conference in Juan les Pins last week?
Corinne (happily): He didn't.

¹ For a detailed account of relevance theory, see Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995); relevance-theoretic issues are further elaborated in Carston (2002); a relevance-theoretic introduction to procedural semantics and discourse markers is given in Blakemore (1987, 2002).

a. *Higher-level explicature*: Corrine is saying that Jean-Louis did not attend the Quality Conference in Juan les Pins at time_t.

b. *Higher-level explicature*: Corinne is certain that Jean-Louis did not attend the Quality Conference in Juan les Pins at time_t.

c. *Higher-level explicature*: Corrine is happy that Jean-Louis did not attend the Quality Conference in Juan les Pins at time_t.

Implicated premise: If Jean-Louis did not attend the Quality Conference in Juan les Pins, Jean-Louis and Corinne could spend the weekend in St. Tropez.

Implicated conclusion: Jean-Louis and Corinne spent the weekend in St. Tropez.

Higher-level explicatures are not part of the truth-conditional content of an utterance (‘Jean-Louis_x did not attend the Quality conference_x in Juan les Pins_x at time_t’), but they can still be true or false in their own right.

2. Data

The observations that I make in this paper are based on the data that have been collected from both oral and written media. The oral medium includes my own corpora (marked as ‘PC’ and ‘BC’) and the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (marked as ‘SBC’). The PC corpus, which was recorded in the United Kingdom (3.5 h) in 2001, consists of four informal face-to-face interactions among friends and acquaintances of the British (10) and American (4) nationalities. All the participants are middle-class Caucasians, in their 30s and 40s, of both feminine and masculine gender, mostly graduates of different occupations. The BC corpus was collected during a two-year period (1999-2001) in a multinational company in the south of France. It comprises frontstage and backstage interaction (Goffman 1959). Apart from face-to-face and telephone conversations, the material has been taken from software called *Win@proach*, which has the characteristics of both written and oral media (i.e. the use of graphic symbols and the possibility of spatial and temporal transmission are combined with on-line processing, greater or lesser informality and linguistic features typical of spoken discourse). The SBC corpus is the three CD-ROM volumes that contain 14 speech files (15.45 h) representing the American component in the *International Corpus of English*. It comprises the panoply of ways people use language in their lives: conversation,

gossip, arguments, on-the-job talk, card games, city council meetings, sales pitches, classroom lectures, political speeches, bedtime stories, sermons, weddings, etc. People of different ages, occupations, and ethnic and social backgrounds are represented in the corpus.²

The written medium includes contemporary British and American plays and novels and newspaper articles. Even though pragmatic (or discourse) markers have traditionally been regarded as oral linguistic phenomena *par excellence*, there are no principled grounds, as Schourup (1999) contends, for not complementing their study with data from written discourse.

Finally, invented examples, a practice not uncommon in relevance-theoretic analyses (Sperber and Wilson 1997), have been used to illustrate or underscore a pertinent point in a simple and concise manner.

3. The conceptual origin of the pragmatic marker *you see*

Perception verbs encode concepts which are considered to be communicatively important. For example, mental predicates such as *see* and *hear* are included in a list of universal semantic primitives (Wierzbicka 1996) and are, moreover, claimed to be frequent in mother-baby interaction even when the baby is blind (Gleitman et al. 1990).

The verb *see* encodes conceptual information but it appears to be polysemous:

- (2) Did you **see** what wretched conditions they live in?
- (3) Do you **see** what I mean?

In (2) the concept encoded by the verb *see* is tied to the literal meaning 'see with one's eyes'; in (3) to the metaphoric meaning 'see with one's mental eyes' or 'understand'. Wierzbicka (1996: 81), for instance, bases

² Transcription conventions:

- Abrupt cutoff
- .. Shorter pause
- ... Longer pause
- (H) Inhalation
- = Sound extension
- [] Overlapping
- < > Lento
- '' Reported speech

this perceptual-to-cognitive shift on the verb *know* – ‘to see is to know something about something because of one’s eyes’.

Tracing the origin of the pragmatic marker *look* from the corresponding perception verb, Brinton (2001) argues in favour of the process of grammaticalisation from the main clause to a parenthetical sentence adjunct. The pragmatic marker *you see* might have similarly evolved, namely, by losing the status of a matrix clause:

- (4) You see that [_{subordinate clause}] > You see Ø [_{subordinate clause}] > You see, [_{matrix clause}]

You see, as a pragmatic marker, has preserved the unmarked word order. However, the acquired status of a parenthetical has led to lexicalisation (i.e. the clause behaves like a lexical unit), desemanticisation (i.e. from conceptual to procedural meaning) and coalescence (*you see* > *y’see*). Furthermore, *you see* is structurally comparable with epistemic parentheticals such as *I hope*, *I think* and *I understand* in that it has a pronominal subject, non-progressive present and syntactic mobility.

Still, epistemic parentheticals have not undergone lexicalisation and desemanticisation as the following examples illustrate:

- (5) I **hoped** (that) the service could be recovered soon.
 (6) I **hope** (that) the service can be recovered soon.
 (7) [**I hope**,] the service [**I hope**,] can be recovered soon [, I **hope**].

In (5) the verb *hope* dominates the subordinate clause and has a conceptual, truth-conditional meaning of a propositional constituent. In (7), by contrast, the parenthetical verb *hope* loses dominance but gains a semantic scope over the proposition. Although *hope* has kept the conceptual meaning, it no longer contributes to the truth conditions of the proposition, marking instead a specific propositional attitude. In (6) *hope* may have the interpretations of both (5) and (7) (cf. Andersen and Fretheim 2000: 4-5).

On the other hand, the conceptual meaning of the verb in the *you see*-clause requires that *that* should not be elided:³

³ If *that* is elided, the distinction between the regular *you see*-clause and the lexicalised *you see*-clause may be maintained by other means such as a modal construction (e.g. *you can see*), an interrogative form (e.g. *do you see*) or an echo-question (e.g. *you see?*).

- (8) [On displaying a slide to the audience]
You see that the light is moving.
- (9) This can't be a star. [**You see,**] the light [,**you see,**] is moving
[,**you see**].

However, instances, though rare, of the elided complementiser and conceptual ((non)literal) meaning of the verb have been attested in my data:

- (10) The candles burned steadily and Alice turned to look at them with satisfaction. '**You see** they're all right now. It was a warning.'
(HV: 209)⁴

Therefore, a possibility of a parentheticalisation of the regular *you see*-clause cannot be entirely dismissed:

- (11) Sharon: 'how many people are there with whom you really enjoy talking to, and would really understand' and so on. I said 'There are two people'. '**You see**, you absolutely have no chance'. (PC)

In fact, this might point to yet another pragmatic marker in disguise – one that is typically used when the speaker wishes to check the addressee's understanding of a point, or when the speaker intends to prove her point.⁵

4. Cognitive-pragmatic observations

According to Blakemore's seminal relevance-theoretic analysis, discourse connectives are semantic constraints on relevance. In particular, *you see* introduces the proposition that is relevant as an explanation for the preceding proposition: "the presentation of this proposition has simply

⁴ HV = Hold, V. (1975). *The Shivering Sands*. London: Collins.

⁵ In my American English data, this form has been used in place of the marker *look* as well as for hedging.

raised the question ‘Why?’ or ‘How?’” (Blakemore 1987: 89). In (12), for instance, *you see* prefaces evidence for the previously-given conclusion:⁶

(12) I shall say no more of it here. **You see**, I’ve given my word.

I adopt in this paper the non-truth-conditional, procedural account of *you see*, without giving any further evidence as it was amply provided and argued for in Blakemore (1987). What I would like to reconsider, however, is the source of the evidential status of the marker in terms of the communicative level it affects.

According to Blakemore (1987) and Blass (1990), both *you see* and *after all* introduce evidence for a prior conclusion. In this way, their main contribution to utterance interpretation lies on the side of cognitive effects, more precisely, in strengthening an existing assumption. In terms of the explicit/implicit distinction, this means that they affect the implicit side of communication. Still, as the authors argue, *you see* and *after all* differ in one respect. The following example shows this:

(13) Juliet was distressed.

After all, Romeo had not seen her.

You see, Romeo had not seen her. (Blass 1990: 128)

Whereas *after all* prefaces a reminder, *you see* introduces a new assumption (Blakemore 1987: 89, Blass 1990: 128). This raises an interesting question about the status of these “additional” instructions, especially in relation to their professed core meanings. Here is what Blass claims for the reminding function of *after all*: “historically, *after all* appears to have arisen as part of a clause which is still used sometimes: *after all is said and done*. I suggest, therefore, that what *after all* contributes, as an additional explicature, is that the proposition introduced with *after all* is known” (Blass 1990: 129). In other words, *after all* is viewed as an in-between case of both truth-conditional and non-truth-conditional meaning (but see Traugott 1997).

In sum, Blakemore’s account is that *you see* and *after all* procedurally and non-truth-conditionally constrain implicatures (although she does not

⁶ Just like the inferential connectives *after all*, *moreover* and *so*, *you see* indicates how the proposition it introduces is to be interpreted as relevant; that is, it expresses the relationship of dependent relevance and cannot be used in a conjoined utterance (Blakemore 1987).

explain the relation between the two instructions, or whether it is one complex instruction encoded by the connectives); Blass's account, on the other hand, is that *after all* is a procedural and non-truth-conditional constraint on implicatures, but that it additionally contributes to the truth conditions of the explicature (it is not altogether clear whether this latter contribution is of a procedural or a conceptual nature).

Confining my discussion to the pragmatic marker *you see*, I would like to propose a refinement of the above accounts along the following lines. The first instruction, according to which *you see* constrains the implicit side of communication by encoding the information about a type of cognitive effect (i.e. strengthening of an assumption on the basis of further evidence), is not controversial. Let us then focus on the second instruction. Assuming that the information about a given/new assumption is indeed signalled by *you see*, the question is whether it is coded or pragmatically derived. Together with Blakemore (1987) and Blass (1990), and contra Ariel (1998), I take it to be semantic. Unless we wish to revert to Grice's *conventional implicatures* (i.e. explicit non-saying), the only option open to pragmatic analysis is conversational implicating. But then, the information about the status of the introduced assumption would be cancellable without contradiction, which, surely, cannot be the case.

Linguistically then, *you see* encodes the information that the host proposition is assumed not to be known to the addressee. However, is this meaning part of the proposition expressed? Is it then conceptual? I do not think so. Notwithstanding various stages of grammaticalisation, especially in terms of the conceptual-procedural cline, linguistic items generally do not simultaneously maintain the meaning of the original class and that of a pragmatic marker at a given stage.^{7,8} Nevertheless, Blass (1990) may be on the right track in regarding this instruction as affecting the explicit side of communication, and to this point I shall briefly turn now.

A sketchy answer that I am suggesting lies in the assumption that *you see* procedurally encodes two distinct, non-truth-conditional, instructions: one constrains the formation of an implicature, the other constrains the formation of a higher-level explicature such that the speaker considers the proposition expressed by her utterance not to be (directly or indirectly)

⁷ See Mišković-Luković (2004) for an account of *in other words*.

⁸ As Fraser aptly puts it: "discourse markers are not adverbs, for example, masquerading as another category from time to time [...] when an expression functions as a discourse marker, that is its exclusive function in the sentence" (Fraser 1990: 388-389).

evident to the hearer. This saves the addressee's processing effort and enables his fuller attention to what the speaker intends to express. In this way, *you see* turns out to be a powerful discourse-strategic device that contributes to relevance on both the effort and effect sides. In order to test this assumption, I shall first examine how the marker relates to mood indicators, and then see how my proposal squares with the discursive functions attested in real-life examples.

5. The pragmatic marker *you see* and mood indicators

Compared to some other pragmatic markers originating from perception verbs, such as *look* and *listen* (Mišković-Luković 2006), *you see* is more restrictive because it only co-occurs with declaratives. This, however, should not be surprising given the instructions that the marker encodes.

On the one hand, the instruction that the host proposition is not evident to the addressee is incompatible with the instruction otherwise encoded by an interrogative form.⁹ But it does not rule out declarative or imperative forms:

- (14) Mike is an egotist.
a. *It-is-not-evident-to-you, why do you care for him?
b. It-is-not-evident-to-you, he doesn't care for you.
c. It-is-not-evident-to-you, dump him/you must dump him.

On the other hand, the instruction about the inferential connection between the two propositions is compatible with the declarative form. The imperative form, in contrast, goes hand in hand with conclusions:

- (15) Mike is an egotist. So, dump him/you must dump him.
(16) *Dump Mike/You must dump Mike. So, he is an egotist.

⁹ The interrogative mood indicator constrains the inferential construction of a higher-level explicature that the question is an interpretation of a relevant answer (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995).

The interrogative form is used to strengthen the preceding utterance only in rhetorical questions as signalled by the negative polarity item in (18):¹⁰

- (17) *Mike is an egotist. Does he help you?
(18) Mike is an egotist. Does he **ever** help you?

To conclude, the higher-level explicature instruction precludes the interrogative form and the implicature instruction rules out the imperative form. This leaves us with the declarative form of a host utterance as the only type of mood indicators that satisfies both conditions imposed by the semantics of *you see*.

6. Socio-pragmatic observations

In comparison with *look* and *listen*, *you see* (or *see* in the SBC corpus) was more frequent in my data. It typically occurred within a speaker's turn, occupying the initial position in an utterance (*P You see, Q*), and sometimes final (*P Q, you see*).¹¹ The difference between initial and final *you see* may reflect turn-taking organisation in talk-in-interaction (speaker's continuation and turn-transition) or be a result of purely relevance-driven concerns (the initial position being more prominent and therefore more efficient in signalling the relevance of a following utterance):

- (19) Mary: So I stopped the car, and they said what are you doing.
I said, <oh, I gotta tighten this wire here>. ... (H) ... So I had!
.. turn on the ignition and turn it off. ... **See**, once you turn
that key on, ... then you hear the .. the fuel pump .. come on.
(SBC)
(20) Andy: I've always wanted to work in Edinburgh.
Pete: Yeah. I think it's a good place to live.
Julie: Edinburgh? Excellent.

¹⁰ Rhetorical questions are interpretations of the answers that the speaker considers to be relevant to the addressee (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995).

¹¹ More frequent in the final position are the conceptual verb *see* and the regular *you see*-clause with rising intonation (i.e. the elliptical forms of *do you see/don't you see?*) functioning as tags and meaning roughly 'do/don't you understand the point?'.

Andy: Absolutely the opposite from Aberdeen. It's because of the Parliament, **y'see**.

Pete: Huh?

Andy: Parliament. It's gonna be the capital of the country. (PC)

Because *you see* attaches to an utterance that is interpreted as an explanation of what has previously transpired, it does not occur discourse initially (a nonverbal P), nor does it constitute a turn *per se* (a nonverbal Q).

The fact that *you see* does not mark the main discourse act directly follows from the instruction about the strengthening of a previous assumption; that is, the host utterance is perceived as an afterthought or repair to the topic introduced in the main discourse act:

(21) Rebecca: So then, ... and then, ... he sort of pulled the paper aside, and [he's still]

Ricke: [Yeah].

Rebecca: staring [at you]

Rickie: [Unhuh] still sta=ring and, ... (H) just, you know, .. and the=n, .. but when uh uh=, ... like you come to a stop, **see** that's all through the tunnel.

(SBC)

You see is also used in argumentation. Unlike *look* and *listen*, however, the former marker is not a bearer of undesirable perlocutionary effects. In fact, the discourse strategy based on *you see*-utterances typically carries an "objective" undertone. The marker is, thus, freely used in both formal and informal conversational styles:

(22) Dom: Yes, but look here, the office is a space control and they know what the TR duty code is and how to use it. And if you

[could help-]

Mike: [I suggest] again that you send a telex to the security department and explain everything because, **you see**, we are not in charge of this and-

Dom: Yes, yes. Okay. Right. Okay. (BC)

(22), for instance, has been extracted from a relatively hostile frontstage interaction which is characterised by uncooperative transitions,

unmitigated dispreferred acts and so on. Interpreting Mike's prolonged and unnecessarily explicated prior answers as rejection, Dom challenges his interlocutor, who is a Help Desk agent, by reminding him of his principal duty to his customers (*if you could help*). Mike's potentially face-threatening metalinguistic repetition (*I suggest again*) is subsequently mitigated in the utterance which *you see* marks as a nonmanifest explanation as to why he has to turn down the addressee's request, and the interaction finally closes in agreement.

7. Summary

From a cognitive-pragmatic perspective, *you see* contributes to relevance on both the explicit and implicit sides of communication. The marker signals not only that the assumption the speaker is putting forward is not evident to the addressee, but also that this assumption must be taken as a confirmation of some previously-made assumptions.

From a socio-pragmatic perspective, *you see* does not occur discourse-initially, nor does it constitute a turn by itself. The contextually restricted *you see* does not mark the dominant part of discourse, but is, on the other hand, quite frequent in interaction. As an argumentative marker, *you see* is primarily used as an evidential-rhetoric marker (in contrast to the primarily epistemic-rhetoric markers *look* and *listen*) in both formal and informal conversational styles.

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МАРКЕР *YOU SEE*: КОГНИТИВНО-ПРАГМАТИЧКА И
СОЦИО-ПРАГМАТИЧКА ЗАПАЖАЊА

Сажетак

Из перспективе теорије релеванције, у овом раду се бавимо семантичким значењем и прагматичким функцијама енглеског маркера (дискурса) *you see*, који се оквирно може превести као 'знаш/знате', 'јер', '(ово кажем) зато што' и сл., како бисмо јасније сагледали његову улогу у комуникацији. Разлог зашто смо за предмет нашег рада изабрали управо маркер *you see*, лежи, напосто, у чињеници да се он учестало користи у свакодневном разговору, али да није анализиран у савременој семантичкој и прагматичкој литератури на један обухватнији начин, који би језичку и когнитивно-прагматичку, значењску компоненту утемељио у социопрагматичким реализацијама.

Кључне речи: глаголи перцепције, експликатура вишег нивоа, импликатура, индикатори за начин, прагматички маркери, релеванција

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PERCEPTION OF UNIQUENESS AND THE ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH ARTICLE SYSTEM

Abstract

This paper examines the patterns of article use by Polish learners of English as a second language. On the basis of existing theories of the meaning of English articles, it will be demonstrated that the acquisition of the English article system depends on learners' perception of the uniqueness of a noun phrase. The purpose of the article is to compare learners' performance in the forced-choice elicitation task in three categories of noun phrases: (1) definite and unique through associations, (2) definite and unique through previous mention, general knowledge or knowledge of the immediate situation), and (3) indefinite and unique through associations or previous mention. The analysis of data obtained from two groups of lower-intermediate and advanced learners leads to certain limited conclusions about the role of uniqueness and other semantic and discourse-related universals that contribute crucially to the interpretation of the English definite article.

Key words: acquisition of English articles, definiteness, uniqueness

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1. Introduction

English articles can be referred to as a relatively simple, closed system of generally unstressed morphemes, which encode such complex semantic notions as existence, reference and attribution; discourse notions of context and anaphora and syntactic notions of number and countability (Burton-Roberts 1976). In consequence, the articles are one of the most difficult structural elements for second language (L2) learners.

The acquisition of English articles by learners from different first language (L1) backgrounds has been an area of considerable interest in second language acquisition research (SLA) in the past three decades. Early studies of morpheme acquisition orders in English, such as e.g. Oller and Redding (1971) and Larsen-Freeman (1975), show that the accuracy of article use was lower for speakers of article-less languages like Japanese, Chinese and Korean than for other learners who had articles in their L1s (French, Spanish and German). Similarly, Duškova (1969) claims that the difficulty experienced by Czech learners in mastering the English article system is due to the absence of articles in Czech. A series of comparative studies by Ringbom (1985) have confirmed that learners' problems appear to be more serious when their native languages do not have articles or article-like morphemes. Huebner (1983) and Thomas (1989) have shown that article misuse in the acquisition of English as a second language is not random, but is connected to language and discourse universals, which determine interpretation of the target determiner phrase (see Bickerton 1981).

More recently, various positions have been proposed by researchers in the generative second language acquisition field as to whether L2 learners transfer their L1 grammar at the initial state of SLA and whether they have full access to Universal Grammar (UG), including new parameter settings. The underlying assumption of the majority of those positions is that L2 interlanguage (IL) grammars are UG-constrained (see, e.g. Hawkins 2005, Ionin, Ko and Wexler 2004, Goad and White 2004, Prévost and White 2000 and Trenkic 2007, *inter alia*).

The major findings of those studies demonstrate that speakers of L1 article-less languages differ from native speakers of English in at least three ways: (1) they drop articles where *a/the* is obligatory for native speakers (omission errors), (2) they use *the* where *a* is required and vice versa (commission errors), and (3) they may overgeneralize *the* in contexts

where no article is necessary in English (flooding errors). This paper is an attempt to investigate the process of article acquisition in L2 English by speakers of Polish in terms of learners' perception of noun phrase uniqueness, familiarity and other related semantic universals.

2. Uniqueness and the definite article

2.1. Early accounts of uniqueness

Studies of the meaning of the English articles have been approached from two broad perspectives, which can be characterized as 'uniqueness' and 'familiarity'. Researchers such as Russell (1905) and Hawkins (1978, 1991) claim that felicitous use of the definite article requires that the NP referent be uniquely identifiable to the hearer, whereas Christophersen (1939), Strawson (1950) and Heim (1982), inter alia, argue that the definite referent of the NP must be familiar within the discourse.

Early accounts of uniqueness in definite noun phrases were based on Russell's (1905) Theory of Definite Descriptions. To illustrate the main assumptions of this theory let us first analyze the following sentences (from Hawkins 1991:406-407).

- (1) *The professor* is drunk
- (2) *A professor* is drunk.

The logical translation of (1) can be represented as (3), symbolizing professor by P and drunk by D:

- (3) $\exists x (P(x) \ \& \ \sim \exists y (P(y) \ \& \ x \neq y) \ \& \ D(x))$
i.e. there is an x who is a professor, and there is no y such that y is a professor and non-identical to x, and x is drunk.

This analysis implies the three components of the utterance:

- A. Existence: There is a professor.
- B. Uniqueness: There is only one professor.
- C. Predication: This individual is drunk.

The first two propositions – the existential clause and the uniqueness clause characterize the definite description of the NP in question and are assumed to be the crucial elements in Russell's formal analysis of definite noun phrases. If we compare (1) and (2), the major difference between them lies in its uniqueness claim: (2) may be logically represented as (4)

- (4) $\exists x (P(x) \ \& \ D(x))$
i.e. there is an x who is a professor, and x is drunk

Similarly, sentence (5) signals that there is just one entity satisfying the description used. The most natural interpretation of (6) is that only one car is involved, but the possibility is left open that Mary may have just bought more than one car.

- (5) Mary's gone for a ride in *a car she just bought*.
(6) Mary's gone for a ride in *the car she just bought*.

This leads to the obvious conclusion that the indefinite article *a* in its non-generic meaning does not signal uniqueness, but as in the examples above show, it does not signal non-uniqueness either.

2.2. Ways of expressing uniqueness

More recently Hawkins (1978) in a study of definiteness and indefiniteness identified a number of non-generic uses of the definite article related to the identifiability and uniqueness of a referent in discourse. Some of the ways of establishing uniqueness are presented below.

- A. [*Anaphorically – Through previous mention*]
I bought a blue cup. *The blue cup* broke.
- B. [*Through associations*]
We went to a wedding. *The bride* was very tall.
- C. [*Through entailment, via PPs, adjectives or modifying clauses*]
The roof of our house is leaking.
- D. [*Through world knowledge*]
The sun is shining.
- E. [*In the visible situation*]
Pass me *the salt*, please.

In this paper we concentrate on the type of uniqueness that is indicated through associations in the discourse context. This is not expressed directly through anaphora, nor is it signaled by such grammatical devices as prepositional phrases (PPs) or modifying clauses. Hawkins (1978) claims that the term “association” cannot be described with satisfactory accuracy, yet we can adequately define the difference between general and specific knowledge uses of the definite article with reference to associative and purely anaphoric types of definite NPs. He writes:

A general knowledge use of the definite article will be one which is made possible on the basis of an associative relationship between the generic expressions which correspond to the specific trigger and its associates. Thus, the generics corresponding to a wedding: *the bride* will be *weddings have brides*, or *a wedding has a bride*. (...) On the other hand, specific knowledge of a referent is knowledge which cannot be inferred about a car or a wedding, etc. Hawkins (1978:124-125)

This means that non-associative, or as Hawkins writes, “strict” anaphora, is not possible on the basis of general knowledge of the entity within a class of entities. The two types of definite article use based on general and specific knowledge of the NP referent constitute the main dichotomy in the interpretation of the definite noun phrases in which uniqueness is expressed through associations or previous mention anaphora. In the following section we briefly outline the ways of expressing uniqueness relevant to the present study.

2.3. Uniqueness through associations

The associative use in the computation of uniqueness of the NP referent seems quite problematic because the hearer must know the entity in question, its nature and, for example, its cultural context. In a sentence such as *The bride was very tall* the hearer knows that weddings involve brides, but also grooms, guests, wedding cakes, etc. He should be able to make the natural inference that the reference is to the bride at the particular wedding (there is usually one bride at a wedding) although he may not know anything about her. Lyons (1999) refers to this type of associative

uses as *bridging cross-reference*. He describes them as a combination of the anaphoric and the general knowledge types. Similarly, in (7) the NP referent in the second sentence (*the driver*) has not been mentioned before, but there has been mention of the entity connected with the definite NP in question, that is *a taxi*.

- (7) I had to get a taxi from the station. On the way *the driver* told me there was a bus strike.

It is part of our knowledge that taxis have drivers as well as wheels, seats, fares, etc. and any of them can be referred to by means of a definite noun phrase. So the referent *the driver* is uniquely identifiable through association with the antecedent *a taxi*. The italicized NP in (7) represents an entity that is new to the discourse, yet its existence is easily accommodated on the basis of the evoked trigger *taxi*. That is, we can easily infer the likely existence of a driver, and in this case we can infer its uniqueness. The criterion of uniqueness is particularly significant in cases where the referent is hypothetical or in the future. In (8) we may assume that the competition is not yet over and the winner is definitely not identifiable, but he or she is unique in that a single winner is implied.

- (8) *The winner of this competition* will get a week in the Bahamas for two.

Lyons (1999) claims that many situational uses are also associative. A definite NP is possible because the speaker and the hearer take it for granted that some situations involve certain entities. Even though the speaker cannot identify the NP referent and he does not expect the hearer to be able to do so, they both know that there is such an entity in the situation. The following examples come from Lyons (1999:9).

- (9) [Nurse entering operating theatre] I wonder who *the anaesthetist* is today.
(10) I wonder who *that anaesthetist* is.

In (10) the speaker does not know the identity of the person referred to, but she is referring to a particular individual, which means that demonstratives may require identifiability but definites do not (*op. cit.*).

2.4. Uniqueness and Inclusiveness

The parameters of uniqueness may also be defined on the basis of a more general kind of knowledge of associative relationships between entities, such as the fact that any set of elements will have a unique entity, which sanctions a first-mention *the* in the sentence *Who is the professor?* when students arrive for a new class. This regularity is labelled *inclusiveness* (Hawkins 1978). Examples of such associative relationships between a set and its elements include, for example:

- a class → the professor, the textbook, the final exam
- a wedding → the bride, the bridesmaids, the cake
- a house → the roof, the attic, the walls
- a car → the steering wheel, the engine, the dashboard
- a murder → the victim, the killer, the knife

To illustrate this notion let us analyze the inclusiveness effect in (11). Here the uniqueness involves a relationship of the definite NP and its antecedent, so the hearer may assume that there is a single dashboard in the car in question, the same as there is a single bride at the wedding, but not only one dashboard in the entire world.

(11) This car has a statue on *the dashboard*.

Roberts (2003) claims that many NPs are susceptible to such interpretation. He writes that ‘the head is interpreted as a relation such as *dashboard of*, with an implicit argument contextually given, e.g. the denotation of the salient and relevant *this car*’ (*op. cit.*:290). The interpretation of the definite NP is on pragmatic grounds, since the hearer knows that there is more than one dashboard in the world but there is generally only one per car. Roberts (2003) asserts that the phrase ‘dashboard of’ denotes not just a relation, but also a function which constitutes the uniqueness effect.

As was shown in the above examples, bridging cross-reference and inclusiveness generally involve the interlocutors’ common knowledge of the entities in context. When this knowledge is not absolutely entailed, the definite NP referent may or may not be relevant to what comes before. In order to make the last sentence in (12) relevant we need to establish that

John was killed by shooting, and not, for example by poisoning, stabbing or strangling. This will entail the existence of a gun as the possible murder weapon, otherwise the use of the definite article in the noun phrase may not be justified, as in (14). The examples below are based on Roberts (2003:300).

- (12) John was murdered yesterday. ?*The gun* lay nearby.
- (13) John was shot yesterday. *The gun* lay nearby.
- (14) #John was stabbed yesterday. *The gun* lay nearby.

It is interesting to note that the antecedent connected with the NP referent may not even occur in the preceding sentence, or part of the sentence. The felicity of (15) requires no such trigger on the basis of which the hearer can infer the existence of the plane in question.

- (15) They've just got in from New York. *The plane* was five hours late.

The associative use of the definite referent is based on the hearer's world knowledge that an aircraft is the most likely form of conveyance to travel from New York to most places and making the inference that the reference is to the particular plane. As the above utterance shows, the definite article may be felicitously used to denote entities which are included, for instance, in the global context of travelling, but they have not been previously mentioned in the discourse.

Similarly, Roberts (2003) in a recent study of definite noun phrases analyses a type of uniqueness, which he refers to as *informational uniqueness*. In some situations, the hearer may reasonably assume that there is only one entity in the context even though there is no antecedent in the preceding sentence. Roberts claims, for example, that in (16) a child is justified in assuming that there is only a single clown in the puzzle in question and also, only a single puzzle on the next page.

- (16) [Teacher giving directions] On the next page you will find a puzzle.
Find *the clown* in the puzzle.

2.5. Absolute uniqueness

All the examples discussed above involve the idea of uniqueness, i.e. the definite article signals that there is only one entity that refers to the NP referent in the particular situation. Uniqueness established through associations or anaphora is not usually absolute, but rather relative to a particular context. Thus, in (8) there is just one winner of the competition and in (9) it is assumed that there is one anaesthetist taking part in the operation. However, the uniqueness of the definite article can also be absolute when the NP referent is 'inherently unique'; that is, it denotes something of which there is only one entity, e.g. *the sun*, *the moon*, or *the universe* (Lyons 1999:8). We do not normally speak of *a sun* or *a universe* because we think of our sun in the solar system, although we know that there are millions of suns in the universe or perhaps there is a possibility of there existing another parallel universe(s). Similarly, nouns like *Pope*, *king*, *queen* or *president* are often considered to be inherently unique, because there is usually one at a given time in a given situation, although there have been many Popes in history, and at present there are many kings or presidents (but generally not in one country), thus from this perspective we may speak of *a Pope* or *a president*. Hawkins (1991:421) presents the following examples which refer to the two possible interpretations of the definite and indefinite articles, and offers the following explanation for them.

- (17) England has *a prime minister*, and America has *a president*.
- (18) England has *the prime minister*, and America has *the president*.

Sentence (17) defines certain state officials in England and America while (18) allows an interpretation that England has the prime minister of some other country currently on a state visit, England has the prime minister that somebody was just talking about or England has John Major and America has George Bush. Lyons (1999) concludes that one can always find a context in which a noun may not be unique, yet it does not invalidate the point. It seems that this way of expressing uniqueness is quite transparent for L2 learners of English as they share the same general knowledge of the world and its unique elements with native speakers of English. Another reason is that such inherently unique NPs are frequently available in the input.

2.6. Definiteness without uniqueness

Finally, as we have stated before, the two dominant views of definiteness, i.e. uniqueness and familiarity can account for the vast majority of felicitous uses of the definite article in English, however they cannot account for all. A unique but unfamiliar entity may be felicitously referred to with the definite article, while a familiar but non-unique referent may also be felicitously interpreted as a definite NP. The following examples from Birner and Ward (1994:93) illustrate the point.

- (19) If you're going into the bedroom, would you mind bringing back *the big bag of potato chips that I left on the bed*?
- (20) [Hotel concierge to guest] You're in Room 611. Take *the elevator* to the sixth floor and turn left.

The bag of potato chips in (19) is unfamiliar information and the entity is not uniquely identified by the NP, as there could be several such bags in the room. However, as long as it is assumed by the speaker to be the only bag of chips left on the bed, the referent is uniquely identifiable. In (20), on the other hand, no unique elevator is inferred in the given context, yet the use of the definite article is perfectly acceptable. Whenever the referent is not uniquely identifiable on the basis of the definite NP it must be undifferentiated in context, that is the elevators in this case are undifferentiated with respect to the purpose of use, so the hotel guest can take any of them to get to the sixth floor. This means that such cases do not involve any antecedent or trigger on the basis of which the hearer is expected to infer a unique elevator. As Birner and Ward explain, in the absence of uniqueness the definite article is used, for example, for those conveyances or entities that move along a regular, pre-established path or occur in usual contexts as in (21), but not in (22).

- (21) To get to the railway station, I suggest taking *the bus*.
- (22) #To get to the railway station, I suggest taking *the taxi*.

It seems that the felicity of an utterance is crucially dependent upon the beliefs of the interlocutors concerning the relevance of unique identification of the particular entity. Sentence (23) refers to a uniquely identifiable bank, while (24) may not.

(23) Mr. Johnson robbed *the bank*.

(24) Mr. Johnson went to *the bank*.

On the basis of such utterances Birner and Ward (1994) conclude that neither familiarity within the discourse or within the hearer's knowledge nor uniqueness, i.e. the property of being uniquely identifiable to the hearer, is a necessary condition for the felicitous use of the definite article. Yet, they claim that uniqueness is sufficient for the correct use of the definite article. In the following section we discuss the study based on the notion of uniqueness as the underlying semantic universal in the correct choice of L2 English articles.

3. The study

3.1. Research questions and hypotheses

In this research, we concentrate on the associative and anaphoric use of the definite article in L2 English. Following the proposal of Birner and Ward (1994) that uniqueness is a sufficient condition for the felicitous use of the definite article, we hypothesize that L2 English learners are able to access the semantic universal of uniqueness, but their perception of this feature will depend on (1) the ways in which it is expressed in the utterance, and (2) the learners' level of L2 English proficiency. In particular, we refer to the two ways of establishing uniqueness, i.e. (I) through associations, and (II) through previous mention, general knowledge and the knowledge of the situation.

Hypothesis 1

L2 English learners will choose the definite or indefinite article when uniqueness is established in the discourse context through associations. The degree of fluctuation will depend on the level of students' proficiency in English

Hypothesis 2

L2 English learners will choose the definite article when uniqueness is established in the discourse context through world

knowledge, in the visible or immediate situation or anaphorically, through previous mention.

Additionally we intended to investigate the use of the indefinite article in the noun phrases related to the antecedent through association and previous mention without uniqueness. We further hypothesize that learners may have difficulty establishing definiteness of a NP in a variety of discourse contexts that do not entail uniqueness of the referent in question. This leads to hypotheses 3.

Hypothesis 3

English learners will choose the definite and indefinite article to mark a definite non-unique NP referent related to the antecedent that has been previously mentioned in the discourse, or is related to the antecedent in the preceding sentence or part of the sentence.

3.2. Participants and procedure

The participants in this study were 80 L1 Polish learners of L2 English. They were recruited from university-level graduate students of English, Polish and history and students of three local secondary schools. The Oxford Placement Test (Allan 2004) was used to assess their proficiency in English. On the basis of these results, the participants were divided into low and high proficiency groups. The lower-intermediate group consisted of 23 female and 17 male students between 16 and 18 years of age. The advanced group comprised 40 MA level students of English, Polish and history (29 females and 11 males), between the ages of 21 and 25. A control group of native speakers of English also participated in the study. It consisted of 12 native speakers of British and American English employed mostly as lecturers and teachers at Wrocław University, the local schools and colleges and a few engineers and lawyers working for local business companies and financial institutions. No beginner group was included as it was doubtful whether they would be able to handle the experimental task.

Testing took place in the premises of Wrocław University and the secondary schools in the classroom setting for all learners. The native

speakers were interviewed in their offices, at the university or in the schools they worked for. The secondary school participants were not informed about the purpose of the study as the tasks were part of their end-of-semester school progress test. Similarly, the university students were asked to perform a number of written tasks as part of the MA course requirement, however at the time of the research they were not acquainted with details of the experiment.

3.3. Task

A forced-choice elicitation task was used in the study. The test was similar in design to other instruments employed in previous studies of the acquisition of L2-English articles, e.g. Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004). It consisted of 40 short sentences or dialogues mostly based upon the examples adapted from Hawkins (1978, 1991), Lyons (1999), Birner and Ward (1994), Roberts (2003) and Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004). Several dialogues and distractor sentences were designed by the author and two native speakers of the control group. Out of the total number of 40 tokens, 30 were coded as relevant to the experiment while the remaining 10 were beyond the scope of the present study. They were not the subject of analysis as they required, for example, the use of the zero article in article-less NPs, and for that reason they were included in the study. Otherwise the learners might have focused entirely on the suppliance of *the/a* and ignore the null article. Examples of such items are presented below.

- (25) [Passenger at the airport] Excuse me, have you seen a red-haired girl? She is my daughter. I think she flew in on *flight 239*, but I'm not sure.
- (26) Jane had a terrible accident, she's in *hospital* now.
- (27) He was elected *member of parliament* for Oxford.

The sentences and dialogues contained three NP categories, two definite (one unique through association and one unique through previous mention, world knowledge or the knowledge in the visible/immediate situation) and one indefinite (non-unique through association or previous mention). Each context was tested in ten coded noun phrases, where one

choice had to be provided (*the a/an*, or \emptyset). The distribution of categories in the test was as follows:

Context 1 [unique through association]	10 tokens
Context 2 [unique through previous mention]	10 tokens
Context 3 [non-unique]	10 tokens
Context 4 [other, un-coded]	10 tokens

The test items were carefully selected so most of the target NPs were singular and in the subject or direct/indirect object position. Also, the test was checked by the native speakers and two secondary school teachers to make sure that all the examples would be fully understood by the participants. The native speakers were asked to supply the missing articles in the dialogues, and they performed as expected. However, there were a few problematic cases in which the majority of the respondents suggested that both the indefinite article and the definite article could be used, as in (28). Such examples were left un-coded, or removed from the test.

- (28) [Woman] What's wrong with Bill?
[Man] Oh, *the/a girl he went out with* was nasty to him.

Also, one of the non-teacher respondents argued for the two articles in the majority of definite noun phrases giving examples of contexts in which a non-unique NPs was, in his view, equally or more natural. For example, in the part of the USA where he lived most people used to keep more than one dog, so he insisted the preferred form in (29) would be *a* instead of *the*.

- (29) Don't go in that yard, *the/a dog* will bite you.

However, the rest of the respondents unanimously accepted *the* in (29) as the most likely choice in this context, so the test item was kept and coded for further analysis.

4. Results and discussion

As predicted, the lower-intermediate learners were less accurate in their article use across all categories than the more proficient learners. The overall score for all the contexts was 47.75 percent of correct answers in comparison to 84.92 percent in the advanced group. Article omission was relatively low in all categories, which shows that the lack of accuracy observed in the learners' performance on the task was mainly due to article misuse. Omission of articles was evidently higher in the lower-intermediate group, 11.67 percent in all contexts in comparison to 4.17 percent in the advanced group. This observation corresponds with the previous studies which have revealed high article omission at lower levels of learners L2 English proficiency (see e.g. Hawkins et al. 2006).

The results of the study are summarized in Table 1, which shows the percentage of correct/incorrect choices and omission of articles in the three categories. The results corresponding to the target response for each category are highlighted.

Category	Group 1 (lower-intermediate) (N=40)			Group 2 (advanced) (N=40)		
	a	the	∅	a	the	∅
1. unique through association with or without the antecedent (target: <i>the</i>)	46.75	39.50	13.75	7.75	85.50	6.75
2. unique through previous mention, world knowledge or in the visible situation (target: <i>the</i>)	33.00	57.75	9.25	11.00	86.00	3.00
3. non-unique with association or previous mention (target: <i>a</i>)	46.00	43.50	10.50	83.25	14.00	2.75

Table 1. Results of the forced-choice elicitation task in both groups.

The data reported in this section provide support for the proposed hypotheses. The Polish L2 English learners were sensitive to the semantic concept of uniqueness and used it to determine the definiteness of a noun phrase. However, they differed in their perception of the ways of establishing uniqueness. The lower-intermediate students over-relied on the discourse-related factors such as previous mention and the more transparent means of expressing uniqueness based on the general knowledge of the world (e.g. *the sun, the sky*), or in the immediate situation where the definite referent was physically present (e.g. *the dog, the salt*). The percentage of correct answers in this NP category was about 58 in this group, whereas the number of target-like choices in category 1 (uniqueness through association) did not exceed 40 percent. The students had visible problems with the correct interpretation of the definite noun phrases, regardless of the fact that they occurred with the antecedent (e.g. *a wedding – the bride, a taxi – the driver*), and only few definite referents (e.g. *the plane*) were not preceded by the directly expressed corresponding noun phrases (e.g. *They've just returned from New York. The plane was five hours late.*) Also, in context 3 (uniqueness without previous mention or association) the pattern of learners' article choice revealed a great deal of fluctuation between the definite and the indefinite article, with the number of correct and incorrect answers almost equally distributed (43.5 percent vs. 46 percent respectively).

