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

BELGRADE ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE STUDIES

VOLUME IX
2017

Belgrade, 2017

Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies (Belgrade BELLS)
2017 – Volume IX

Editor-in-Chief:
Jelena Vujić (University of Belgrade)

Editor of Volume 9:
Novica Petrovic (University of Belgrade)

Published by:
Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade

Graphic design:
Biljana Živojinović

Printed by:
Čigoja štampa
Belgrade, Serbia
2017

ISSN 1821-3138 (Printed volume)
ISSN 1821-4827 (Online text)
UDC 811.111+82

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Like its predecessor, this Volume of *BELLS* contains papers presented at the *5th International Conference English Language and Literature Studies: Tradition and Transformation*, organised by and held at the English Department of the Faculty of Philology of Belgrade University in October 2015. Together, these two volumes testify to the sheer diversity of the participants' contributions in the fields of theoretical and applied linguistics, translatology, literary and cultural studies.

This Volume opens with **Stevan Mijomanović's** paper, which tries to shed light on the development of conceptual metaphors and basic terminology in the domain of anaesthesiology through the prism of cognitive linguistics. To its credit, it manages not to anaesthetize the reader. **Danijela Đorđević** presents the results of research into the use of epistemic modality markers as hedges in English and Serbian research articles in various scientific disciplines. The results of her comparative analysis contain some interesting implications for the teaching of English for specific purposes and for non-native scholars writing their scientific papers in English. **Jelena Grubor's** paper is dedicated to testing the construct of perceived L2 speaking proficiency and determining its components, with a view to analysing inter-rater reliability and establishing whether the raters use similar criteria while testing speaking proficiency. Her findings indicate that the use of a five-trait-category model in testing speaking proficiency in an L2 in practice seems to produce more objective results than a holistic approach.

Opening the section dedicated to literary studies, **Sergej Macura** analyses a paradigm shift in representing trauma in Modernist fiction, attempting to show what made possible the eventual movie version of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, decades after it was originally published, despite the fact that the protagonists' character traits were far from suitable for the Hollywood Motion Picture Production Code. In his paper, **Tomislav Pavlović** deals with the dominant motifs in the poetry of Michael Longley, a leading Irish modernist poet, and tries to shed light on their amazing syncretic power, which is instrumental in helping us penetrate the existential *aporias* imposed by a specific *hermeticism* of Ulster, customarily resistant to historical and philosophical explanations.

The paper presented by **Miloš Arsić** analyses the key aspects of Cormac McCarthy's redefinition of both the conventions of reality and genre in his novel *The Road*, focusing on the loss of humanity rather than on the obliteration of a system or a culture, showing that the true demise of the world as we know it lies in the depletion of meaning – its actual destruction being of secondary importance. **Milena Nikolić's** paper investigates how the mirror motif is used in Margaret Atwood's novel *Cat's Eye* to symbolically represent the psychological state of its heroine, initiate changes in her perspective and indicate that reality is only a reflection of what she is able to see at a given moment. The author relies on ontological and psychological theories as a framework for exploring the relation between Elaine's possible liberation from fantasy, which is an indispensable resource for her fictional world, and the potential for identifying the real causes of her traumas.

Andreea Popescu attempts to analyse the changes introduced by Richard Wagner in his musical drama based on Wolfram von Eschenbach's poem *Parzival* in the context of the Arthurian legend and the late Romantic paradigm by presenting the universal meaning of man's journey towards the sacred. **Svetlana Milivojević Petrović** deals with David Lodge's response to the widespread feeling in the 1960s that realism and the novel form were in a crisis, reflected most memorably in John Barth's influential essay "The Literature of Exhaustion". She shows how Lodge, by tackling metafiction on his own terms, moving freely between the realistic and the metafictional mode while keeping his "modest faith in realism", proved that the creative possibilities of literature, despite widespread misgivings, were far from exhausted.

Jelena Pršić's paper deals with the motif of time lapse in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* (2009), two novels belonging to different literary and cultural traditions, yet sharing one of their main themes: *the relationship between the hero and the city*. Using Elizabeth Grosz's term *interface* to define the relationship between bodies and cities, she emphasises that both novels are largely based upon the body-city *interface* and attempts to prove that they both have specific instances of *temporal* interruption, which serves as a *spatial* body-city interrelation. Revisiting the (in)famous F. R. Leavis/ C. P. Snow controversy, **Lena Petrović** reads the contemporary debate concerning the role of the humanities in university-level education as the

latest version of the paradigm clash dramatically transposed in the stories of two archetypal knowers – Faust and Prospero.

Finally, continuing a tradition of our very own, namely, of presenting an interview with a prominent English studies scholar whenever possible, we are very glad to be able to present Professor **Radojka Vukčević's** interview with Christopher Bigsby, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the Royal Society of Arts, an award-winning novelist and biographer.