In the advanced group, a statistically significant difference in the students' performance in article choice in categories 1 and 2 was not recorded. In fact, they did slightly better in selecting the definite article for the NPs based on uniqueness established through associations than through anaphora or general knowledge (86 and 85.5 percent respectively). Unlike the findings from the low intermediate group, the advanced learners showed a considerably smaller difference between the accurate use of the definite article in the three contexts. This evidence seems to support the underlying assumption of the study that L2 English learners fluctuate in their choices of the definite and indefinite article in relation to their perception of uniqueness in L2, and this period of optionality gradually disappears with the learners' increasing proficiency in the second language.

A within-group analysis of students' performance in the three contexts shows a relatively high correlation between the scores of category 1 and 2 for both groups ($r=.76$ in group 1 and $r=.56$ in group 2) and category 1 and 3 in the advanced group ($r=.57$). The correlation coefficient for

the scores in category 2 and 3 in both groups and category 1 and 3 in the lower-intermediate group was close to zero or mildly negative. This reveals relatively high variability in the students' interpretation of definite and indefinite unique noun phrases in context 2 and 3, in which the referent in the second mention was frequently preceded by the definite article no matter whether it was definite or indefinite. The following table presents Pearson's correlation analysis of the students' raw scores in the three categories.

	GROUP 1 (lower-intermediate)		GROUP 2 (advanced)	
	Category 2	Category 3	Category 2	Category 3
GROUP 1 - Category 1 Category 2	.76* -	-.01 -.15	- -	- -
GROUP 2 - Category 1 Category 2	- -	- -	.56* -	.57* .07

*Correlation significant at $p < .001$

Table 2. In-group correlation analysis of the three categories of NPs.

Closer scrutiny of the responses provided by the learners shows a possible influence of a number of factors which may have affected their interpretation of the uniqueness of a NP. The question is what makes a strong or a weak cue of uniqueness in L2 English for speakers of article-less languages; previous mention, association, world knowledge or perhaps the entailment expressed, for instance, through the grammatical structure of possession (e.g. *the roof of my house*). We assume that the weakest indication of uniqueness is through association because it is the least salient as the relationship between the definite referent and its antecedent or the context situation is not expressed syntactically. On the other hand, in the case of unique NPs expressed through entailment learners need to understand the structure and the meaning of prepositional phrases such as the genitive *of*, modifying clauses and adjectives like *the best*, etc. In spite of their syntactic complexity, those ways of establishing the uniqueness of a noun phrase are quite transparent and they mostly refer to relatively

invariant forms. This means that we very rarely hear phrases like *a roof of my house*, since houses hardly ever have more than one roof.

This observation leads to the conclusion that exposure to L2 input and availability of a particular NP in the input accelerates the acquisition of the articles in L2 English. We may predict that learners will acquire first those NPs in which uniqueness is signaled by easily available, reliable cues that always map the same form onto the same meaning or function, *the sun* always refers to ‘our’ sun and *the roof of my house* always refers to the same unique, definite entity. (The notion of ‘form-function mapping’ was proposed by MacWhinney (2001) in his Competition Model, according to which the learner discovers which forms are used to realize which functions, and what ‘weights’ to attach to individual forms in the performance of specific functions).

Another factor that may have influenced the learners’ article choice is formal instruction provided in the form of overt pedagogical rules. It is an established practice in Polish schools that learners are taught how to use English articles through formal instruction based upon such rules as ‘first-mention vs. second-mention’. Thus, learners are instructed to use the indefinite article with noun phrases that occur for the first time in the discourse and the definite article with those noun phrases that have been mentioned before. The problem is that the rule works pretty well in most contexts, as in (30), where uniqueness is established through anaphora, but not, for example, with indefinite, specific NPs which are part of a larger set of elements as in (31). The NPs in (30) and (31) were both interpreted as definite by many low proficient learners because they occurred for the second time in the discourse.

(30) I bought a blue cup. *The cup* broke.

(31) The pet shop had five puppies and seven kittens. Mary chose *a puppy*.

The NP property in (31) is defined as a type of presuppositionality, referred to as *partitivity* (see, e.g. Heim 1982). This semantic notion is established for indefinites by introducing in the previous discourse a set that the target NP belongs to. Partitivity, or ‘being one of’, is often expressed directly by means of the phrase *one of the* instead of the indefinite article *a*, as in (32), or in (34).

- (32) The pet shop had five puppies and seven kittens. Mary chose *one of the puppies*.
- (33) We went to a wedding last week. *A guest* made a speech.
- (34) We went to a wedding last week. *One of the guests* made a speech.

We may suppose that the infelicitous article choices made by the lower-intermediate learners in context 1 and 3 was caused by their inability to interpret the NP in question as unique or non-unique. A high percentage of incorrect article choices in the first-mention, definite, unique NPs and in the second mention indefinite, unique NPs could have resulted from the learners' mechanical responses to the position of the referent in the discourse. The learners may have been motivated by the explicit, pedagogical rule, according to which new NPs, mentioned for the first time in the discourse are by definition indefinite, while previously mentioned NPs are always definite.

5. Conclusion

Regarding the research hypotheses, which predicted fluctuation in the use of *the* and *a* in contexts 1 and 3 as well as higher accuracy of article choice in context 2, we may conclude that the analysis of the learners' accuracy across the tasks largely confirms the predicted patterns of article commission. However, the available data also suggest that L2 English article choice involves the optional use of the definite and indefinite forms of articles as it is also characterized by a certain amount of variability in the context in which fluctuation was not expected.

The assumption of this study was that any difference between the performance of the two groups of learners would be due to their different proficiency levels; the advanced learners were expected to be more accurate in their article choice in L2 English since they were less affected by such factors as specificity and were able to distinguish between definite and indefinite contexts. Although the results in the advanced group proved to be significantly better, still they were far from the target-like pattern of article selection. A detailed in-group analysis shows that the advanced learners also manifested some difficulties in matching definiteness and uniqueness with their grammatical representations.

We think that the possible explanation of the optional patterns of article use may primarily concern the factors which have been already discussed: the perception of uniqueness, the learners' L2 proficiency, exposure to L2 input and the role of formal instruction in elicitation tasks. As regards the methodology of the research, the present study investigated the performance of subjects in the L1 setting, on the basis of a single data collection technique, that is, a forced-choice elicitation task. It seems that article misuse and omission may be even greater in spontaneous language use. Learners may be able to supply articles in obligatory contexts as a result of explicit teaching rather than the presence of those morphological features at a deeper level of their IL grammars. Studies of English article acquisition (e.g. Robertson 2000) show that in more spontaneous, uncontrolled forms of L2 use, such as oral production, formal instruction and explicit pedagogical rules have little, if any effect on the learners' choice of articles. Therefore, in order to obtain a more complete picture of the L2 acquisition of the English article system, we need data based on both recognition and production.

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Appendix

Category 1

1. We went to a wedding last week. *The bride* wore blue.
2. They've just returned from New York. *The plane* was five hours late.
3. I hated that book. *The author* is an idiot.
4. [Woman] I was cleaning the house the other day and I found a box in *the attic*.
5. I had to get a taxi from the station. On the way, *the driver* told me there was a bus strike.
6. I'd like to meet *the artist* who painted that, but I don't know who it is. The painting isn't signed.
7. [Man examining restaurant menu] I wonder what *the salmon* is like today.
8. [Customer] The meat I bought here this morning is completely spoiled! I want to talk to *the owner* of this store! And I want to see him right now!
9. A painting by Rembrandt was stolen from the City Museum. The police are trying to catch *the thief*, though he may have already left the country.
10. We had dinner in that new Italian restaurant. I had chicken and salad – both were great, but *the dessert* was far too sweet for my taste.

Category 2

1. Don't go in that yard, *the dog* will bite you
2. You'll find tea and coffee in *the cabinet* to the right of the window.
3. I bought a blue cup and a green cup. Unfortunately, *the blue* cup broke before I got home.

4. [Man at the dinner table] Please, pass *the butter*.
5. This afternoon I went to the park. *The sun* was shining and
6. ...there wasn't a cloud in *the sky*.
7. I went to a video store and got a film and three video games. Then I went home and watched *the film*.
8. [Boy] You know, Peter had two pets, a pig and a parrot. He decided to sell one of them.
Which do you think it was? – [Girl] ... *The parrot*.
9. I dropped five coins and found only four of them. *The missing coin* is probably under the sofa.
10. Last week Grandpa went to an animal market. He found a cow and a small horse that he liked. But he didn't have enough money, so he only bought *the horse*.

Category 3

1. There were two sweaters and three blouses on the shelf. Mary bought *a blouse*.
2. Sue wants a car for her eighteenth birthday, but I don't think *a car* is a good idea.
I wouldn't let her drive on Saturday nights.
3. [Teacher] A man went to the jungle because he wanted to see a lion or a zebra.
He looked all over and he looked and looked... Who came running at the man?
[Child] ... *A zebra*.
4. [Professor] I met some students before class. *A student* came to see me after class as well.
5. We went to a wedding last week. *A guest* made a speech.
6. The pet shop had five puppies and seven kittens. Mary chose *a puppy*.
7. Carl had dinner with three students and two professors. *A student* brought the wine they drank
8. Mark and Tim went to see our local football team play. They had a good time and afterwards, they met *a player*. He was very friendly.
9. Jim has many old records. His cousin borrowed *a record* from him yesterday.

10. [Woman pointing to a pile of books] John, can you see those books lying on the floor? I need a hard surface to write on. Would you please hand me *a book*?

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Лех Забор

ПЕРЦЕПЦИЈА ЈЕДИНСТВЕНОСТИ И УСВАЈАЊЕ ЕНГЛЕСКОГ
СИСТЕМА ЧЛАНОВА

Сажетак

У раду се испитују обрасци употребе чланова код пољских ученика енглеског као другог језика. На основу постојећих теорија значења енглеских чланова, у раду се показује да усвајање енглеског система чланова зависи од перцепције јединствености именичке синтагме од стране ученика. Циљ рада је да се упореде одговори ученика на тесту са задацима принудног избора за три категорије именичких синтагми: (1) одређене и јединствене на основу асоцијација; (2) одређене и јединствене на основу претходног помињања, општег знања или знања о непосредној ситуацији; (3) неодређене и јединствене на основу асоцијација или претходног помињања. Анализа података добијених тестирањем две групе ученика (нижи-средњи и напредни ниво) упућује на одређене ограничене закључке у вези са улогом јединствености и других семантичких и дискурских универзалија које кључно доприносе тумачењу енглеског одређеног члана.

Кључне речи: усвајање енглеских чланова, одређеност, јединственост

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GENDER AND VOCABULARY LEARNING IN EFL: A CASE STUDY FROM MACEDONIA

Abstract

This paper reports the results of a study of the influence of gender on the use of vocabulary learning strategies of EFL learners in the Republic of Macedonia. A questionnaire was administered to 709 EFL learners from ten elementary schools, ten secondary schools, as well as five Faculties of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. The findings reveal similarities in the ten most and least frequently used VLS by male and female learners. Apart from females' greater use of all five categories of strategies, 8 of the 13 VLS tested by chi-square tests show more frequent use by females, one strategy is used more often by males, whereas the remaining 4 do not show any significant variation by gender.

Key words: vocabulary learning strategies, gender, chi-square tests, significant variation

1. Introduction

Until recently the study of gender and its influence on language learning outcomes was dominated by the *difference approach* to understanding gender and language learning, which viewed gender as a static, context-

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free category, focusing on males and females as rather generalized images (Schmenk 2004: 514).

Gender differences have been found in many aspects of human social and cognitive development. Synthesizing research on gender differences in human social behaviour, Oxford (1993: 66) points out that females are more interested in social activities than males; females are less aggressive than males; females are less competitive than males. Research on gender differences in language use has revealed that in mixed-gender interactions females ask more questions, use more polite speech forms and interrupt less frequently than males (Catalan 2003: 55).

Gender differences have been noticed in the area of human cognitive development, as well. Pre-school and elementary school girls develop intellectually faster than boys (Vučić 1987: 106), whereas later boys catch up. Verbal skills in the first language tend to develop earlier in females than in males. Girls usually perform better on reading, spelling and grammar tests (Oxford 1993: 67). Males generally outperform females in mathematical and visual-spatial ability (Lefrancois 1994: 55). Moreover, the achievement of males varies more than the achievement of females on most tests. However, in the past several decades gender differences among adolescents have declined (*ibid.*)

Gender differences in cognitive achievement have partly been attributed to anatomical differences in male and female brains. Springer and Deutsch (1989) /cited in Oxford 1993: 69/ have found that the left hemisphere in men is more specialized for verbal activity and the right hemisphere is more specialized for abstract or spatial processing; women have a more integrated brain function than men due to a richer connection between the two sides of the brain.

Nevertheless, gender differences should not be interpreted as merely caused by biological factors. As Nyikos (2009: 75) points out: “Much of the perceived female superiority in language capability may be due to the added effort which adults tend to lavish on baby girls compared to baby boys.” Research has shown that parents have more complex conversations with daughters and encourage them to talk more than sons (*ibid.*). Parental expectations as well as gender-related cultural beliefs are considered to play a powerful role in determining the motivation and learning achievement of male and female students (Kaylani 1996: 80).

As far as motivation for learning is concerned, it is assumed that females, more than males, demonstrate integrative motivation, “a socially

based orientation reflecting a desire to learn the language in order to identify with the target language group” (Oxford, Nyikos and Ehrman 1988:326). In contrast, instrumental motivation, “in which knowledge of the language is chiefly desired for job advancement or some other instrumental reason”, is more typical of males (ibid.).

Classroom interaction has also been viewed as gendered. Teachers treat male and female students differently (Eggen and Kauchak 1994: 177). They ask boys more questions, and these questions are more complex and abstract. Boys receive more approval, they are listened to more and are rewarded more for creativity (ibid.). In pair and group work, male students have been found to speak more and take longer turns than female students who “provide a good supportive environment for the males” (Sunderland 1996: 97).

The difference approach to understanding gender and language learning has been criticized for being “inherently stereotyped” (Schmenk 2004: 517). Stereotypical beliefs that females are better language learners than males, which primarily stem from females’ “presumed greater social orientation” (Ehrman and Oxford 1990, cited in Schmenk 2004: 519), overlook the individuality of actual male and female learners.

The attempts of the difference approach to assess the superiority of one gender over the other in learning achievement have recently been replaced by attempts to devise critical and feminist pedagogies in ESL/EFL. These recent approaches view gender not as a static dichotomous category, but as a “complex system of social relations and discursive practices differently constructed in social contexts.” (Norton and Pavlenko 2004: 3). The proponents of these approaches see gender as an important facet of social identity, which interacts with factors such as race, ethnicity, class, age, etc.

The emerging interest in learners as individuals who construct their complex identities in specific contexts parallels another line of research – the research of language learning strategies in correlation with gender differences.

As the aim of this paper is to elucidate the patterns of vocabulary learning strategy use among male and female EFL learners in the Republic of Macedonia, we will start by reviewing literature on language learning strategy use, and more specifically, vocabulary strategy use focusing on gender as a variable. The complex nature of gender as a social system of interrelated factors being beyond the scope of this paper, we will

limit discussion to those findings that elucidate how gender influences EFL learners' use of vocabulary learning strategies in the Republic of Macedonia.

2. Research into gender differences in language learning strategies

Language learning strategies are the specific behaviours learners use to improve their learning (Oxford 1990: 8). A plethora of empirical studies have explored how language learning strategies interact with individual variables such as age, motivation, gender, proficiency, anxiety, self-esteem, aptitude, personality type, cultural background, language teaching methods and other factors.

A review follows of the major studies on gender differences in language learning strategy use.

Politzer (1983) /cited in in Oxford, Nyikos and Ehrman 1988:322/ examined the language learning behaviours of undergraduate students enrolled in French, Spanish and German courses. He concluded that female learners use social strategies more frequently than male learners.

Ehrman and Oxford (1989: 8) studied the effects of gender differences, career choice, and psychological type on adult language learning strategies. They found that women report more use of strategies than men that could be related to psychological type.

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) /cited in Oxford 1993: 82/ reported that female college students used the following three categories of strategies more often than male students: formal rule-based strategies, general study strategies, and conversational input-elicitation strategies.

Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, and Sumrall (1993) /cited in Oxford 1993: 83/ examined gender- difference trends among high school students studying Japanese by satellite. Female students used cognitive, social, and affective strategies more often than males. Metacognitive, compensation and memory strategies did not show any significant variation by gender. In addition, females' motivation for learning was higher than males'.

In their study of language learning strategy use by students at three different course levels at the University of Puerto Rico, Green and Oxford (1995: 261) found greater strategy use among more successful learners and higher levels of strategy use by women than by men. Female learners

used the following types of strategies more often than male learners: memory, affective, metacognitive and social.

Exploring the impact of gender and other variables on the use of vocabulary learning strategies of students studying a foreign language at the University of Alabama, Stoffer (1995) discovered that female students used vocabulary learning strategies more often than their male colleagues. However, most of these differences failed to be significant. Significant differences in strategy use by gender were established only for the following categories of strategies: Memory, Mental Linkages and Organizing words (Stoffer 1995: 155).

Catalan (2003: 65) investigated the vocabulary learning strategies of Spanish-speaking students learning Basque and English. The study showed that the ten most and least frequently used vocabulary strategies were shared by male and female students. Females reported greater use of nine out of fourteen strategies for discovering meaning as well as greater use of thirty-one out of forty-six consolidation strategies. There was a higher usage among females of social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

Kaylani (1996: 75-88) studied the effects of gender and motivation on EFL learning strategy use among high school students in Jordan. Female students used significantly more memory, cognitive, compensation, and affective strategies than male students. The use of social and metacognitive strategies did not vary significantly by gender. It is interesting that the strategy profiles of successful females resembled the strategy profiles of successful males more than they did those of unsuccessful females (*ibid.*: 85).

The study of Oxford et al. (1996: 19-34) found that women were more willing than men to try out a new strategy. Women reported using more memory, cognitive, social, and affective strategies than men. Men seemed to be more oriented toward self-evaluation with a focus on the outcome (*ibid.*: 26).

The investigation of the influence of gender and proficiency on the use of EFL learning strategies of a group of Technological Institute English majors in China carried out by Liu (2004) showed significant gender differences among overall strategy use, with females favouring Memory strategies and Affective strategies.

A small number of studies revealed no significant gender differences in language learning strategy use. The research of Shmais (2003) of University English majors' learning strategies in Palestine indicated no significant differences for the two variables examined – gender and proficiency.

It can be concluded from the literature review that female students seem to use a wider range of language learning strategies than their male colleagues, and they use them more often. However, in order to get a clearer picture, gender needs to be related to other individual variables as well as to the specific socio-cultural context of the students being studied.

3. The present study

The present study is part of a large-scale study (Nikolovska 2006) aimed at investigating the relationship between the use of vocabulary learning strategies of Macedonian EFL learners in relation to age, gender and proficiency, as well as the influence of vocabulary teaching strategies on the choice of vocabulary learning strategies. It is the relationship between the use of VLS and gender that will be the subject of this paper.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Subjects

A total of 709 EFL learners participated in the study. 292 of the total sample studied English at the elementary level, 311 at the secondary level and 106 were University students. 213 participants were male, 464 were female, and 32 participants did not report their gender. The study was conducted in ten elementary and ten secondary schools in different towns in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as five Faculties of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. There was a relatively wide divergence in age – from 13 (primary level) to 20 (tertiary level).

The table below shows the distribution of subjects by gender and education level.

Table 1. Sample distribution by gender across the three levels of education

Education level	Females	Males	Unreported	Total
Elementary	163	113	16	292
Secondary	231	66	14	311
University	70	34	2	106

It can be seen from Table 1 that female students outnumber their male colleagues at all three education levels.

3.1.2. Instrument and data collection procedure

The instrument used is a questionnaire for the learners designed for the purpose of the study based on a vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) taxonomy created in line with the taxonomies proposed by Oxford (1990), Schmitt (1997), and Pavičić (2003). The taxonomy included 45 strategies belonging to one of the following categories: Social (imply learning through interaction with another person), Memory (transform information for the purpose of memorizing it), Cognitive (used to analyze and process the material in order to master it), Metacognitive (used to monitor, plan and direct the learning process) and Compensation strategies (compensate for the lack of knowledge). Below is the taxonomy used in the questionnaire:

A. Social strategies

1. Ask teacher for explanation.
2. Ask another person for explanation
3. Talk to foreigners
4. Ask the speaker to repeat
5. Learn in a group

B. Memory strategies

1. Relate words to personal experience
2. Make a mental image of the word

3. Relate the word to synonyms or antonyms
 4. Use graphic organizers
 5. Group words according to meaning
 6. Remember the configuration of the word
 7. Write the translation on cards
 8. Use rhyme to remember new words
 9. Relate the new words to feelings and movements
 10. Check the meaning by covering the translation
- C. Cognitive strategies
1. Keep a vocabulary notebook
 2. Write new words several times
 3. Say new words several times when studying
 4. Record oneself when reading out loud
 5. Read for pleasure in English
 6. Try not to translate word-for-word
 7. Make sentences with the new words
 8. Learn English from TV
 9. Find meaning dividing words into parts
 10. Highlight the new words
 11. Learn English from the Internet
 12. Learn English through computer games
 13. Look for cognates
 14. Write the words down in class
 15. Use a bilingual dictionary
 16. Use a monolingual dictionary
 17. Learn new words through songs
- D. Metacognitive strategies
1. Plan learning
 2. Learn English through other extracurricular activities
 3. Learn from the mistakes on a test
 4. Test oneself with word tests
 5. Self-initiated study of words from texts
 6. Ask for advice how to study more effectively
- E. Compensation strategies
1. Use gestures when stuck for words
 2. Make up new words when stuck
 3. Guess the meaning from context
 4. Paraphrase

5. Ask the interlocutor for help
6. Avoid difficult topics

The participants responded to the 45 strategy descriptions on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = usually and 5 = always). The following three levels of strategy use were established based on the participants' self-reported frequency of VLS use:

- a) low (mean between 1.00 and 2.49)
- b) medium (mean between 2.50 and 3.49)
- c) high (mean between 3.50 and 5.00)

The questionnaire also contained a short cloze test used to determine the proficiency level of the participants and 30 vocabulary teaching strategies (VTS) to which the subjects responded by ranking their perceived frequency of use on a 5-point scale (never, rarely, sometimes, usually and always). The purpose of this part was to investigate the effects of VTS on the choice of VLS. The results of this part of the study will not be discussed here.

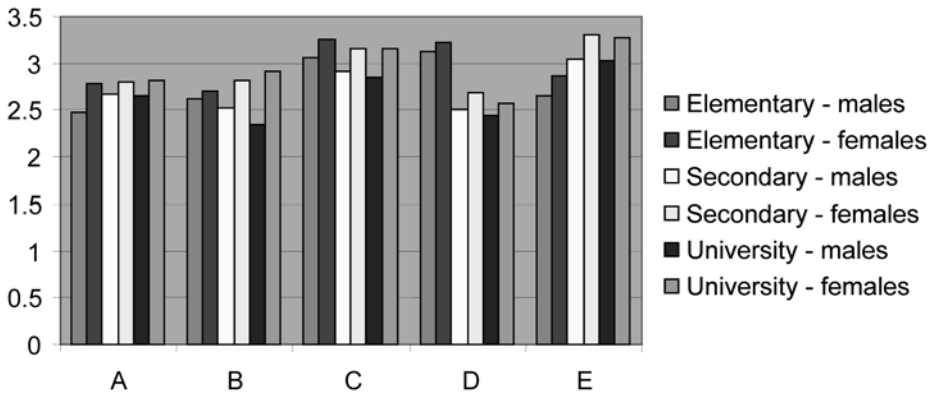
The questionnaire was administered during regular English classes. The administration took between 20 and 45 minutes. It was anonymous and it was written in Macedonian. The participants were told that the results would have no impact on their marks.

The data were analyzed by means of the statistical programmes SPSS for Windows and STATISTICA. Chi-square tests were used to check whether the use of specific VLS varied significantly in relation to learners' gender.

3.2. Data analysis and discussion

The chart below (Chart 1) shows that all means for the five strategy categories fall within the medium range of 2.5 to 3.49 with a few exceptions. Social strategies (elementary level), Memory strategies (University) and Metacognitive strategies (University) are used at a low frequency level by male students (mean value between 1.00 and 2.49). It is obvious that the means for all the categories are higher for females.

Chart 1: Variation in use of the six categories of strategies by gender



Note:

A = Social; B = Memory; C = Cognitive; D = Metacognitive; E = Compensation

The greater frequency means of all the strategy categories favouring females is in line with the findings of previous research, as we have seen (eg., Green and Oxford 1995, Oxford 1993, Oxford et al. 1996).

Eight out of the thirteen strategies tested by chi-square tests showed statistically significant correlation with gender. These strategies are:

- B2 Make a mental image of the word
(Pearson Chi-square = 17.647; df = 5; p = .00343)
- B6 Remember the configuration of the word
(Pearson Chi-square = 39.777; df = 5; p = .00000)
- B10 Check the meaning by covering the translation
(Pearson Chi-square = 23.615; df = 5; p = .00026)
- C1 Keep a vocabulary notebook
(Pearson Chi-square = 14.453; df = 5; p = .01299)
- C10 Highlight the new words
(Pearson Chi-square = 55.772; df = 5; p = .00000)
- C12 Learn English through computer games
(Pearson Chi-square = 48.962; df = 5; p = .00000)
- C15 Use a bilingual dictionary
(Pearson Chi-square = 25.640 df = 5; p = .00011)

E4 Paraphrase

(Pearson Chi-square = 32.122; df = 5; p = .00001)

The chi-square tests revealed that there is a significant correlation between gender and the use of eight out of the thirteen strategies tested ($p < .05$). Female learners are more likely to make a mental image of the word (B2), to remember the configuration of the word (B6) and to check the meaning by covering the translation (B10) than male learners. In addition, female learners were found to keep a vocabulary notebook (C1), highlight new words (C10) and use a bilingual dictionary (C15) more often than male learners. The only strategy used more frequently by males than by females was C12 (Learn English through computer games). The only Compensation strategy tested (E4) also correlated significantly with gender and was favoured by females. Females are more inclined to paraphrase than males.

Females' more frequent use of the following strategies: B2 *Make a mental image of the word*, B6 *Remember the configuration of the word* and C10 *Highlight the new words*, which rely on learners' visual-spatial skills, is not consistent with research findings according to which males outperform females in visual-spatial ability (Reid 1987: 94, Oxford 1994: 143). If we compare these results to findings of related research on vocabulary learning (Stoffer 1995), we will notice that the strategy *Visualize new words* in Stoffer's study (ibid.: 127), equivalent to *Make a mental image of the word* in our study, belongs to a category (Factor 7) which does not show any significant differences by gender. Furthermore, if we regard B6 and C10 as visual strategies comparable to Stoffer's Factor 6 strategy group (ibid.: 126), which in Stoffer's study do not vary by gender, the findings are again incompatible.

Females' greater use of B10 *Check the meaning by covering the translation*, C15 *Use a bilingual dictionary* and E4 *Paraphrase* may be explained by females' superiority in linguistic ability and facility in using language rules which may lead to greater success in processing language (Oxford, Nyikos and Ehrman 1988: 324, Oxford 1993: 67).

The finding that females keep a vocabulary notebook more frequently than males could be accounted for from the perspective of females' greater desire for signs of social approval, such as good grades and a willingness to fit in with conventional norms and to follow a teacher's advice (Oxford, Nyikos and Ehrman 1988: 324, Kaylani 1996: 86).

The only strategy tested for significant variation by gender which favours males is C12 *Learn English through computer games*. This finding is in concert with males' preferred sensory learning styles – visual and tactile (Reid 1987: 94). In Stoffer's study the strategies which involve making use of computers do not vary by gender (Stoffer 1995: 122)

The following strategies did not show any significant variation by gender:

- A1 Ask teacher for help
(Pearson Chi-square = 10.624; df = 5; p = .5940)
- A3 Talk to foreigners
(Pearson Chi-square = 5.689; df = 5; p = .33772)
- B5 Group words according to meaning
(Pearson Chi-square = 6.892; df = 5; p = .22879)
- D4 Test oneself with word tests
(Pearson Chi-square = 5.286; df = 5; p = .38198)
- D5 Self-initiated study of words from texts
(Pearson Chi-square = 8.746; df = 5; p = .11968)

As we have seen from the literature review, in most studies females use social and metacognitive strategies more often than males (Oxford 1993: 82, Green and Oxford 1995: 261, Catalan 2003: 65). Although the overall use of social strategies in our study showed higher means for females, which can be explained by females' greater social orientation (Oxford, Nyikos and Ehrman 1988: 324), the use of the two social strategies (A1 and A3) tested by chi-square tests did not vary significantly by gender. Similarly, in spite of females' generally greater use of metacognitive strategies, which implies self-monitoring, self-evaluation, identifying goals, etc. the frequency of use of the two metacognitive strategies tested (D4 and D5) was not significantly greater for females.

Unlike the results of Stoffer's study in which the strategies used to organize words showed significant differences favouring females (1995:156), in our study strategy B5, Group words according to meaning, did not show significant variation by gender.

We will now examine the ten most and least frequently used vocabulary strategies by male and female EFL learners in order to compare them.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 show the rank order of the ten most frequently used strategies by males and females (elementary, secondary and university level respectively).

Table 2. The ten most frequently used strategies – elementary level

Strategy	Rank		Frequency mean	
	male	female	male	female
C14 Write the words down in class	1	1	4.01	4.37
D3 Learn from the mistakes in the test	2	4	3.74	3.98
C10 Highlight the new words	3	2	3.73	4.2
B10 Check the meaning by covering the translation	4	5	3.66	3.95
C6 Try not to translate word for word	5	8	3.62	3.81
C2 Write the new words several times	6	/	3.58	/
C3 Say the new words several times when studying	7	10	3.47	3.61
C15 Use a bilingual dictionary	8	6	3.43	3.9
D4 Test oneself with word tests	9	/	3.38	/
A1 Ask the teacher for explanation	10	3	3.37	4
C8 Learn English from TV	/	7	/	3.84
C7 Make sentences with the new words	/	9	/	3.72

As far as the ten most frequently used strategies are concerned, certain similarities can be noticed. Eight strategies are shared by males and females at the elementary level: C14 Write the words down in class, D3 Learn from the mistakes on the test, C10 Highlight the new words, C6 Try not to translate word-for-word, B10 Check the meaning by covering the translation, C3 Say new words several times when studying, C15 Use a bilingual dictionary, A1 Ask teacher for explanation.

Table 3. The ten most frequently used strategies – secondary level

Strategy	Rank		Frequency mean	
	male	female	male	female
C8 Learn English from TV	1	1	4.48	4.39
C17 Learn new words through songs	2	3	3.85	4.13
E4 Paraphrase	3	6	3.67	3.79
C6 Try not to translate word-for-word	4	8	3.65	3.66
C12 Learn English through computer games	5	/	3.48	/
C14 Write the new words down in class	6	7	3.42	3.73
E3 Guess the meaning from context	7	/	3.38	/
B10 Check the meaning by covering the translation	8	4	3.36	3.99
C10 Highlight the new words	9	2	3.32	4.14
A1 Ask the teacher for explanation	10	/	3.24	/
C15 Use a bilingual dictionary	/	5	/	3.81
C3 Say the new words several times when studying	/	9	/	3.6
E5 Ask the interlocutor for help	/	10	/	3.58

The following seven out of the ten most frequently used strategies are shared by male and female secondary students: C8 Learn English from TV, C17 Learn new words through songs, E4 Paraphrase, C6 Try not to translate word-for-word, C17 Learn new words through songs, C14 Write the new words down in class and B10 Check the meaning by covering the translation.

Table 4. The ten most frequently used strategies – university level

Strategy	Rank		Frequency mean	
	male	female	male	female
C8 Learn English from TV	1	1	4.36	4.53
E4 Paraphrase	2	3	3.69	4.04
C15 Use a bilingual dictionary	3	4	3.45	4
C17 Learn new words through songs	4	5	3.42	4
E3 Guess the meaning from context	5	/	3.42	/
C12 Learn English through computer games	6	/	3.3	/
C6 Try not to translate word-for-word	7	6	3.27	3.99
E5 Ask the interlocutor for help	8	/	3.15	/
B10 Check the meaning by covering the translation	9	7	3.1	3.81
C14 Write the new words down in class	10	8	3.06	3.81
C10 Highlight the new words	/	2	/	4.2
B6 Remember the configuration of the word	/	9	/	3.71

At university level, the number of most frequently used strategies shared by males and females is also seven. These are: C8 Learn English from TV, E4 Paraphrase, C15 Use a bilingual dictionary, C17 Learn new words through songs, C6 Try not to translate word-for-word, C14 Write the new words down in class and B10 Check the meaning by covering the translation. The seven strategies most frequently used by males and females at secondary and university level are identical.

In spite of the similarity in the ranking of the most popular strategies for male and female students, a closer analysis reveals that the means for females are higher than for males.

It is interesting that C12 Learn English through computer games, which is one of the ten most popular strategies for male university students ($M = 3.3$) is among the least popular strategies for their female colleagues ($M = 2.31$).

Tables 5, 6 and 7 present an overview of the ten strategies least favoured by males and females (elementary, secondary and university level respectively). Most of these strategies are hardly ever used by males and females. However, the frequency means for most strategies are slightly higher for females than for males.

Table 5. The ten least frequently used strategies – elementary level

Strategy	Rank		Frequency mean	
	male	female	male	female
C11 Learn English from the Internet	1	/	2.38	/
C16 Use a monolingual dictionary	2	4	2.36	2.28
E1 Use gestures when stuck for words	3	1	2.34	2.46
B7 Write the translation on cards	4	/	2.22	/
B9 Relate the new words to feelings and movements	5	6	2.21	2.25
B8 Use rhyme to remember new words	6	9	2.19	2.03
A4 Ask the speaker to repeat	7	5	2.13	2.28
E2 Make up new words when stuck	8	8	2.1	2.17
A3 Talk to foreigners	9	3	2.94	2.32
C4 Record oneself when reading out loud	10	10	1.29	1.2
D1 Plan learning	/	2	/	2.41
B4 Use graphic organizers	/	7	/	2.22

The following eight strategies are among the ten least frequently used strategies for both males and females at the elementary level: C16 Use a monolingual dictionary, C4 Record oneself when reading out loud, A3 Talk to foreigners, B9 Relate the new words to feelings and movements, B8 Use rhyme to remember new words, A4 Ask the speaker to repeat, E2 Make up new words when stuck and E1 Use gestures when stuck for words.

Table 6. The ten least frequently used strategies – secondary level

Strategy	Rank		Frequency mean	
	male	female	male	female
C9 Find meaning dividing words into parts	1	/	2.32	/
B5 Group words according to meaning	2	/	2.23	/
C1 Keep a vocabulary notebook	3	/	2.14	/
C16 Use a monolingual dictionary	4	3	2.11	2.4
A5 Learn in a group	5	5	2.02	2.37
B8 Use rhyme to remember new words	6	7	2.02	2.16
B4 Use graphic organizers	7	8	1.92	2.09
B7 Write the translation on cards	8	6	1.79	2.17
D1 Plan learning	9	9	1.53	1.88
C4 Record oneself when reading out loud	10	10	1.08	1.13
C12 Learn English through computer games	/	2	/	2.48
A3 Talk to foreigners	/	1	/	2.53
C11 Learn English from the Internet	/	4	/	2.39

Male and female secondary students share the following seven strategies as the least frequently used: C16 Use a monolingual dictionary, A5 Learn in a group, B8 Use rhyme to remember new words, B7 Write the translation on cards, B4 Use graphic organizers, D1 Plan learning and C4 Record oneself when reading out loud.

Table 7. The ten least frequently used strategies – university level

Strategy	Rank		Frequency mean	
	male	female	male	female
B9 Relate the new words to feelings and movements	1	/	2.35	/
B5 Group words according to meaning	2	/	2.3	/
D4 Test oneself with word tests	3	/	2.24	/
C13 Look for cognates	4	/	2.09	/
A5 Learn in a group	5	3	2.06	2.48
B4 Use graphic organizers	6	4	1.94	2.33
B8 Use rhyme to remember new words	7	6	1.91	2.29
D1 Plan learning	8	9	1.79	1.62
B7 Write the translation on cards	9	8	1.68	2.11
C4 Record oneself when reading out loud	10	10	1.15	1.07
C16 Use a monolingual dictionary	/	7	/	2.12
C12 Learn English through computer games	/	5	/	2.31
A3 Talk to foreigners	/	1	/	2.53
C11 Learn English from the Internet	/	2	/	2.53

At university level, six of the ten least frequently used strategies are shared by males and females. These are: A5 Learn in a group, B4 Use graphic organizers, B8 Use rhyme to remember new words, B7 Write the translation on cards, D1 Plan learning and C4 Record oneself when reading out loud.

Analyzing the ten least and most frequently used vocabulary strategies of males and females in light of previous research is almost impossible as only one of the studies mentioned in the literature review investigated which strategies were most and least favoured by males and females – the research carried out by Catalan. In this study (2003: 62), nine of the ten most frequently used strategies and eight of the ten least frequently used

strategies, as well as similar rankings, were shared by males and females. Commenting on the common vocabulary learning patterns between males and females, Catalan speculates: “As human beings, males and females are more alike than different; although there may be sex differences in language learning due to innate and social causes, research carried out so far is not conclusive enough to determine absolutely different ways of learning for the two sexes...” (ibid.: 64).

4. Conclusions

The purpose of the present study was to explore the influence of gender on the use of vocabulary learning strategies in learning English as a foreign language in the Republic of Macedonia.

The results reveal similarity in the ten most and least frequently used strategies by males and females. Elementary school male and female learners share eight out of the ten most popular strategies, whereas the number of the most common popular strategies for secondary school and university male and female students is seven. Similarly, among the least popular strategies eight are shared by males and females at elementary level; seven at secondary level and six at university level.

In view of the overall use of VLS categories, it can be inferred that although the means for all five categories are higher for female students, they all fall within the medium frequency range (2.5 to 3.49) except for Social strategies (elementary level), Memory strategies (university level) and Metacognitive strategies (university level). These three categories have a low frequency range for male learners (mean value between 1.00 and 2.49). The finding that females normally employ learning strategies more frequently than males is in line with the findings of previous research, as we have seen, and may at least partly explain why females usually outperform males in language learning.

In spite of these similarities, there are differences in the patterns of use of individual strategies. Eight of the thirteen strategies tested by Chi-square tests show significant variation in favour of females except for one, C12 Learn from computer games, with higher usage for males. The use of the remaining five strategies does not vary significantly by gender.

The existence of both similar and different patterns of strategy use by male and female learners reveals that the study of gender differences in

language learning very often brings about controversial results. This is one of the reasons why they should be interpreted with caution.

In discussing these findings, it should be emphasized that the role of gender in determining learning outcomes is far from easy to define, the main reason being its complex nature, which is a product of a number of interrelated factors.

The evidence of gender differences in EFL vocabulary learning brings to the fore the necessity of raising learners' awareness of their preferred learning strategies. At the same time, it is necessary to raise teachers' awareness of the diversity of learning strategies in the classroom and their variation by gender, as well as by other individual variables. Teachers can use a number of strategy assessment techniques, such as surveys, think-aloud procedures, diaries, interviews, and observations (Oxford 1993:84) to diagnose learners' preferred ways of learning. The task of the teacher in this respect is to find out how male and female learners learn most effectively and support them in maximizing their learning potential. The data about which strategies are least frequently used by males and females can be incorporated in a strategy training programme to train students how to develop new strategies and improve the existing ones. Teachers should integrate strategy instruction in the English language classroom on a regular basis "...in a natural but explicit way." (ibid.).

Although these findings cast some light on the relationship between gender and vocabulary learning strategy use, they are far from conclusive. Many issues which remain unresolved, such as the reasons for the existence of gender differences in strategy use, may be the subject of future research. In order to investigate this complex relationship in more depth, further investigation is needed which will examine the complex interplay of learning strategy use, gender and factors such as personality, motivation, proficiency, culture, learner beliefs and attitudes about learning.

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РОД И УЧЕЊЕ ВОКАБУЛАРА У ЕНГЛЕСКОМ КАО СТРАНОМ ЈЕЗИКУ:
СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА ИЗ МАКЕДОНИЈЕ

Сажетак

У чланку је приказано истраживање утицаја рода на избор и употребу стратегија за учење вокабулара код ученика и ученица енглеског као страног језика у Републици Македонији. Укупно 709 ученика и студената из десет основних и десет средњих школа, као и са пет различитих факултета Универзитета Кирило и Методије у Скопљу радило је упитник чији су резултати указали на сличности у употреби десет највише и најмање учесталих стратегија за учење вокабулара код ученика и ученица енглеског као страног језика. Осим што се показало да припаднице женског рода више употребљавају свих пет категорија стратегија, испоставило се да ученице чешће користе осам од тринаест стратегија за учење вокабулара тестираних помоћу хи-квадрат теста, једној стратегији чешће прибегавају ученици, док се код преостале четири стратегије не примећује значајна варијација у употреби између родова.

Кључне речи: стратегије за учење вокабулара, род, хи-квадрат тест, значајна варијација

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THE CVX THEORY OF SYLLABLE: THE ANALYSIS OF WORD-FINAL RHYMES IN ENGLISH AND IN SLOVAK

Abstract

The CVX theory of syllable by S. Duanmu claims that the maximal rhyme size in all languages is VX, i.e. VV or VC (Duanmu 2009). Duanmu's analysis of word-final rhymes in English shows that all coda clusters form a complex sound or can be explained by morphology. Long vowels can be represented as short and thus the rhyme size does not exceed VX. The data from Slovak cast doubts on the universal nature of the CVX syllable theory. In Slovak, word-final consonant clusters form complex sounds only rarely and not all consonants beyond the VX limit have morphological solution. Moreover, the dominant feature of Slovak vowels is their length, which expands the number of timing slots in the rhyme structure template.

Key words: CVX syllable theory, consonant clusters, complex sound, word-final rhymes

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1. Introduction

The CVX theory of syllable structure by S. Duanmu (2009) assumes that the maximal syllable size in all languages is CVX (CVC or CVV) and any extra sounds at word edges either have a morphological solution or can be treated as complex sounds (*ibid.*).

This so-called morphological approach to syllable structure is based on the analysis of the data from five languages that allow large consonant clusters: Standard Chinese, Shanghai Chinese, Jiarong, English and German (Duanmu 2009: 71). The evaluated languages belong to two language families – the Sino-Tibetan and the West-Germanic. As is well-known, the phonotactic possibilities and constraints of genetically close languages are usually at least partly related. In my opinion, this fact relativizes the supposed universal character of the CVX model of syllable.

In order to examine the validity of the proposed universal CVX syllable structure, I have undertaken a research aimed at testing this theory on the Slovak language, which is typologically different from the other languages mentioned above (Gregová 2010, 2011). Slovak belongs to the West-Slavonic languages, which are all highly inflectional and allow relatively long sequences of consonants. The research compares and contrasts the syllable structure and the phenomena pertinent to the CVX theory in English, one of the languages that Duanmu tested his theory on, and in Slovak.

In the first stage of the research, I compared the possible word-initial and word-final consonant clusters in English and in Slovak (Gregová 2010). The analysis showed that the total number of possible consonant clusters in Slovak is much higher than in English and their structure is more heterogeneous.

The second stage of the research focused on the single-slot analysis of syllable onset, i.e. the analysis of the word-initial consonant clusters, in terms of three basic concepts of the CVX theory (see below) and the notion of a complex sound (Gregová 2011). It seems that whereas the single-slot analysis of some languages perfectly fits Duanmu's assumptions (cf. Marlo 2004, Duanmu 2009), in Slovak the simplification of syllable onset may cause difficulties and at least a two-slot onset template is required in this language.

In this paper, I will first briefly introduce the CVX syllable theory, and then I will consider word-final rhymes, including an analysis of word-final consonant clusters in English and in Slovak.

2. The CVX theory

Duanmu's idea that the maximal syllable size in all languages is CVX (CVC or CVV) is based on three morphological concepts:

(1) **The Affix Rule:** "Affix or affix-like sounds can be pronounced, whether they can fit into a syllable or not" (Duanmu 2009: 50). For example, the final consonant [s] in the monosyllabic word *pets* [pets] is not the part of a syllable whose structure is then only CVC. This final [s] that represents the sound form of the real suffix -(e)s is accounted for by morphology (the Affix Rule). Similarly, the syllable structure of the word *ax* [æks] is only VC because the final [s] can be accounted for by morphology, too. It is an affix-like sound or a "perceived suffix" covered by the Affix Rule (Duanmu 2010: 8).

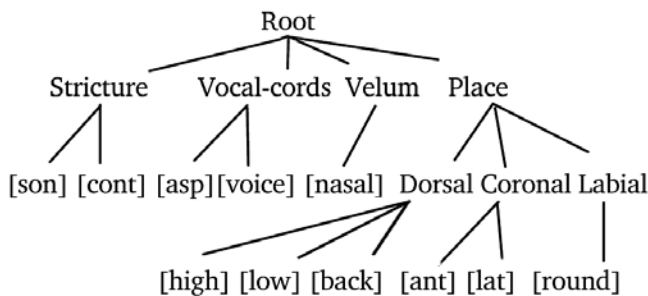
(2) **The Potential Vowel:** extra consonants at word edges are predictable from morphology: in languages having suffixes starting in a vowel, an extra consonant is allowed in a word-final position. This consonant can function as the onset of the suffix vowel. Analogically, in languages that have prefixes ending in a vowel, an extra consonant can be in a word-initial position in order to form a coda of the prefix with a vowel at its end (Duanmu 2009: 70, 150). For example, the final [p] in the word *help* is an extra C when the word is in isolation (supported also by the Anti-Allomorphy; see below), but this [p] functions as the onset of the following V in the word *helping* – [hel]p, [hel][pɪŋ] (Duanmu 2010: 10).

(3) **The Anti-Allomorphy:** "Keep a morpheme in the same shape regardless of the environment" (Duanmu 2009: 47). This rule also supports the syllabification of *help* [help] as a VCV + extrasyllabic consonant [hel]p (ibid.: 47).

The question of how many underlying sounds can be in each of three CVX slots is answered by the concept of a **complex sound**. The extreme case is represented by six underlying sounds which merge into three complex sounds: e. g. in the word *prints* [prints] the CVX structure is [pʳ ɪ̃t˳]. [pʳ] is formed from [p] and [r]; the nasalized [ɪ̃] is formed from [ɪ] and [n], and the affricate sound [t˳] is formed from [t] and [s] (ibid.: 70).

The notion of a complex sound has its roots in the articulator-based feature theory that distinguishes articulators and features. Articulators as the movable parts in the vocal tract participate in speech production, and the gestures made by these articulators constitute features (Marlo 2004: 79). The schematic structure of the articulator-based feature geometry is represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Articulator-based Feature Geometry



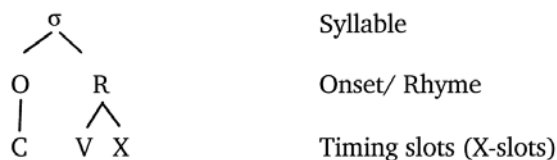
(Marlo 2004: 80)

A complex sound can be seen as a merge, i.e. the gestural overlap of two (or more) sounds (Duanmu 2009: 25). This merging of sounds is governed by the **No Contour Principle** which says that “an articulator cannot make the same feature twice within one sound” (ibid.: 174). A single sound cannot be characterised simultaneously by both [+nasal] and [-nasal], because conflicting gestures cannot overlap, they must be made in sequence and require more than one timing slot (Duanmu 2010: 16). For example, [b] is characterised by Labial [-nasal], [m] is Labial [+nasal], therefore [bm] cannot form a complex sound. Only those sounds can form a complex sound whose articulatory features can overlap (ibid.: 5). Overlapping gestures are made simultaneously and thus a complex sound takes just one timing slot (Duanmu 2010). For example, the gesture of [p] is Labial and that of [l] is Coronal, so they are independent and can overlap. Therefore, [pl] forms a complex sound and fits in a single slot (ibid.).

All in all, in Duanmu’s approach to syllable structure, there is only a single slot for onset and two slots for rhyme (cf. Duanmu 2009, 2010). The structure of the syllable (schematically presented in Figure 2) is either CVV

(e.g. *bee* [bi:]) or CVC (e.g. *bet* [bet]) and any extra consonants at word edges can be explained by morphology.

Figure 2. CVX syllable structure



(Duanmu 2009: 41)

3. The analysis of word-final rhymes in English

As already mentioned, English was one of five languages on which Duanmu (2009) tested his theory. All English possible (and even impossible) word-initial, word-medial and word-final consonant clusters were thoroughly analysed in terms of the main concepts of the so-called morphological approach to syllable structure. Since this paper deals with word-final rhymes (and word-final clusters) only, I will now briefly summarise Duanmu's analysis of the English word-final rhymes in order to exemplify the language that fits the CVX syllable structure.

A word in English can end with a vowel or with one, two, three or four consonants (Roach 2000: 73). The highest number of consonants in the word-final consonant cluster, i.e. in coda, is four. The centre of the syllable can be a short monophthong (representing one timing slot V), a long monophthong (represented by two timing slots VV) or a diphthong (represented by two timing slots VV)¹. This means that the maximal structure of the English word-final rhyme is [VVCCCC]. But Duanmu's theory proposes only the rhyme structure [VV] – long vowel or diphthong and no coda or [VC] – short vowel and one consonant in coda. Thus, how

¹ The analysis of syllables with syllabic consonants in their centre is identical with the analysis of syllables with short monophthongs (both represent one timing slot).

is it possible to reduce the rhyme structure into only two slots? And how can extra sounds at word edges be accounted for?

In English, there are 24 consonantal phonemes (cf. e.g. Roach 2000, McMahon 2002) and any consonant can be final except /h, w, j/ (Roach 2000: 59). If there is only one segment in coda and the syllable centre is formed by a short vowel, the structure of the rhyme proposed by Duanmu is preserved, and is [VC], e.g. *but* [bʌt]. If a long vowel or a diphthong creates the peak, e.g. *mine* [maɪn], *part* [pɑ:t], the rhyme structure is [V:C], i.e. [VVC]. This special case is solved by the simplification of [V:C] into [VC], “where V is tense and short but still distinct from a lax vowel” (Duanmu 2009: 45)². If this analysis is applied, the rhyme size is [VX]³.

The comparison of several sources (cf. Gregová 2010) has shown that there are 55 final two-consonant clusters in English.

Final CC clusters in English

ending with consonants [t] and [d]: pt, bd, kt, gd, mt, md, nt,
nd, ɲt, ɲd, ft, vd, δd, st, zd,
ʃt, ʒd, lt, ld, tʃt, dʒd (21)

ending with consonants [s] and [z]: ps, bz, ts, dz, ks, gz, mz,
ns, z, ɲz, fs, vz, θs, δz, ls, lz
(16)

ending with consonant [θ]: pθ, tθ, kθ, nθ, ɲθ, fθ, lθ (7)

ending with some other consonant: mp, mf, ntʃ, nɔʒ, ɲk, ɲg, sp,
sk, lp, lf, lk (11)

(cf. Gregová 2010)

Most two-consonant clusters (44) end with one of the coronals /t, d, s, z, θ/ as the final ones. These clusters have a morphological solution – the final consonants can be accounted for by the Affix Rule (see above), which covers both real and potential affixes. For example, *blessed* [blest] is a monosyllabic word whose rhyme exceeds [VX] – it is [VCC]. The final C [t] is a real suffix. In the monosyllabic word *want* [wɒnt] the final C is a

² This simplification is possible in languages like English whose vowels are different in terms of length (quantity) and quality, too (cf. e.g. Giegerich 1992).

³ Analogically, the assumption that long vowels (i.e. long monophthongs and diphthongs) “can be accounted for by the idea that [V:C] can be analysed as [VC]” (Duanmu 2009, p.158) is applied also on the rhymes with two-, three-, and four-consonant clusters which are then not treated separately in this paper.

potential suffix. These real and potential suffixes are extra-syllabic. They are not the part of a syllable and the rhyme size does not exceed [VX]: *blessed* – syllabification [bles]t, rhyme [es] – [VC]; *want* – syllabification [wɒn]t, rhyme [ɒn] – [VC] (for details cf. Duanmu, 2009, pp. 154 – 155).

If the Affix Rule cannot be applied (e.g. in the word *camp* [kæmp]), the extra consonant at word edge is supported by the Potential Vowel and/or the Anti-Allomorphy (see above): *camp* – *camping*, syllabification kæm[p] – kæm[pɪŋ] (cf. *ibid.*).

The final three-consonant clusters are quite numerous in English too: there are 39 of them. They end with /s, z, t, d/ which, as already mentioned, can easily be covered by morphology since they represent separate morphemes.

Final CCC clusters in English

ending with consonants [t] and [d]: pst, tst, kst, mft, mst, ntʃt, nɔʒd, ɲst, lmd, lpt, lbd, lft, lvd, lnd, lʃt, lɔʒd, lʃt, lkt (18)

ending with consonants [s] and [z]: pθs, pts, tθs, kθs, kts, mps, mfs, mts, nts, ndz, ɲts, fθs, fts, sts, lmz, lps, lbz, lθs, lnz, ldz, lks (21)

(cf. Gregová 2010)

For example, the rhyme structure in the word *depths* [depθs] is [VCCC]. The final [s] can be solved by the Affix Rule. The remaining segments still exceed the structure [VX]. The consonant cluster [pθ] is a good complex sound since the gestures of [p], which is Labial, and [θ], which is Dental, are independent and can overlap, filling in only one timing slot. Thus the word *depths* [depθs] is syllabified as follows: [dep⁰[s], with the rhyme structure [VC], i.e. [ep⁰] and unsyllabified [s].

The schematic structure of the word-final rhyme in *arranged* [əreɪnɔʒd] is [VCCCC]. The final C [d] is supported by the Affix Rule, while the penultimate C [ɔʒ] is extra-syllabic too, accounted for by the Potential Vowel. What remains is [eɪ – VVN]. In Duanmu's approach "[VVN] can be analysed as [ṼṼ]" (for details cf. Duanmu 2009: 158). The maximal size of the word-final rhyme in *arranged* is then still VX and is [ṼṼ].

The highest number of consonants in English coda is four. There are seven word-final four-consonant clusters in English.

Final CCCC clusters in English

ending with consonant [s]: ksθs, ksts, mpts, lfθs, ltst, lkts (6)

ending with consonant [t]: ntst (1)

(cf. Gregová 2010)

The largest size of word-final rhyme VX is preserved also in words that end with a four-consonant cluster. Word-final consonants are explained by morphology – the Affix Rule, the Potential Vowel, the Anti-Allomorphy, or the notion of a complex sound can be applied. For example, the word *texts* [teksts] has the rhyme [VCCCC]. The final coronal [s] is solved by the Affix Rule. The penultimate [t] can be accounted for by the Anti-Allomorphy or the Potential Vowel. [ks] is a good complex sound. The rhyme structure is then [VC] – [ek^s] (cf. Duanmu 2009: 154 – 156).

4. The analysis of word-final rhymes in Slovak⁴

A word in Slovak can end with a vowel or with one, two or three consonants. The highest number of consonants in the final position of Slovak words, i.e. in syllable coda, is three. Similarly to English, the syllabic nucleus can be a short monophthong (one timing slot – V), a long monophthong (two timing slots – VV) or a diphthong (two timing slots VV)⁵. The maximal size of word-final rhyme is [VCCCC] in Slovak (cf. Gregová 2010).

In the Slovak language, there are 27 consonantal phonemes /p, b, m, f, v, t, d, n, s, z, c, ʒ, r, l, š, ž, č, ʒ̣, ʦ, ɟ, ð, ň, ɫ, j, k, g, x, h/ and all of them can occur in the final position of a word. If the syllable nucleus is a short vowel, the rhyme structure is [VC], e.g. *dom* ‘house’ – syllable structure CVC. If a long monophthong or a diphthong creates a centre, the final C is accounted for by morphology (the Potential Vowel or/and the Anti-Allomorphy) and

⁴ The analysis covers both word-final rhymes without inflection, i.e. the basic form of a word, and with inflection.

⁵ The centre of the Slovak syllable can also be formed by a syllabic consonant that, functioning as a vowel, can be either short (one timing slot) or long (two timing slots).

the rhyme size [VX] is preserved, e.g. the monosyllabic word *pár* ‘couple’⁶ with the segmental structure CVVC and the rhyme [VV] + extrasyllabic C.

The detailed evaluation of several sources (Sabol 1969a, 1969b, Petriščáková 2006, Short Dictionary of Slovak Language online /*Krátky slovník slovenského jazyka*/, Slovak National Corpus /*Slovenský národný korpus*/) has shown that there are 53 final two-consonant clusters in Slovak⁷.

Final CC clusters in Slovak⁸

starting with oral plosive: ps, kt, ks (3)

starting with nasal plosive: mp, mb, mf, nt, nd, nk, ng, nc, nč, nš (10)

starting with fricative: st, zd, st', zd', sk, št, žd, št', žd', ft, vk, xt, lp, lt, ld, lk, lc, ls, lz, lf, lm, rp, rt, rd, rk, rc, rč, rs, rz, rš, rf, rv, rm, rn, rň, jt, jd, jk, jf, jn (40)⁹

In terms of the articulator-based feature geometry, 19 word-final CC clusters [ps, kt, sk, ks, ft, vk, xt, lp, lk, lf, rp, rk, rs, rz, rš, rf, rv, jk, jf] can be represented as complex sounds. Consonants in these clusters either involve different articulators, or they have the same articulator but without conflicting gestures. For example:

- (1) [p] Labial, [s] Coronal – [p^s] = complex sound
- (2) [l] Coronal, [k] Dorsal – [l^k] = complex sound
- (3) [r] Coronal [+anterior, +fricative]

⁶ Considering Kuriłowicz’s idea that the beginning of the word is at the same time the beginning of the first syllable and that the end of the word represents the end of the last syllable (Kuriłowicz 1948), this paper deals with rhymes in monosyllabic words only.

⁷ This contribution does not report all possible combinations of consonants in the Slovak language. Only the most productive clusters occurring in the domestic vocabulary are taken into account (cf. Gregová 2010).

⁸ Since none of these CC clusters or segments in them can be treated as affix or affix-like sound, their division, contrary to English, is based on the manner of articulation of the individual consonants. This type of classification is more useful for a complex sound analysis that is necessary for the morphological explanation of word-final clusters in Slovak.

⁹ Most of these CC clusters are the result of the inflectional processes and contextual occurrences of words. Otherwise, the number of word-final CC clusters in the basic forms of Slovak words is much lower.

- [s] Coronal [+anterior, +fricative]
 [r^s] = complex sound.

If any of these 19 CC clusters forms a rhyme whose peak is a short vowel, the rhyme structure is [VC], where C represents a complex sound. For example:

- (4) *stisk* [stisk]¹⁰ ‘squeeze’ – rhyme structure VC [is^k]
 (5) *necht* [něxt] ‘nail’ – rhyme structure VC [ex^t].

Three of these clusters – [sk], [rs] and [rz] – occur in words where they form rhyme with a long vowel. e.g. *ložísk* < G pl. of *ložisko* ‘lead’, *mravenísk* < G pl. of *mravenisko* ‘anthill’, *bárs* ‘betide’. As already mentioned, Duanmu proposes the simplification of [VVC] into [VC]. But in Slovak, it is impossible to represent the difference between vowels belonging to the same vocalic timbre without referring to their length. The sound form of Slovak monophthongs and diphthongs is relatively stable; they are not reduced, but are fully pronounced in every syllable (Kráľ and Sabol 1989). Moreover, from the aspect of the close/open quality of vowels, the Slovak vocalic sounds are neutral. The vowel pairs in Slovak do not have a different quality; they differ only in their quantity – vowels are either short or long (ibid: 200 – 201). The length of vowels, vocalic quantity, has a phonological-distinctive function in standard Slovak – it differentiates the meaning of words and word forms (cf. Gregová 2008). For example, *sud* ‘barrel’ vs. *súd* ‘tribunal’, *udaj* ‘sell’ vs. *údaj* ‘data’, etc. Thus, Slovak long monophthongs and diphthongs always have to be represented by two timing slots, i.e. [VV]. This indicates that at least one more slot may be necessary for word-final rhymes in Slovak.

CC clusters [mp, mb, mf, nt, nd, nk, ng, nc, nč, nš, st, zd, st̚, zd̚, št̚, žd̚, št̚, žd̚, lt, ld, lc, lš, lz, lm, rt, rd, rč, rm, rn, rň, jt, jd, jn] are not good complex sounds, because they have conflicting gestures. For example:

- (6) [m] Labial [+nasal], [p] Labial [-nasal] – [mp] is not a complex sound
 (7) [n] Coronal [-fricative, +nasal]
 [š] Coronal [+fricative, -nasal]
 [nš] is not a complex sound.

¹⁰ When the sound form of a word is different from its graphic form, the pronunciation is in brackets. When there is no difference between the spelling and the pronunciation of Slovak words, only the graphic form is used.

But the final C in these clusters can be covered by morphology (the Anti-Allomorphy, the Potential Vowel). And when these clusters are preceded by a short vowel, the rhyme size is, in accordance with the CVX theory, [VX]. For example:

(8) *vinš* ‘verse’ – syllable structure [CVC]C, rhyme [VC]

(9) *dost* ‘enough’ – syllable structure [CVC]C, rhyme [VC].

Moreover, clusters [nš, st, šť] can also be easily solved by the Affix Rule (or better Affix-like Rule) since consonants [š] and [ť] function as grammatical suffixes in Slovak.

21 CC clusters that are not good complex sounds [mp, mb, nt, nd, nk, ng, st, zd, st, zd, št, žd, št, žď, lt, ld, lm, rt, rd, rm, jd] occur in syllables where the nucleus is a long vowel or a diphthong. The traditional scheme of the rhyme is then [VVCC]. But clusters [st, št] have a morphological solution. For example:

(10) *plášť* [pla:šť] ‘overcoat’ – CCVVCC, final C can be explained by the Affix Rule, penultimate C can be accounted for by the Potential vowel, so the rhyme is then only [VV].

CC clusters starting with a nasal consonant do not violate the rhyme size [VX] either, even if they are preceded by a long vowel or diphthong. For example:

(11) *žúmp* [žu:mp] < G pl. of *žumpa* ‘cesspit’ – CVVCC, final C is supported by the Potential Vowel, VVC with nasal C is covered by the analysis of [VN] as [Ṽ] (for details cf. Duanmu 2009). The syllable structure is then [C̃ṼṼ]C, rhyme [ṼṼ].

The remaining CC clusters [st, zd, zd, št, žď, lt, ld, lm, rt, rd, rm, jd] represent a violation of the CVX theory. Only the final C is predictable from morphology as extra-syllabic (the Potential Vowel), and one more slot is necessary for the rhyme. For example:

(12) *hviezd* < G pl. of *hviezda* ‘star’ – syllable structure [CCVVC]C, rhyme [VVC].

As to the three-consonant clusters in Slovak, the materials analysed show only four word-final CCC clusters.

Final CCC clusters in Slovak

starting with nasal plosive: nkt (1)

starting with fricative: jst, jzd, jsk (3)

The cluster [nkt] occurs only in rhymes with a short monophthong. For example, in the word *punkt* ‘dot’ – CVCCC. [kt] is a good complex sound ([k] Dorsal, [t] Coronal) and the remaining [un] can be simplified by the analysis of [VN] as [V̇]. The rhyme structure is [V̇C], where [V̇] stands for [ũ] and C is the complex sound [kʰ].

Although the cluster [jsk] is rare and occurs only in rhymes with a short vowel as a peak, it does not fit the rhyme structure [VX]. For example, in the word *vojsk* < G pl. of *vojsko* ‘military forces’, the rhyme is [VCCC], and the final C can be accounted for by the Potential Vowel, but [js] cannot be treated as a complex sound because of conflicting gestures: ([j] is Coronal [-anterior] and [s] is Coronal [+anterior]). At least one more timing slot is required for this word-final cluster.

The cluster [jst] and its contextual version [jtʰ] fit the rhyme size proposed by Duanmu’s theory. The final C [tʰ] has morphological solution (the Affix Rule). Neither [js] nor [jz] can be complex sounds, because of the already mentioned conflicting gestures (the feature specification of [z] is identical to the feature specification of [s], and they differ only in the presence or the absence of the feature Voice). But the penultimate consonants [s], [z] can be explained by the Potential Vowel. The rhyme size is [VC]. In occurrences with long vowels, e. g. in verbs *dôjstʰ* [duojstʰ] ‘to arrive, to come’, *nájstʰ* [na:jestʰ] ‘to find’ the final [tʰ] can similarly be unsyllabified (the Affix Rule), the penultimate C is solved by the Potential Vowel. The syllable scheme of this example is CVVC[C[C] with the rhyme size [VVC].

5. Conclusion

The morphological approach to syllable structure by S. Duanmu (2009) assumes that the maximal syllable size in all languages is CVX (CVC or CVV) and any consonants beyond this limit are predictable from morphology (the Affix Rule, the Anti-Allomorphy, the Potential Vowel) or can be treated as complex sounds. Duanmu has tested his theory on five languages from two language families. And so the question arises here if the genetic closeness of the languages evaluated does not relativize the proposed universal nature of the CVX theory.

In order to examine the validity of this universal syllable size, I have undertaken a research aimed at testing this theory on the Slovak language,

which is typologically different from all the languages analysed so far (cf. Marlo 2004; Duanmu 2009, 2010). The data from the analysis of syllable onset, i.e. the analysis of word-initial consonant clusters, in the Slovak language has shown that the maximum number of consonants in the initial position of a Slovak word, i.e. the maximum number of consonants in syllable onset, is four. But not all consonant clusters can be explained by morphological concepts of the CVX theory and/or they do not form a complex sound. It seems that at least a two-slot onset template is required in the Slovak language (cf. Gregová 2011).

This paper concentrates on the word-final rhymes in English – the language that fits Duanmu’s syllable model – and in Slovak. Traditionally, the largest structure of the English word-final rhyme is [VVCCCC]. In Duanmu’s approach, the rhyme structure is only [VV] or [VC]. Unsyllabified consonants are accounted for by morphology as real or potential affixes (the Affix Rule). If the Affix Rule cannot be applied, the consonants beyond [VX] limit are covered by the Potential Vowel and/or the Anti-Allomorphy (cf. Duamnu 2009). This two-slot template for syllable rhyme is supported by the possibility to simplify [V:C] into [VC], since English vowels differ not only in their length, but especially in their quality.

The situation in the Slovak language is slightly different. The maximal structure of word-final rhyme is [VVCCCC], but neither long monophthong nor diphthong can be represented by only one timing slot. There is no qualitative difference between related short and long vowels. Moreover, quantity has a phonological-distinctive function in Slovak. The difference among vowels that belong to the same vocalic timbre has to be represented with regard to their length. The application of the Affix Rule is limited, and not all consonant clusters can be analysed as complex sounds.

The possible structure of word-final rhymes in Slovak can be summarized as follows:

- (1) short monophthong + C (any consonant) – rhyme [VC],
- (2) long monophthong/ diphthong + C (any consonant) – final C solved by morphology
(the Potential Vowel, the Anti-Allomorphy) – rhyme [VV],
- (3) short monophthong + CC (complex sound) – rhyme [VC^s]¹¹,
- (4) long monophthong/ diphthong + CC (complex sound) – rhyme [VVC^s],

¹¹ Cs stands for a complex sound.

- (5) short monophthong + CC (not complex sound) – final C explained by morphology (the Potential Vowel, the Anti-Allomorphy) – rhyme [VC],
- (6) long monophthong/ diphthong + CC (not complex sound):
 - a) final C possible suffix – final C has morphological solution (the Affix Rule), penultimate C accounted for by the Potential Vowel and/or the Anti-Allomorphy – rhyme [VV],
 - b) penultimate C is nasal – final C supported by the Potential Vowel and/or the Anti-Allomorphy, [VVN] analysed as [V \tilde{V}] – rhyme [V \tilde{V}],
 - c) final C covered by morphology (the Potential Vowel, the Anti-Allomorphy) – rhyme [VVC],
- (7) short monophthong + CCC (N + CC as possible complex sound) – final CC represents a complex sound, [VN] simplified as [V \tilde{V}] – rhyme [V \tilde{V} C^s],
- (8) short monophthong + CCC (not complex sound) – final C accounted for by morphology (the Potential Vowel, the Anti-Allomorphy) – rhyme [VCC],
- (9) short monophthong + CCC (final C is [t]) – final C explained by the Affix Rule, penultimate C solved by the Potential Vowel – rhyme [VC],
- (10) long monophthong/diphthong + CCC (final C is [t]) – final C supported by the Affix Rule, penultimate C covered by the Potential Vowel – rhyme [VVC].

As is clear, although the highest number of consonants in the final position of Slovak words (syllables) is only three, not all of them can be clarified by the morphological concepts of Duanmu's theory (cf. 4, 6c, 8, 10) and one more timing slot is necessary for the Slovak word-final rhymes.

In the next stage of this research, consonant clusters in the word-medial position will be analysed in order to complete the evaluation of the Slovak syllable in terms of the CVX theory. Further research should also encompass additional languages from other language families so as to verify the proposed universal nature of the maximal CVX structure of syllable.

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АНАЛИЗА ФИНАЛНИХ РИМА У ЕНГЛЕСКОМ И СЛОВАЧКОМ ЈЕЗИКУ

Сажетак

Према Дуанмуовој CVX теорији слоговне структуре, максимална дужина риме у свим језицима је VX, односно VV или VC (Дуанму 2009). Дуанмуова анализа финалних рима у енглеском показује да сви финални консонантски кластери образују комплексан глас или се могу објаснити морфолошким средствима. Дуги вокали могу се представити као кратки, те тако дужина риме не прелази VX. Подаци из словачког бацају сенку сумње на универзалност CVX теорије слоговне структуре. У словачком, финални консонантски кластери тек ретко образују сложене гласове, нити се сви консонанти који излазе ван границе VX могу морфолошки објаснити. Штавише, доминантна карактеристика словачких вокала јесте њихова дужина, која повећава број временских размака у структури риме.

Кључне речи: CVX теорија слоговне структуре, консонантски кластери, сложени глас, финална рима

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QUENCHED LIGHT, OR SEEING THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY – A COLLOCATION-BASED VIEW OF LARKIN'S ATHEISM AND DEPRESSION

Abstract

This paper uses computational collocation-based analysis to examine Philip Larkin's reputation as a depressive atheist.¹ After a brief discussion of the term 'collocation', a complete corpus of Larkin's poetry will be analysed for key symbols. This will be compared with a passage from 1 Corinthians 13 describing the transition from an incomplete human state to that of maturity, self-knowledge and perfection. Both will be checked against a reference corpus in the form of a newspaper corpus of 44.5 million words. The nature of transitions in Larkin's poems (whether from day to night, from dissatisfaction to inability or from love to disappointment) will shed light on several questions surrounding his verse, finally showing his persona as a rebellious, doubting and immature Christian.

Key words: corpus stylistics, collocation, poetry, Larkin, atheism, depression

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Since the paper proposes a collocation-based view of Larkin's poetry, let us consider first what we mean by collocation. J.R. Firth considered collocation as being abstracted at the level of syntax:

Meaning by collocation is an abstraction at the syntagmatic level and is not directly concerned with the conceptual or idea approach to the meaning of words. One of the meanings of night is its collocability with dark (Firth 1957: 181).

If we look at the definition by John Sinclair, we shall see that he usually looks for a word's collocates within the limit of four words to the left and four words to the right:

Collocation is the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of one another in a text. The usual measure of proximity is a maximum of four words intervening (Sinclair 1991: 170).

Since both our sources agree that collocation is not syntax bound but determined by proximity, and one states that collocates influence the word's meaning, then we may agree that in the world of a poet collocates may indeed throw light on the meaning of the word that the poet tends to attach to it.² Williams' statements that "meaning is negotiated by use of contextual features" (Williams 2010: 405) and that collocation "is, as Firth and Sinclair showed, an area central to language" (Williams 2010: 403) is in accordance with Louw's view that 'collocation is instrumentation for literary or fictional worlds and is fairly easily supplied' (Louw 2010: 90).

² This view of collocation is best summarized by Williams and Millon (2011):

...[T]raditional phraseology, and much pre-corpus lexicography, and corpus linguistics developed on parallel lines. Those lines were effectively drawn together in the Cobuild initiative[...]

Phraseologists and lexicographers seek to tame language so as to list and classify for inclusion in published works. This requires an essentially static vision of collocation where phraseological units are treated as if created *ex nihilo* and are simply found and classified on purely linguistic grounds as to what may and what may not be termed as a collocation.

The NeoFirthian approach developed by John Sinclair within the context of corpus linguistics is very different in that it places collocation at the very heart of language as an essentially dynamic process in which meanings are created and exploited within textual contexts. The advantage of corpus linguistics is that it allows an analysis of dynamic collocation whilst providing the material for more reductive phraseological or computational exploitation of the data.

(Williams and Millon 2011: 151)

Look at the following concordance from a corpus of complete poetry by Philip Larkin (1922-1985), where the search word 'light' is sufficiently explained by its collocates:³

MicroConcord search SW: light
80 characters per entry
Sort : 1L/SW unshifted.

1 patterned groove, Who **do not need** a light to save Or cheer when they lie down.
2 ack None of the glances they absorb. Light **glossy grey**, arms on a plaque, They c
3 go anywhere. I roll a cigarette, and light A **spill** at the stove. With a lungful
4 to grey By imperceptible degree And light and curtains drawn allay The vastness
5 e the walls have **killed the sun**, And light is **cold**. Now a giant whitewashed D Co
6 ridal London bows the other way, And light, **unanswerable** and tall and wide, Forb
7 dense Solar And spot-light-fingered **glut** Of never-resting h
8 n the west, perhaps, where the **angry** light is. Then **rain** starts; the year goes s
9 Where any-angled light Would congregate endlessly. 6 April 1
10 lligent face; never, **walking away** As light **fails**, to notice the first star Pulsi
11 ed, **Stupefied**, by **inaction** - and, as light Begins to ebb outside, by **fear**; I set
12 now everywhere, Snow in one **blinding** light. Even snow **smudged** in her hair As she
13 that can be **Unnoticed** in the **casual** light of day, **Lying in wait** for half a cent
14 y done, The **night drawn in**, electric light switched on, Your name breathed round
15 t rooms still burning their electric light: I thought: **Featureless** morning, feat
16 te attic. Coming On longer evenings, Light, chill and yellow, Bathes the serene
17 watched from windows in the **failing** light For his world that was always just ou
18 t your maiden name disused. Its five light sounds no longer mean your face, Your
19 silver goblet of the moon A **ghostly** light spills down on arched trees, And filt
20 rning is pushing back hair with **grey** light Memories **strike home**, like **slaps** in t
21 In time the curtain-edges will grow light. Till then I see what's really always
22 day Night in the Royal Station Hotel Light spreads **darkly** downwards from the hig
23 hadows where undriven the dawn Hunts light into nobility, arouse us noble. 13 Ma
24 this same **death** Hangs everywhere its light. Unsheathe The life you carry and die,
25 . Cobblestones were wet, But sent **no** light back to the **loaded sky**, **Sunk** as it wa
26 ach morning, **shelled** upon A sheet of light that paves The palaces of sight, and
27 light upon sleep' At the chiming of light upon sleep A picture **relapsed** into th
28 tember 1946 ITGOL 'At the chiming of light upon sleep' At the chiming of light u
29 ntensely far, that **padlocked cube** of light We **neither define nor prove**, Where yo
30 d there with my jacket off. Seeds of light were sown on the **failure** of evening.
31 t Converts it to a **flattened cube** of light. Whichever's shown, the symbol is the
32 less sky **Black** as a bridge: the **only** light Gleams from the little railway That r
33 line the rail With trousers ripped, light wallets, and lips bleeding. Yes, gone
34 was And water trickles; **dark ruinous** light, **Scratched** like old film, above wet s
35 il-stiffening air, The **birdless** sea. Light **strikes** from the **ice**: Like one who ne
36 f breathing **tightened** into a **shroud**. Light **cringed**. The door swung inwards. Over
37 ent whined at than withstood. Slowly light strengthens, and the room takes shape
38 Rarely exhumable: not in a sleep So light they can awake and occupy An absent m
39 defined against the brickwork. Soon, Light from a small intense **lopsided** moon Sh
40 smoke to stand apart (**Stone-coloured** light sharpening the roofs below) High and
41 a statue, **Irrevocably**: thereby such light is freed That all the **dingy** hospital
42 ad the dead Become untroubled In the light soil. There were no mouths To drink o
43 Branches that fling Leaves up to the light - Every one thing, Shape, colour and
44 racle of glass, whose every hall The light as music fills, and on your face Shin
45 urn is **twisted** in a double **warp**: The light is waking and the dark is sleep And t
46 [55] The march interrupted the light afternoon. Cars stopped dead, childre
47 round the lawn Scan my approach. The light has almost **failed**, And the faint thud
48 uld stick in my nose like bread, The light swell up and turn **black** - so I shamme

³ The concordances of 'light', 'God', 'day' and 'night' were given to me by Bill Louw, University of Zimbabwe, as well as the complete corpus of Larkin's poetry, based on Anthony Thwaite's edition (Thwaite 1988).

49 peace, **but** other things. Beyond the light stand **failure** and **remorse** Whispering
50 ? Colonel Sloman's Essex Rifles? The Light Horse of L.S.E.? March ? 1969 'Black
51 old, And the red clubhouse flag. The light, the turf, and all that grows now urg
52 ts **indecision**. If once it **blocks** the light, I **die**. If I could make a single wish
53 finished faces **Sink** further from the light. **No one pretends To want to help** you
54 rice of stock. **Smoke** hangs under the light. The pictures on The walls are comic
55 readths Of time. Snow fell, undated. Light Each summer **thronged** the glass. A bri
56 elf looped with the **creep** of varying light, **Monkey-brown, fish-grey**, a string of
57 lay Asking the open door Why it was light outside, Since nobody had put on The
58 of thin continuous dreaming Watching light move? If they don't (and they can't),
59 esque Down stucco sidestreets, Where light is **pewter** And afternoon **mist** Brings l
60 tall ships, wind-mastered, **wet** with light, Break from an estuary with their cou

Data from the following files:

ZARKIN.CTX

This is how light is seen in the world of Larkin's poetry.⁴ If the reader were to search for lines in which light is shown with more optimism, he/she would find but a few. However, 31 lines out of the 60 found in the corpus are expressly negative. A comparison with John 1:5 may prove relevant: "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Unsurprisingly, this 20th century English poet is widely regarded as a pessimistic atheist. The concordance with 'God' as the node is no less conclusive:

MicroConcord search SW: god
80 characters per entry
Sort : 1L/SW unshifted.

1 that inspired it all, And made him a god. No, he would never fail. Others, of c
2 ortraits of Sex Sun. Tree. Beginning. God in a thicket. Crown. Never-abdicated c
3 e, **musty, unignorable silence, Brewed God knows** how long. Hatless, I take off My
4 the sky, Asking **to die**: 'To die, dear God, before a **scum of doubt Smear** the whol
5 pausing, goes into a prayer **Directing** God about this eye, that knee. Their heads
6 any nights, as many dawns, **If finally** God grants the wish. ~2 February ~950 Dece
7 go on before us, they Are sitting in God's house in comfort, We shall see them
8 ey need; And famous lips **interrogated** God Concerning **franchise** in eternity; And
9 And thought, That'll be the life; **No** God any more, or **sweating** in the dark About
10 ' Let it be understood That '**somehow**' God plaits up the threads, Makes 'all for
11 , and lips bleeding. Yes, gone, thank God! Remembering each detail We toss for h
12 tor **clenched his fists** And **swore** that God exists, **Clamping** his features **stiff** wi
13 adio's altarlight The **hurried** talk to God goes on: Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be
14 mit with his gown and dish Talking to God (who's **gone too**); the big wish Is to h

Data from the following files:

ZARKIN.CTX

⁴ Collocation-based analysis is not restricted to English. For an analysis of Alexander Pushkin in the Russian original, see Milojković (2011: 48-9).

This concordance is more helpful than the previous one in establishing the meaning of the node with greater precision. The first negative line is line 4 (collocates in 8 lines out of 14 have been singled out), where light collocates with 'scum of doubt'. Three more lines express doubt, containing 'if finally', 'somehow' and 'hurried' (if the conversation with God is hurried it loses in dignity somewhat). Since the 'scum of doubt' line may not seem conclusive at first sight, the wider context was opened: "To die, dear God, before a scum of doubt / Smear the whole universe, and smudge it out."

The aim of this paper is to present the support or lack of it for Larkin's reputation as an atheistic pessimist. This will be done by checking the complete corpus of Larkin's poetry against the 44.5 million word corpus of the Times newspaper,⁵ as well as against the famous Chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians, in particular the following passage:

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.
10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.
11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
12 For now we *see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face*: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.
13 And now abideth *faith, hope, and charity*, these three; but the greatest of these *is charity*.

(*The Bible*. Cited from Carroll and Prickett 1998: 217-218, emphasis in bold italics added)

If we search for 'faith', 'hope' and 'charity' in Larkin's verse, that will not leave much hope for our attempt to redeem his reputation of an atheist. The word 'charity' is not to be found. The word 'faith' is to be found twice:

⁵ What will be referred to as the Times corpus refers to a newspaper corpus (44.5 million words of running text) of the Times of London for the year 1995 created and distributed informally by the late Tim Johns.

MicroConcord search SW: faith
80 characters per entry
Sort : 1R/SW unshifted.

1 ten in the palm. g February ~960 TWW Faith Healing Slowly the women file to wher
2 than roots, This chiselled, flung-up faith Runs and leaps against the sky, A pra

Data from the following files:

ZARKIN.TXT

In the first concordance line, 'faith' appears as part of the title 'Faith Healing', a practice that Larkin considered doubtful. The second line is from the beginning of the poem 'A Stone Church Damaged by a Bomb': "Planted deeper than roots,/ This chiselled, flung-up *faith*/ Runs and leaps against the sky,/ A prayer killed into stone/ Among the always-dying trees..."

The word 'hope' does not leave us much more hopeful. There are nine concordance lines, out of which two are from a jocular last will and testament and two from a birthday poem to a friend. The remaining five lines are all negative: "the last of hope" (line 2), "that long and sickly hope" (line 5), "through doubt from endless hope to hate and terror" (line 7), "all we can hope to leave them now is money" (line 8). Line 2 does not contain obviously pessimistic collocates but the wider context shows that Hope is used in a far more sinister context than in any other poem ("The house on the edge of the serious wood...')