As before, we remain very grateful to the Faculty of Philology, first of all to our former Dean Professor Aleksandra Vraneš and our present Dean Professor Ljiljana Marković, for their unswerving support to the organisation of the *5th International Conference English Language and Literature Studies: Tradition and Transformation* and to the continued publication of this periodical.

Belgrade, December 2017

Novica Petrović
Editor of *BELLS*, Volume IX

Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

UDC 811.111'276.6:61
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.1

Stevan Mijomanović*
University of Belgrade
Faculty of Medicine
Belgrade, Serbia

CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS OF ANAESTHESIOLOGY

Abstract
Anaesthesiology is a branch of medicine that enables efficient surgical treatment and the safety of a patient through preoperative treatment, pain relief and monitoring of vital functions during surgical procedures. The aim of this paper is to examine the language of this discipline through the prism of cognitive linguistics. The focus is on the conceptual metaphors and the basic terminology used by anaesthesiologists. Most of the medical terms are of either Greek or Latin origin, and can thus be obscure to laymen. This paper will try to shed some light on the terms used in anaesthesiology by focusing on their etymology. Since pain management is an integral part of anaesthesiology, we will also examine conceptualizations of pain. Medical terminology is closely related to the human body, thus a closer look might reveal how medical professionals perceive it, whether as a machine (e.g. intubation), physical space (local/regional anaesthesia) etc. Identifying conceptual metaphors of medical terminology can give us a broader insight into how and why those who treat us and cure us do what they do. The scope of this study will be restricted to the main processes and phenomena of anaesthesiology

Key words: anaesthesiology, the language of medicine, conceptual metaphor, pain.

* E-mail: stevan.mijomanovic@gmail.com

Introduction

Throughout human history and existence people have tried to solve the riddle of the human body. We have tried to understand and give meaning to what we feel, how we experience the world around us and the world inside us. Ancient peoples had different ideas about the working of the human body, ranging from a set of tubes permeating our body, parts of the body being under the auspices of different deities (Egypt), or the Hippocratic theory of the entire body being an equilibrium of four humours (blood, black bile, yellow bile, phlegm). Since then, our knowledge has grown and is still growing. We are now aware of the minute mechanisms that set the body and life in motion, we know about various diseases, numerous medicines and techniques that prolong our life span, and we are still learning and discovering. This progress has led to the emergence of genetics, enzymology, molecular biology, biophysics, biochemistry, and a large number of clinical branches; internal medicine alone has ramified into cardiology, gastroenterology and hepatology, endocrinology, etc. (Micic 2008:10). But with all this progress, we have encountered numerous concepts, phenomena and different insights that needed to be named. There is a saying in Latin (from Greek όνομα ορίζοντας) that usually refers to humans –*nomen est omen* – however, it can be applied to words. Each word has its denotation and connotation. The language of medicine is not different in this respect and is, as the above-mentioned saying, rooted in both Greek and Latin. "The language of medicine rests on a fundamentally learned terminology made up of formants (roots, prefixes, suffixes) drawn from Greek and Latin" (Van Hooff 1998: 49). Some of these words have entered the everyday language and are understandable to a majority of people (tumour, coagulation), whereas some are completely indecipherable to a laymen (endocarditis, elastofibroma). The language of medicine begs for implicit knowledge in order for it to be comprehensible and thus it stays mostly bound to medical and healthcare professionals. Medical language tends to describe rather than define the incompletely fathomed natural phenomena (Rothwell et al. 1994: 695). This paper will try to unveil the covert meanings of the terminology of one of the most comprehensive branches of medicine, i.e. anaesthesiology. This will be done through a cognitive framework, mainly focusing on etymology through the prism of the conceptual metaphor theory. The aim is to further understand how we and medical and healthcare professionals perceive our

bodies. Studying the underlying conceptual metaphors of anaesthesiology can give us the starting point for further research of conceptual metaphors of all branches of medicine. This can further help us understand the limits of our knowledge and contribute to the progress of medical sciences.

Anaesthesia

Anaesthesia is reaching the alleviation or absence of pain and sense of touch, with or without loss of consciousness. An anaesthesiologist is a specialist who applies various technical procedures and medicines to induce patients into anaesthesia. The primary role of an anaesthesiologist is to ensure that the patient experiences anaesthesia painlessly and safely. Anaesthesiology is a branch of medicine that is being developed with the aim of increasing the efficacy of surgical treatment, the safety of a patient, and with the aim of minimizing and annihilating the suffering caused by pain and psychological tension in patients.