MicroConcord search SW: hope
80 characters per entry
Sort : 1R/SW unshifted.

1 reports we l~v ~ To give them, as we hope, a hearty laugh; And Kipling's 'If' t
2 signalled in attics and gardens like Hope, And ever would pass From address to
3 claims The **end** of choice, the **last** of hope; and all Here to confess that somethi
4 our ears To the Musical Society, and hope It finds out why they loathed the pan
5 what I desired - That long and **sickly** hope, someday to be As she is - gave a fli
6 it - Admiration; friendship too; And hope that in the future you Reap ever rich
7 e Through **doubt** from endless love and hope To **hate** and **terror**; Each in their dou
8 it's a different country. **All we can** hope to leave them now is money. 10 lanuar
9 , The feeble and the downright bad. I hope you have a splendid day, Acclaimed by

Data from the following files:

ZARKIN.TXT

So far, 1 Corinthians 13 supports the view that Larkin was not a Christian. After all, even if faith does not need to be mentioned explicitly, hope is the foundation and the lighthouse of the religious. Seeing that the collocates of 'light' are very different from what an average person might expect ('angry', 'failing', 'grey', 'dark ruinous'), we know what to anticipate when it comes to the collocates of 'day':

MicroConcord search SW: day
80 characters per entry
Sort : 1R/SW unshifted.

1 [219] 'By day, a lifted **study-storehouse**' By day, a
2 By day, a lifted **study-storehouse**' By day, a lifted **study-storehouse**; night Conv
3 right bad. I hope you have a splendid day, Acclaimed by wheeling gulls at play A
4 ng I got up and it did **not**. The first day after a **death**, the new **absence** Is alwa
5 lack The happiness I had. Now **in the** day All's **ravelled** under the sun by the wi
6 oss for half the night, but find **next** day All's **kodak-distant**. Easily, then (tho
7 d for her own attending, And there **by day** and night With her blithe bone mending
8 s thunderstorms, Holds up **each** summer day and shakes It out **suspiciously**, lest s
9 With shovel and spade; That **each dull** day and each **despairing** act Builds up the
10 her getting away Now she's there **all** day, And the money he gets for wasting his
11 e time, Half-past eleven on a **working** day, And these **picked out of it**; see, as t
12 6 May 1977 [207] Aubade I **work all** day, and get **half-drunk** at night. Waking a
13 ss of **night Swamps** the bright **nervous** day, and **puts** it out. In other times, when
14 and twist, and the pubs Wide open **all day**; And the countryside **not caring**: The p
15 es. Wedding-Wind The **wind** blew **all** my wedding-day, And my wedding-night was the
16 ing and the **dark** is **sleep** And **twice a day** before their gate We kneel between the
17 words Then parts out **the rest of the day** Between bathing and **booze** and birds Is
18 s in our summer wear Brother, and the day Breathes **coldly** from fields far away A
19 ing provides for. What can it do **each** day But **hunt** that **imminent** door Through wh
20 osite) **won't** achieve. That's **clear as day**. But come back late at night, You'll h
21 4 February 1965 [160] Administration **Day by day** your estimation clocks up Who d
22 rotics **No one gives you a thought**, as **day by day** You **drag your feet**, clay-thick
23 g, but **futile**, ' said his diary, Where **day by day** his movements were recorded And
24 to join us? **In a pig's arse**, friend. Day **comes to an end**. The gas fire breathes
25 ng steers become old cattle from that day, Electric limits to their widest sense
26 mothers. And so, while summer on this day Enacts her dress rehearsals, Let us fo
27 ess faces: Gold surf of the sun, **each** day **Exhausted** through the world, gathers a
28 ld mingle, and the **night** would not Be day's **exhaustion**; there would drift about
29 9 February 1973 HW Show Saturday **Grey** day fcr the Show, but cars jam the narrow
30 ghs up **failure**, Carries the night and day, fetches Profit from sleep, from skies
31 winds crying for that unbroken field, Day having **lifted**) Black flowers burst out
32 tempt of good and bad; But one Spring day his land was **violated**; A bunch of hors
33 **futile**, ' said his diary, Where **day by day** his movements were recorded And nothin
34 ves and domes travel The **slow** sky all day. I land to stay here; And the windows
35 ife come along And pour out tea, **each** day. I don't know what was said; Just hosp
36 -lifting arms. She was **slapped up** one day in March. A couple of weeks, and her f
37 al memory. So it was **stale** time then, **day in, day out**, Blue fug in the room, not
38 n to face the way That led me to this day. Instead of fields and snowcaps And fl
39 screamed. 'Lift through the breaking day' Lift through the breaking day, Wind t
40 cancy, **Empty inside and out**, **replaces** day. (Like a **fuse** an impulse busily disint
41 n be **Unnoticed** in the **casual** light of day, **Lying in wait** for half a century To s
42 and sillier; Much we buy **each market day**, More still obtain: All, all is carrie
43 lways there: **Unresting death**, a whole day nearer now, Making all thought impossi
44 7 1969 HW [174] The Explosion On the day of the **explosion** Shadows pointed towar

45 y. So it was **stale** time then, **day in, day out**, Blue **fug** in the room, nothing to
46 yond the glass The **colourless** vial of day **painlessly spilled My world** back after
47 I'd've thought. Must finish now. One day **perhaps** I'll know What makes you be so
48 Above the sea, the yet more **shoreless** day, **Riddled by wind**, trails lit-up galler
49 ents, naturally. Thereafter **night and day** She came both for the sight Of his slo
50 the bed was a **hospital** bed. Then one day she **fell** Outside on the **sad** walk And h
51 xx '**Sinking** like **sediment** through the day' **Sinking** like **sediment** through the day
52 lither - Creatures, I cherish you! **By day**, sky builds **Grape-dark** over the salt U
53 r's impressive lie - Upon whose **every day** So many **ruined** are May could not make
54 ove and money Ways of **slow dying**. The day spent **hunting pig** Or holding a garden-
55 h observed Celestial recurrences, The day the flowers come, And when the birds g
56 arture: only **shadows** Move when in the day the sun is seen **for an hour**, Yet to me
57 omething is always approaching; **every day** Till then we say, Watching from a bluff
58 ay' **Sinking** like **sediment** through the day To leave it clearer, onto the floor of
59 like long hills, a range We ride **each day** towards, and **never** reach. 17 NorJember
60 nripe day you bore your head, And the day was **plucked** and tasted **bitter**, As if s
61 airborne Did I recall the date - That day when Queen and Minister And Band of Gu
62 g to catch my Comet One **dark November** day, Which soon would snatch me from it To
63 with adult enterprise, And on another day will be the **past**, A valley **cropped** by
64 eaking day' Lift through the breaking day, Wind that pursues the dawn: Under nig
65 between felt-hatted mums Whose **weekly** day-excursion yields Baby-sized parcels, b
66 W, TNS, ITGOL 'So through that **unripe** day you bore your head' So through that un
67 ore your head' So through that **unripe** day you bore your head, And the day was pl
68 No one gives you a thought, as **day by day** You **drag** your feet, **clay-thick** with mi
69 till might trace **Uncalled-for** to this day Your person, your place. 10 Oc~ober 19
70 ry 1965 [160] Administration **Day by day** your estimation clocks up Who deserves
71 hame out of hiding. **All** the **unhurried** day Your mind lay **open like a drawer** of kn

Data from the following files:

ZARKIN.TXT

The overall impression is that of routine, often frustrating. This is certainly a sign of depression. All the seemingly ambiguous contexts were opened to confirm the initial impression, and it was confirmed in each case. For instance, line 40 comes from 'Sinking like sediment through the day': "Sinking like sediment through the day/ to leave it clearer, onto the floor of the flask/ (Vast summer vessel) settles a bitter carpet -/ Horror of life."

If this is Larkin's vision of day, the source of light, what is then his view of night?

MicroConcord search SW: night
80 characters per entry
Sort : 1R/SW unshifted.

1 cape, or perish saying no. **Midsummer** Night, 1940 The sun falls behind Wales; the
2 and choose wrong; And so we rise. At night again they sound, Calling the travell
3 e it ploughs up **failure**, Carries the night and day, fetches Profit from sleep, f
4 t Outpatients, naturally. Thereafter night and day She came both for the sight O
5 , And reads the Modern Boy in bed at night. And when, upon the cricket field, he
6 among the wealthy sneered, On such a night as this **twilight** and **doubt** Would ming
7 culptured on England, **wait** again for night As a **deserted** beach the tide that smo

8 d last bun: How you had **laughed**, the night before you **left**; All your potentialit
9 patterns on the curtains, drawn The night before. The milk's been on the step,
10 rs sang in their sockets **through the night**: '**Blow bright, blow bright** The coal o
11 ing each detail We **toss for half the night**, but find next day All's kodak-distan
12 disperses. But We, on this **midsummer** night, can sneer In union at mind that coul
13 afternoons. New strong **Rain-bearing** night-**winds** come: then **Leaves** chase warm bu
14 alk on this or that excuse, Till the night comes to **rest** While some high bell is
15 home existed) letters of **exile**: Now Night comes on. **Waves** fold behind villages.
16 ' By day, a lifted study-storehouse; night **Converts** it to a flattened cube of li
17 till: bowing, the woods **bemoan**; **Dark** night **creeps** in, and leaves the world alone
18 about it when the meal lay done, The night drawn in, electric light switched on,
19 ht' Or resolution's aid. Around, the night drops **swiftly** down Its **veils**; does no
20 steps cold. The **rain drips drearily**: night's **fingers spin** A **web** of drifting mist
21 disregard their **blowing**, Or if, this night, **happiness too is going**. He Hears tha
22 small blunt footprints come and go. Night has left **no more to show**, Not the can
23 **Black flowers burst out** wherever the night **has knelt**. 15 December 1945 ITGOL
24 hey burn on, **impersonal**, through the night, Hearing the hours **slowly** topple past
25 y, Wind that pursues the dawn: Under night's **heedless stone** Houses and river lay
26 treet Of tramways and bells. But one night I **heard the feet**. Step after step the
27 ur version' of 'these **incidents** last night'? I try the door of where I used to l
28 e walls of my room rise, it is **still** night, I have **woken again** before the word w
29 hours pass: if I'd gone by boat last night I'd be there now. Well, it's too late
30 pause' Out in the lane I pause: the night **Impenetrable** round me stands, And ove
31 . 24 Novemoer 1965 HW [162] Friday Night in the Royal Station Hotel Light spre
32 my heart. 12 October 1944 TNS, ITGOL Night- M usic At one the **wind** rose, And wit
33 users Spread the stands of Modes For Night: **Machine-embroidered**, thin as blouses
34 ht: Featureless morning, **featureless** night. **Misjudgment**: for the stones slept, a
35 thankful springs' Coming at last to night's **most thankful** springs, I meet a run
36 runken boatswain. 'Coming at last to night's **most thankful** springs' Coming at la
37 ve no proper names: Men out **alone** at night Never look up at them For guidance or
38 Hearing this last word, There was no lambing-night, No **gale-driven** bird Nor fros
39 h industrial shadows And traffic **all** night **north**; swerving through fields Too th
40 m back, and how it will end ? Not at night? Not when the **strangers** come? Never,
41 night?' Why did I **dream of you** last night? Now morning is pushing back hair wit
42 ng-day, And my wedding-night was the night of the high **wind**; And a stable door w
43 ait But for the coming of the **winter** night Of **deep** December; **blowing** o'er the gr
44 reeze That wanders through the **quiet** night of **June**. Now time should stop; the w
45 u have your **innocent-guilty-innocent** night Of **switching partners** in your own sad
46 done, Produce our lives beyond this night, **Open** our eyes again to **sun**. Unhinder
47 ar the feet Of **lonely** walkers in the night Or **lingering pairs**; Girls and their s
48 things back to when they **danced** all night, Or went to their wedding, or sloped
49 ber 1938 [226] Summer Nocturne Now night **perfumes** lie upon the air, As rests t
50 he night puts twenty veils' When the night **puts** twenty **veils** Over the sun, and t
51 so many years ago. 1 231] 'When the night **puts** twenty **veils**' When the night put
52 les for a **cancer**; or on some **Advised** night see walking a **dead** one? Power of some
53 I was sad That any man or beast that night should **lack** The **happiness** I had. Now
54 **death** has merely made **beautiful**, And night skies so **brilliantly spread-eagled** Wi
55 x. beforelune Iy39 Street Lamps When night **slinks**, like a **puma**, down the **sky**, An
56 g sea-pictures - Keep it all off! **By** night, **snow** swerves (O loose moth world) Th
57 r the carrying, for its own sake, Is night so **gifted**? Mind never met Image of de
58 And everywhere the **stifling mass** of night **Swamps** the bright nervous day, and pu
59 t fraying cliffs of water Or late at night **Sweet** under the differently-swung sta
60 ll as a **veil**; But I have watched all night **The fire** grow **silent**, The grey ash so
61 work all day, and get **half-drunk** at night. Waking at four to **soundless dark**, I
62 wind blew all my wedding-day, And my wedding-night was the night of the high win
63 nds Show after four o'clock, Time of night when **straying winds** **Trouble the dark**.
64 [230] 'Why did I **dream of you** last night?' Why did I **dream of you** last night?
65 land. Are you **prepared** for what the night will **bring**? The **stranger** who will nev
66 me To walk on the chilled shore Of a night with **no memory**, Till your voice forso
67 That, unopposed at last, return **Each** night with **cancelled** promises They want ren

68 own attending, And there **by** day and night With her blithe bone mending Watched
69 pleasures I would give, **if** this **sweet** night Would ever **stay**, **cooled** by the pale m
70 ight and **doubt** Would mingle, and the night would **not** Be day's **exhaustion**; there
71 we meet How can I tell you that Last night **you** came **Unbidden**, in a **dream**? And ho
72 clear as day. But come back late at night, You'll hear a **curious counter-whispe**

Data from the following files:

ZARKIN.TXT

One can hardly claim that the image of night is optimistic or hopeful, but it is certainly less uniform than that of day, and also gentler and softer. The images are more varied, fire and light are sometimes mentioned, as well as dreams of 'you' which the poet does not find unpleasant. Rain, wind, snow and leaves are involved, but also the quiet summer night of lingering pairs. Night often becomes an active agent, it converts, creeps, fingers, spins, kneels, puts twenty veils over the sun, slinks like a puma down the sky. The general impression is that of mystery. Line 17's wider context may at first sight seem baffling. The poem 'Winter Nocturne' deals with the advent of night, an event often mentioned in Larkin's verse. Finally it arrives:

The rain falls still: bowing, the woods bemoan;
Dark night creeps in, and leaves the world alone.

The whole poem is about the period of transition between day and night, culminating in its arrival. How then can it at the very moment of arrival leave the world alone? It is unlikely that Larkin, who is known to have written 500 words a day after homework as a teenager, could have left in such an inconsistency. Apart from the meaning of 'leave something in a particular state' (which implies that the world is alone now night has entered it), Larkin must also have had in mind the meaning 'not bother or interfere with, leave be'. The word 'leave' co-selected with 'alone' was searched in the Times corpus. 150 concordance lines were found. In 15 of them the context was literal (e.g. leave a child alone, i.e. without adult supervision). Out of the remaining 135 lines 99 pointed to the conclusion that leaving something or someone alone in the sense of not interfering with it is a good idea, because of the unwelcome consequences of not leaving alone. Therefore, the poem about the advent of night describing the unrest felt in nature prior to its arrival states clearly that night, by leaving the world in the state of loneliness, does a good thing.

Indicatively, the number of occurrences of ‘day’ and ‘night’ in Larkin’s poetry is equal: 71 and 72. This must mean that they played an equal part in his world and were taken equally seriously. What is the nature of their relationship in his world and does Larkin perceive night as more favourable? Let us open the context of line 58 to see the relationship between day and night:

And everywhere the stifling mass of night
Swamps the bright nervous day and puts it out.

It comes from the poem ‘Midsummer Night’ which again deals with transition between day and night. The phrase ‘it out’ was searched in the Times corpus. 195 lines were found. ‘Out’ was mostly a particle belonging to a phrasal verb, with ‘it’ as its direct object, like ‘carry it out’, ‘pull it out’, ‘sort it out’. Mostly the underlying argument in the concordance lines was that the action described by the phrasal verb was intended to solve a problem. Four concordance lines contained ‘put it out’. In all four lines, what needed to be put out was a great fire. Thus, night, “swamping” bright nervous day, may be interpreted as doing the poet a favour, extinguishing the great calamity – day. The day is nervous because it may be put out but also because it might be making the poet nervous too. This is, of course, an allusion to St John: “And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not”. In Larkin’s world, night quenches the calamitous day. Why does it need quenching? The poem answers the question.

The poet proceeds to explain that in the past night did not use to be “day’s exhaustion” because it continued to distress the minds of men. Stories of the supernatural were told at night, he says. Now we may laugh, but we have thought of our own monstrosities, the dynamite and “Fire!” of war:

The angels yawning in an empty heaven;
Alternate shows of dynamite and rain;
And choosing forced on free will: fire or ice.

This ending to the poem at first leaves us in doubt of Larkin’s choice. We know that fire in this poem’s world means ‘day’. ‘Ice’, therefore, must mean ‘night’. This is confirmed by another poem – ‘The North Ship’, in which the ship sailing to the north goes “into the unforgiving sea”. The north–death parallel combined with the fire–ice opposition must mean that ice,

in all its undemanding perfection, means 'death'. Larkin laments the fact that his free will is limited by such a choice. Heaven is empty because it does not admit the undecided (remember "guarda e passa" in Canto III of Dante's *Inferno*). Larkin's forced choice must exclude the doubt which is so characteristic of him. Is he choosing ice? Paradoxically, by choosing fire (day) in the poem one chooses death which is a door to heaven. By choosing ice one chooses death which is the death of the north ship lost in the unforgiving sea. The logic of the poem demands that Larkin should choose fire. We are dealing with a rebellious and complaining poet and a Christian.

The question why 'day' is perceived as a calamity is perhaps best answered in 'After-Dinner Remarks'. It appears to have been written on an evening (again):

And now the evening ambles near,
Softly, through the scented air,
Laying by the tautened fear:

Peace sliding from above.

The "tautened fear", of course, belongs to day, and the evening is a welcome transition from day to night. Why? The poem answers the question: "... living is a dreadful thing, and a dreadful thing it is". Perhaps when an Englishman uses the words 'dreadful thing' he does not really mean it? The Times corpus showed seven concordance lines:

Line 1 – rain combined with very bad depression.

Line 2 – unexpected death of an adolescent's parent.

Line 3 – a negative critique of an unprofessionally done book.

Line 4 – a murdered young woman.

Line 5 – the mental breakdown of a young girl.

Line 6 – a badly beaten woman.

Line 7 – torture.

Thus, when Larkin says that living is a dreadful thing he obviously means it. Why does he find it dreadful?

On this day, previously to the soliloquy, the persona, "in the face of time", seems to have missed an opportunity to make his feelings and desires known to the woman he loves, or failed to take steps that may have brought them closer together. That makes him take an all-encompassing

look at his entire life full of doubt and inaction, and assume that future will bring nothing but loneliness. He wonders if he is

A keyhole made without a key
A poem none can read or say
A gate none open wide to see

The fountains and the trees.

The images of a keyhole and a gate as transitions to fountains and trees are reminiscent of entering Paradise, or the moment in 1 Corinthians when “seeing through a glass darkly” becomes “face to face”. Larkin wishes to be “known” and fails as a result of too much doubting. The ending to the poem explains how night alleviates day’s frustrations:

Around, the night drops swiftly down
Its veils, does not condemn
Or praise the different actions done,
The hour that strikes across the town
Caresses all and injures none

As sleep approaches them.

Day is a source of distress and frustration through inaction and doubt resulting in loneliness and fear that one will never “be known”, but night comforts all and brings peace to all regardless of their mistakes. When we remember the collocates of ‘day’ and ‘night’ in both concordances, we will see how they fit into this interpretation.

That Larkin was aware of the quoted passage from 1 Corinthians 13 mentioning the transition to true perception and knowledge of oneself and others is confirmed by several references. ‘After-Dinner Remarks’ contains one:

I saw my life as in a glass:
Set to music (negro jazz),
Coloured by culture and by gas,

The idea of a kiss...

It is obvious from this example as it will be from others that to Larkin the transition to knowledge, and, therefore, happiness, is the transition to a fulfilled relationship that he, for some reason, fails to achieve. Before proceeding to justify this assumption, another poem is worth quoting. The short ironic piece ‘Naturally the Foundation will Bear Your Expenses’ contains the following lines: “Perceiving Chatto darkly/ Through the mirror of the Third.” The persona, a cynical and successful academic travelling abroad, expresses his ambition to be published, which he might fulfil by previously appearing on the BBC Third Programme. This example is included here to support the assumption that Larkin was fully aware of the passage quoted from 1 Corinthians 13 and it being a transition to happiness (the cynical academic regards self-knowledge and happiness as attainable through publicity and fame). Our notion that the mirror in Larkin represents a transition to a relationship which is never achieved is supported by another poem, ‘The Dance’.

The persona of the poem arrives at a dance at which he is to meet the woman he is interested in and immediately glances at his own appearance in the mirror, which leaves him far from happy:

... my equally contemptuous glance
That in the darkening mirror sees
The shame of evening trousers, evening tie.

Indicatively, the persona sees his reflection in the mirror against the background of a jazz band, which reminds us only too well of ‘After-Dinner Remarks’. We are to be reminded of the same poem again, when the hero elbows his way through the crowd to the woman he loves. In her gestures he recognises the speech of invitation, and the moment freezes. This timeless situation could become permanent, a transition to eternity (a reminder of 1 Corinthians 13?), but their interaction is rudely interrupted, and the hero allows himself to be led away to join a conversation that does not interest him. The glass, or ‘darkening mirror’⁶, has again served

⁶ It is worth noting here that forms of ‘mirror’ appear in Larkin’s poetry five times. Apart from the references to Radio 3 and ‘the shame of evening trousers’, there is a reference to ‘harmless mirrors’ in ‘I am washed upon a rock’ and two references that are sinister: in ‘A house on the edge of a serious wood’ and in ‘Time and Space were only their disguises’.

as transition. To what? A frustrated love experience. Happiness and self-knowledge are again refused him.

“Face to face” appears twice in Larkin’s corpus. Once in the poem ‘Explosion’ (we have to infer that it is about coal-miners as they are, characteristically, never mentioned as such):

The dead go on before us, they
Are sitting in God’s house in comfort,
We shall see them face to face –

Plain as lettering in the chapels...

If we are left in doubt by these lines as to whether Larkin is being serious and respectful in his obvious reference to 1 Corinthians (and this passage shows how well he was aware of it and how he understood it), the last line mentioning the “unbroken eggs” of one of them sets us straight.

The other mention of “face to face” supports our previous speculations. In ‘Reasons for Attendance’ the hero is drawn to the “lighted glass” to watch young dancers (“all under twenty-five”, he says) “shifting intently face to flushed face”. This is another direct allusion. As the persona, characteristically, debates with himself whether to go in:

...Why be out here?
But then, why be in there? Sex, yes, but what is sex?

and goes on to convince himself that sex is not everything, we recognise a familiar pattern. The glass is a marker of transition, the transition being to “face to flushed face” and evoking the thoughts of sex in the persona. This is Larkin’s ‘charity’ and knowledge attainable if the desired transition is accomplished – sexual love. “Face to flushed face” is not the same as “face to face”. It is more physical and might bring about change(s) of partners.

The word ‘charity’ appearing in 1st Corinthians is always rightly understood as ‘love’ meaning ‘agape’, universal love. ‘Charity’ never appears in Larkin’s verse, but ‘love’ does. What kind of love?

Larkin’s corpus gives 49 concordance lines. 34 of them express disappointment. If we open wider contexts, only one optimistic line remains. The wider context of each line was opened to find out what kind of love Larkin means. Only five lines did not mean man-woman love. Two

of these refer to close ties – with family members and close friends (both in the context of hospitals and the possibility of death). These poems are ‘Compline’ (1950) and ‘Ambulances’ (1961). Two lines mean ‘agape’, universal love. The poems are ‘New Year Poem’ (1940) and ‘Faith Healing’ (1960). Both of these poems reveal that Larkin fully understood the concept of ‘agape’. The optimistic line, the only optimistic one referring to love in the whole of Larkin’s poetry, is from ‘When first we faced, and touching showed...’. The years of the poems show that Larkin’s view of love and use of the word did not change with time.

The first 130 concordance lines from the Times corpus featuring the word ‘love’ were studied to see in what meaning the word ‘love’ is used there. If we discard all lines mentioning ‘love affair’ (in more than 50% of the lines used delexically, e.g. ‘the Edwardian love affair with the past’), 57 lines remain. Of these, family love is mentioned three times, romantic love 33 times, and anything close to ‘agape’ once. This one example is a quotation of Samuel Johnson saying: “I am willing to love all mankind, except an American”. So much for universal love and the British newspaper reading audience.

Larkin’s poetry is strictly and candidly autobiographical. A collocational analysis of the complete corpus of his verse shows him as indeed suffering from depression and lack of hope. Night relieves the persona of day’s tortures and leaves him in the welcome state of loneliness after yet another attempt to complete the desired transition to the state of ‘face to face’. Larkin was aware of 1 Corinthians 13 and generally used biblical references in his poetry, in particular the ‘mirror’ episode (‘Naturally the Foundation will Bear Your Expenses’, ‘Explosion’), although the extent to which mirrors or glass seem consistently to appear in his verse at crucial moments of transition is arguably an unconscious parallel. His notion of happiness appears to differ from that of 1 Corinthians 13 in that he viewed it as man-woman physical love. The poems show that the encounters that are reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 13 do not bring the persona the wished-for sense of self-knowledge prophesied in the biblical chapter. The persona does not mature through his encounters. His notion of love never really reaches that of ‘agape’. His source of frustration must also be seen in the fact that he dislikes mirrors and finds his reflection in them dissatisfying, figuratively as well as literally. That is in accordance with the point of view of a man who finds physical love essential to happiness. As for his supposed atheism, he does express grave doubt. The

doubt, however, is of a gnawing nature, as he obviously rather doubts God's justice than his very existence, as poems 'Explosion' (where the reference to 'face to face' is used sarcastically) and 'Midsummer Night' show. When forced to choose between fire and ice, or day and night, he, despite the greatest reluctance, chooses day. Thus, fear of living is overcome by faith, while St Paul still tells us that without charity (Greek *agape*, Latin *caritas*) it will avail us little. And charity, he tells us, never fails.

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СВЕТЛОСТ ОБУЗЕТА ТАМОМ ИЛИ
ПОГЛЕД КАО КРОЗ СТАКЛО У ЗАГОНЕТКИ –
КОЛОКАЦИЈСКА АНАЛИЗА ЛАРКИНОВОГ АТЕИЗМА И ДЕПРЕСИЈЕ

Сажетак

Рад се бави корпусном колокацијском анализом да би потврдио или оповргао популарно мишљење да је познати енглески песник двадесетог века Филип Ларкин био депресивни атеиста. Да би се ова анализа боље фокусирао, кључни симболи у корпусу целокупне Ларкинове поезије се посматрају и на позадини познатог одломка из Прве Павлове посланице Коринћанима који описује прелаз из несавршеног људског стања у стање самоспознаје, зрелости и божанске љубави. Корпусно-стилистичка методологија се огледа и у поређењу Ларкиновог корпуса с референтним корпусом – новина Тајмс за 1995. годину, који садржи 44,5 милиона речи. Транзиције у Ларкиновим песмама приказује његовог јунака као бунтовног, неодлучног и незрелог – кришћанина.

Кључне речи: корпусна стилистика, колокација, поезија, Ларкин, атеизам, депресија

***Literary and
Cultural Studies***

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MEN AND BEAUTY

Abstract

This autobiographical essay in praise of Pat Sheeran, the Irish novelist, filmmaker, and scholar, addresses the following questions: “What is to be done with this newfound knowledge that in beauty, behind beauty, is nothing, the abyss, dust?” What forms of writing and living by men suffice in our period, when theory has exhausted the resources of cultural replenishment formerly available, yet death and purposeless still stare us in the face? By exploring the unusual and shamanistic character of Pat Sheeran, this essay explores how beauty, love, and art as male pursuits may still have value.

Key words: Pat Sheeran, novel, film, beauty, nothing, writing, death, purposeless, art

Pat Sheeran was a writer, filmmaker, and teacher at the National University of Ireland, Galway. In September 2001 he died of a heart attack. Four years earlier, not long after I arrived in Galway on a research fellowship, I found out what his other friends already knew. He had a wild genius for sincerity. (Indeed, as Kevin Barry remarked after his passing, Pat was so “boyishly sincere” he was sometimes baffled by university bureaucracy and its forms of politesse; “he had no other way than sincerity; he flew in under your radar.”)

The evening began in this way: Pat Sheeran caught me by the arm in the crowds on Shop Street in Galway, and pulled me into a pub. The drinks

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were not yet drawn when he said that he was shattered; his mother had died. He had come into money and wanted to spend it as fast as possible. We should go eat the most expensive meal it was possible to eat in Galway, and drink until everything that had recently passed had been forgotten. Was I game?

I was game. As the waiter landed in front of us two saucers with a dozen oysters each, he told me about the film, “The Fifth Province.” It was set in a place both within and supplementary to the Four Provinces of Ireland, a place in which the impossible always happens. Pat Sheeran explained that through transcendental meditation he had learned to travel to this other province, striding out of his body while his body slept. There was such a gleam in his eye as Yeats possibly had when he spoke of talking with the dead.

– So where do you go when you have these out-of-the-body experiences—rooms where ladies are lonely? But then you would wish you’d brought your body with you, wouldn’t you?

For rambunctious combinations of the laddish and the elfin, Pat Sheeran had both a taste and a talent. He was good at getting out of bounds quickly and gaily, and for coming to grips with what could bring two people together in talk of what most mattered. As good a gossip as a very smart woman, Pat Sheeran soon established that we were both married, both parents of children in their twenties, both in love with the woman of our (different) dreams, both unhappy with the current orthodoxies of our profession, even with those elements that we ourselves in the past had helped to make orthodox, both trying to find a new way of writing that enabled us to allow ideas to arise out of and return to the both the dailiness and depths of our personal lives.

In his 1992 opening address to the Yeats Summer School, Pat Sheeran had made much of the importance of colonization to the understanding of Irish literature. Now he said he was tired of the “post-colonial racket.” He had a theory (he always had “a theory”) that British imperialism had enriched his life as an Irish person. He would not have things different from what they’d been. He had been left with both the English and the Irish languages. He had a great hook-up with America because of the Irish diaspora, he could take advantage of whatever was on offer in Britain just like a British person, and still he was a citizen of this little republic on the receiving end of EU transfer payments, a nation too small to do much harm to others. The bellyaching of middle-class academics—as if they were

personally oppressed—annoyed him, as would any kind of bellyaching. The default setting for his mindset was joyousness.

We agreed, around the time that dessert arrived, that the pleasure of literature had been left so long unmentioned many did not know where to find it or how to experience it. Literature was a text you swatted up for exams on the crimes of the bourgeois, or the men, the white men, the straight men, or the imperial British, or the capitalist Americans. The quest for justice was indeed important, but we had forgotten to hold justice and beauty in a single thought (see: Yeats). Somehow, beauty had slipped our grasp and gone missing.

“Magic” was his own gadget—a way of using language that made reality include the dead and the ghosts of all earlier beliefs. I wanted to talk about beauty. A writer like Yeats would keep changing a poem in draft without respect to consistency of meaning. Finally, the poem would click into place, and nothing could again be changed. What is it that is perceived by the artist when he or she stands back with satisfaction...Perfecto! Yet it was difficult to talk about how a poem or story finds its own form, one that accommodates us to the un-alterability of a pseudo-statement, a statement that was not necessarily equivalent to the prior opinion of the author and one that was unavailable to disconfirmation. It was much harder to talk about beauty than about meaning, utility, power, or history. I was beginning to be boring. Pat’s eyes were drifting off. Professors hate to be lectured by Professors. Indeed, so do other people.

About midnight, he took me out into the country. He pulled the car up under some oaks beside a massive front gate barring the way to a long drive. At the end of that drive, Pat explained, was the last Big House in Ireland to have been burned by the IRA. One day he would introduce me to the man who set fire to it.

– Come along, we’ll go for a walk. Have you ever, he asked, seen a faery?

No, and I did not expect to do so this night. Like a round wheel of fire, he said they were, silently whooshing over the grass, and you rarely got to see them except through the corner of your eye, and then only in haunted places like this place, sometime after midnight. Quiet dropped upon us. The place was indeed somewhat spooky. The grasses were blowing in the nightwind, and moonlight was making the hills milky and frothy-looking. The serpentine drive went over a little bridge. Up from below came the weird variety of pitches and percussions 18th century versifiers called the

“purling of a little rill.” Off to the side were grey masonry outbuildings around a yard. The drive circled up a hill, and we reached the front of the burned-out house. Above it, backlit clouds streamed across the sky, and you got a strange sensation when staring up the walls that they themselves were moving and the sky was still. This was the “Pat Sheeran effect.” When you go with a seer to look for things that are not natural, they seem to be about to appear. But the walls did not move; the clouds moved, I reminded myself, and we turned back toward the car along the other route of the circular drive.

It led down towards a lake, and at one end of the lake one could make out a black grove of trees. The strangest sound began to come from that grove. It made your small hairs stand up—a kind of squawking, very raspy, and in waves of chorus upon chorus growing. As we came up to the trees there suddenly lifted from those branches one and then several and finally a whole flock of nesting herons. It was a rookery! Those were angry mother and father birds, protecting their big chicks. One could now see the nests of sticks. Perfectly natural explanation.

On the way back to Galway, Pat Sheeran remained silent, pleased with the night’s epiphany.

2

A year later, my wife Cliodhna and I had dinner with Pat Sheeran and his life-companion and co-author Nina Witoszek. Together Nina and Pat write novels, films, and essays as “Nina Fitzpatrick” (a characteristic pun: *Nina fits Patrick*). They are transgendered soul-mates. He says that she is the male principle he had previously always needed—the structuring, intellectual, far-seeing, and purposeful intelligence. She says he is her Muse.

Some months earlier, Nina had had a tumor taken out of her stomach. For a while, she had been looking toward death. The four of us were talking of what death might be like, and could one really get up close to it, even pass across into it, prior to the moment of death itself. Or was it always an infinite distance from life, and wholly unimaginable? Nina and Pat were making a documentary about Irish funerary traditions, based on Nina’s doctoral thesis, *Talking to the Dead*.

My belief, I admitted, is that I have died, and not once but many times. Some males have an overly active panic response. When something

frightens such a man (an unstoppable rapid flow of blood does it for me), then his heart races and his breath stops. This overly active response then sets in. It sends a biochemical signal telling the heart to slow down, but it sends too powerful a signal, and instead of slowing down, the heart stops. So the bloodflow to the brain stops. The man turns greenish-white and faints. Some time later—from a few seconds to a minute—the phenomenon passes over, and the man slowly comes back to consciousness. During that spell when the heart is stopped, I believe that one is virtually dead.

On these wretched disabling occasions, I always have the same dream. I am falling down a corridor, a corridor that is not a vertical drop, but a slowly twisting angular fall. The speed of the fall is not so fast as if you had jumped off a building; it is a rapid downdrift, in which your arms swim and grab, and your feet cannot find any footing. Along the corridor are doors, and sometimes you can see into the rooms. Inside traumatic scenes are enacted by ill-assorted people from your past. You become aware that the corridor must have a bottom, and when you reach it, that will be the end of you. But every part of your body has become unbelievably heavy, as if you are in a centrifuge. Your hand weighs a ton; you strain to lift it, to hold it up in front of your face, as if to ward off evil. There is a blast of light, then more blasts. Now you find yourself rising above the scene in which you first fainted. There you are, down below, lying in a circle of people who talk in concerned voices as they kneel around your unconscious body. Someone is coming in the door with a wet towel or glass of water, perhaps smelling salts. Then you are back inside your own still dreadfully heavy body, looking not down but up at this assembly. It is over, and you are not very sure all of a sudden where you have been or where you are now.

Much of this dream—often described in similar terms by those who have “died” on the operating table—is easily explained as an epiphenomenon of oxygen gradually being withdrawn from different parts of the brain (those that control memory, balance, vision, etc.). Still, it does raise an almost metaphysical question. Since the dreamer never reaches the bottom of the height from which he falls, does that mean that the experience of consciousness endlessly protracts itself during its final seconds?

Pat Sheeran then told a story about a time he almost died, the occasion of an unforgettable two-way talk with God. His life had had many phases. He had been a public-action anarchist, then a union organiser. He had become an expert on the botany and topography of the Burren. He had been and still was a mushroom-gatherer. And during one phase, he had

been a wind-surfer. All the time he would be in Galway Bay or round the coast of Clare in the gales and big waves. Once out beyond the Flaggy Shore, the sea became so angry it tore his sail to pieces. Each wave heaved him high and threw him low, carrying him all too quickly toward the rocky headlands. If he was not drowned first, there on the shore he would surely die, smashed and bloody and full of seawater. Terrified, he called on God. I will give up anything, just save me! No answer. I'll give up drink! No answer. And cigarettes. No answer. Then the voice of God shaped itself in his mind. Will you give up Nina? No, he replied, I would rather die and go to hell. I will not give up Nina.

– So you see, he said across the dinner table to Nina, I am going to go to hell for you.

He never did tell me how he got out of that stormy sea. Perhaps it was by the same route he has by now surely gotten out of hell.

3

Subsequently, he told me that for a long time he never went to Mass. Latterly, he had experienced a desire for a return to Catholic worship. Perhaps it was hearing the banshee cry in a Tennessee hotel room the night his father (an ex-policeman) died in Navan. But Pat Sheeran could not just start showing up for the eleven o'clock mass at Galway Cathedral. He had a beef with the Bishops of Galway, for he claimed they either fattened on church funds, fathered unacknowledged children on American women, or supervised the mistreatment of students in boys' schools. So Pat Sheeran located a priest in town who had returned from Africa with a wife and children. The hierarchy had ordered this priest to separate himself either from the wife or from the Church. He would do neither. He was saying pre-Vatican II Latin Mass on Sunday mornings in Le Graal, a wine bar on Dominick Street. The majority of the congregation were, oddly, nursing mothers. I should go sometime, Pat suggested. After all, I kept talking about scholarly books on the historical Jesus.

No, Mass attendance fitted my life at no point. I was not Catholic or Christian, or even ex-Christian, just a natural-born pagan with an interest in the religious beliefs of my fellow humans. But what about a counter-proposal—we would write a book together called *Bad Catholics*. A “bad Catholic” was a rebel from either the clergy or the dogma of the Church,

but whose spiritual relation to the world was through and through a Catholic one. A bad Catholic would have a Catholic sense of sex, a Catholic sense of beautiful magic, a Catholic sense of confession, and a Catholic sense of sacramental realities like purgatory, marriage, and lustration. A bad Catholic might sleep around or busy himself in the black economy but he would not eat fish on Friday. Pat Sheeran asked which of us would write what in this book—presumably, I'd do George Moore since I had written a long biography of that author. No, Moore was not a Catholic at all, good, bad, or indifferent. My part would be to write the life story of Pat Sheeran, and Pat Sheeran could take his pick of the rest...say, James Joyce, for instance, the quintessential bad Catholic. The title would be a winner. Soon people would realise that the only kind of real Catholics left are bad Catholics, and that perhaps the best Catholics of all earlier eras were bad Catholics too because they had their doubts and were not always obedient.

The project never came to anything, I think because Pat Sheeran had a Catholic sense of humility and so declined to be the hero of a story. Probably he also sniffed something morbid about me writing his life before he was done writing it and living it himself. Besides, the only books with which he would be associated would be, he explained, the works of Nina Fitzpatrick. Still, I think it would have been an excellent subject. A church in which Pat Sheeran was again made at home would be a desirable institution for any country to have.

4

A few years ago he showed me a script for a short film by Nina Fitzpatrick. I wish I still had a copy of it. It opens with a spaceship landing on the treeless moonlit stony hills of the Burren. Out of it get a crowd of aliens with metallic-looking faces and big eyes. They walk about in a sort of full-body halo. Soon they assemble in a dry stone church on the Burren, and, seen from without, the church sends rays of light through all the unmortared cracks. Inside, the aliens are being given a sermon by the local parish priest. He is delighted at the rise in Sunday attendance. He dreams of extending his mission to the stars and the million undocumented species of the universe. From having been priest to the smallest parish of Ireland, he will carry the torch to the universe, like the great Irish saints of the past!

The priest explains to his extraterrestrial congregation that God loves all creatures. Smiles appear on the faces of the aliens. They are a touchy-feely species, quick to be tickled by an idea, and quick to give the kiss of peace. Next the priest explains the Ten Commandments.

– There is one God and no other—the One who loves all creatures—and you must worship Him.

They squeal with delight; they would be glad to do so.

– Next, you shall not make graven images, or any other pictures of the Divine One.

Fine.

– Don't take the name of God in vain.

By smiles and noddings, the aliens show that they would never curse anyone.

– Next, come to Church every Sunday and don't work on that day.

Excellent! The commandments about honoring parents and avoiding murder also go down very well, and the aliens are concluding that at last in their travels through the universe they have come upon the Truth. Then the priest goes on to the Seventh Commandment:

– You shall not commit adultery.

Adultery? What is that? That, explains the priest, means that you marry a person of the opposite sex and then you may kiss, hug, and sleep with no more than this one person. The aliens are in a flutter. The noise of strange converse rises in the Burren church. One of them is delegated to ask a question: what would be the result of ignoring this particular commandment? That would be terrible, answers the priest: God would no longer love you; He would be angry; He would cast you into the fiery pit. Close-up here on the face of one alien: a large blue tear forms in the corner of an eye, and then rolls down a titanium cheek. One by one the members of the congregation arise from their pews, and, as the priest begs them to stay for further explanation, they file out of the doors of the church.

The whole film is rather complicated, as it involves the hilarious troubles of a County Clare kangaroo farmer. I cannot remember the details. What I do remember is the general idea Pat Sheeran communicated of a Roman Catholicism that had been reformed by Martian sensibilities, so that all were once again welcome within it.

5

Pat and Nina were going for dinner at Dave Power's house (he is a film-producer in Galway, and he had the script about the extraterrestrials in County Clare). Pat was bright-eyed about this approaching dinner engagement. Did the chances for funding look promising? No, that was not it. It transpired that Dave Power, himself a hunk, has a beautiful wife, Therese a reflexologist). I had to understand: everything Therese did was beautiful. To be around her was to be decentered: you fell right out of your own ego. It was all one could do to keep from staring, but one felt the need to memorize this face. As in that book by Elaine Scarry *On Beauty and Being Just*, the "homely act of staring" was an urge toward replication, a desire to copy, and become like her or to make something like her (Scarry 1998: 7). She attended to you, to everyone, with grace. You felt honored to have been noticed in a kindly way. Pat concluded by telling me he always felt much better for a day or two after having dinner with Dave Power.

He made it clear that Therese was not something or someone he wanted. If he could have anyone, he already had that person, Nina. And playing the thief with another man's wife—Dave Power was the best of men and a friend at that—was entirely out of question. Besides, such goings on would be the furthest thing from the mind of Therese. Fulfillment of sexual desire was not at issue. To act as beautifully in relation to the world around you as she did, and to have such an improving effect on every event that passed—those effects would be worth replicating, if one could somehow catch from her the trick of it.

Clíodhna was not sure that this form of male regard was not simply a classic case of the objectification of women. At first, I was inclined to agree, but to add—so, men objectify women, men are scopophiliacs, men are hard-wired to look at women admiringly. It is evolutionary in origin. What is to be done? But then I began to think that I was not understanding Pat Sheeran's regard for another man's beautiful wife in the correct manner. He did not objectify Therese because it was not primarily her body-image that he found to be beautiful. Consider this thought-experiment: another woman of about the same size brings a photograph of Therese to a team of cosmetic surgeons. They can do just about anything, they are that sophisticated. They go to work in the operating room, and later in the gym and the hair salon; presto! Out comes another Therese. Would Pat have found her beautiful? I don't think so. It is a case similar to the one Yeats

makes for Maud Gonne in “The Folly of Being Comforted.” Not her hair, which grows grey, or her face, which becomes wrinkled, but her “ways” are beautiful to him (Yeats 1963: 86):

Because of that great nobleness of hers
The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs,
Burns but more clearly.

6

The desire to reproduce (but not to possess) is like the impulse to turn phrases or to tell stories well or to make films or, as Pat Sheeran was doing at the time, to build a house on a hill near Moycullen that people should still be glad to see on that hill in another hundred years, something beautiful. In the modern period, beauty had gotten a bad name. It came to be believed that all art should be disturbing, conceptual, outrageous, industrial, or incomprehensible. The sublime had utterly trumped the beautiful. An appealing, harmonious, pleasure-giving art was treated as a prop for the status quo; or as superficially decorative, hiding the ugly truth; or as a form of prettiness cranked out by one fashion system or another, to keep people buying and to rebuild the walls of status distinctions. Things should not be this way, for while they were, the world was getting patently uglier. You would have to be an idiot not to realise that more beauty was good, and less was bad.

But what was the beautiful, after all? I have since come to think that James Kirwan may be right in holding that beauty is not a thing at all, or even a property of things, but an experience of a thing that gives disinterested pleasure (see: James Kirwan, *Beauty*). Pat Sheeran did not want to get rich by writing a screenplay that would sell (while having no objection to blockbusting success as an unintended consequence); he did not want to get the woman from his friend for the sake of his own desire; he did not want to put up a house that simply provided typical comfort at the lowest price. Instead, he sought (with Nina’s help) to create pleasures that were intrinsically satisfying.

Much about this quest for beauty still confounds me, and I doubt that I shall ever understand it. In a *New Symposium* conducted with the dead, Pat Sheeran may be sorting the matter out with Socrates, Dante, Blake,

Kant, Oscar Wilde, and God. Socrates could explain the move from the beauty of the boy to Beauty itself to the One that is the True, the Good, and the Beautiful too. Dante could show the way up the same long stairway from the beauty of Beatrice to the Beauty and Truth of God, expressed as light and the song of angels. Since the 19th century, we are more likely to halt on the stair, and falter where we firmly trod, and stretch lame hands and grope, and gather dust and chaff (Tennyson 1849: poem 55). “What is to be done with this newfound knowledge,” a contemporary philosopher asks, “that in beauty, behind beauty, is nothing, the abyss, dust?” Is it that we still need to know God but there is no God; we still seek Truth but there are only truths; we search for the soul but we are only animals able to dream up the concept of soul; we want eternity and yet there is less time left for each of us with each day we live? Right down the line, we do not get what we most want. Yet, amazingly, in the one case of beauty, our experience of being just out of reach of the Ultimate is an experience of pleasure.

According to Kant’s way of thinking, in the moment of gazing upon something that is to us beautiful, we do not feel that this beautiful thing is a thing of its cultural moment, or that its attraction springs from our own particular taste, or that reverence for it masks the contradiction at the heart of the landowning class. In the moment of apprehension of beauty, we forget all the relative and material aspects of the experience. We feel, as Kirwan observes, that we have entered into something “universal,” and that others may share in that experience.

Yet people, in fact, do not all find beauty in the same things. There are communities of taste, groups of people who find pleasure in the fact of finding pleasure all together from a single source, and who find pleasure as well in talking about what is best or a little less than the best about that common source of pleasure. The communities overlap sometimes, and sometimes not at all (perhaps one cannot enjoy both Mozart and heavy metal). Beauty inspires in communities of taste a bit of missionary zeal. To feel that this is beautiful and that, by God, is not, is to feel righteous. One is supposed to be just as tactful about not denouncing a friend’s décor to the friend’s face as about not talking down that friend’s religious beliefs in the sanctuary of the friend’s presence. Apart from this little sphere of tolerance and tact, people are as passionate about their convictions in matters of taste as in matters of faith.

Even if the great souls in the symposium were to agree that beauty is a feeling, not a thing; and that beauty creates an illusory belief that one is in the presence of the universal; and that in fact communities of taste are all equally unjustified in their missionary righteousness; even if all this were true, as a paid-up member of the Pat Sheeran community of taste, I have my own zeal for the good news. There are, I believe, particular grounds for what is beautiful to humans. The grounds are not, as Socrates, Dante, and Kant suggest, in God, Truth, or Metaphysical Universals. They are (Eureka!) the following three:

Nature,
The human body,
What the Greeks called *techne*, or skill in making.

No natural landscape is unbeautiful. I have travelled across North America, China, Europe, and everywhere one finds oneself among other humans travelling and admiring the landscape. A rich and lively swamp in Ontario is full of beauty; so are the exotic bodily shapes of hot Mohave sanddunes. The earth may be found in an ugly state where humans have blighted it, but pretty much only there. Each tree is beautiful. So is each leaf. So is the chequered shade upon the lawn. Forms of art draw their sense of variety, shape, harmony, and texture from our experience of this planet. The seasons created by this revolving planet in its revolutions around its sun create our sense both of cyclity and of the four-phase staged progress to an apex and down from that apex. As Northrup Frye showed in the 1960s, there is a genre, a trope, and a mode of expression for each season. There are few comedies of autumn or tragedies of springtime. The primitively-conceived four elements—water, earth, air, and fire—are constituents in the psychology of the spirit: there is a mood and personality type for each. This planet is our home; we love all its variable elements and trace in them the lineaments of beauty. When humanity saw the first pictures of the earth taken from outer space, the response was to hail its extraordinary beauty, compared with that of red Mars or even many-ringed Saturn. Those other planets were strange icy forms of beauty in the universe, but not warm, domestic, lovely, cloud-enswired, blue-oceaned home, Gaia. Everyone thinks of the earth as a female and a mother; not so with Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, or Pluto.

Second, “the Human Form Divine,” as Blake called it, is the source of many canons of beauty. Symmetry centers us. We like organic relations of parts to the whole, with a higher (the head) and lower (obedient limbs, disobedient parts too). According to Edmund Burke, as infants at the breast, we are imprinted with an idea of beautiful form. The line that is drawn from under a woman’s ear, down along the neck, over the collarbone and plunging in the swoop of the breast is the “line of beauty.” Our concept of the sublime, he implies, is derived during same early stage of life from the remoteness, erectness, height, capacity for anger, and strength of the father. An extraterrestrial species—let us say one that looks like an opossum—might find our species an off-putting sight, but for us, even a human of ‘average’ endowment is the image of God. It is a difficult lesson in the Book of Job when the voice in the whirlwind declares that God is also the whale and the crocodile, “the doors of his face with his terrible teeth all around” (41:14). The easiest forms of beauty in which to take pleasure are the primal, narcissistic ones, those that hold up the mirror to humanity, and especially to motherhood.

Finally, we stand in awe of the person who can do what God is said to have done: make a world by means of skill and superabundant power. We like it when the handiwork shows, and we like it when the handiwork is hidden in the independent perfections of the thing made. We like it when the creation has a history (includes the image of time past and time passing) and we like it when artifice creates a world that seems either timeless or not yet come to pass. There are so many good reasons for this satisfaction with the human capacity for creation that they cannot all be spelled out. One thing above all we use as a mark of the best kind of making. That is the kind of making that was done so well we say the thing was made to last. A person that writes a poem or a play not to please the largest number of consumers now, but to satisfy the dead and the still unborn, that is the person to whom in the end we yield up our honors. Before they died, the great writers aimed to leave, and did leave, “something so written to after times as they should not willingly let it die (Milton 1642).”

Right now, of course, for the most part those who provide the pleasures for kingdom come may get as much praise as Jesus got when he went home to his neighbors, brothers, and sisters in Galilee. They said he was a madman. He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief (Matthew 13: 56-58). Thus was the prophet without honor in his own country. Outside Galilee, people loved a miracle—the walk on the water,

the resurrections, the changing of water into wine. And they loved the miracle-worker who defied all odds. But the Palestinians evidently were also set on fire by the way Jesus had of telling old stories in new ways, such as the one about the kingdom being like a man who found a treasure in a field (not his own field), and went away and sold all that he had, so that he could buy that field; that is what the kingdom of heaven is like. Jesus was great with riddles.

– Now what is the kingdom of heaven like? You cannot guess? It is like a mustard seed.

– And how is that?

Let me tell you...

He was not an ordinary storyteller, or barefoot doctor, or defrocked priest working at the riverbank. It was hard to know what to call him. Even within his own time, people were inclined to follow him and to praise his mysterious power and the specific talent for making people see the earth as heaven on which they should live like angels.

7

A few months after Pat Sheeran died, word went out that there was to be a gathering in his honor at Le Graal one Thursday evening. The people who came on that night were remarkably in their variety. One was a lighting technician with a television crew. “I only saw him once,” the technician said. “I was on assignment to do the lights for a television interview of Nina Witozsek, to be held in the wooden house out the Moycullen way. We were all set up with all our lights downstairs when this man appeared up on the overhanging balcony. He asked us if we had everything we needed. We could make free with the refrigerator if we were hungry or thirsty. Then he disappeared into an upstairs room. The funny thing about it was that he was completely naked. I concluded that Pat Sheeran was a man very comfortable with his own body.”

There were, of course, students and professors—plenty of them. The Classics professor Brian Arkins gave a furious rendition in perfect Latin of Catullus V: “Vivamus mea Lesbia”—Let us live, my Lesbia—which totes up the scores, then hundreds, and thousands and hundreds of thousands of kisses the poet would give his beloved. There were also gardeners, house-builders, mushroom gatherers, film directors, film and theatre people of

many sorts, political activists, and a reflexologist. On the whole, there were more women than men. Everyone came to praise the lively spirit of Pat Sheeran.

It is good to praise men and women, particular people who have gone a journey no one else has gone, people who have left a proof of their being in the memory of friends, or on paper, or on film, or in gifts they have given, houses they have built, children they have raised, or relationships that they have created. I am thinking especially of people who widen our sense of human possibility by adding to the world's store of what is beautiful. It is a pleasure to praise Pat Sheeran.

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ЉУДИ И ЛЕПОТА

Сажетак

Овај аутобиографски есеј у славу ирског романописца, режисера и научника Пета Ширена (Pat Sheeran), поставља следећа питања: „Чему служи ово новостечено знање у лепоти, које изван лепоте не представља ништа, амбис и прах?“ Које су форме писања и живљења довољне у нашем времену, кад је теорија исцрпла све расположиве залихе обнављања у култури које су биле доступне ствараоцима у прошлости, док су смрт и бесциљност представљају неумитност као и некад? Истражујући необичну, шаманску природу Пета Ширена, овај есеј испитује истрајност стваралачког надахнућа лепотом, љубављу и уметношћу.

Кључне речи: Пет Ширен, роман, филм, лепота, ништавило, писање, смрт, бесциљност, уметност

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FORGING, MILKING, DELIVERING: THE FEMALE AND MATERNAL AS LINKS BETWEEN A *PORTRAIT*... AND *ULYSSES*

Abstract

This paper will try to point out that readings of James Joyce's *Ulysses* as a son's quest for his father and a father's quest for a lost son overlooks a very strong and important element of femaleness in the novel. In fact, the ties between *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses* are built upon motifs of femaleness and the mother. The mother figure is inscribed in both novels in various symbol nets, from the first sentence of *A Portrait* all the way to Molly's ecstatic inner monologue. Other female figures appear merged one into another in *A Portrait* and this technique of blurring meaning and shapes remains very important in *Ulysses*. This paper will take into account a number of "gendered" readings of both novels.

Key words: Femaleness, mother, Joyce

Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race. (26 April)

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These are the famous words of Stephen Daedalus at the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, right before he, in the final entry of the diary, invokes the “old father, old artificer”. Let us look at the beginning of the entry for April 26:

Mother is putting my new secondhand clothes in order. She prays now, she says, that I may learn in my own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels. Amen. So be it. Welcome, O life... (Joyce 1981: 228).

The realms of mother and father seem to be strictly divided here – the mother belongs not only to the private realm, but also to the practical and emotional one, as she packs Stephen and teaches him simple truths of independent life, whereas the father appears as a father-figure, a mythological force to whom the grand promise is addressed. For the same young man who had sometime earlier decidedly said to his friend Cranly: “I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church” (Joyce 1981:222), undertaking this hard task seems a logical outcome. The mechanical metaphor even more so – to forge something not created yet is quite appropriate for a son of an artificer. Thus the wordings of these two final entries reveal the tension of creativity and generativity, as much as they hide the mythological undercurrent of the mother figure. Because, as we see towards the end of the novel, Stephen is resolute in turning away from patriarchal institutions, while the only mystery unresolved remains the mother, as Cranly warns: “What do we know about what she feels? But whatever she feels, it, at least, must be real! It must be.” (Joyce 1981:218). Even as a figure, the mother is tightly connected to reality, she either cannot afford to be “an artificer” or is connected to some other sources of creation. Milking, rather than forging.

Cows, Birds and Girls

There are critics who warn us that Joyce was young in the time when the history of sexuality was going through a turbulent period. It is the time of Oscar Wilde’s trials and the rise of the New Woman, Freud’s discoveries about human sexuality. All that has found its place in Joyce’s characters whose sexuality is often confusingly volatile in its stereotypical

understanding of male/female roles. In that view, the readings of James Joyce's *Ulysses* as a son's quest for his father and a father's quest for a lost son clearly overlook a very strong and important element of femaleness, as well as the fact that the ties between *A Portrait...* and *Ulysses* are built upon the motives of femaleness and the mother.

Most of the symbolic networks of the novel are established at the fairy-tale like opening of *A Portrait*:

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo...

The scene, graphically and through sound, points to the multiplicity of female/mother roles in the novel. Joyce has been among the major male writers read as an example of *l'écriture féminine*, also known as *French feminist theory*, a poststructuralist concept of writing from 1970s. It includes literary production as well as theoretical writings about that production, which amalgamate philosophy, psychology and poetry. Hélène Cixous, one of the most important representatives of the approach, sees writing as perpetual production of difference and *jouissance*. Writings that emphasize the pleasure of text are closer to the rhythms of the female body and therefore are the poetics of *jouissance* named *l'écriture féminine* or, in the closest English translation, *writing the body*. Hélène Cixous points to the very beginning of *A Portrait*, where she discovers the importance of orality on both the auditive and graphic levels, as much as in the very content, through the perpetual appearance of the letter O. "I insist on the graphic and phonic o's because the text tells me to do so", writes Cixous, still pointing to the apparent paradox that "with all its italics and its typography, the text asks the reader to listen" (Cixous 1991: 4). The rhythm and meaning of the scene take us back to the still undisturbed unity with the mother and, for Cixous, point to the basic conflict of the story – between the mother who is "a great soul but a slave", and who "asks slavery of him" (Cixous 1991: 7).

In her praise of writing as permanent production of differences, Cixous calls women to write, because they, writing through and their bodies, "write in white ink". And this white ink, this writing by milk, is present as a subject in Joyce's novels, within a wide net of symbols */bovinet/*, also established in the opening lines of *A Portrait*. The moo/cow from the

beginning is metonymically connected to milk, breasts, femaleness and mother. It takes us, for instance, all the way to the image of the half-naked peasant woman who offers Davin milk and invites him to her house in the middle of the nowhere¹. Woman is, we then see clearly, a secret, dangerous other, a creature at the door to life and death, pleasure and doom.

This bovine imaginery, however, has both male and female sides. Suzette Henke investigates the influence of women in *A Portrait...* in the manner of French feminist theory and argues that female characters are present everywhere and nowhere in this novel, and never in the foreground. In this way, Henke reveals a couple of important motifs that will be continued in *Ulysses* in essentially the same manner. Emma, the girl to whom the vilanelle is dedicated is given only the initials (E.C), not a full name as in *Stephen Hero*. Her first appearance in the novel is almost indistinguishable from Eileen, as if a confusion of identities was aimed at. It takes a while to shape out this character and make it visible, although it remains dispersed and never really solid. Her traits are not only shared with the young girl from the Stephen's childhood, but also with another symbolic female creature, the girl on the beach.²

The famous scene of epiphany at the beach, as well as the preceding scenes, constructs the mythical image which locates the whole novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* on an archetypal map. Young Stephen has turned down the offer to enter the Jesuit order. He has declined it wordlessly, with a simple gesture of removing his hand from the rector's hand, at the moment when he recognizes the older man's inability to rejoice. But then, Stephen himself is not so joyous, either. Some time later, he passes a group of priests, invoking the memory of the offer he declined

¹ Davin declines – he perceives her as somebody else's house, an already taken territory. Upon hearing the story, Stephen thinks of her as of a symbol of Ireland, offering herself blindly, without thinking. But, these are both male projections. None of the two young men see her as a lonely young woman, left alone in the night. They don't perceive her even as a well of milk, a nurturer, or maybe only a future one, as Davin remarks "I thought by her figure and by something in the look of her eyes that she must be carrying a child." (Joyce 1981:165) To both of the friends she is rather a secret, an unknown *other*, and an *other* cannot help but being dirty and dangerous in some way.

² Henke says, for instance, that Stephen desires Emma, but fears he would be tangled into the cobweb of domesticity and that Emma and all the women are secret for Stephen the mysterious, dangerous Other. This, we have seen, also stands in the case of the young woman Davin told Stephen about.

and reaches the beach where his friends play in the water. He looks upward, toward the clouds which

... were voyaging across the deserts of the sky, a host of nomads on the march, voyaging high over Ireland, westward bound. The Europe they had come from lay out there beyond the Irish Sea, Europe of strange tongues... (Joyce 1981: 152).

As soon as he steps on the beach, the idea of Europe begins literally to hover above him. His friends underline the mythical reading of his own situation. They hail him shouting: “Stephanos Dedalos! Bous Stephanoumenos! Bous Stephaneforos!” In the word play of his colleagues, Stephen assumes a new, archetypal identity. He is designated as a sacred bull, a sacred animal of the European origin, as well as kin of Daedalus, famous builder and runaway from the Cretan labyrinth he himself has made. There is even a cry of drowning³, as a parodic reminder of the Daedalus/Icarus story. Stephen, however, does take their game quite seriously and reads their word play in a non-parodic way. The net of associations takes us straight to the heart of the cradle of Europe – Crete, reviving the story of Europa’s rape by Zeus, disguised as a white bull.

The white bull was the sacred animal at Crete, and when Pasiphaea felt lust toward it Daedalus made a wooden cow for her to mate with it. Both *techne* by which nature can be imitated to the point of making an artificial animal and the generativity by which Pasiphaea gives birth to the Minotaur, the monster, seem to be implied in the shouts of Stephen’s colleagues. Geopolitically, Stephen’s position is at the end of the location named Europe. If Crete, the place where Europe was taken to, is the beginning, is Ireland here an ending, the edge, the new beginning of the continent?⁴ Crete reversed, its mirror image? It surely is all that for Stephen. Being on a social and geographical margin, Stephen looks upward, looks toward Europe, longing for it as the continent of his own archetypal and artistic identity. The geography of this novel underlining the complex relation toward location as the main issue of presenting identity as dynamic is not

³ “-O, cripes, I’m drowned,” cries one of the boys.

⁴ Compare it to Rilke’s lines about the distorted sky in the Underground world (Orpheus. Euridyce. Hermes.)
“...around the other earth, a sun
And a silent star-filled heaven turned,
a grief-heaven with distorted stars”.

so much “Who am I?”, as “Where am I?”. Where am I on a (some, this) map... And, what does the map depict? As Stephen himself says in the opening chapter of *Ulysses*, thinking of himself as a boy years earlier: “I am the another now, and yet the same”, noting that being one is a process, not a state.

For Henke, the girl Stephen sees on the beach is anima, the female part of Stephen’s identity. She amalgamates the traits of the Christian, Celtic and pagan iconography – she is mortal and angelic, sensual and serene. Her ivory tights evoke Eileen’s hands as well as the Ivory tower, and her bird-like breasts remind him of the Holy Spirit. Vicki Mahaffey notes that the encounter with the girl on the beach breaks the essentialist division between active men who make mistakes and passive, receptive women. In a way, she agrees with Henke saying that the bird/girl is not only a fantasy of what Stephen would wish to have, but what he would wish to be. She is male – female creature because she has the male ability to transcend the environment, and the female ability to escape, to fly away. Only through the perspective of the girl, can he come to terms with the world.

However, neither Henke nor Mahaffey point to the echo of mermaids in the girl. She could be a bird, an angel, but still, she is the female danger, a seductive mermaid, a beauty and the beast at the same time. A Minotaur reversed?

This symbolic net is continued throughout *Ulysses* as well – at the very beginning, the old woman bringing milk becomes a focus of metaphoric and metonymic variations in Stephen’s mind; not to mention Bloom’s/ the narrator’s comments on the young woman he meets at the butcher’s store. The culmination of this motif is the chapter “Oxen of the Sun”, where various styles of chronological stages in the development of English are presented as the nine months of human gestation⁵. The chapter has similarities with one of the Joyce’s letters to Nora, in which he compares the writing of the book, his labor of an author, to Nora’s pregnancy and labor (Friedman 1989: 79)⁶. However, Susan Friedman’s notion that “Joyce’s women produce infants through the channel of flesh, while his

⁵ Susan Friedman points out that “Joyce’s extensive plans for the chapter highlight his continuing separation” of mind and body, word and deed, man and woman. (Friedman 1989: 79).

⁶ “...thinking of the book I have written, the child which I have carried for years and years in the womb of the imagination as you carried in your womb the children you love, and of how I had fed it day after day out of my brain and my memory” (August 21, 1912).

men produce a brain child through the agency of language” (Friedman 1989: 79) does not catch the dynamic and non-essentialist sense of sexual identity that permeates both *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*.

Although it is true that the chapter depicts the profaning of the sacred – young men drink and talk too loud in the hospital where women do this natural but nonetheless mysterious task of giving birth, and as a parallel to bovines belonging to the Sun god being slaughtered and eaten by starving men, we cannot stop at the either/or polarization⁷. Joyce’s heroes at least try to be both/and – both male and female in this case, to have both male and female experience. So, if there are young men who in one moment talk about Caesarian section, which is one of those ‘appropriations’ of woman’s childbirthing abilities by medical authorities, there is also ‘our Bloom’, whose interest in that subject is initiated by hearing about Mrs. Purefoy’s trials, and will have his/her share in the “Circe” episode. There is also another Bloom, Molly Bloom, who will at the end of the book deliver exactly what in such a binary reading would belong exclusively to men – words⁸.

“O Jamesy let me up out of this”

For Dorritt Cohn, “Penelope” is a paradigm, *locus classicus* in the limited corpus of the autonomous interior monologue. In *Ulysses*, it is the only moment when the figurative voice totally obliterates authorial narrative. Cohn notes that Joyce himself said that ‘Ithaca’ was an end, while “Penelope” has no end, middle, nor beginning. It begins and ends with the word *Yes* and revolves around itself. The time is hour none, infinity... This, according to Cohn’s analysis, seems to be just one of Joyce’s numerous mystifications of

⁷ The very idea that men create what is sublime – words, or the word which can even become god is derrided by the parodic tone of the chapter. On the other hand, the fact that woman gives birth to body, that *habeat corpus* is almost a curse, that Bloom himself senses and expresses at least twice that women stand at the gates of this world, bringing men and seeing men off, again underlines the mystery of history as the opposite to the misery of history – from a male perspective. All these nuances culminate in the closing chapter of *Ulysses* – “Penelope”.

⁸ Suzette Henke points to the fact that throughout *Ulysses* gender identities are undecidable, polymorphic and mobile, they oscilate. In her view, the atmosphere in the Eccles street no. 7 is so much like a carnival that there can be no solid, firm voice of the authoritarian male subject.

his work. Critics tended to literally understand what Joyce said on circling in his letter to Frank Budgen, so that they read “Penelope as permanent repetition, revolving of the same”. In such a reading Molly has been often seen as a great lump of lust, as Mahaffey claims. Such readings have completely neglected the fact that what she speaks is marked by a linear flow of time, unrolling into time through the sequences. The circularity of Molly’s arguments, including her first and last words, is decisively contrasted by the elements which underline her temporal sequences. Primary is the fact that the monologue does describe an event – the onset of her period. This event changes the flow of Molly’s thoughts, separating it clearly to ‘before’ and ‘later’. Molly enters into her ‘New moon’, new cycle in the course of her monologue, and this is a decisively temporal event, no matter how mythical are its undertones.

In her linguistic analysis of the chapter “Penelope”, Dorrit Cohn points to the fact that the only pronoun which always has the same referent is ‘I’, while the most unstable are the male pronouns in the third person – it is assumed that Molly always knows who ‘he’ is in her monologue, but it is not always clear to the reader.

Thus, we may note both the fact that this is the only chapter of the novel where there is no trace of a narrator, and that the stability of the pronoun ‘I’ points to Molly as subject is not a usual woman’s position. Neither is she a usual subject – a solid, unmoving center. Not only does everything flow out of her, from her insides, she herself is everywhere, emanating the world which we witness /pretend to hear. So much of her monologue concerns other characters that she becomes dissipated and disseminated through her own speech. Therefore, the circling Joyce had mentioned need not refer to the concept of time but to the subject/object dynamics of the chapter.

As Cohn also points out, Molly makes very little movement. Most of the time she is lying down in bed, which makes her flow of thoughts technically more easy. She is lying down and delivering her speech delivering it in the posture (on the bed) which has been much more convenient for male doctors, in opposition to squatting, which is the only other position she takes throughout the whole chapter. It turns out that lying down is more convenient for the author, too, who happens to be a former student of medicine. So, what we have here can be read as an extension, an implicit comment on the “Oxen of the Sun” chapter – we have a woman delivering, giving birth to words.

Finally, there is one metaphor of femaleness inherent in the very name *Penelope* – weaving. Penelope's weaving is a seductive practice, her way to thread away from the usurpers, the monsters, to keep her identity secure. It is her way of seemingly saying *Yes*, whereas it means a resolute *No*. Weaving is also a mechanical thing, it is in this way similar to forging, and like forging, it is both a highly gendered activity and a metaphor for doing things with words, language, consciousness. Weaving, texture making, so, as Mahaffey warns, it is no wonder Penelope has a pen in her very name.

But, there is a crack in the coverage of words/thoughts which obliterates the voice of the narrator in 'Penelope' – there is a moment when Molly thinks: "O Jamesy let me up out of this", meaning Jesus, but meaning also–Jamesy. Molly's outward passivity is both necessary to make her inward activity easier to present, and is in collision with it. Her apostrophe is a cry for deliverance and a cry in delivery, to be saved from the confinement. She pleads for help – let me up out of this! But, what is *this*? A sexual web of being an object of a gaze, or a textual /textural web she is herself weaving and has been woven into, at the same time? As anywhere in Joyce, there are no definite answers, just a multiplication of questions.

Mahaffey finds analogy between Joyce's words and his life:

Joyce's fictions certainly grew out to meet the coincidences of his own life: the Fates, those original spinners, gave Joyce as his most faithful and consistent, benefactress, a feminist woman of letters named Weaver. *(Mahaffey 1997: 133).

In a similar vein, I would add that for the author playing so much across male/female sides, it seems remarkable that he was first christened as James Augusta Joyce, which was later changed to James Aloysius Joyce. The white ink of Augusta/Aloysius writings create a fictional world where maleness and femaleness are in a permanent play of differences, identities, *Yes* saying, *jouissance*, that is - re/joycing...

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КОВАТИ, СНОВАТИ, РАЂАТИ... ЖЕНСКО И МАТЕРИНСКО
У ПОРТРЕТУ... И УЛИКСУ

Сажетак

У овом тексту се указује на то да читање *Уликса* Џејмса Џојса као синовљеве потраге за оцем и очеве потраге за изгубљеним сином превиђају веома снажан елеменат женског у роману. Заправо, везе између романа *Портрет уметника у младости* и *Уликса* изграђене су на мотиву мајчиног лика и женскости. Лик мајке је присутан унутар различитих мрежа симбола, и то од прве реченице *Портрета* до Молиног екстатичног унутрашњег монолога. Остали женски ликови стапају се у *Портрету* један у други и ова техника замагљивања значења и облика остаје битна у *Уликсу*. У раду се разматра и неколико родних читања ова два романа.

Кључне речи: Женскост, мајка, Џојс

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WHY IS A TALKING BIRD FUNNY? ASPECTS OF HUMOR IN “THE JEW BIRD” BY BERNARD MALAMUD

Abstract

This paper explores the humor in Bernard Malamud’s story “The Jewbird”. Humor is analyzed through two aspects: the universal and the socio-cultural. The universal refers to the mechanisms that render something comic regardless of their socio-cultural setting, i.e the culture from which they originate. Two existing theories of humor are used to describe this: the incongruity theory and the superiority theory. The socio-cultural aspect is a description of the elements of humor whose creation and perception depend on the local culture from which they originate. Finally, the paper reviews the significance of the elements that create an appropriate atmosphere for the comic.

Key words: Jewbird, Bernard Malamud, humor, comic, incongruity, superiority, society, culture

A frequently anthologized short story, Bernard Malamud’s “The Jewbird” is also among his best known works. One of the leading voices in Jewish-American literature of the late 20th century, Bernard Malamud (1914-1986) was born and raised in Brooklyn, in a family of first generation Russian Jewish immigrants. As a result of his upbringing, his prose

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thematically focuses on the urban life of this community. Similarly, “The Jewbird” revolves around Malamud’s familiar themes. Set in post-World War II Brooklyn, a skinny cross-eyed crow with unkempt feathers flies into the kitchen of the Cohen family while they are having supper. The bird, named Schwartz, perches on the kitchen door and talks like a human, explaining that it is a Jewbird who is on the run from other birds of prey persecuting him. Harry Cohen, a frozen food salesman, is immediately suspicious of the bird and its Jewishness, and so treats him with hostility, while his wife Edie and his son Morris (Maurie), show the bird compassion and charity and are willing to take him in and feed him. At the insistence of Laurie and Edie, the bird stays with the family despite Mr. Cohen’s objections. As time gradually passes Mr. Cohen begins to harass the bird in order to kick him out, believing him to be a “pest” and “free loader”, even though the bird helps Laurie with his homework and has a very small appetite. Eventually Mr. Cohen and Schwartz have a fight and Mr. Cohen kills the bird, throwing him out through the window.

This short story is rich with metaphors, symbols, parodies and other figures of speech that point to the various levels of meaning in the text. For example, the short story can be analyzed through the metaphor of the tenant, which is also the subject of Malamud’s 1971 novel *The Tenants*. In fact, this short story treats the idea that for centuries Jews were “tenants” in foreign lands, not having their own country where metaphorically they could be their own “landlords”. As “tenants”, they were always dependent on someone’s mercy or whim; and just like the crow Schwartz, they lived in fear of being evicted or killed for no apparent reason, or, or for reasons such as Mr. Cohen’s: he says the bird is an “A-number-one trouble-maker” (Malamud 1981: 918). The allegorical element of the bird speaking with the language of first generation immigrants also points to another level of the text – the hatred of assimilated Jews towards non-assimilated Jews, or the intolerance of second generation assimilated immigrants towards their parents. Hence the significance of the beginning and ending of the story: the story opens with the arrival of the bird and the mention of the illness of Cohen’s mother, and ends with her death and Cohen’s murder of Schwartz. Malamud suggests that the hatred that Cohen feels towards the bird is a type of Semitic anti-Semitism. Eileen Watts explains this self-hatred: “Living for so long by others’ standards of behavior, dress, and especially language has contributed to the self-hatred that many assimilated American Jews project onto unassimilated Jews” (Watts 1996: 158). Similarly, the hostile

and inhospitable manner in which Cohen treats the bird also symbolizes the harsh welcome the Jews received in America.

In addition to the socio-cultural complexity of the story that is crucial for the understanding of the symbolic meaning of the text, there is another complex phenomenon present in the short story – the element of humor. Even though the short story can be labeled as “comic” due to the continuous presence of humor generally associated with positive feelings, the story also has elements of tragedy – hence it can be categorized in the domain of the tragicomic.

The humor in “The Jewbird” will be analyzed through two aspects: the universal and the socio-cultural. Here the universal level of humor refers to the mechanisms that render something comic regardless of their socio-cultural setting, i.e. the culture from which they originate. Two existing theories of humor are used to describe this: the incongruity theory and the superiority theory. The incongruity theory refers to the cognitive mechanism functioning behind the comic notion – an unexpected cognitive shift, or a combination of two incongruous ideas – or to quote Keith-Spiegel, “Humor arising from disjointed, ill-suited pairings of ideas or situations or presentations of ideas or situations that are divergent from habitual customs form the basis of incongruity theories” (Keith-Spiegel 1972: 7). Although the beginnings of this theory are seen as far back in history as Cicero, it is considered to be developed by the philosophers Kant and Schopenhauer in the 18th and 19th century, and later embraced in its full or modified form by many contemporary theorists of humor such as George Santayana and Michael Clark. The superiority theory of humor, on the other hand, is known as a social theory of humor (Attardo 1993: 47), but in this text it will be referred to as a theory that also explains humor on a universal level. This theory is social in nature because its essence lies in the aggression or superiority expressed from one person to another, where usually the person who suffers the aggression is the butt of the joke, while the person imposing his or her superiority is the creator of the humor. Where self-deprecating humor is concerned, the person creating the humor is also its subject, but feels superior to “follies of themselves past” (Hobbes 1987: 19). Among the first to explain humor as functioning through this mechanism were Plato and Aristotle, though one of its major proponents is the philosopher Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century and Charles Gruner in the 20th century. Many theorists of humor combine both of these aspects – incongruity and superiority – to explain the essence of

the comic; such are Henri Bergson, Arthur Koestler and John Morreall, to name a few. This paper also combines these two theories to explain the universal level of humor in the analyzed short story.

The second aspect through which humor will be analyzed – the socio-cultural aspect – is merely a description of the elements of humor whose creation and perception depend on the local culture from which they originate.

Finally, the paper explores the significance of the elements that create an appropriate atmosphere for the comic.

The main incongruity that gives “The Jewbird” its comic character is the mixing of reality and fantasy as expressed through the talking bird. This creature is simultaneously both man and bird – something that is not deemed strange by the environment that communicates with it. This humorous mechanism has been defined by several theorists of humor. According to Henri Bergson, one of the three main characteristics of humor is its human dimension (Bergson 1911: 10). Hence, the comic effect is realized when animals, plants or things behave or look like human beings. However, the man-animal incongruity is not the only element that causes the comic effect. Arthur Koestler, who defined the “Man-Animal” relationship as a separate form of humor, claims that “this double-existence is comic, but only so long as the confrontation has the effect of slightly degrading exposure of one or the other” (Koestler 1964: 67) – which clearly points to the aggressive nature of this phenomenon and the way in which incongruity and superiority work together to cause the comic effect. In “The Jewbird”, the man-animal mechanism is of key importance to the comic nature of the text. For example, had the bird Schwartz been a banished old Jewish man – abused and killed by a member of his own ethnic and religious group, the short story would have been unequivocally tragic.

If we consider incongruity to be the major cognitive mechanism that creates humor in the text, the element of aggression or superiority where a certain trait, individual or group is the object of humor can be seen as the content-based mechanism that also contributes to the generation of the comic effect, as noted by Koestler. In “The Jewbird”, the object of the comic (“the butt of the joke”) is double. This duality corresponds to the two comic characters in the short story – Schwartz and Harry Cohen, who are in conflict with one another. On the one hand, it seems that Schwartz, the banished bird trying to find refuge from the anti-Semitic birds of prey is the object of humor because of his constant passive-aggressive complaining,

his attempt to make others pity him, while at the same time imposing himself on his hosts and getting everything he wants:

At Cohen's insistence Schwartz lived out on the balcony in a new wooden birdhouse Edie had bought him.

"With many thanks," said Schwartz, "though I would rather have a human roof over my head. You know how it is at my age. I like the warm, the windows, the smell of cooking. I would also be glad to see once in a while the *Jewish Morning Journal* and have now and then a schnapps because it helps my breathing, thanks God. But whatever you give me, you won't hear complaints."

(Malamud 1981: 915)

We see a similar example when the cruel Mr. Cohen suggests that Schwartz eat the dry corn from the bird feeder:

"Not for my digestion," he later explained to Edie. "Cramps. Herring is better even if it makes you thirsty. At least rainwater don't cost anything." He laughed sadly in breathy caws.

(Malamud 1981: 915)

These examples indicate that Schwartz is the object of humor because he insists to be treated like a man, although in reality he is a bird who puts on a false show of humility and gratitude. As Schwartz symbolizes first generation Jewish immigrants to America, this ethnic group seems to be the object of amiable ridicule.

Cohen, on the other hand, a representative of second-generation assimilated Jews, is the most ridiculed character in the text. Hence, the criticism conveyed through humor is in fact criticism of this particular ethnic community. It is no coincidence that Cohen is a frozen food salesman: frozen food, according to Watts, represents his "icy humanity" and "cold compassion" (Watts 1998: 159). At the same time, this profession points to the assimilation of Cohen into the urban environment and his rejection of Jewish tradition. There is further symbolism in Cohen's profession: the only thing the skinny, smelly, disheveled Schwartz demands of Cohen is that he shares with him the same food he provides for his family. Not only does Cohen refuse to share this insignificant amount of food with the bird, but he also humiliates him by feeding him cheap bird food and herring. Cohen is verbally vulgar and constantly offending Schwartz –the

underlying reason for his abusive behavior being that the bird presented himself as a Jew:

“What have you got against the poor bird?”

“Poor bird, my ass. He’s a foxy bastard. He thinks he’s a Jew.”

“What difference does it make what he thinks?”

“A Jewbird, what a chutzpah. One false move and he’s out on his drumsticks.”

(Malamud 1981: 914-915)

Even though Schwartz earns the food and roof over his head by voluntarily overlooking Maurie’s studying and violin practicing, resulting in a significant improvement in Maurie’s low grades, Cohen’s vanity and pride prevent him from realizing that his son’s success is somehow related to the bird.

Towards the end of the story, after Cohen terrorizes Schwartz for months, hoping that he will leave on his own (he buys a cat for his son, pops paper bags while Schwartz is sleeping, mixes his food with watery cat food), Schwartz and Cohen finally have a fight and Cohen kills Schwartz. The manner in which the murder takes place is deeply symbolic: during the fight with the bird, Cohen takes Schwartz by his legs and whirls him several times above his head. This episode is in fact a parody of the Jewish custom Kapparot performed on the day before Yom Kippur. During this ritual, a chicken or rooster are taken and waved over the head while reciting a prayer. After that the bird is slaughtered and given to the poor, in hope of redemption from one’s sins. The irony is that Cohen, a man who has lost touch with his Jewish tradition and is oblivious of his ill deeds, does not seek nor receive redemption from his sins.

In Cohen’s case, the element of aggression or ridicule in fact refers to Jewish anti-Semites, who, in their selfish attempt to preserve their newly acquired identity, yield to hatred, selfishness and aggression. On the other hand, this criticism can refer to all anti-Semites, as well as more generally to the negative human characteristics of selfishness, pride and hatred.

In fact, Malamud frequently uses vanity and stupidity as objects of ridicule, especially where the characters of Cohen and his son Morris are concerned. When Morris’s grades in school improve and he starts getting C’s due to his work with Schwartz, Cohen’s vanity and pride are ridiculed when he openly reveals his plans to send Morris to an Ivy League college. Even Morris’s good-natured stupidity is kindly ridiculed when he doesn’t

understand why Schwartz is hiding in a paper bag and believes that he's making himself a nest – an absurd idea because the bird does not behave like a bird at all, and is in fact hiding out of fear.

Bearing the above-mentioned in mind, we can conclude that the universal level of humor is expressed through the cognitive mechanism of incongruity on the one hand, and the existence of superiority or aggression on the other hand. Due to the fact that the object of humor or ridicule is a particular ethnic group, the type of humor in the short story can also be labeled as ethnic humor.

The socio-cultural setting of "The Jewbird" is quite complex and rich, conditioning the understanding of the humorous elements by the reader. In fact, the comic character of the short story is dependent on its context: a family of second generation assimilated Jewish immigrants in Brooklyn, New York. If the reader is unaware of the specifics in the relationships in this ethnic community, they cannot grasp the essence of the humor or the object of ridicule in certain situations. When the reader, for example, is unaware that the name Cohen is a typically Jewish name, as well as that Kingston was a popular vacation spot for Jewish families in the 1950s, they will find it difficult to establish the wider context of the short story and its humor. The typically Jewish food on Cohen's table is another element that points to the identity of the short story's protagonists. The language the crow speaks – English riddled with errors and Yiddish words – symbolizes the language of first generation Jewish immigrants to America. If the reader fails to comprehend the meaning behind the lexical and syntactic idiosyncrasies of the crow's speech, the humorous incongruity may remain unnoticed and unappreciated. One such comic example heavy with socio-cultural meaning is the following:

"But aren't you a crow?"

"Me? I'm a Jewbird."

Cohen laughed heartily. "What do you mean by that?"

The bird began dovening. He prayed without Book or tallith, but with passion. Edie bowed her head though not Cohen. And Maurie rocked back and forth with the prayer, looking up with one wide-open eye.

When the prayer was done Cohen remarked, "No hat, no phylacteries?"

"I'm an old radical."

(Malamud 1981: 913)

This dialogue occurs when Cohen and Schwartz meet, emphasizing the suspicion and disrespect that Cohen feels towards the crow. The humor arises not just from the fact that the bird talks like a human being; it also observes Orthodox Jewish religious rituals and has a clever response to Cohen's subtle attack towards his lack of the religious kit needed for praying: "I'm an old radical". What is also interesting to note is that the parody of the Kapparot custom at the end of the story where Cohen kills Schwartz does not contain elements of humor, although parodies are generally considered to be comic. This supports the scholar Weisstein's thesis that parodies are not necessarily funny – "It would be wrong to maintain, however, that such discrepancies are invariably humorous, although it is naturally hard to determine a parodist's true intention." (Weisstein 1966: 803). In the case of the parody of Kapparot in "The Jewbird", the critical imitation of the custom points to the tragic sinfulness of the performer of the ritual, who, ironically, does not seek atonement. The positive emotions that humor generally evokes are not present in this very serious parodic segment that is key to the understanding of the entire short story.

Humor is present in the very last line of the short story; the humor is linguistic, and thus, culturally conditioned. At the very opening of the story Schwartz explains that he is on the run from "anti-Semeets" – an incorrect pronunciation of the word "anti-Semites" which would be typical for the first generation Jewish immigrants with a lesser command of English. Although the family corrects the crow in his pronunciation, when Maurie finds the lifeless and disfigured body of the bird and asks who could've done such a thing, Edie's answer is the tragicomic echoing of Schwartz's explanation: "Anti-Semeets". This short utterance holds several layers of meaning: Edie's acceptance of her parents' identity, as well as her subconscious confession that her husband is an anti-Semite himself.

Apart from the universal and socio-cultural levels of humor present within the text, Malamud adds elements to the short story that provide an appropriate setting for the comic. For example, if the incongruity of a crow talking and behaving like a human being was accompanied by an atmosphere of dark mysteriousness, the reader would most probably feel fear instead of the pleasant emotions associated with humor. In the studies of humor, this thesis was tested by Mary K. Rothbart, who argues that these incongruities can result in several reactions, the most extreme of which are fear and laughter due to pleasure – the latter of which is "experienced in a safe or playful setting" (Rothbart 1976: 38) Malamud is quite aware of the

danger of incongruity so he lightens up the potentially serious atmosphere with many dialogues, short sentences, profanity in Mr. Cohen's direct speech and the use of Yiddish words by the crow. The crow's speech renders a playful imitation of the syntax of first generation Jewish immigrants: "I would also be glad to see once in a while the *Jewish Morning Journal* and have now and then a schnapps because it helps my breathing, thanks God". (Malamud 1981: 915) Malamud's general choice of words also contributes to the comic value of the short story. For example, at the very beginning of the story, when Schwartz makes a bizarre and unexpected appearance in Cohen's kitchen, Malamud describes him as "black-type longbeaked bird—its ruffled head and small dull eyes, crossed a little, making it look like a dissipated crow" (Malamud 1981: 913). It is the incongruity in the description itself, i.e. the unexpected and unconventional choice of words that adds to the comic effect. Additionally, the bird is not only comic because of its appearance: undoubtedly the reader will draw a parallel between Malamud's crow and Poe's raven (Hanson 1993: 363). The comic here lies in the ironic shift from the tragic, serious and noble in Poe, to the low and mundane of Malamud: his crow is a ruffle-feathered, rheumatic thing with a chronic cough which lands on the kitchen door instead of a bust of Pallas.

Another of Malamud's characteristics of style is the use of clever responses in the crow's speech. Such is the case with the dialogue between Edie and Schwartz, when she tells him he has to be patient so that the cat gets used to him and stops attacking him. Schwartz has a witty response for this foolish advice: "When he stops trying we will both be in Paradise" (Malamud 1981: 918). This phrase, on some level resembling a joke, is comic because of its implied value.

To conclude, the humor in Malamud's "The Jewbird" is marked with a strong socio-cultural note, whereas its universal aspects are expressed through situations and language typical of a particular ethnic community. The playful and witty language that Malamud employs in combination with short sentences and frequent dialogues contribute to the creation of a light atmosphere that allows the leading incongruity of the story – the bird that behaves like a human – to be perceived as comic. The incongruities in Malamud's story are further related to subjects that call forth the ridicule of negative human characteristics such as pride, vanity, stupidity and hatred.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most impressive feature of "The Jewbird" is the subtle balance between the tragic and the comic. Even though the

short story is fundamentally tragic, emphasizing the senselessness of hatred and selfishness which in turn lead to torture and murder of the innocent, “The Jewbird” also raises essential questions about ethnic and religious identity and its influence on the moral aspects of the individual. The comic manner in which these serious issues are approached is not coincidental: it seems that Malamud was well aware of the power of the comic to yield an entirely different viewpoint on suffering – one that is devoid of needless sentimentality – thus subtly enabling the reader to independently comprehend the absurdity of hatred.

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ЗАШТО ЈЕ ЈЕВРЕЈ-ПТИЦА СМЕШНА?
АСПЕКТИ ХУМОРИСТИЧНОСТИ У „ЈЕВРЕЈ-ПТИЦИ“
БЕРНАРДА МАЛАМУДА

Сажетак

Тема овог есеја је хумор Бернарда Маламуда (Bernard Malamud) у причи „Јевреј-птица“ (“Jewbird”). Хумор се посматра из двоструке перспективе: хумор у општем смислу речи и хумор са социо-културног аспекта. Универзални аспект хумора односи се на постојање елемената у тексту које сматрамо смешним без обзира на могуће социо-културне импликације, односно културу из које дело потиче. Тумачење дела у оквиру овог рада засновано је на две постојеће теорије хумора: теорији инконгруентности и теорији супериорности. Социо-културни аспект подразумева опис елемената хумора чије уметничко обликовање и разумевање зависе од познавања локалне културе. Коначно, у овом есеју се говори о значају елемената који доприносе стварању повољне атмосфере за комичне ефекте.

Кључне речи: Јевреј-птица, Берnard Маламуд, хумор, комика, незграпност, супериорност, друштво, култура

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LOUIS MACNEICE'S ZOO AS A PERSONAL MENAGERIE

Abstract

This paper approaches the problem of writing and re-configuring personal history in the presence of animals by a modern subject who in the politically charged climate of the 1930s, as a result of developing an intimate relationship with the London Zoo, modifies his attitude towards life. The paper takes a specific interest in the London Zoo as a parable of history. I argue that *Zoo* is a hybrid crypto-autobiography which drives towards a didactic ending encouraging the reader to turn to animals, to hear the disconcerting voice: "Le Zoo, c'est moi".

Key words: parable, experience, gaze, personal history, collection

In Louis MacNeice's little recognized crypto-autobiographical narrative *Zoo*, the non-human world of animals sustains a parabolic fantasy, the type Samuel Hynes speaks of as "constitute[ing] judgments of life as it exists (Hynes 1992:36)."

Zoo was commissioned by Michael Joseph as a book on the London Zoo and it was first published in 1938. Jon Stallworthy writes that it was "designed for the armchair reader" and that it was expected to be more "impressionistic than Julian Huxley's Official Guide to the Zoo (Stallworthy 1996: 225)", a text recommended by MacNeice in his preface. Despite

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the rushed circumstances of *Zoo's* composition in four busy months¹, Stallworthy notes that it came out of extensive field research and the deep personal interest of the poet. Prior to writing the book, MacNeice went to Edinburgh Zoo, Bristol Zoo, Paris Zoo, Whipsnade and London Zoo. He also carried with him vivid memories of childhood visits to the Dublin Zoo. MacNeice had been fascinated by Zoos ever since his first visit as a schoolboy on holiday. He had come to think of the Zoo as a “cross between a music hall and a museum,” a place to be visited half because he liked looking at the animals and half because he liked looking at people. It was also “a nice sort of dream-world, and you can get into it for a shilling (MacNeice 1938: 225).

A “Book Society Recommendation,” *Zoo*, published with Nancy Sharp's realistic and “precise” drawings, “sold well enough (Stallworthy 1996: 231).” Over the decades it has been consistently ignored, sparse notes of its criticism spoke of “flimsiness of thought,” Kenneth Allott's label which seems to have been unfairly adhered. Peter McDonald, a very scrupulous critic of MacNeice, links *Zoo* with the poet's other “rushed compositions” or “productions” which, despite their faults, he says, show important traces of the development of MacNeice's “aesthetic sense.” McDonald categorizes *Zoo* as a “book of ‘reportage’ steeped in autobiography (McDonald 1991: 78)” which is also an example of MacNeice “attempting to destabilize the self in the writing and to establish personal ‘honesty’ more firmly as an imaginative resource (McDonald 1991: 79).” But like most critics, McDonald does not invest more attention into the tensions of what we may impressionistically, more than strictly categorically, label as a post-human dimension of this autobiography².

Zoo, defined in the preface as “a series of impressions” with “a good deal of information,” consists of fifteen chapters and twenty nine drawings by MacNeice's companion, who is introduced by the author as a “realist artist of unusual perception and skill”. MacNeice also adds that her animals are put “with a precision unobtainable in writing (MacNeice 1938: 9).” Such precision is certainly manageable in photography but he dismisses it for the sake of the art which first made the animal its subject, the art

¹ In chapter XV MacNeice mentions the hurried conditions in which he is writing, saying that “my publisher is clamouring for this script” (MacNeice 1938: 245).

² It proposes to read life narrative in negotiations of the human that considers, among others, encounters with the animal as theorized by, for example, Donna Haraway and Cary Wolfe.

he finds more truthful and authentic. Recollecting his favourite childhood book, *Cassell's Natural History*, he speaks nostalgically of its unrealistic illustrations, still lifes, coloured plates, pictures engravings “which are so much more romantic than photographs (MacNeice 1938: 68).” His fondness for what he calls the “naïve romance of Natural History,” especially the tidy “*paysage exotiques*” as if from a “*petit bourgeois parlour*,” speaks to his early taste and informs the choice of illustrations.

In Sharp's sketches, animals' eyes never look straight at us; they are turned down and sideways. In most cases they are either closed or are not even there. Foregrounding parts of the figures, and concealing the eyes, what MacNeice calls “the final glass barrier (MacNeice 1938: 65)”, Sharp provides her own critique of the zoo which can be aligned with John Berger's acute views from *About Looking* that the look which “may have played a crucial role in the development of human society, ... has been extinguished. Looking at each animal, the unaccompanied zoo visitor is alone (Berger 1991: 28).” But MacNeice does not rebuke the loss, engaging with the zoo not as a “monument” or “epitaph” to a loss, as does Berger, but with the zoo as a post-auratic place of potential communion with oneself and the alien other. He observes that animals may not look at us, but they do look through us (MacNeice 1938: 165). And, like many writers of the 1930s, he grounds his book's concerns with the seemingly truthful and sincere treatment of the real:

I am, and always have been, very interested in the zoos and animals, and also in the people who look at them. All the remarks of visitors here recorded I have actually overheard, just as Nancy Sharp's drawings have been actually drawn from the animals (MacNeice 1938: 255).

In the poem “The Panther” by Rainer Maria Rilke, the first original (and untranslated) stanza of which MacNeice uses as the motto for the entire book, the animal, which etymologically speaking stands for “all beast”, is so exhausted “from seeing the bars” that, “it no longer holds anything anymore”. In the third stanza of this poem, the beautiful panther dies. Rilke wrote the poem in the Jardin des Plantes, the Paris Zoo, following Rodin's advice to look for inspiration there. He found silence and the panther's exhausted seeing. MacNeice records a visit to this zoo, “very much a glory in decline (MacNeice 1938: 242)”, a “melancholy relic of history” with his South African friend Ernst who knows Rilke's fine poems

about “flamingoes (MacNeice 1938: 235).” He says they felt too exhausted with the “overloaded” atmosphere of this menagerie, and left behind the hundred thousand bars Rilke noted in his poem.

I am mainly interested in how this very thirties book, a collage of the personal and the documentary forms like reportage, negotiates and recasts the subject’s connection with history experienced in the presence of animals in the European zoos visited by him. Do multiple encounters with animals and their fundamental distinctness move the subject out of the orbit of history? Do the animals offer some form of explanation and provoke a necessity to refigure his *bios*, modify his attitude to life? And finally, how is the London Zoo, the poet’s personal parable for history, also a lesson he expresses as: “What man does with the outward and visible animals he has already done with the inner ones (MacNeice 1938: 122).” In a politically charged climate, in *Zoo*, like in Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* in Orwell’s famous essay “Inside the Whale,” the writer proceeds by identifying with the unserious, and “irresponsible,” believing and asserting that “it is most important *and* useful *and*, indeed, serious that the less serious branches of serious activities, should continue to be practiced (MacNeice 1938: 19).” This postulate is realized by activating surfaces and textures, extravagance, elegance, nonsense, grotesquerie, the images of the pleasure of what he calls “dappled things”. The subject’s consistent attitude of casual observer additionally helps sustain claims to lightness. He plays down “whatever is hallmarked as serious – pamphleteering, preaching, praying, goose-stepping, grinding axes (MacNeice 1938: 19).”

To build and assure the validity of a non-expert position, unlike Julian Huxley who, evoked at the beginning is assumed to be speaking authoritatively of the zoo from within, The Writer begins by staging an act of “self-defense” rendered in a form of a dialogue with an imaginary Reader. Unlike animals with their conditioned specialization in the zoo, “professional animals,” very remarkable and “narrow specialists” living a “steady and one-sided existence where their job is merely to be on show (MacNeice 1938: 31)”, the Writer speaks and looks like a “layman”. A public man, “outside his proper sphere,” he tries to claim his right to experience child-like entertainment. This experience is obtained from engagement with forms of life which are understood as alien. But such experiences require the listener. Unless shared they are useless: “the human being cannot experience anything - *anything*, mind - you without reacting to it both with his emotions and his intelligence (MacNeice 1938: 15).” The

Writer, speaking as “I” but also, identifying with other visitors as “we”, believes that to be successful, he has “to be so many things (MacNeice 1938: 31)” - a researcher on the zoo subjects, Nancy’s partner, the artist, a traveler, a teacher, and an autobiographer – a tense plurality confronted against beings which “are not human and never can be (MacNeice 1938: 64).” He validates his position of the true and informed observer by claims to a genuine interest in the subject and the actuality of the experiences he is writing about. He is not too worried about *writing* itself. But he suggests that readers who are seeking facts should turn to experts in the field, those who *know* “thousands of fascinating facts about habits and histories, the outsides and insides of animals” and of course to animals themselves (MacNeice 1938: 255). Thus the experience with animals does not produce knowledge; its nature is mainly impressionistic. That is why he also rejects those aspects of the zoo which would solidify the factual claims of his book.

The essential discontinuity between human and non-human lives is made very pronounced in the condition of the subject’s autonomy, unrestrained mobility and freedom, compared with the animals’ framed predicament. He is the visitor in the zoo. “Visitor” is a word heavy with implications in MacNeice’s poetry and prose, especially in connection with his images of the Irish home. Tom Paulin explains that in the West of Ireland, where MacNeice is from, the word is used to speak of tourists, and that the sense of dispossession applies to both its metaphysical and topographical dimensions (in Corcoran 1993: 17). But outside Ireland, the encounter of such a sovereign subject with the animal makes clear that not every being can enjoy the status of a visitor. For the animals in the zoo “the flow of joy that comes from living not *in* or *as* a body but simply from being an embodied being has no place (Coetzee 1999: 35).” But the speaker in *Zoo* is not agonizing over this aspect of the world with which he develops such an intimate relationship.

His attention to animals rests mainly on the assumption that they refuse direct communication. His earliest zoo memory contains an image of the first monkey he saw “an organ-grinder’s monkey in Ireland scooping for pennies in a gutter of Irish mud (MacNeice 1938: 69).” In John Berger’s words, animals do not “confirm” him, “either positively or negatively (Berger 1991: 5).” Drawn to the zoo, the self in its “plurality” is challenged and tested by the exciting specificity of the relationships whose terms preclude responsibility, communication, envy and which most of all exclude the

existence of language. The utter distinctness and dissimilarity of animals, the fact that they are “even more different than my sleeping self is from my waking self (MacNeice 1938: 67)”, suffice to attract him towards zoos. As fascinating objects of observation, the animals gradually make him aware of the existence of superficial parallelisms like the “impulse to go on living (MacNeice 1938: 65)” but also curious reversals when animals appear more developed and becomingly dressed than humans (MacNeice 1938: 195). Anatomizing the animals metaphorically, gazing at the zoo’s “catalogues of rich and exotic and unknown extravagances (MacNeice 1938: 217-218)”, the visitor subjects his selves to attention and contemplation. He speaks of “the top part of my soul, the contemplative aesthetic part,” about the “lower parts of my soul (MacNeice 1938: 76)”, about animals which we have in us and which are numerous members of his private world (MacNeice 1938: 124), and also of the *bric-à-brac* and incidentals of his private world. The London Zoo is an excessive, irresistibly delightful menagerie. He is there because he finds looking and animals but also looking at people pleasurable. The wealth of images and sumptuousness of scenes assure a source of entertainment “cut off from what we call actuality (MacNeice 1938: 65).” “Like a man eating an artichoke (MacNeice 1938: 218)”, the Writer reckons with an always “incorrigibly plural”³ life, encouraging at the end the acceptance of the animal in him: “le Zoo, c’est moi (MacNeice 1938: 255).”

At the deplorable end of summer fullness of 1938, before autumn’s “reposeful mists and autumn smells” which will provoke his final accounting of the decade, the titular zoo is most of all the “*ailleurs*” (MacNeice 1938: 253), a special world, imbued with its period background, bolstered up and transposed with personal references, plain reportorial style, a variety of intertexts like histories and documents by experts, diary entries, drawings, notes, and a lot of parodying⁴. It is very much concerned with the identity and private history of its visitor, a solitary animal engaged in projecting this special world and its relations. It is both a very private world and

³ See his poem “Snow” (MacNeice 1979: 30).

⁴ Speaking of his omissions in the book, MacNeice mentions the “Zoo’s Occurrence Book which is kept up day by day,” he speaks of other documents not available to the public but also the presence of animals in literature “from Aristotle and Apuleius and the folk stories to Brer Rabbit and Kipling and D.H. Lawrence” (MacNeice 1938: 254), the linguistic wealth of tautologies in nomenclature (like *Bufo bufo*) and also animal films like *Swiss Family Robinson* (MacNeice 1938: 188).

a communal place. The zoo conglomerates multiplicities and excess. It generates movement, noise, sensations, play and games, curiosity, physical pleasure and trash. A dynamic enclosure, the zoo is like a “vast floating multicellular organism,” a “cross between a music hall and a museum,” a “dream – world (MacNeice 1938: 29).”

I read *Zoo* as MacNeice's modern parable in prose. It proceeds parabolically, not for its own sake, but to encourage the return to animals and their return “to language⁵”. As a “kind of double-level writing, or ... sleight-of-hand,” it offers what MacNeice in *Varieties of Parable* described in Freudian terms as latent and manifest meanings (MacNeice 1965: 3). While at the surface level we read the glitter and exciting surfaces of the zoo, the underlying level of this “double-level” writing has more to do with his large and not directly articulated anxiety over life. He goes in and out of the zoo so often that his activities outside begin to mix in with “beasts (MacNeice 1938: 125)” and the way he sees them. A real physical place with gates and terraces, cast-iron decorations, vegetation, cinema, and many special Houses, even the Studio of Animal Art, the zoo is located in proximity to the subject's new place. It is a convenient extension of his home, it is his neighborhood. He says he took a flat “looking over Primrose Hill,” and decided that the zoo “would do for my garden. I should be able to drop into the Zoo for coffee.” He expects to be able to “look at one animal and come out again (MacNeice 1938: 68).” The connection he indicates here has to do with sustenance and the possible transformative value of such occasional domestic space linking raw nature and culture. He acts like a visitor, parabolically journeying to this world, looking at the zoo from within and from outside, from his flat window, and from above, as a close-up and panoramically, in the pattern of dark and light, in rain and in the sun, at its most formal, and when presenting itself with a “certain Hollywood vulgarity (MacNeice 1938: 187).” There is also death and refuse in the zoo, dead rats and mice are common. The close-up of animals “dead on their bellies, their dead hands bent at the wrists, their naked tails, still deader, stretched on the shingle (MacNeice 1938: 191)” show the less familiar sights. But the zoo is also a textual location in annual reports of the Zoological Society, its long documented history which the visitor opens up, “tired of reading

⁵ I owe this phrase to J.M. Coetzee's admirable reading of the poets' engagement with animals and their alien worlds (Coetzee 1999: 47-69).

'literature' (MacNeice 1938: 106)⁶ and which render the zoo in terms of an impressive collection of building projects involving the public and a private support. The visitor "reads" the zoo in books with animal pictures and animal stories, in poetry and prose. It is a site of early memories populated with toy animals, it is a state of the mind, a repository "for our fun or for our science (MacNeice 1938: 239)." The zoo is finally a vast preserving and isolating asylum denied the real dialectic of living, "a life of progress, pattern of dark and light, the necessity of winning our bread which builds our wits, the tension without which there is no music and the conflict without which there is no harmony (MacNeice 1938: 239)."

The London Zoo attracts not only the subject, it "fetches people", it "ranks first among London's public shows". He says its grounds are penetrated by:

two million faces, inhaling and exhaling, goggling and giggling and smiling and joking and smoking and puffing and pouting and yawning and looking in compacts, and of these four million feet, in brogues or sandals or sandshoes or suede or patent leather or python, pattering and tripping and limping and lagging and jumping and stumping and standing (MacNeice 1938: 28).

The crowds carry their personal histories, "intricate family backgrounds." He observes that people moving about the zoo are like "trailing clouds of history" (MacNeice 1938: 76). Each of these men is a conglomerate, in each there are many animals "but the community is undemocratic – the beasts enslaved for ever, caged or buried (MacNeice 1938: 122)." He imagines distinctive characteristics of these private worlds recorded as snaps of synecdochic collage of "new shoes gingerly tripping to the turnstiles – navy and white or black patent leather and *suede*" or a "made-up face, a Cockney accent, a hat that trailed a net of episcopal purple," a "suit too closely fitting" (MacNeice 1938: 94). The noise of the crowd and their "tired," "hearty," "ribald" manners make claims on the space of the "pleasure garden (MacNeice 1938: 125)." People come to experience the London Zoo in their leisure and they leave it without "compromising" their status. People leave "without communion." The "stream of their lives" temporarily diverted does not merge with other currents. The animals and

⁶ The main source is The Reports of the Council and Auditors of the Zoological Society of London (for 1937).

the visitors remain contained in their “own pet little worlds (MacNeice 1938: 124).”

Other histories meet in the zoo. It is a vast public place which includes the zoo’s “main thoroughfare” - the War Memorial right at its main entrance. The Memorial’s form seems occluded by a “happy-go-lucky luxuriance of weed-like flowers and big daisies – and even some mulberry trees (MacNeice 1938: 54).” We read that it is additionally “surrounded by the Reptiliary, the Aquarium, the Reptile House and the Monkey House – also by eight pillar-box-red wire waste-paper baskets (MacNeice 1938: 54).” The Memorial itself is dismissed as an unattractive reproduction of a medieval French “Lantern of the Dead” with “two over-romantic lines from James Elroy Flecker”⁷ as well as a list of twelve names of war victims “killed in the Great War,” the unnamed “– three keepers, five helpers, one messenger, two gardeners, one librarian” are preserved in the special functions they performed (MacNeice 1938: 54). The War Memorial is picked up by a sort of osmotic process, its place on the page shared with the drawing of the functional design of the Penguin Pool’s multiple entrances and exits, stairs and slopes and with the description of the austere Lion House, fitting, he says, Aristotelian “the pleasure proper to tragedy (MacNeice 1938: 56).” In such a busy arrangement, comprehension of isolated singularity is vitiated. History like the prominent rhizomatic, weed-like vegetation partaking of multiple versions of interactions, hitting the senses like the robust geraniums, everywhere has its inalienable meanings. Green patches were practical and in their significance. We learn that during the War, the zoo “did vegetable gardening” and “lunched the troops in its restaurant,” it organized numerous exhibitions “to demonstrate the dangers of blowflies and horse-flies... to demonstrate the wickedness of rats and mice and to publicize the methods of their destruction.” It helped invent “new ways to deal with manure and refuse,” it raised pigs and chickens, and “most noble of all – sacrificed a number of their own show animals for food (MacNeice 1938: 146-147).”

The visitor’s individual history inserted almost accidentally like a parabolic “sleight of hand,” or a “sample of typical personal history,” is used to illustrate personal modification of the attitude necessary for anyone who goes into the zoo (MacNeice 1938: 76). The key to his history are zoos in various European locations. The Dublin Zoo of childhood recollections

⁷ They are inscribed on the plaque of the memorial, at its base and go as follows: “Till the red war gleam like a dim red rose / Lost in the garden the sons of time.”

and subsequent visits, for example, is the place of empty or inadequate cages, passive animals which show signs of exhaustion, and where the Irish grass, as in his autobiographical poems, is always overgrown. The zoo of childhood memories reaches beyond its gates. Animals and their natural companionship define the visitor's remembered place of origin: "the streets were crowded with beasts going to a cattle fair-squealing of pigs, smell of cow-dung and shag – and some children were sitting in the gutter making dung pies." In Ireland, he recollects, there are always wicked goats "by the roadside ... roaming free, leering down at you from gorsy rocks (MacNeice 1938: 97)." He bolsters the fullness of this seemingly natural scenery with the urban view of Dublin which itself "has such a strongly physical presence, even in its brick and stone, that a zoo seems hardly necessary" (MacNeice 1938: 70). Reference to England, where he moved, presents a strikingly different set of relations with animals defined by "most arrogant self-expression (MacNeice 1938: 74)." Its zoos are expected especially by those with "public-school-cum-country-squire attitude" to be vast show grounds and scientific institutions (MacNeice 1938: 221). English large dog shows, displaying artificially bred and kept dogs, demonstrate "artificial products of the fancies (MacNeice 1938: 74)." He endorses these popular "gems of impossible logic or blatant but unconscious egotism – Love me, love my dog and hate everybody else's," their "virulence and vanity (MacNeice 1938: 73)."

The personal chapters in *Zoo* include miniature biographical stories of marginalized animals reduced to the status of pets with which he entertains himself. This relation, like the relation with animals in the zoo, precludes parallel development of their lives. The subject who portrays himself as a dog lover, one with many episodes with pets, has no illusions as to the nature and pattern of these relationships:

When I am alone with my dog, there are not two of us. There is myself and something Other. It gives me a pleasant feeling of power, even of black magic, to be able to order this Other about and to give it food which it actually eats. The dog, as we have domesticated him, is in a sense our creation, a toy, an art-object. We play Pygmalion with him and he comes to life (MacNeice 1938: 64).

The portraits of his dog-pets leave no doubt that they are objectified beings-in-the-world engaging at the owner's will, his double-layered soul. They are not expected to be understood or show understanding; his experience of contact with them can be both "horrifying" but also

“fascinating”. He recollects, for instance, when his bull mastiff bitch puppy, ill and almost paralyzed, “retained her reflexes of obedience and with crippled legs and almost sightless eyes would hobble after one if ordered to (MacNeice 1938:75).” This depiction, in its use of impersonal “one” is a parody of companionship, a spectacle of separation. But even such a grotesque experience with an urban pet seems a gain for the subject. As Berger observes, a relationship with an animal can offer the mirror to parts of a human which would otherwise be not made visible; the pet “*completes him*”, and as a result he becomes “the-special-man-he-is-only-to-his-pet” while the pet becomes reduced and silenced to a sort of the puppet in the private world of the family (Berger 1991:15). MacNeice says that eventually his pet had to be destroyed (MacNeice 1938:75).

The sample of personal history inserted between summer impressions of the zoo takes us only seemingly away from the proper subject. It charts a significant personal change that concerns the subject’s past, his interiorized ancestry. He justifies the digression as a “recantation, a modification of attitude, a putting aside of snobbery” – a pre-requisite for going to the zoo: “no one who goes to the Zoo must go as a snob (MacNeice 1938: 76).” Re-visiting the place of his childhood after many years of absence, “insulated with comfort and private memories (MacNeice 1938:84)”, he unexpectedly sees not the repellent and discredited Ulster, but the pleasantly ordinary and even radiant city. Despised, almost fanatically, the sinister and tyrannical Ulster of his “harassed and dubious childhood (MacNeice 1938: 81)”, emerges in a weekend light as extravagant, sunny, even a comfortable and agreeable place. Surprised or even enraged, he finds it free from the old “macabre elements (MacNeice 1938:81).” On the boat taking him back to London, he decides that it is time to forget his nightmares, to accept, to stop hating.

There are some parallels employed in the way he commands the space of the zoo and, though only momentarily, the space of the family-home. The actualization of the paratactic method is MacNeice’s strategy of gathering, one of the anxious symptoms in the face of the approaching crisis. Aiming at some provisional fusion, this method can assure some comfort and serenity. He approaches both sites with a similar degree of curiosity, attention to detail, and delight. Both sites lend themselves to a consolidating process of inventorying. In the “sample” inserted in the chapter called “A Personal Digression” he speaks of his family’s house “under the Black Mountain” which emerges as no longer black but a

“luminous grey-blue (MacNeice 1938: 81).” Like the London Zoo and like the War Memorial, it, too, is wrapped in foliage, its fullness and richness. The variegated externality of plants, of his favourite azaleas and geranium always disturbs clarity and precision of delineation. The house is old, very comfortable, stuffed with things to look at. Its walls are decorated with framed engravings, oil portraits, floral wallpaper and “plaster vine-leaves grossly choking the cornices (MacNeice 1938: 81).” “Idling” there, eating leftover chocolates, he recognizes he is experiencing a “world without progress”. And this unspectacular, monotonous but insistent “context,” leisurely viewed ephemera not seen for years, attains some higher importance, it leads to an event resulting in a transforming question: “who was I to condemn them?” Its release produces a decisive affective attitude. Successive encounters with the spectacular in the zoo will be marked by this change. But it is amid the throwaway, the over-familiar, the banal, and the useless that this pivotal component of personal history is made. The subject’s emplacement in material and organic excess, challenging the symmetry of the usual sense of distances and proportions, issues in a change of a point of view. It drives him away from himself. In the dizziness of the exterior, he opens up to new ways of looking which produce an ethical potential expressed in Zoo’s central moral lesson. Confronting his child-like desires for pleasure, he answers to the capacity of the encounter with the other. This consciously created dimension of his autobiographical narrative is not incidental but integral to life: “The eyes continued smiling and we left for England. One must not dislike people, I thought, because they are intransigent (MacNeice 1938: 85).”

Zoo’s parabolic, hybrid, and fragmentary narrative drives towards a didactic ending in which the subject encourages the reader to go back to the zoo and to turn to animals, to hear the disconcerting voice: “le Zoo, c’est moi (MacNeice 1938: 255).” This is the semantic message of the parable. Its peculiar coordination of diverse repositories of contrastive images, despite the universalizing drift of the parable, seems a more complex and symptomatic characteristic. Zoo is a menagerie containing things, places, people, and animals, multiplicities and extravagancies which sustain this coalescing territory as a site of private and increasingly public meanings.

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Тереза Бруш

ЗООЛОШКИ ВРТ ЛУЈА МЕКНИСА КАО ЛИЧНА МЕНАЖЕРИЈА

Сажетак

Овај есеј бави се проблемом стварања и ревидирања личне историје у политичком и социјалном окружењу тридесетих година двадесетог века и начином на који појединац мења став о свету као последицу интимног прихватања живота у лондонском зоолошком врту. У есеју се лондонски зоолошки врт посматра као параболо историје. У есеју се износи став да је *Зоолошки врт* у суштини хибридна

аутобиографија која стреми дидактичком завршетку храбрећи читаоца да се окрене животињама и ослушне збуњујући глас: „Le Zoo, c'est moi“.

Кључне речи: параболоа, искуство, поглед, лична историја, збирка

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DISINTEGRATION OF A JEWISH POLISH IDENTITY AND RE-INVENTION OF A POSTMODERN HYBRIDIZED SELF IN EVA HOFFMAN'S *LOST IN TRANSLATION: LIFE IN A NEW LANGUAGE*

Abstract

Despite the calls for a comparative analysis of multicultural/ethnic American life writing, voiced, for example, by Werner Sollors in *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (1986) or James Robert Payne *Multicultural Autobiography: American Lives* (1992), relatively few studies have been devoted to contemporary Central or Eastern European immigrant autobiographies. One of the early discussions of several "European ethnics" (of Vladimir Nabokov, Alfred Kazin and Eva Hoffman) was featured in *Between Cultures: Contemporary American Bicultural Autobiography* (1994) and authored by a Polish Americanist, Jerzy Durczak (Danuta Zadworna Fjellestad "European ethnics"). Although many Central or Eastern European immigrant autobiographers are university educated (some of them are even Nobel Prize winners such as Czesław Miłosz and Joseph Brodsky) and express their "passing into a new language" in quite complex narratives, their autobiographies have been analyzed primarily in comparison to other ethnic American life narratives of visible minorities such as those written by Maxine Hong Kingston or Richard Rodriguez (e.g. Petra Fachinger's "Lost in Nostalgia: The Autobiographies of Eva Hoffman and Richard Rodriguez" or Ada Savin's "Transnational Memoirs in Dialogue: Eva Hoffman and Richard Rodriguez")

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Gunthorun Gudmendsdottir -Eva Hoffman, Michael Ondantje, Kyoko Mori in *Autobiography and Fiction in Postmodern Life Writing* 2003 etc.).

Key words: multicultural, ethnic, immigrant, autobiography, Eva Hoffman, language, minority

Despite the calls for an analysis of multicultural American life writing, voiced by such literary critics as Werner Sollors in *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* or James Robert Payne *Multicultural Autobiography: American Lives*, relatively few studies have been devoted to contemporary Central or Eastern European immigrant autobiographies written by “European ethnics” (Zadworna Fjellestad 1995: 195, 133). Although many Central or Eastern European immigrant autobiographers are university educated (some of them are even Nobel Prize winners such as Czesław Miłosz and Joseph Brodsky) and express their experience of “a life in a new language” in quite complex narratives, their autobiographies have been analyzed primarily in comparison to other ethnic American life narratives of visible minorities such those written by Gloria Anzaldúa, Maxine Hong Kingston or Richard Rodriguez (Hoffman, Browdy Hernandez, Fachinger).

Such a comparative analysis often disregards the specificity of European ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Jewish Polish) and the disparate responses to the pressures of assimilating to American culture. For example, for an immigrant who, like Eva Hoffman, had been initially raised in a Jewish family assimilated to Polish culture, the transition first to Canada and then to the United States constituted repeated cultural shocks. It deprived her of a recognizable frame of reference and shattered her adolescent sense of self. The experience of multiple cultural and linguistic dislocations produced a painful polyphony of voices struggling for acknowledgment and power. The shock of her double emigration was further aggravated by the long-term consequences of being a second-generation Holocaust survivor under the care of her traumatized and disoriented parents.

Eva Hoffman’s life narrative, *Lost in Translation: Life in a New Language* (1989), was written in English but was devoted also to her early attachment to the Polish language. [It was termed a (“semiotic memoir” by Stanislaw Barańczak) to highlight the significance she ascribed to the problems caused by second language acquisition and the learning of new cultural

codes in forming her hybridized immigrant self.] Mary Besemeres and Susan Trigell even credited Hoffman's account of translating herself into a new language as instrumental in the establishment of a new subgenre of women's autobiography called "the language memoir" (Besemeres/Trigell 2005: 263). Other women's language memoirs include Alice Kaplan's *French Lessons* (1993), Shirley Geok-lin Lim's *Among the White Moon Faces* (1996), Natasha Lvovich's *The Multilingual Self* (1997) or Kyoko Mori's *Polite Lies* (1997).

Significantly, her immigration first to Canada at the age of 13, then to the United States to get a college education, was imposed on her by her parents, Holocaust survivors. Hoffman perceptively analyses her linguistic alienation, accompanied by the emotional disintegration she experienced in the new countries, by making intertextual comparisons to other immigrant narratives (e.g. M. Antin's classic success tale of assimilation *The Promised Land*). She looks back on her childhood in Cracow with nostalgia for lost familiar places, understandable cultural codes and favourite words untranslatable into English. Even though she recalls a few minor cases of Polish anti-Semitism, she describes her early life in Poland as contented/pleasant/, offering her both very satisfying social contacts as well as prospects for an education and career as a concert pianist. Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*, the account of her unwilling emigration, records her initial disorientation, degradation in status, fewer career opportunities and even the loss of her female attractiveness as she finds it difficult to conform to Canadian and American standards of feminine beauty. Hoffman vividly describes the painful split ("the entropy of articulateness") she has experienced between the languages of her "private" Polish and Jewish self and that of her "public" American persona. Later a Harvard PhD graduate in English literature and a writer at *The New Yorker*, Hoffman eventually constructs her hybridized identity as a New York intellectual, "a partial American, a sort of resident alien" (Hoffman 1989: 221).

Lost in Translation opens with a scene of young Ewa as she is reluctantly leaving her native Poland. Ewa vividly recreates the stress which her unwilling emigration at thirteen first to Canada then to the US has inflicted on her:

I desperately want time to stop, to hold the ship still with the force of my will. I am suffering my first, severe attack of nostalgia, or *teşknota*—a word that adds to nostalgia the tonalities of sadness and longing. It is a

feeling whose shades and degrees I'm destined to know intimately, but at this hovering moment, it comes to me like a visitation from a whole new geography of emotions, an annunciation of how much an absence can hurt (Hoffman 1989: 4).

Her pain is intensified by the memories of her the happy childhood in Cracow. As she recalls at the moment of departure the images of summer vacations, piano lessons, fascinating visits to the libraries and good times with her Polish friends,, she experiences a sense of “an enormous cold blankness—a darkening, erasure, of the imagination ...as if the heavy curtain has been pulled over the future” (Hoffman 1989: 4). Even though her Jewish parents assimilated to Polish culture and perceive emigration as an economic opportunity and escape from the “sense of disaffiliation”/ alienation and the trauma of Shoah/ the Holocaust that took the lives of their relatives (Hoffman 1989: 58), their decision is incomprehensible to Ewa, and she compares it to the loss of her whole way of life, the familiar universe: “We can't be leaving all this behind—but we are. I am thirteen years old, and we are emigrating. It's a notion of such crushing, definitive finality that to me it might as well mean the end of the world” (Hoffman 1989: 3). She painfully acknowledges her lack of agency and the deprivations she suffers as a result of this initial displacement.

Both the beginning of this self-narrative and its structural composition signal the theme of the costs immigration involves. Unlike many other immigrant narrators (Mary Antin), Ewa does not represent her immigration to America as a promise. Instead she associates Canada with desolate places like the “Sahara” and the first part of the book, devoted to her loving recreation of her childhood in Poland, is entitled “Paradise.” Her painful adolescence in Canada, described in the second part of her narrative bears the ominous title “Exile.” The title of the third part “The New World” focusing on her alienation during her college years and her gradual though painful adjustment during adulthood in the United States emphasizes the strangeness of her adopted country rather than the promise or opportunity with which it was usually associated.

The account of her stay in Canada (Vancouver), records a number of radical changes. First Ewa and her sister undergo a “second baptism,” an experience recorded by many immigrant narratives, when Ewa's and her sister's Polish names are substituted by their English equivalents. This increases their acute sense of disorientation. Ewa's privileged status as a talented as well as an attractive girl, which she enjoyed in Poland, also

disappears when she becomes a “voiceless” immigrant unfamiliar with the Canadian culture’s social customs and bodily regimens.

Strangely enough, the incomprehensible rules and codes of her new country make the adolescent Eva wistfully recall her agency and the relative freedom she enjoyed in Communist Poland, where she was at least familiar with the System, which she compares unfavourably to her immigrant position in Canada. Her relocation to Canada is aggravated by/ also accompanied by the change in the economic situation of her family as her parents prove profoundly disoriented and often incompetent, powerless caretakers after their transition to the adopted society. Due to this change, Eva’s confusion increases as she is expected to take over some of her parents’ roles (at one point in *After Such Knowledge* she describes her testimony/testifying in court on behalf of her mother). The numerous changes accompanying the immigration and life in Canada soon prove overwhelming, and Eva experiences a deep identity crisis. As she struggles to articulate her concerns in a new language and realizes that in this sphere she is also severely restricted, she collapses into a prolonged disintegration, a sort of “divided consciousness.” An eloquent speaker of Polish, Eva recounts her “silencing” in Canada as a devastating experience:

“I’m not filled with language anymore, I have only a memory of fullness to anguish me with the knowledge that, in this dark and empty state, I don’t really exist” (Hoffman 1989: 108).

Indeed language, as the subtitle of Hoffman’s autobiography *Life in a New Language* suggests, is her main concern. During the long period of struggle to master English in order to fully express herself, a project Ewa also realizes through her decision to write her diary in English and by reading voraciously and learning new words –through this process, the adolescent Eva becomes acutely aware of the performative aspect of many signifying practices and the emotional impact this knowledge exerts on her: “this radical disjoining between word and thing is a desiccating alchemy, draining the world not only of significance but of its colors, striations, nuances—its very existence. It’s the loss of a living connection” (Hoffman 1989: 107). Unlike her peers, she becomes increasingly self-conscious about the pervasiveness of cultural and ethnic stereotypes and her own displacement:

For me, I want to figure out, more urgently than before, where I belong in this America that’s made up of so many sub-Americas. I want, somehow, to give up the condition of being a foreigner. I

no longer want to tell people quaint stories from the Old Country, I don't want to be told that 'exotic is erotic,' or that I have Eastern European intensity, or brooding Galician eyes. ..I no longer want to have the prickly , unrelenting consciousness that I'm living in the medium of specific culture.... I want to reenter, through whatever Looking Glass will take me there, a state of ordinary reality (Hoffman, 202).

For a long time Eva experiences a painful sense of being a “usurper,” yet she begins fighting with her friends—they believe they are rebellious while Ewa perceives them as mere actors in cultural scripts. This awareness and estrangement Eva feels among her American friends generates a continued /constant, prolonged/ conflict and her overwhelming emotional responses:

Much of the time, I'm in a rage. Immigrant rage, I call it, and it can erupt at any moment, at seemingly miniscule provocation. It's directed with equal force at “the Culture”—that weird artifice I'm imprisoned in—and my closest friends. Or rather, it's directed at the culture-in-my-friends. My misfortune is to see the grid of general assumptions drawn all over particular personalities, to notice the subjection to collective ideology where I should only see the free play of subjectivity (Hoffman 1989: 203).

Already a lecturer at the University of New Hampshire, she struggles to master the English language: “I've become obsessed with words...If I take enough, then maybe I can incorporate the language, make it part of my psyche and my body. I will not leave an image unworded, will not let anything cross my mind till I find the right phrase to pin the shadow down” (Hoffman 1989: 216). Even in the early stage of writing her diary in English, this undertaking eventually produces a negative impact on Eva's Polish self: “Polish is becoming a dead language, the language of untranslatable past” (Hoffman 1989: 120).

Yet despite her increasing proficiency and eloquence in English, Eva feels her voice sometimes fails her. In some emotionally charged situations, she can't locate registers properly, sometimes she even can't find her voice at all. One of her male friends is introduced in her narrative as a particularly fluent/vivid speaker. As she recounts his anecdotes, she calls them “his riff.” Even as she responds with admiration to his anecdotes, she can detect the sense of artifice in her voice and is frightened by her bodily response and

emotional reaction her occasional inability to perform naturally in English: “My throat tightens. Paralysis threatens. Speechlessness used to be one of the common symptoms of classic hysteria. I feel as though in me, hysteria is brought on by tongue-tied speechlessness” (Hoffman 1989: 219). Even long after her double migration, Eva feels overpowered by the polyethnic influences she is exposed to: “Since I lack a voice of my own, the voices of others invade me as if I were a silent ventriloquist...Eventually the voices enter me by assuming them, I gradually make them mine. I am being remade, fragment by fragment, like a patchwork quilt; there are more colors in the world than I ever knew” (Hoffman 1989: 220). Gradually her sense of being overwhelmed by the foreign cultures gives way to her realization of becoming re-invented/ reconstructed in the process of her partial Americanization and she redefines her sense of self as a sort of “hybrid creature”.

As she discusses the social and cultural changes brought about by the counterculture movement during her college years in Texas, she eventually begins to feel less estranged in the atmosphere of social disorientation of the 1960s:

In a splintered society, what does one assimilate to? Perhaps the very splintering itself. Once I enter college, the rivulet of my story does join up with the stream of my generation’s larger saga, and the events of my life begin to resemble those of peers. Marriage, divorce, career indecisions, moving from city to city, ambivalences about love and work and every fundamental fact of human activity. I share with my American generation an acute sense of dislocation and the equally acute challenge of having to invent a place and identity for myself without the traditional supports. It could be said that the generation I belong to has been characterized by its prolonged refusal to assimilate—and it is in my very uprootedness that I’m its member (Hoffman 1989: 197).

She realizes that her sense of being an exile is not limited to her individual experience but that it is permeating many individuals contesting American culture.

When Eva is awarded her doctoral degree, which she terms “the certificate of full Americanization,” and as she teaches literature in English, she experiences a moment of sudden realization and finally feels at home in English when she is reading one of Eliot’s poems: “I’m back within the

music of language, and Eliot's words descend on me with a sort of grace. Words become, as they were in childhood, beautiful things—except this is better, because they're now crosshatched with complexity of meaning, with the sonorities of felt, sensuous thought (Hoffman 1989: 186)."

Yet apart from the episodes invoking the fulfilling moments of being able to enjoy speaking English, Hoffman's non-linear, fragmented account of "a life in a new language" vividly dramatizes the agonizing/painful/ split of her consciousness into separate linguistic selves. She often reconstructs her internal dialogues in Polish and English voices, talking about emotions, relationships and major decisions in her professional life. In her inner dialogue about marrying an American despite her fond memories and emotional ties with Marek, her Polish teenage boyfriend, Eva evokes/expresses her experience of confusing ambivalence over the divergent preferences of her English and Polish selves:

"Should you marry him? The question comes in English.

Yes.

Should you marry him the question echoes in Polish.

No.

But I love him. I'm in love with him.

Really? Really? Do you love him as you understand love? As you loved Marek?

Forget Marek. He is another person. He's handsome and kind and good.

You don't feel creaturely warmth. You're imagining him. You're imagining your emotions. You're forcing it.

[...]

Why should I listen to you? You don't necessarily know the truth about me just because you speak in that language. Just because you seem to come from deeper within" (Hoffman 1989: 199).

She eventually decides to silence her resistant Polish voice with a sharp rebuke: "I don't need you anymore. I want you to be silent. Shuddup." (Hoffman 1989: 199). The dialogue vividly represents the defeat of her adolescent spontaneous self and the triumph of the adult common sense and A similar painful bilingual dialogue concerns her decision not to choose music as her career under new circumstances of immigrant life:

“Should you become a pianist? The question comes in English.
No, you mustn’t. You can’t.
Should you become pianist the question echoes in Polish.
Yes, you must. At all costs.
The costs will be too high.
The costs don’t matter. Music is what you’re meant to do.
Don’t be so dramatic. I can play for myself. For pleasure.[...]
Reasons, reasons... You’re passionate about it...
You have a duty to yourself.
I live here now. I can’t just close my eyes and follow my passions,
I have to figure out how to live my life. [...]
What did you want? What do you want?
I want... I want not to have to change so much. But I have to.
I have to catch up to myself. It’s not just the question of music,
you know.
Yes, I know. But it’s going to hurt, giving it up.
Yes, it’s going to hurt. (1999-2000) [...]

Eventually, her opposing bilingual voices call for a reconciliation of her Polish self with her multicultural self/subjectivity.

“But we’ll get along somehow.
Yes, we’ll get along (2000).”

Ironically, years later after considering the dissatisfaction she and many of her adult childhood friends feel despite their professional successes, she ponders divorcing her American husband. Her deliberation is represented as an internal dialogue of her voices in two languages: “I’ve acquired new ideals, do you mind?” the American voice says. “You’re an immigrant, you can’t afford ideals” the Polish one answers. The debate ends when the Polish voice says, “I’ll never leave you quite alone...” The American voice responds with a new assurance, “But I don’t have to listen to you any longer. I am as real as you now. I’m the real one” (Hoffman 1989: 199).

Different cultural concepts about marriage and life are discussed in these internal dialogues with the awareness that an “incompatible marriage” is incompatible only according to an American worldview/frame of reference. In her internal dialogues Ewa does not only focus on decision making but she also attempts to imagine an alternative reality- as if she

still had been living in Poland. This discussion is followed by her dreams of Cracow and the description of her actual travel to Poland accompanied by “this appearance of seemingly forgotten things, as eerie and fulfilling as if one woke up to find one’s dream materialized” (Hoffman 1989: 32).

Hoffman doesn’t focus on the reconstruction of an orderly linear narrative of successive events, but she evokes the language of plural selves and the turning points in the transfiguration from immigrant subjectivity to her ultimate re-invention as “a sort of resident alien.” She notes down her dreams featuring “bilingual puns” (243) and finally describes the new feeling as if English was transported in her blood, has entered her cells and even her unconscious:

Maybe, behind my back and while I wasn’t looking, I’ve acquired a second unconscious, an American one, made up of diverse cultural matter. Like any unconscious, this one is hard to pin down. I only know that the hybrid creature I’ve become is made up of two parts Americana, that the pastiche has lots of local color. Despite my resistance, or perhaps through the very act, I’ve become a partial American, a sort of resident alien (Hoffman 1989: 221).

Yet despite her newly acquired linguistic competence, Eva is still burdened by her consciousness of (Shoah) the legacy of the Holocaust transmitted to her by her parents’ war stories and post-traumatic stress symptoms. After the suicide of her Polish childhood love, Marek, who migrated to Israel, Eva considers the fate of herself and her Jewish friends:

sometimes, I think of him and Zofia and myself, and others like us I know, as part of the same story—the story of children who came from the war, and who couldn’t make sufficient sense of the several worlds they grew up in, and didn’t know by what lights to act. I think, sometimes, that we were children too overshadowed by our parents’ stories, and without enough sympathy for ourselves, for the serious dilemmas of our own lives, and who thereby couldn’t live up to our parents’ desire—amazing in its strength—to create new life and to bestow on us a new world. And who found it hard to learn that in this new world too one must learn all over again, each time from the beginning, the trick of going on (Hoffman 1989: 230).

Even though Eva and many of her childhood Jewish friends were assimilated to a Polish culture, the emotional impact of war has affected the second generation of Holocaust survivors in a different but also profound way. Eva recalls her mother disclosing to her the fact that she was Jewish although they practiced just some of Jewish customs and Eva never learned to speak Yiddish. Eva's mother tries to make her aware of their complex ethnic identity and the devastation they and their relatives were subjected to during the war: "My mother wants me to know what happened, and I keep every detail of what she tells me in my memory like black beads. It's a matter of honor to remember, like affirming one's Jewishness. But I don't understand what I remember. To atone for what happened I should relive it all with her, and I try. Not really, I can't go as near this pain as I should. But I can't draw from it either." (Hoffman 1989: 25). After growing up in the shadow of war atrocities, Eva decides to distance herself from her mother's anguished memories/stories as she realizes that "Surely there is no point in duplicating suffering, in adding mine to hers. And surely there are no useful lessons I can derive from my parents' experience: it does not apply to my life; it is in fact misleading, making me into a knee-jerk pessimist" (Hoffman 1989: 25).

Many years later Hoffman will decide to examine the numerous consequences of growing up as a second generation Holocaust survivor in her interdisciplinary study *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (Hoffman: 2004).

In her first narrative, *Lost in Translation*, however, Eva decides that for her the defining experience of her adolescence and early adulthood is that of double immigration and being rendered inarticulate in the new cultures. Ultimately, it is her psychotherapist who provides the term for her disorientation, instability and the ensuing emotional crisis. According to him, Eva's trauma is caused by "culture shock" produced by multiple displacements (to Canada and the US). Eva decides to retell her story of uprooting/dislocation/ in the adopted language to a sympathetic American listener:

For me, therapy is partly translation therapy, the talking cure, a second-language cure...But gradually, it becomes a project of translating backward. The way to jump over the Great Divide is to crawl backward over it in English. It's only when I retell my whole story, back to the beginning, and from the beginning onward, in one language, that I can reconcile the voices within

me with each other; it's only then that the person who judges the voices and tells the stories begins to emerge (Hoffman 1989: 272).

She self-consciously analyses her attitude towards her adopted language, comparing it to her mother tongue. She becomes aware that gradually her internal dialogue is conducted more often in English with only occasional Polish phrases, and she mourns the gradual loss of her native language: "When I talk to myself now, I talk in English. English is the language in which I've become an adult...In Polish the whole provinces of adult experience are missing" (Hoffman 1989: 272)

Finally, when Eva visits her American friend, Miriam, she realizes that her frame of social references is re-established: "it is only within intelligible human context that a face can become dear, a person known. Pattern is the soil of significance; and it is surely one of the hazards of emigration, and exile, and extreme mobility, that one is uprooted from that soil." (Hoffman 1989: 278). It is in the presence of this sympathetic and attentive listener that Eva can finally heal her trauma of disorientation, restore the severed emotional ties and envision her future. Her self-narrative closes with the image of the two friends admiring the spring flowers in a Cambridge garden permeated by Eva's new sense of her self comfortable with her new place: "Right now, this is the place where I'm alive. How could there be any other place?" (Hoffman 1989: 28). The final test of Eva's adjustment is her satisfaction with the language of her new voice: "The language of this is sufficient. I am here now" (Hoffman 1989: 280). Eva's previous ambitious desire to tell "every story" to articulate "the whole world at once" (Hoffman 1989: 11) gives way to a more modest task of communicating effectively her sensations of a given moment while feeling at ease in her new sense of self. However, Eva is also aware that her re-invented postmodern nomadic self speaks also a hybrid voice: "When I speak Polish now, it is infiltrated, permeated, and inflected by the English in my head. Each language modifies the other, crossbreeds with it, fertilizes it. Each language makes the other relative. Like everybody, I am the sum of my languages" (Hoffman 1989: 273).

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ДЕЗИНТЕГРИСАЊЕ ЈЕВРЕЈСКО-ПОЉСКОГ ИДЕНТИТЕТА И
СТВАРАЊЕ ПОСТМОДЕРНОГ ХИБРИДНОГ БИЋА У ДЕЛУ
ЕВЕ ХОФМАН ИЗГУБЉЕН У ПРЕВОДУ: ЖИВОТ У НОВОМ ЈЕЗИКУ

Сажетак

Упркос потреби за компаративном анализом мултикултурног/етничког америчког животног писма на коју су указали, на пример, Вернер Солорс (Werner Sollors) у делу *Даље од етничитета: хармонија и суноврат у америчкој култури* (*Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*, 1986) или Џејмс Роберт Пејн (James Robert Payne) у делу *Мултикултурна аутобиографија; америчко искуство* (*Multicultural Autobiography: American Lives*, 1992), релативно мало је студија које се баве савременим централним или источно европским имигрантским аутобиографијама. Једна од најранијих дискусија неколицине рођених Европљана, Владимира Набокова, Алфреда Казина и Еве Хофман, (Vladimir Nabokov, Alfred Kazin, Eva Hoffman) представљена је у делу *Између култура: савремена америчка двокултурна аутобиографија* (*Between Cultures: Contemporary American Bicultural Autobiography*, 1994) Американца пољског порекла Јиржија Дурчака (Jerzy Durczak, Danuta Zadworna Fjellestad "European ethnics"). Иако су многи од централно или источно-европских имиграната универзитетски образовани, неки чак и добитници Нобелове награде као Чеслав Милош (Czeslaw Milosz) и Јозеф Бродски (Joseph Brodsky) и изражавају се на другом језику у веома комплексним наративним творевинама, њихове аутобиографије су анализирани преваходно у поређењу са другим животним писмима Американаца по рођењу, припадника мањинских група као што су Максин Хонг Кингстон (Maxine Hong Kingston) или Ричард Родригез (Richard Rodriguez), на пример, дело Петре Фашингер, „Изгубљена носталгија: Аутобиографија Еве Хофман и Ричарда Родригеза“ (e.g. Petra Fachinger's "Lost in Nostalgia: The Autobiographies of Eva Hoffman and Richard Rodriguez" или Аде Савин (Ada Savin) „Транснационални мемоари у дијалогу; Ева Хофман и Ричард Родригез“ ("Transnational Memoirs in Dialogue: Eva Hoffman and Richard Rodriguez") Гунторун Гундмендсдотир-Ева Хофман, Мајкл Ондантје, Киоко Мори (Gunthorun Gudmendsdottir -Eva Hoffman, Michael Ondantje, Kyoko Mori) у делу *Аутобиографија и дикција у постмодернистичком животном писму* 2003 (*Autobiography and Fiction in Postmodern Life Writing* 2003), итд.

Кључне речи: мултикултурност, етничитет, имигрант, аутобиографија, Ева Хофман, језик, мањина

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“HEY, COME ON, WE’RE ALL AMERICANS HERE”: THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN IDENTITY IN JOHN UPDIKE’S *TERRORIST*

Abstract

In his ‘post-9/11 novel’ *Terrorist* (2006) John Updike portrays Ahmad, an American high school boy struggling to come to terms with his hyphenated Arab-Irish-American identity in a multi-ethnic US American environment. Trying to redefine his place as a citizen in a ‘western’ culture, the stereotypical ascriptions of ‘Arab’ and ‘Muslim’ influence the protagonist’s self-perception and his identity formation as he “fits the racial profile of white anxiety” (Davis 2001: 48). Updike’s representation of a young Muslim-American in post-9/11 New Jersey employs all sorts of clichés and has been heavily criticized by reviewers for the stereotypical and hollow depiction of his young protagonist. In this paper, Updike’s fictional interpretation of Islamist terrorism as a literary response to 9/11 and the “Clash of Civilizations” is investigated.

Key words: identity, Americanism, Islam, terrorism

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Introduction

In his twenty-second novel *Terrorist* (2006)¹ John Updike portrays an American high school boy who grows up in New Prospect, New Jersey, converts himself to Islam at age eleven and a few years later nearly sacrifices his life for the jihad by planning to detonate a suicide bomb in Lincoln Tunnel, connecting New Jersey and Manhattan.

When almost at the end of the novel Ahmad's Jewish high school guidance counselor Jack Levy manages to enter the bomb truck and tries to prevent Ahmad from pressing the detonation button, Jack says, "Hey, come on, we're all Americans here. That's the idea, didn't they tell you that at Central High? Irish-Americans, African-Americans, Jewish-Americans; there are even Arab-Americans" (Updike 2006: 301).

Despite the obvious irony of this statement, Levy is touching upon one of the key issues of the novel: the different cultural backgrounds of the people surrounding Ahmad who himself embodies both East and West and tries to come to terms with his hybridity. Focusing on Ahmad (Ashmawy) Mulloy and the way he relates to his multi-cultural environment, this paper attempts an analysis of the fictional representation of Muslim-American identity for which John Updike has been heavily criticized.

Terrorist appeared five years after September 11, 2001² and references the tragic WTC attacks like more than one hundred other American novels that have come out since 9/11 (cf. Däwes 2010: 495).³ The title itself not only points to the protagonist's destiny but also refers to a problem of increasing importance: Ever since 9/11, people perceived as *Muslim* or *Arab* run an even higher risk of being associated with terrorism, as Mike Davis points out: "The real burden of the new urban fear – the part that is not hallucinatory or hyperbolized – is borne by those who fit the racial problem of white anxiety: Arab and Muslim Americans [...] For those caught squarely in the middle of this paranoid *gestalt* [...] there is the threat of violence" (Davis 2001: 48).

¹ Henceforth quoted directly in the text with page numbers.

² The German translation appeared exactly on September 11, 2006.

³ In her article "Close Neighbors to the Unimaginable": Literary Projections of Terrorists' Perspectives (Martin Amis, John Updike, Don DeLillo)" Däwes focuses on novels that are written, as the title already indicates, from the terrorists' perspective – an approach that only a few "9/11 novels" have taken so far.

Although most American Muslims are not Arab, and most Americans of Arab descent are not Muslim, but Christian, as Paul M. Barrett explains in his excellent portrait of American Islam (Barrett 2007: 6), 'Arab' and 'Muslim' are very often equated, and the idea that Arabs are terrorists and Muslims fundamentalists has already been elaborated on by Edward Said (1978/2001 and 1998). These stereotypes persisted already before 9/11 (for a detailed analysis, see Susan Akram 2002), yet, they were reinforced after the WTC attacks; in the six weeks after 9/11, civil rights groups estimated more than six murders and "one thousand serious assaults committed against people perceived as 'Arab' or 'Muslim'" (Davis 2001: 48), and a 2006 Gallup poll has shown that four in ten Americans admitted feeling prejudices against Muslims (ibid.). Four in ten "would require Muslims to carry special identification cards and undergo more intensive security checks at airports" (ibid.). It is thus no wonder that many US citizens of Arab descent doubt whether they count as "real" Americans (ibid.) – a feeling that has been reinforced by political measures such as the US PATRIOT Act⁴ of 2001 and other examples of US "anti terrorist" legislation (cf. Akram 2002: 69f.).

Against this backdrop, John Updike decided to broach the issue of anti-Islamist attitudes in the US, but chose a new and rather unexpected vantage point: that of a fundamentalist Muslim would-be terrorist. Updike explains his decision in an interview with Charles McGrath in *The New York Times*:

When Mr. Updike switched the protagonist's religion to Islam, he explained, it was because he "thought he had something to say from the standpoint of a terrorist." He went on: "I think I felt I could understand the animosity and hatred which an Islamic believer would have for our system. Nobody's trying to see it from that point of view. I guess I have stuck my neck out here

⁴ **U**niting and **S**trengthening **A**merica by **P**roviding **A**ppropriate **T**ools **R**equired to **I**ntercept and **O**bstruct **T**errorism Act of 2001 (US PATRIOT Act) (United States, 107th Congress). The contrived acronym reinforces the message of the Act by linking patriotism to the War on Terror, shifting the meaning of the word "patriot" from "one who loves his or her country and supports its authority and interests" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary 2009 – "patriot") to "nationalist" or even "chauvinist" in the sense of "one who shows excessive favoritism towards his or her country" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary 2009 – "nationalist").

in a number of ways, but that's what writers are for, maybe."
(McGrath 2006: 1)

The terrorist's perspective Updike employs is not only a thought-provoking contribution to literary representations of 9/11 but also provides „the 'hijacked' imagination with counter-narratives and perform[s] a range of psychological, political, and cultural functions which complement and diversify the cultural memory of 9/11“ (Däwes 2010: 497 f.). Updike's contribution may be unconventional, but it is at the same time absolutely relevant as he portrays Islamist terrorism as inherent in American society – and not as something coming from outside as its diametrically opposed *Other*. Updike appropriates the terrorist's perspective in order to show that Ahmad is simply a human being, a victim even, that many readers will be able to relate to (cf. Däwes: 508). Däwes continues to argue that „the fictional adoption of the terrorist's perspective can be read as a metonymic means of self-exploration“ (Däwes: 502) – demanding a different way of dealing with religious and ethnic diversity in the United States of America.

Ahmad is the son of a Catholic Irish-American mother and an Egyptian father who grows up in New Prospect, New Jersey, the fictional version of Patterson where the terrorists around Mohammed Atta had stayed for some time before September 11, 2001. Ahmad tries to come to terms with his Irish – Arab – American hybridity and is surrounded by various *hyphenated Americans* that serve as identification figures for the teenager: His Irish-American mother, his atheist-Jewish high school guidance counselor Jacob/Jack Levy, his African-American Christian short-term girlfriend Joryleen, his Arab-American boss Charlie Chehab, a CIA undercover agent, and the Yemeni imam Shaik Rashid. But *Terrorist* is not only about an American Muslim's trajectory and his difficulties to come to terms with the American way of life. It is also about the search for identity in a multi-ethnic society. The protagonist's identity crisis leads to a desperate search for structure and stability, and he finally encounters directions and guidance in Islamic fundamentalism. In *Terrorist*, however, Updike writes not so much about Islamic fundamentalism as an external threat but as a phenomenon related to the religious development of the United States more generally, as Walter Grünfweig has pointed out (Grünfweig 2006: 1). Fundamentalism in this case is not seen as something religious but rather related to the feeling of “belonging” in a post-modern world. Thus, the novel is actually not so much about the accurate depiction of Muslim-American identity but about what makes a young man radical in 21st century America. I agree with

Grünzweig who concedes that for this reason, the dominant perspective is that of Ahmad who condemns the social, cultural and ideological deficits of US American, respectively „Western“ life (cf. Grünzweig 2006: 1).

In *Terrorist*, one could argue, Updike employs an entirely essentialist approach to cultural identity, including clichéd and stereotypical presentations of Arabs and Muslims that correspond to what Edward Said most prominently has observed on a more general level regarding the treatment of Islam in the US: “So far as the United States seems to be concerned, it is only a slight overstatement to say that Moslems and Arabs are essentially seen as either oil suppliers or potential terrorists” (Said 1998: 1). Whereas critics such as Birgit Däwes (2010: 509), Rana Sweis (2006: 1), or James Wood (2006: 2) provide ample evidence that Said’s assumptions are correct, I find Yvonne Zipp’s argument equally pervasive: in *Terrorist*, she argues, also African-American, Irish-American, or Jewish-American characters are presented in an essentialist way:

American Muslims probably won’t be lining up to shake Updike’s hand: All the Muslim characters, with one exception, are employed in the terrorism business, and Ahmad’s imam is portrayed as a sneering zealot. But frankly, none of the characters in *Terrorist* exactly defy stereotype. There are two African-American teens: They work as a pimp and a hooker. Guidance counselor Jack Levy, the lone Jewish character, is both cheap and guilt-ridden. You get the idea. (Zipp 2006: 1)

Charles Demers is even more critical in his analysis: „The characters that inhabit Ahmad’s world are uniformly caricatures: secular Jews are over-thinking and libidinous; African-American men are violent pimps with ridiculous names (specifically, in this case, *Tylenol Jones*); women are either pathetic spinsters, obese and sexless food-obsessed cartoons, intellectually inconsequential sluts or sex workers” (Demers 2006: 2). Although Demers and Zipp are right in stating that Updike’s descriptions are almost caricatures, I argue that he uses overstatement and essentialism deliberately. What Updike, I believe, is concerned with in *Terrorist* is a renegotiation of Americanness for all of his characters and a search for or re-affirmation of some common ground beyond ethnic and religious borders. The characters in the book actually “humanize” each other (cf. Grünzweig 2006: 2), and the story of Ahmad is not the story of Mohammed Atta, but of a Muslim-American teenager, maybe the more radical 21st

century version of “H. al-din Caulfield” as has been ironically argued by Demers (2006: 1). Although Updike’s intentions are again subverted by the ambivalences the text reveals, Updike writes in the tradition of a utopian discourse of American identity in spite of ethnic and religious differences; Ahmad needs to negotiate his American identity amidst his different role models, and the main question Updike asks throughout the novel seems to reverberate St. Jean de Crèvecoeur’s question “What, then, is the American, this new man?” (Crèvecoeur 1782/1986: 69): By presenting various models of Americanness in the novel, Updike indirectly offers a concept of identification for Ahmad that is not essentialist, but recognizes the discursive constructedness of identity in the post-modern world.

Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy is the son of a lapsed Catholic Irish American, would-be bohemian mother, Teresa, and an Egyptian exchange student, Omar Ashmawy, who abandoned the family when Ahmad was only three years old. In search for his identity, the confused adolescent Ahmad is looking for a father figure in Islam: “He thought he might find in this religion a trace of the handsome father who had receded at the moment his memories were beginning” (Updike 2006: 99). He eventually finds two *ersatz* fathers - Sheik Rashid, the sly, fundamentalist Yemeni imam, who teaches Ahmad Arabic and the Qu’ran, and a Lebanese-American young man, Charlie Chehab, who is actually a CIA agent. Yet, the imam does not accept Ahmad as one of his kin. Ahmad does not even speak Arabic, and his *otherness* is too apparent: “To him, Ahmad is American. No amount of zeal and Qur’an studies can change his mother’s race or his father’s absence. [...] Sheikh Rashid – a man slight and slim as a dagger, with a dangerous slyness about him, [...], does not offer himself as a father; there is in his regard of Ahmad something fraternal and sardonic, a splinter of hostility” (Updike 2006: 145). Although the pupil tries very hard to learn the language, he will never make up for the fact that it is not his mother tongue. With his Irish-American mother, English is his first language. Sheikh Rashid comments on Ahmad’s reading from the Koran: “Good. I mean, good enough. We must work harder, of course, on your accent” (Updike 2006: 108). Sheikh Rashid and Charlie, the undercover agent, keep working on Ahmad and lead him onto the *straight path* - and into a terrorist plot – also promising a new identity: “The mosque took him as a child of eleven; it let him be born again” (Updike 2006: 99).

Ahmad is a handsome young man, he is very correct, intelligent and at the same time intolerant, always wearing stiffened crisp white shirts

that remind him of his good-looking and neat Egyptian father of whom he remembers not much more than a sweet smell, "perhaps aftershave lotion, though with a hint of some spice in it, perhaps a Middle Eastern dish he had just consumed" (Updike 2006: 36). This is what he tells his Jewish high school guidance counselor Jack Levy who asks him for an explanation of his double name: Jack Levy's folder holding the student's records is labeled "Mulloy (Ashmawy) Ahmad" (Updike 2006: 34). Levy asks Ahmad: "Uh, Mr.--? How do you like to be called? Mulloy or – he looks again at the cover of his folder – 'Ashmawy?'" (Updike 2006: 36) Ahmad has a very clear explanation at hand for Levy: "My mother attached her name to me, on my Social Security and driver's license, and her apartment is where I can be reached. But when I'm out of school and independent, I will become Ahmad Ashmawy" (Updike 2006: 37).

Unable to negotiate a "third space" (Bhabha 1994: 37; Rutherford 1990: 211) for himself from which a new identity formation can take place and "which enables other positions that can emerge" (Rutherford 1990: 211), his way of dealing with the situation is simply shutting out one of his halves, and as a fatherless boy in search of his identity he chooses to trace his Egyptian roots. In his everyday life, the official name 'Mulloy' will be the one that grants Ahmad a European-American background and makes him a bit less suspicious for the Bureau of Homeland Security. Ahmad, however, clearly opts for his Muslim identity. In order to establish a stable self, and also to come to terms with the loss of his father, he has to expel everything that might threaten his rather porous ego boundaries. These are constantly at risk – as the "devils", as Ahmad calls the non-believers, are threatening him and, as he says, "want to take away my God" (Updike 2006: 3).

Ahmad's point of view is contrasted with several outward perspectives, most importantly that of Jacob/Jack Levy, the Jew. Levy recognizes Ahmad's intellectual abilities and shows interest in his pupil's activities. The talented boy seems to be failing to live up to his potential when he reveals to Levy that he is planning a career as a truck driver - "a declaration that will surely be accompanied, in the inevitable movie based on *Terrorist*, by a swelling of ominous music," as Shainin ironically puts it (Shainin 2006: 1). Ahmad in fact earns his truck driver's license and at the end of the novel drives a suicide bomb truck into Lincoln Tunnel. It takes a lot of twists in the plot line to make Ahmad's guidance counselor Jack Levy (who is, after all, the brother-in-law of a secretary working in the Department of Homeland Security) stand at a crossroads on a Sunday morning, climbing into the truck

at a red traffic light on the New Jersey Turnpike. The novel comes to a climax when towards the end Ahmad and Jack are sitting in the bomb truck, heading for the Lincoln Tunnel, the detonation target. The doubting Jew and the determined Muslim begin discussing their religious convictions, the red detonation button metaphorically sitting between them. When Ahmad is told that his friend Charlie had in reality been a CIA agent and has been murdered, he starts accepting another role model right there in the car: "There had been a father who vanished before his memory could take a picture of him, and then Charlie had been friendly and shown him the roads, and now this tired Jew in clothes as if he dressed in the dark has taken their place, the empty space beside him." (Updike 2006: 290) This *empty space beside him* means more than just the passenger seat in the truck, and Charlie's 'showing him the roads' clearly alludes to his initiation. When a moment later Jack and Ahmad find out that the note that had been attached to dead Charlie quotes a passage that could be a quotation from both the Torah and the Qur'an, their 'harmonization' becomes even more evident.

As if they still had a lot of time, they casually start discussing their lives. Like a father and son who are together in a car, they eventually run out of topics until Jack casually says, "Well, what else can we talk about? Giants Stadium. Did you catch the Jets game yesterday?" (Updike 2006: 294).

Ahmad inquires about Jack's faith and makes a remark that already hints at a deep-down-acceptance of his Jewish teacher:

"Before Israel, Muslims and Jews were brothers – they belonged to the margins of the Christian world, the comic others in their funny clothes, entertainment for the Christians secure in their wealth, in their paper-white skins. Even with the oil, they despised us, cheating the Saudi princes of their people's birthright." Mr. Levy heaves another sigh: "That's some 'us' you've worked up, Ahmad." (Updike 2006: 295)

This *us* creates a bond between them – Jews and Muslims are suddenly seen as brothers by Ahmad, seen as the *Other* of Christianity and thus reinforcing the tie between the two men. When Ahmad warns Jack to get out of the truck, Jack replies "We're in this together, son" (Updike 2006: 296). This statement of Jack's could be read as nothing but a colloquialism, but there is some kind of bond in the air that Ahmad already feels but at this stage still negates; otherwise he would not be as quick to answer, "I'm not your son" (Updike 2006: 296).

When Jack a little later agrees to read Sayyid Qutb, the radical Egyptian poet and political philosopher Ahmad tells him about, and even promises to assign Qutb's texts as an optional reading for his high school students, their relationship deepens again. Ahmed's rather dry statement "Sir, I regret to say that you will not live. In a few minutes I am going to see the face of God. My heart overflows with the expectation" (Updike 2006: 303) sounds rather artificial and not very convincing. It is hard to believe that Ahmad will really press the button. This uncertainty is reinforced by the parallel action: Like in a church episode earlier in the book, Updike again has a little black girl smile at Ahmad as a sort of *déjà-vu*; the girl and her baby brother are sitting in a car in front of the bomb truck, waving out through the rear window and trying to catch Ahmad's attention. At first, he tries to ignore them, but he cannot help looking at the small children. Eventually, they get bored and fall asleep, just as the truck approaches the point in the tunnel that is marked for the detonation.

A moment later, after telling Ahmad about his own sad life and reassuring him that he could not care less if he died now, Jack tries to reach for the button, but Ahmad "seizes his hand in his own" (Updike 2006: 304). He keeps pressing Jack's hand until Jack asks him to let go, not without almost fatherly admiring the strength Ahmad has acquired over the summer. This compliment leads Ahmad to proudly announce that he is now also no longer afraid of Tylenol. Ahmad then even talks about his love-life and confesses that he quite liked Joryleen. Finding yet another commonality with his teacher Levy, he asserts, "So not only you have romantic difficulties" (Updike 2006: 305). This again resembles a conversation between a father and his son.

When Levy starts talking about death, Ahmad is taken aback by the fact that his teacher is actually not afraid and even seems to be looking forward to dying. This leads Ahmad to contemplate the Qur'an:

In the fifty-sixth sura, the Prophet speaks of the moment when the soul of a dying man shall come up in his throat. That moment is here. The journey, the miraj. Buraq is ready, his shining white wings rustling, unfolding. Yet in the same sura, "The Event," God asks, We created you: will you not credit us? Behold the semen you discharge; did you create it, or We? God does not want to destroy; it was He who made the world. (Updike 2006: 306)

Just before they pass the crucial bend, the weakest place of the tunnel structure where Ahmad is supposed to press the button, he has an epiphany:

The pattern of the wall tiles and of the exhaust-darkened tiles of the ceiling – countless receding repetitions of squares like giant graph paper rolled into a third dimension – explodes outward in Ahmad’s mind’s eye in the gigantic fiat of Creation, one concentric wave after another, each pushing the other farther and farther out from the initial point of nothingness, God having willed the great transition from non-being to being. This was the will of the Beneficent, the Merciful, ar-Rahman and ar-Rahim, the Living, the Patient, the Generous, the Perfect, the Light, the Guide. He does not want us to desecrate His creation by willing death. He wills life. (Updike 2006: 306)

This sudden illumination that happens in a place underneath the river where Ahmad “feels himself already under to be under water“ (Updike 2006: 298) could be interpreted as a purifying immersion into water that leads to a new life, a birth, a renaissance. The concentric waves could be read as symbolizing labor pains with the exhaust-dark tunnel resembling a womb. The same passage could, however, also be read as a description of an orgasm. Maybe it is a far-fetched argument that speaks for this interpretation that Levy adopts the role of a surrogate father, as he tells Ahmad shortly before this epiphanic experience that he has slept with Ahmad’s mother. However, the passage definitely has a climactic religious, but also a strong sexual connotation, and sets off Ahmad’s decision to live on. When he retrieves his hand from the detonation button and puts it back to the steering wheel, the little black children in the car in front of them start smiling again, and he even waves at them (cf. Updike 2006: 307).

The interpretation that a new life has begun for Ahmad is supported by the fact that Jack Levy now welcomes him: “Well done, my friend, welcome to the Big Apple“ (Updike 2006: 308). Ahmad accepts this and “lets himself be guided, taking the left turn. The path is straight. ‘You are driving like a pro,’ Mr. Levy tells him.“ (Updike 2006: 309). Ahmad together with Levy is on a new *straight path*, and it seems easy for him to follow it.

The last sentence in the book, “*These devils, Ahmad thinks, have taken away my God*” (Updike 2006: 310) creates a circular structure as the book also starts with this sentence, only with a different tense. Yet, the ending

is open, and it is not at all clear what Ahmad is going to do next. Däwes argues that "this closure erases all subversive potential and leaves readers with the more prevalent taste of its generalizations. Instead of dialogically engaging with cultural difference, *Terrorist* leaves intact the boundaries between religious systems and ideologies, empathizing with the Other only to construct a clearer sense of Self, and eventually using this glance in the mirror to stabilize master narratives of the 'clash of civilizations' (Huntington)" (Däwes 2010: 508f.).

While Däwes reads the ending in a negative way, other critics argue on a more positive note that it "suggests that violence and terrorism can be avoided and that inter-cultural understanding is possible (Sweis 2006: 2)". Personally, I would agree with the latter interpretation: It is, after all, Jack Levy's sensitive way of dealing with Ahmad's personal problems that lead him to abandoning the idea of blowing up Lincoln Tunnel. Ahmad feels that Levy understands him and takes his Muslim identity seriously. It is a spirit of tolerance which suddenly allows for a new interpretation of the Qur'an on the part of Ahmad, which again triggers the epiphany that makes Ahmad see a *light at the end of the tunnel*.

What is just as important as Ahmad's epiphany is the fact that it is Jack Levy, the *Jew*, who leads Ahmad, the young *Muslim*, back to the 'Straight Path' - in a wider, humanistic sense. Both of them are actually Americans. Whether or not Updike's understanding and interpretation of Islam is adequate (and many critics such as Charles Demers (Demers 2006: 1) or Michiko Kakutani (Kakutani 2006: 1) have argued it is not) is less important than the power he ascribes to his protagonists' thoughts and reflections (cf. Grünzweig 2006: 2). The fact that *Terrorist* sold like „hot cakes“ has made it part of American literature and culture, and as such, the novel contributes to a discourse about Muslim American identity and is a political statement that can be read as a call for tolerance and responsibility. The post-modern struggles the book's characters find themselves in will perhaps never be solved, and the task of self-identification will probably never be brought to completion, a danger Zygmunt Bauman warns against in *Identity* (Bauman 2007: 98), where Stuart Hall describes the challenges as follows:

Since cultural diversity is, increasingly, the fate of the modern world, and ethnic absolutism a regressive feature of late-modernity, the greatest danger now arises from forms of national and cultural identity – new and old – which attempt to secure their identity by adopting closed versions of culture or community

and by refusal to engage... with the difficult problems that arise from trying to live with difference. (Hall 1993, quoted in Bauman 2007: 98)

These challenges have definitely been recognized by John Updike, and I agree with Walter Grünfweig who argues that *Terrorist* could be read as a modern version of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's play *Nathan the Wise* (Grünfweig 2006: 2) with the parable of the three rings at its center: as an appeal for tolerance, friendship, and religious relativism.

However, adopting such an enlightened position and trying to live with difference, as Hall puts it, is certainly most difficult. There is still a long way to go to – and John Updike was, I am convinced, absolutely aware of the challenges multicultural America is facing when he has Jack Levy cynically say, "Hey come on, we're all Americans here. That's the idea, didn't they tell you that at Central High?" (Updike 2006: 301).

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„МА, ХАЈДЕ СВИ СМО МИ АМЕРИКАНЦИ“:
ПРЕДСТАВЉАЊЕ МУСЛИМАНСКО-АМЕРИЧКОГ ИДЕНТИТЕТА
У АПДАЈКОВОМ РОМАНУ *ТЕРОРИСТА*

Сажетак

У свом роману *Терориста* који је објављен после 11. септембра 2001. Џон Апдајк (John Updike) ствара лик Ахмеда, америчког средњошколца који покушава да прихвати свој хибридни идентитет Арапина, Ирца и Американца живећи у мултиетничком окружењу у Америци. Покушавајући да редефинише своје место грађанина у 'западњачкој' култури, стереотипне представе о 'Арапима' или 'Муслиманима' утичу на јунаково схватање себе и стварање представе о сопственом идентитету као да жели да се уклопи у „страх белаца у погледу сопствене расе“ (Дејвис 2001: 48). Апдајк представља младог муслиманског Американца у Њјудерсију у контексту расних предрасуда и клишеа и због тога је био жестоко критикован. Многи прикази Апдајковог романа замерају му површност и дводимензионалност профила јунака. У овом есеју разматра се проблем Апдајковог литерарног одговора на 11. септембар и размишљања о „сукобљеним визијама света“.

Кључне речи: идентитет, амерички идентитет, ислам, тероризам

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POSTMODERN IRONY AND HUMOR IN CATCH-22 BY JOSEPH HELLER AND THEIR PARALLELS IN POSTMODERN MUSIC AND ART

Abstract

This essay explores the concept of irony and the ways in which this mode is reflected in such distant forms of aesthetic expression as literature, music and visual arts, especially within the postmodern era which not only embraces, but also intensifies and influences this long-established stylistic technique. With this aim, this essay takes Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22* as a representative example of the postmodern literature, as well as Kurt Vonnegut's graphic *Trout in Cohoes*, Rupert Holms's *The Pina Colada Song* and Leroy Anderson's *The Waltzing Cat* as corresponding examples of postmodern visual and music arts respectively. The theoretical framework is based on Wayne Booth's concept of irony, and also includes humor as an accompanying element of ironic expression.

Key words: irony, humor, postmodernism, Joseph Heller, Catch-22, Wayne Booth

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1. Introduction: from Plato to postmodernism

*“The only shield against irony, therefore, is absolute circumspection,
a shield no man can lift.”*

(Muecke 1969: 31)

Asked to define irony, many a person will face a difficult but challenging task, since continuing disagreements among critics, despite the concept’s long history, add to the complexity and elusiveness of the term. As a mode of expressing a certain discrepancy or incongruity between words or situations and their meanings, the term irony derives from the Greek ‘eiron’, a common character in Greek comedy, who pretends to be foolish and ignorant, and whose modesty of speech contrasts with another common, though pretentious character called ‘alazon’.

As a literary technique, irony was first recorded in the Platonic dialogues where Socrates assumes the role of the eiron, and by asking seemingly innocuous and naive questions exposes the self-contradictions of his conversers, forcing them into seeing the truth. Nowadays, this technique is commonly known as Socratic irony. For the Roman rhetoricians irony was a rhetorical figure that expressed a meaning contrary to the literal meaning of the words. “This double-edgedness appears to be a diachronic feature of irony.” (Cuddon 1999: 427-428)

At the turn of the 18th century, Friedrich Schlegel pointed out the ironical nature of the balance maintained between the serious and the comic. He also used the term irony “in connection with the detached and objective viewpoint of the artist and his work” (Cuddon 1999: 429), creating the concept of ‘romantic irony’.

Before the eighteenth century, irony was one rhetorical device among many, the least important of the rhetorical tropes. By the end of the Romantic period, it had become a grand Hegelian concept, with its own essence and necessities; or a synonym for romanticism; or even an essential attribute of God. And in our century it became a distinguishing mark of all literature, or at least all good literature. (...) [A]ll of these refer, in life and literature, to the ways in which, for those who can tell a hawk from a handsaw, the hawk’s view modifies or “discounts” the handsaw’s, and vice versa.

(Booth 1974: ix)

Irony has numerous functions: it clarifies and intensifies the reader's notions and perceptions of the author's intentions and the truth of the work. This is what Northrop Frye says about irony in *Anatomy of Criticism*:

The ironic fiction-writer, then, deprecates himself and, like Socrates, pretends to know nothing, even that he is ironic. Complete objectivity and suppression of all explicit moral judgments are essential to his method. Thus pity and fear are not raised in ironic art: they are reflected to the reader from the art. When we try to isolate the ironic as such, we find that it seems to be simply the attitude of the poet as such, a dispassionate construction of a literary form, with all assertive elements, implied or expressed, eliminated. Irony, as a mode, is born from the low mimetic; it takes life exactly as it finds it. But the ironist fables without moralizing, and has no object but his subject. Irony is naturally a sophisticated mode....

(Frye 1957: 40-41)

We may conclude that irony is not a new postmodern technique, but continues and often intensifies the ironic literary technique of the previous periods. Since it questions the surface intentions of the work, it is not surprising that, in the postmodern era, with its denial of absolute knowledge and the accompanying idea of multiple truths, it has become one of the most important devices of the author's style.

Wayne Booth: marks of irony and the steps in its reconstruction

Regardless of inconsistent theoretical definitions, all types of irony, according to American literary critic Wayne Booth (and his canonic work *A Rhetoric of Irony*, 1974), share four marks of irony: first, "they are all intended, deliberately created by human beings to be heard or read and understood with some precision by other human beings" (Booth 1974: 5); second, "they are all covert, intended to be reconstructed with meanings different from those on the surface" (Booth 1974: 6), in contrast to overt or direct assertions; next, "they are all nevertheless stable or fixed, in the sense that once a reconstruction of meaning has been made, the reader is not then invited to undermine it with further demolitions and reconstructions"

(Booth 1974: 6); and, finally, “they are all finite in application” (Booth 1974: 6), in contrast to infinite, either stable or unstable, ironies.

According to Booth’s theory, there are four steps in reconstructing these unspoken meanings whereby the author says one thing but intends another, inviting the reader to trace the hidden messages. In step one, since the reader recognizes certain incongruity between the words and their meanings, he “is required to reject the literal meaning” (Booth 1974: 7). In step two, “alternative interpretations or explanations are tried out” (Booth 1974: 7), such as that the author himself is for some reason unaware of this discrepancy. In step three, the reader must come to a conclusion about the author’s knowledge or beliefs. The reader’s confidence that the author is being ironic depends on his conviction that, like him, the author sees and rejects what the statement implies. “It is this decision about the author’s own beliefs that entwines the interpretation of stable ironies so inescapably in intentions.” (Booth 1974: 11) No matter how convinced the reader is that a statement is illogical, he must determine whether what he rejects is also rejected by the author, and whether there is a basis for the author to expect the reader’s agreement. The author thus becomes “only the creative person responsible for the choices that made the work - what I have elsewhere called the ‘implied author’ who is found in the work itself” (Booth 1974: 11). In step four, after we have come to a conclusion about the knowledge or beliefs of the author, we are invited to choose a new meaning. “Unlike the original proposition, the reconstructed meanings will necessarily be in harmony with the unspoken beliefs” (Booth 1974: 12) that the reader has decided to attribute to the author.

2. Irony and humor in postmodern arts: a comparative analysis

“The postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently.”

(Eco 1985: 7)

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller: clues to irony

The main theme of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) is the irony of the now-idiomatic 'catch-22', but the narrative is also structured around the motif of bureaucratic absurdity and a prolonged series of similar ironies.

The novel's protagonist is Yossarian, a U.S. Army Air Force bombardier, stationed during World War II on a Mediterranean island near Italy, but the narrative also follows a number of other characters describing, in a non-chronological style, the events from their different points of view. Yossarian's antiwar and anti-heroic comments provide ironical and humorous counterpoint to the tragedy of the war. The irony of the novel thus involves the use of the protagonist whose view of the world questions the views of other characters and, by implication, of the implied author.

And there is much more irony in the novel: in addition to the numerous examples of direct or overt irony that we find in the work of this author, we also find a continuous thread of an ironic temper or tone, an ironic way of looking at things, a spirit of irony which prevails in Heller's work.

According to Booth's theory, there are several clues to detecting and reconstructing the ironic meanings of literary texts: straightforward warnings, known error proclaimed, conflicts of facts within the work, clashes of style, and conflicts of belief.

a) Straightforward clues to irony

Following Booth's theory, direct guidance from the author or straightforward warnings of irony "in the author's own voice" (Booth 1974: 53) include warnings in the title, in epigraphs, and other direct clues, such as prefaces and postscripts. The clues traceable in the work in question include warnings in the novel's title, epigraph and preface.

Warnings in the title. This is a form of the author's straightforward warning where he uses the title of the novel to signal the ironic quality of the entire work. The title gives us "quite directly information that we can immediately use in suspecting 'secret' intentions behind the narrator's words" (Booth 1974: 53).

'Catch-22' from the novel's title, as a reference to a fictional bureaucratic stipulation, bears an ironic overtone in its being a catch codified with a number, which indicates further bureaucratic nonsense

and absurdities in the story, including multiple forms of unreasonable and immoral deductions.

This is how the military police ironically explain 'catch-22': "Catch-22 states that agents enforcing Catch-22 need not prove that Catch-22 actually contains whatever provision the accused violator is accused of violating" (Heller 1961: 139). Also, another provision states: "Catch-22 says they have a right to do anything we can't stop them from doing" (Heller 1961: 147). The irony of the eponymous 'catch-22', a recurring motif in the story, thus presents the main theme of the novel.

Warnings in epigraph. The novel begins with an epigraph, which is another clue to its ironic intentions: "This island of Pianosa lies in the Mediterranean Sea eight miles south of Elba. It is very small and obviously could not accommodate all of the actions described. Like the setting of this novel, the characters, too, are fictitious." (Heller 1961)

There is a twofold manifestation of straightforward warnings of irony within this epigraph. First, in line with the concept of romantic irony, it consciously undermines the novel's fictional illusion by exposing the process of composition "as a matter of authorial whim" (Baldick 1996: 222). Second, the epigraph also introduces the ironic tone by paradoxically stating that the island is too small to accommodate all the actions that take place there.

The author never appears again in the novel directly; having informed the reader of the fictitious nature of both the setting and the characters in the novel, and having also ironically suggested the multitude of actions performed on this nonexistent, yet too small an island, "he then left them to speak entirely for themselves. Or rather one should say that he pretended to. Every word chosen spoke for him, but not directly." (Booth 1974: 55)

Other direct clues. The most apparent warning of all, according to Booth, is a direct statement by the author, such as in prefaces and postscripts.

In his Preface to the 1994 Edition of *Catch-22* Joseph Heller wrote:

But Yossarian is alive when the novel ends. Because of the motion picture, even close readers of the novel have a final, lasting image of him at sea, paddling toward freedom in a yellow inflated lifeboat. In the book he doesn't get that far; but he is not captured and he isn't dead. (...) Sooner or later, I must concede,

Yossarian, now seventy, will have to pass away too. But it won't be by my hand.

(Heller 1994)

The author conveys his ironic tone and attitude by commenting on the character, thus being critically aware of the literary composition he is creating (which is sometimes referred to as a 'literary self-consciousness' of the ironic work).

But these straightforward warnings are only an opening clue in a long series of clues that secure an ironic tone in the novel.

In short, if we look at the first kind of clue, the author's direct statement in title, epigraph, postscript, or whatever, and ask how we *know* that the author speaks to us in a more direct tone in them than in his other words, we discover that the direct statement is always at best only a hint; our confidence begins to rise only when we come to other clues. Unless what the voice says or does conflicts in some clear way with what we can be sure the author would say, we will not *know* that the passage is ironic.

(Booth 1974: 57)

The other clues include known error proclaimed, conflicts of facts within the work, clashes or disharmonies of style and conflicts of belief.

b) Known error proclaimed

Clues to irony referred to by Booth as 'known error proclaimed' or 'deliberate error' include, in the novel which is the subject of our analysis, popular expressions and conventional judgment clues.

Popular expressions. "He was a self-made man who owed his lack of success to nobody" (Heller 1961: 13), says the narrator describing one of the characters. Taken by itself the confusion of the statement with the common "He was a self-made man who owed his success to nobody" might mean that the narrator is himself "ignorant of the standard expressions: not ironic, just ignorant. But in a context of other 'incredible' errors, probabilities become certainties: [the author is] communicating with us from behind [his] narrators' backs". (Booth 1974: 58)

There is, moreover, a dialogue based on discussing an ironically reversed saying and its possible meanings:

‘Because it’s better to die on one’s feet than live on one’s knees,’ Nately retorted with triumphant and lofty conviction. ‘I guess you’ve heard that saying before.’ ‘Yes, I certainly have,’ mused the treacherous old man, smiling again. ‘But I’m afraid you have it backward. It is better to live on one’s feet than die on one’s knees. That is the way the saying goes.’ ‘Are you sure?’ Nately asked with sober confusion. ‘It seems to make more sense my way.’ ‘No, it makes more sense my way. Ask your friends.’

(Heller 1961: 135)

Another such ‘error’ is a negative reversal of another popular expression: “It takes brains not to make money” (Ibid: 18), producing an ironic commentary on the character referred to and the practice of wartime profit making, another engaging theme in the novel.

Conventional judgment. “Major Major had been born too late and too mediocre. Some men are born mediocre, some men achieve mediocrity, and some men have mediocrity thrust upon them. With Major Major it had been all three. Even among men lacking all distinction he inevitably stood out as a man lacking more distinction than all the rest, and people who met him were always impressed by how unimpressive he was.” (Ibid: 44) In this passage, when Heller speaks of the character ‘achieving mediocrity’ or ‘standing out as a man lacking more distinction than all the rest’, we do not encounter vocabulary inaccuracy in applying the verbs ‘achieve’ and ‘stand out’ to negative qualities, but a call to the reader’s judgment of the author’s ironic intentions of the text.

In “Men went mad and were rewarded with medals” (Ibid: 7), the point of the latter half of the statement depends on the reader’s knowledge of conventional notions of valid judgment, whereby men who go mad are not normally rewarded with medals.

A short dialogue with the protagonist: “‘How is Lieutenant Dunbar?’ he asked at last. ‘As good as they go,’ Yossarian assured him. ‘A true prince. One of the finest, least dedicated men in the whole world’” (Ibid: 6) stands as a valid example of antiphrasis, a figure of speech very common to this type of ironic clue, which uses a word or a phrase (‘a true prince’, in this case) in a sense directly opposite to its usual meaning, showing the way in which the meaning of a statement can be completely reversed by

a knowledge of its context (lieutenant - 'the least dedicated men in the whole world').

These are all "deliberate factual discords" (Booth 1974: 61), deliberate ironic under- or over-statements. All these examples lead us to treat possible incongruities within the text that oppose our knowledge or conventional judgments not as casual inaccuracies, omissions or ignorance on the part of the author, but as deliberate errors pointing to a wider sense of inescapable irony.

c) Conflicts of facts within the work

This clue to the author's ironic intentions corresponds to another quality inherent in the nature of irony, the element of the absurd and the paradoxical. A good example in the novel is the paradoxical situation with Catch-22 specifying that only soldiers who are crazy can be grounded, but, if they ask to be grounded, they will no longer be treated as crazy and will have to fly more missions:

Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn't have to; but if he didn't want to he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle.

(Heller 1961: 23-4)

The reader's consequent conclusions about what in fact is going on is exactly the reverse of what the literal meaning intends, and the impossibility of the reader's 'believing' what the passage actually 'says' reveals the sense of irony.

"That crazy bastard may be the only sane one left" (Ibid: 60) and "Under Colonel Korn's rule, the only people permitted to ask questions were those who never did" (Ibid: 18) are some other examples of contradictory statements where the "false" voice must be "repudiated" and the "correct" voice must "triumph" producing "the reverse of 'advance warning'" (Booth 1974: 61). Some other examples include: "The dead man in Yossarian's tent was simply not easy to live with" (Heller 1961: 10), illustrating paradoxical discrepancy between words and their meaning, and "The Texan turned out to be good-natured, generous and likable. In three days no one could stand

him” (Ibid: 3), exemplifying an absurd incongruity between actions and their results.

A further example is the conflict of facts that, on the one hand, the official enemies in the novel are the Germans, while, on the other, no Germans ever appear in the story as enemy combatants, except as pilots employed by a private entrepreneur working for the United States military units. Thus the reader becomes aware of a situational discrepancy between appearance and reality.

“[M]any works of stable irony provide within themselves the knowledge necessary for establishing that a speaker’s ignorance is not shared by the author. Whenever a story, play, poem, or essay reveals what we accept as a fact and then contradicts it, we have only two possibilities. Either the author has been careless or he has presented us with an inescapable ironic invitation.” (Booth 1974: 61)

d) Clashes or disharmonies of style

“If a speaker’s style departs notably from whatever the reader considers the normal way of saying a thing, or the way normal for this speaker, the reader may suspect irony.” (Ibid: 67) Postmodern ironists have specialized in such stylistic shifts.

“Bills piled up rapidly, and he was soon faced with the loss of his most precious medical instruments: his adding machine was repossessed, and then his typewriter. The goldfish died. Fortunately, just when things were blackest, the war broke out.” (Heller 1961: 20) The melancholic tone of the first two sentences is followed by the lively rhythm of the third one and the use of the incongruous linking word ‘fortunately’. The fact “that the passage is ironic is unmistakably revealed through violations of stylistic norms” (Booth 1974: 70) that the reader shares with the author.

“Milo’s eyes were liquid with integrity, and his artless and uncorrupted face was lustrous with a shining mixture of sweat and insect repellent” (Heller 1961: 140-1) is another example of the conflict in stylistic levels. There is simply no way of reconciling the description of Milo’s ‘artless and uncorrupted’ face and his eyes ‘liquid with integrity’ with the ‘shining mixture of sweat and insect repellent’, i.e., the somber author of the former part of the sentence with the humorous, sardonic author of the latter.

The stylistic clash is

based on recognizing different ways of saying what, in substance, would seem to amount to identical messages. Whenever, in the normal course of perusing a piece of precisely executed writing, whether discursive or imaginative, whether prose or verse, one encounters any radical tergiversation from those perhaps ineluctable norms of expression with which one is accustomed, one should promptly recognize that there is a strong likelihood that irony is being adumbrated.

(Booth 1974: 68)

A widespread form of ironic disharmonies of style, according to Booth, is what is commonly referred to as parody. In the words of this author, “[t]he most obvious use of stylistic clues in stable irony is found in parody, the mocking imitation by one author of another author’s style” (Ibid: 71). Though parody is not commonly considered as ‘irony’, it is ironic in Booth’s definition: the surface meaning must be rejected, and another, ‘higher’ meaning must be found by reconstruction.

In the work in question in our analysis, parody is revealed through style. It is revealed in the paragraph about a soldier called Milo, with direct associations, in its images of spring and lilacs, with T. S. Eliot’s poem *The Waste Land*:

April had been the best month of all for Milo. Lilacs bloomed in April and fruit ripened on the vine. Heartbeats quickened and old appetites were renewed. In April a livelier iris gleamed upon the burnished dove. April was spring, and in the spring Milo Minderbinder’s fancy had lightly turned to thoughts of tangerines.

(Heller 1961: 258)

This overt parallel to Eliot’s work, referring readers to other meanings of the text, prepares them for the many ways in which the author places the description of his characters into an ironic shade.

e) Conflicts of belief

“Finally, we are alerted whenever we notice an unmistakable conflict between the beliefs expressed and the beliefs we hold and suspect the

author of holding. We can see the resulting ironies most clearly when there is an incredible passage in the midst of straightforward writing.” (Booth 1974: 73)

One of the indicators to such clues is illogicality: “He got on well with his brothers and sisters, and he did not hate his mother and father, even though they had both been very good to him.” (Heller 1961: 136) We all know, or should know, what is ‘logical’, so it is obvious that the author pretends to be making certain statements which imply beliefs that he cannot have held. “Yossarian had everything he wanted in the hospital” (Heller 1961: 2) is another example of the author’s manipulations and the violation of normal reasoning processes. This deliberate illogicality should be viewed as the author’s invitation to join him in condemning the absurdity of things.

Elements of humor

“Perhaps the most original and important critic of our time, Kenneth Burke, has made irony into a kind of synonym for comedy.” (Booth 1974: ix) This is also in line with the concept of romantic irony whereby irony involves “a playful attitude towards the conventions of the (normally narrative) genre.” (Baldick 1996: 222)

Indeed, much of the use of irony in the work of Joseph Heller (who was initially called a black humorist, and only later labeled postmodernist) is colored toward comic effects. In addition to being illustrative of irony, his novel *Catch-22* also provides a good example of humor, black (or dark) humor notably, since it includes playfulness in a plot with an otherwise humorless subject. The prevailing tragic themes, such as the Second World War, battle injuries and death are for the most part treated humorously.

Comic relief can often intensify the irony of a situation, with ordinary characters and situations exaggerated beyond the limits of ‘normal’ irony: “Dunbar was lying motionless on his back again with his eyes staring up at the ceiling like a doll’s. He was working hard at increasing his life span. He did it by cultivating boredom. Dunbar was working so hard at increasing his life span that Yossarian thought he was dead.” (Heller 1961: 3) The element of humor in the novel includes puns: “Yossarian—the very sight of the name made him shudder. There were so many esses in it.” (Heller 1961: 115)

The events in the novel are also described in the way that the new information often completes a joke commenced earlier, in a previous

chapter sometimes. For example, Chapter 1 ends with “In less than ten days, the Texan drove everybody in the ward back to duty—everybody but the C.I.D. man, who had caught cold from the fighter captain and come down with pneumonia” (Heller 1961: 7). Chapter 2 begins with “In a way the CID man was pretty lucky, because outside the hospital the war was still going on” (Heller 1961: 7), completing the joke from the previous chapter.

Another characteristic producing comic effect is the repetition of certain words and phrases, such as the use of the adjective ‘crazy’: “McWatt was crazy. He was a pilot and flew his plane as low as he dared over Yossarian’s tent as often as he could, just to see how much he could frighten him. (...) Sharing a tent with a man who was crazy wasn’t easy, but Nately didn’t care. He was crazy, too, and had gone every free day to work on the officers’ club that Yossarian had not helped build.” (Heller 1961: 8) This humorous repetition questions the sanity of all the characters in the novel and, in a wider context, the purpose and justifiability of the war driving people insane.

This continual breaking of the serious tone, which points to the author’s full awareness of the ambivalent nature of the novel, in line with the romantic concept, is another characteristic of irony:

The writer who employs what is called romantic irony (a concept for which Schlegel was largely responsible) exhibits true presence of mind by showing an awareness, a sensibility, that he does not expect his work to be taken wholly seriously - and does not wish it to be. He conveys this tone and attitude (thus inviting a complementary tone and attitude in his reader) by being at once critically aware of what he is doing and why he is doing it, even while he may be impelled by a strong dynamic creative purpose. Thus he is fully conscious of the comic implication of his own seriousness.

(Cuddon 1999: 767)

These are just some of the numerous manifestations of humor, black humor admittedly, in the novel. The continual playful tone produces a gradual and cumulative sense of irony, affirming it as a subtly humorous perception of the novel’s inconsistency. The narrative thus involves some of the “key attributes of postmodernism”, such as “its knowing irony” and “its playful polysemy or plurality of sense” (Sim 2001: 237). Playfulness and black humor, which both rely on Jacques Derrida’s concept of ‘play’ and the

ideas proposed by Roland Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text*, together with the concept of irony, thus become some of the most discernible aspects of postmodernism.

Parallels in music and visual art

Postmodernism in music, as the postmodernist movement in general, is regarded as having developed as either a reaction to, or a continuation of certain aspects of modernism (for most authors, such as music theorists Leonard B. Meyer and Otto Karolyi, postmodern music originated at about 1930). It therefore shares characteristics with other postmodern arts, including, as such, irony and humor.

Jonathan Kramer, American composer and music theorist, following the theoretical concepts of Umberto Eco and Jean-François Lyotard, postulates the idea that postmodernism (including musical postmodernism) is “more an attitude than a historical period” (Kramer 2002: 216). He defines 16 characteristics of postmodern music, including a distinction that postmodern music “is not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but has aspects of both a break and an extension, [and] is, on some level and in some way, ironic” (Kramer 2002: 216).

Similar to literary irony, irony in music can involve both irony of situation and verbal irony, arising from a sophisticated awareness of contrast between what is and what appears to be. *Escape*, later known as *Escape (The Piña Colada Song)* (1979), a popular culture song written by an American-British composer, Rupert Holmes, is a good example of situational irony. It is a simple and light musical work in soft rock genre, whose lyrics speak of a man who, tired of his current relationship, decides to answer an ad of a woman who is seeking a man who must like piña coladas, getting caught in the rain, and some other little things. However, at the meeting, he finds out that the woman is actually his current girlfriend, and only then does he realize that she loves the same things as he does. Ironically, the two of them recognize through this strange situation that they do not have to search any further for what they seek in a relationship.

There is also some irony in the fact that, despite a variety of his other, more serious musical works (including his 1985 Tony

Award-winning musical *Drood*), as well as his literary achievements (in addition to being a songwriter, he was also the author of plays, novels and stories, and he won the 2007 Drama Desk Award for the Broadway musical *Curtains*), Holmes will remain remembered as the author of this amusing, unpretentious pop hit.

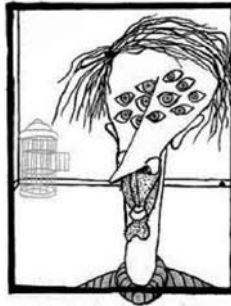
The Waltzing Cat (1950) by Leroy Anderson, American composer, illustrates the element of humor as used in postmodern music. It is a short, light concert piece, with creative instrumental effects, turning sentimental string sounds that are characteristic of Strauss waltzes into cats' meows.

Postmodernism in the visual arts emerged even earlier (in relation to Europe, at least) than in literature or music: most critics place the shift from modern to postmodern art at the beginning of World War I, precisely 1914 (McEvilly 1998: 27) in Europe, and the 1960s (Ibid: 29) in America.

Although irony is often defined as a language device, it is also a central feature in many works of postmodern visual art, where meaning is challenged not by the literal meanings of the words, but by the non-verbal meanings of the situation which contains certain incongruities between appearance and reality.

Kurt Vonnegut was not only an American novelist whose narrative works blended different genres such as black comedy and science fiction (such as his famous *Slaughterhouse-Five*), but he was also known in the domain of graphic art, blending, again, various modes of expression, including irony, playfulness and black comedy. In one of his numerous witticisms, this is how he commented on his own humorousness: "Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion... I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less cleaning up to do afterward" (Vonnegut 2009).

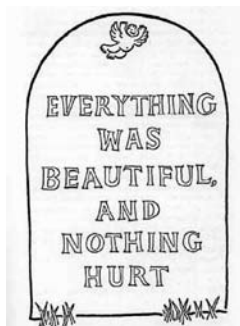
Trout in Cohoes is a graphic portrait of Vonnegut's fictional character, Kilgore Trout, who is also literarily portrayed in several novels by the author. His eleven eyes "tend to give the impression of a vibrating head, which certainly reflects Trout's constantly agitated state of mind. The birdcage in the background is the home of Trout's parakeet, Bill. In *Breakfast of Champions* Trout offers Bill three wishes and the chance of freedom. The wise bird returns to his cage, which Trout calls the smartest choice of all because then Bill will always have something left to wish for." (Reed 1999: 18)



Kurt Vonnegut, *Trout in Cohoes*, 1997.

David Minton, a reviewer, wrote that “the portrait of Kilgore Trout possesses all the clear and open wit and humor (black humor admittedly) one finds in [Vonnegut’s] novels” (Reed 1999: 18). When a university rejected his master’s thesis in anthropology, Kurt Vonnegut commented: “It was rejected because it was so simple and looked like too much fun. One must not be too playful.” (Vonnegut 1999: 267) In view of this anecdote it is not difficult to agree with American critic Peter Reed in his observation that “Vonnegut’s curious blend of science fiction, black humor, absurdity, and relentless irony may be viewed as his way of dealing with an incomprehensible world” (Reed 1999: 19).

Vonnegut’s graphic thus very well reflects the postmodern ironic and playful setting. The sense of irony contained in his versatile opus culminates perhaps in a tombstone graphic that appears in his famous work *Slaughterhouse-Five*, most ironically expressing the painful experience of World War II:



(Vonnegut 1969: 61)

This inscription on a tombstone, producing an image of life simultaneously lovely and painful, conveys, as do so many other postmodern works of the literary, musical and visual arts, a marvelous message of the beauty and irony of life.

3. Conclusion

“Perhaps it was our common sense of fun that first brought about our understanding. The real marriage of true minds is for any two people to possess a sense of humor or irony pitched in exactly the same key, so that their joint glances at any subject cross like interarching search-lights.”

(Edith Wharton, talking of her growing friendship with Henry James, in *A Backward Glance* 1972: 173)

In accordance with Booth’s theory, all the above analyzed works of postmodern art share the four established marks of irony: they are all intended ironies, deliberately created by their authors to be understood by the readers; they are all covert, designated to have their meanings construed as different from those on the surface; they are all stable, in the sense that we are not invited to undermine once made reconstructions of meaning; and last but not least, they are all finite in application. Their reconstruction, also, follows the four steps that can always, according to Booth, be discovered in the analysis of irony: rejecting the surface, literal meaning, trying out alternative interpretations, making a decision about the author’s knowledge and beliefs, and finally constructing a meaning in harmony with that decision.

The artist becomes a kind of god viewing creation (and viewing his own creation) with a smile. From this it is a short step to the idea that God himself is the supreme ironist, watching the antics of human beings (Flaubert referred to a ‘*blague superieure*’) with a detached, ironical smile. The spectator in the theatre is in a similar position. Thus the everlasting human condition is regarded as potentially absurd. (...) In fact [Thomas] Mann, expert on the ironical, when speaking of the novel (in *Die Kunst des Romans*, 1939) says that the novel keeps its distance from

things and by its very nature is distanced from them; it 'hovers' over them, and 'smiles down upon them'.

(Cuddon 1999: 431)

It can be concluded that, not surprisingly, postmodern theory in all three forms of artistic expression - literature, visual art and music - shares the same artistic techniques (playfulness, humor and irony), and with the same aim. The ironic detachment which permeates these works puts into question our individual visions of human beings and existence. The element of humor is used to express the insensitivity, absurdity and paradox of the modern world. They are both 'detached' ways of speaking in a postmodern world where "no utopian possibility of change is left untouched by irony and skepticism" (Stacey 2010: 44). Through this type of analysis, Booth has led us into a pattern of reconstructions of a variety of tones and voices, enabling us to deal, at the theoretical level at least, with the irony and absurdity of the human condition.

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Мирјана Кнежевић

ПОСТМОДЕРНА ИРОНИЈА И ХУМОР У РОМАНУ *КВАКА-22*
ЏОЗЕФА ХЕЛЕРА И ЊИХОВЕ ПАРАЛЕЛЕ У ПОСТМОДЕРНОЈ
МУЗИЦИ И ЛИКОВНОЈ УМЕТНОСТИ

Сажетак

Есеј истражује концепт ироније и начине на које се овај концепт одражава у тако различитим облицима естетског израза као што су књижевна, музичка и ликовна уметност, посебно у оквиру постмодерног доба које не само прихвата, него и интензивира и утиче на ову давно установљену стилску технику. Са овим циљем, есеј анализира роман Џозефа Хелера *Квака-22* као репрезентативан пример постмодерне књижевности, као и графику Курта Вонегата *Траут у Кохоузу*, песму Руперта Холмса *Пина колада* и композицију Лироја Андерсона *Мачка која игра валцер* као одговарајуће примере у ликовној уметности и музици. Теоријски оквир се заснива на концепту ироније Вејна Бута, а такође укључује и хумор као пратећи елемент ироничног израза.

Кључне речи: иронија, хумор, постмодернизам, Џозеф Хелер, *Квака-22*, Вејн Бут

***Belgrade BELLS
Interview***

INTERVIEW: MICHAEL HOEY

TRUST YOURSELVES, DON'T HAVE HEROES

by Jelisaveta Milojević



Michael Hoey is a British linguist and Baines Professor of English Language. He has lectured in applied linguistics in over 40 countries. He has authored a number of textbooks on linguistics including *Signalling in Discourse* (1979), *On the Surface of Discourse* (1983), *Patterns of Lexis in Text* (1991) (which was awarded the Duke of Edinburgh English-Speaking Union Prize for best book in Applied Linguistics in 1991), *Textual Interaction*

(2001) and *Lexical Priming: A New Theory of Words and Language* (2005), which proposes a new way of looking at language based on evidence from corpus linguistics. It was shortlisted for best book in applied linguistics by the British Association for Applied Linguistics and described as being ‘a must for anyone involved in corpus linguistics or with an interest in what shapes the way we use and understand words’. Hoey’s research into lexical priming theory in Liverpool has been credited as signalling a shift in linguistics away from the theory of universal grammar espoused by Noam Chomsky. Hoey has also written extensively on coherence and cohesive harmony.

Hoey has had a long association with the University of Liverpool, where he began lecturing in 1993. He was Director of the Applied English Language Studies Unit between 1993 and 2003 and is currently Pro Vice-Chancellor for Internationalisation; between 2008 and 2009 he was Dean of the university’s Faculty of Arts.

He is co-editor of a series of books on corpus linguistics published by Routledge, and also serves as the chief adviser on the Macmillan English Dictionary, for which he also wrote the foreword.

Michael Hoey is an academician of the Academy of Social Sciences.

BELLS: It has been thirty years since we met at the University of Birmingham, with which I was affiliated as an Academic Visitor. I was then a happy beneficiary of your kindness and expertise and today, yet again, you continue to be unfailingly generous with your time and wish to talk to us.

MICHAEL HOEY: It is my pleasure.

BELLS: In the obituary published in *The Guardian* on 3 May 2007 you wrote that John Sinclair, Birmingham University’s Professor of Modern English Language, was a giant in English language studies and a world leader in three fields: discourse analysis, lexicography, and corpus linguistics, and that he was instrumental in building the university’s reputation as a world centre for English language studies. You yourself were a lecturer in the English Department at Birmingham University – however, in 1993, you decided to pursue your

academic career at the University of Liverpool. What were the academic challenges and reasons behind your decision to leave Birmingham?

MICHAEL HOEY: I have always wanted new challenges. I was very happy at Birmingham where I had excellent colleagues and an exciting research environment but I felt that if I stayed I would slip into complacency. Liverpool University is, like Birmingham, a world class university and offered me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills. John Sinclair's towering presence at Birmingham meant that such skills were less likely to be developed there. I certainly didn't leave, though, as a result of any tension between us and we remained good friends until his premature death.

BELLS: **What is the connection between your Birmingham academic background and your current academic work?**

MICHAEL HOEY: I learnt my corpus skills by working alongside such people as John Sinclair, Antoinette Renouf and Gwyneth Fox at Birmingham, and so there was a considerable degree of continuity between my work there and my work at Liverpool, a continuity strengthened by the fact that Antoinette Renouf's research unit moved to Liverpool at about the same time. My lexical priming theory builds, as you said in your generous introduction, on my corpus linguistic experience, particularly in connection with the Collins COBUILD project. It also builds, though, on the work of my colleagues at Liverpool, such as Mike Scott, whose Wordsmith software has been absolutely vital to my work, and Geoff Thompson, who has kept me connected with developments in systemic linguistics.

BELLS: **Your Birmingham colleagues have shown great respect and admiration, both implicit and explicit, for the academic success you went on to achieve. One book in particular caught my attention: Scott, Mike and Geoff Thompson, eds. (2001) *Patterns of Text: In Honour of Michael Hoey*. John Benjamins, vii+323pp. Antoinette Renouf paid homage to you in her article 'Lexical signals of word relations', and the last chapter of the volume, 'The deification of information', is by the very John Sinclair who pioneered work in discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. A book was written in your honour**

when you were only 53 years of age, and thus long before retirement, which is usually when such laurels are bestowed – what a great precedent! How does it feel to be so respected and admired?

MICHAEL HOEY: I am lucky to have such kind friends. I don't deserve respect or admiration.

BELLS: In his Collins English Dictionary Annual Lecture, 'The dictionary of the future,' delivered at the University of Strathclyde on 6 May 1987, Professor John Sinclair commended Collins for their remarkable contribution to the practice of lexicography and for establishing a new standard and style in monolingual lexicography. In introducing the Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary, he referred to it as a radically new type of dictionary – the dictionary of the future. You yourself were once a keen member of the ELR (English Language Research) COBUILD team involved in the project in lexical computing and producing the COBUILD dictionary, and I remember your valuable theoretical contributions to the ELR colloquia. Twenty five years ago, John Sinclair masterminded this dictionary of the future – and today you are Chief Adviser on the Macmillan English Dictionary, for which you wrote the foreword. In what way do you find these two dictionaries related? What, in your opinion, is the dictionary of the future?

MICHAEL HOEY: I think that the Macmillan's English Dictionary is a truer successor of the Collins COBUILD dictionary than recent versions of the COBUILD dictionary itself. Its editor-in-chief, Michael Rundell, its associate editor, Gwyneth Fox, and of course myself as its chief consultant all were members of the original COBUILD team, and we have incorporated into the Macmillan's Dictionary all the most successful features of the original COBUILD dictionary along with a number of extra features that we regard as improvements. The dictionary of the future is clearly going to be on-line, though no publisher has yet worked out how to make an on-line version sufficiently profitable that it will cover the very considerable development costs of what is in effect a huge and very detailed on-going research project into the lexicon of the English Language. The dictionary of the future will continue to draw upon corpus research but will allow direct access to the

corpora and will also make use of the immense textual resource available on the Internet. This means that it will be possible to move from single examples to hundreds of examples, from one-line examples to paragraph-length examples, from instances drawn from a designed corpus to instances drawn from all over the world.

BELLS: The development of international education has had a major impact on universities globally. Over the past decade, it has become a cornerstone of governmental higher education strategies as well as a force of change for most institutions around the world. You have lectured in applied linguistics in over forty countries. At the University of Liverpool between 2008 and 2009, you were Dean of the Faculty of Arts and you are currently the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Internationalisation. On 12 March 2011 you participated in the British Council's 'Going Global' session, *Internationalising higher education: unattainable dream or sustainable reality?* What was your stand on the issue?

MICHAEL HOEY: My view is that Higher Education is following the world in becoming internationalized, and that the sustainability of internationalisation depends on how we understand what it means to be international. If an institution is internationalizing in order to make money, or to improve its world ranking, then it will not succeed for long. There have got to be moral principles underpinning any international strategy – these principles include ensuring that all parties in any international arrangement genuinely benefit from the arrangement, recognizing that every student's international experience is unique to him or her and that therefore nothing less than 100% student satisfaction is good enough, and identifying those research questions that require international responses if they are ever to be answered. If an institution aims to make sure that everybody benefits, that students have a life-changing experience and that the research it does is of the highest importance and caliber, paradoxically it will probably also be profitable and well ranked in the international tables as well, but those are by-products not goals. That, at any rate, is the view we hold at the University of Liverpool.

BELLS: According to an old Latin proverb, *docendo discimus*, we learn by teaching. What is it that you have learned from your students?

MICHAEL HOEY: I have learnt from every one of my Ph.D. students and I could fill a book with examples. At the undergraduate and taught masters levels I have been inspired by my students' enthusiasm. I have also benefited from trying out ideas on them. I have always valued their intelligence and have always argued that CLEARLY expressing an idea doesn't make the idea less valuable – my students have helped me express my ideas more clearly.

BELLS: You have lectured in forty countries. Is there a message that you feel inclined to deliver to us - your academic audience in Belgrade?

MICHAEL HOEY: To my shame, I've never been to Belgrade despite all my travelling. What I would say to any audience, though, is: trust yourselves. Don't let the Anglo-American tradition suppress your own original thinking and don't have heroes. Even the best linguists have weaknesses in their thinking, and while we all build on the work done by great people before us, we also have sometimes to rebuild afresh. And the idea is more important than the person. We all get forgotten within a generation, if not considerably sooner, but good ideas can last much longer, even though the people who had the ideas are no longer remembered. And in the end, that is all that is important.

BELLS: Having known you as a charismatic linguist and professor, I would suppose that you consider your profession a calling. So, finally, it remains to be known: is there a question that you would like to have been asked?

MICHAEL HOEY: I certainly don't think of myself as charismatic! But I think your questions have been very good. I have already sung the praises of John Sinclair but I should have liked the excuse to sing the praises also of Eugene Winter and Randolph Quirk, both of whom also influenced me hugely in the earlier part of my career.

BELLS: Professor Hoey, it has been a privilege to talk to you. Thank you very much.

Jelisaveta Milojević
10 July 2011

Notes to Contributors

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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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