Most people, when asked about the role of an anaesthesiologist, will say that this is a doctor that puts you to sleep. The role of anaesthesiologists is, however, far more complex than this. During surgery, an anaesthesiologist is the one who monitors all your vital functions (your temperature, blood pressure, your heart, lung and kidney function) and, if need be, tends to any disturbances, makes up for lost blood and fluids and regulates the dosage of the medication to ensure complete absence of pain during and after the operation. An anaesthesiologist, simply put, keeps you alive during an operation. In order to do this, an anaesthesiologist must have an extensive knowledge of physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology, surgical diseases and their basic treatments, pain therapy, reanimation and resuscitation, and principles of intensive and critical care. Without anaesthesia, modern medicine, as we know it today, would not be possible. Many procedures could not be done without the patient being completely senseless. Anaesthesia ensured that patients do not die from both physical and psychological trauma, and it made the advancement of medicine possible. Today's innovation and improvement of new surgical techniques and procedures owe their existence to anaesthesia. Bearing all of the above-mentioned in mind and the extensiveness of knowledge needed to practise it, we are of the opinion that the terminology of anaesthesia would be the best starting point of a linguistic study concerned with the conceptual metaphors of medical terminology.

Metaphors of medicine

Metaphor is a powerful tool that gives form to many abstract concepts and phenomena that we experience. The way we think, i.e. our cognition, is embodied. The structure of our thoughts stems from our bodies and what our bodies experience (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The pervasiveness of metaphor, metaphorical mappings from more concrete source domains to more abstract target domains, in everyday life and thought have been widely explored in many areas of human knowledge. Medicine is no exception. We have already mentioned different perceptions of the human body throughout human history. Naturally, with the evolution of that knowledge, we grasped for words and concepts that would give shape to a rapidly growing understanding of the world around us and inside us. One of the main mechanisms of production of new words of science and medicine is meaning extension via metaphor. According to Fleishman (2006: 484) there is a spectrum of researches dedicated to either metaphors of medicine or metaphors based on the human body. These explorations range from the metaphoric language of pain, metaphors of destruction and purgation, moral and cultural implications of metaphors, metaphors in doctor–patient communication, and metaphors generated by body parts and their afflictions. Semino (2008) has focused on metaphors in educational materials and scientific metaphors through many examples of medical texts. She has also focused on the metaphors of cancer, their identification and usage by the patients (Semino et al. 2004; 2015). Other researchers, such as Ning Yu (2003) and Judit Simó (2011), have looked at certain body parts, the gallbladder and blood respectively, and the cultural boundedness of the metaphors they generate. On the level of texts, medical and scientific metaphors have been explored by Van Rijn-van Tongeren (1997) and Cameron (2003).

Van Rijn-van Tongeren (1997: 57) says that many theorists make a distinction between 'dead' and 'live' metaphors. Dead metaphors are idioms that were once used in everyday language, but have become petrified over time, i.e. conventionalized and fixed in the lexicon. She argues that, because of this, many authors find the 'live' metaphors more worthy of analysis due to the greater chance of creative interpretation. According to her, many 'dead' metaphors are not even recognised as metaphors, and she explains this phenomenon referring to Black, who states that this happens in the cases of catachresis (use of a word in a new sense in order to fill

in the gap in the lexicon). In opposition to Black, Van Rijn-van Tongeren mentions Searle as being the proponent of 'dead' metaphors, as they are the ones that survived.

Van Rijn-van Tongeren sees metaphors as surface representations of an underlying conceptual system and she identifies 1. metaphors used to structure medical concepts and 2. functions of metaphorical expressions in medical texts. She differentiates between three different functions: catachretic, didactic and theory-constitutive (Van Rijn-van Tongeren 1997: 97-103). Catachrectic metaphors fill in the gaps in the vocabulary ('blood vessels as rivers'), didactic metaphors explain new concepts by means of new concepts ('the body is a machine'), and theory-constitutive metaphors are applied to phenomena that are still unknown in order to structure it.

Similar to Van Rijn-van Tongeren, Cameron (2003: 200-2) discusses a passage from a science textbook aimed at schoolchildren and identifies three different kinds of metaphorical expressions: technical, technical + theory, and sub-technical. Technical metaphors are conventionalized terms within the scientific domain ('chambers' and 'walls'), while sub-technical metaphors have a pedagogic potential (blood as the body's 'transport system') in explaining certain phenomena as opposed to theory-constitutive use.

Lakoff (1993) argues that the term 'metaphor' refers to "a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system", and the term 'metaphorical expression' refers to "a linguistic expression (a word, a phrase, or sentence) that is the surface realisation of such a cross-domain mapping". In this paper we will examine the terminology of anaesthesia and, in that respect, we will focus mainly on metaphorical expressions such as words and phrases, and on their underlying cross-domain mappings. Our focus will also be more on dead metaphors, since most terms in medical terminology represent an already set lexical system, and we will concentrate on the catachrectic or technical metaphors.

Anaesthesia and sedation metaphors

According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) *anaesthesia* is [an- (Greek: not/without) + *aisthesis* (Greek: to feel/perceive)] want of feeling/ sensation; insensibility. Anaesthesia is a combination of medications that block pain and other sensations and, at times, leads to the state of unconsciousness (general anaesthesia). General anaesthesia includes a

state of manageable reversible unconsciousness, amnesia and analgesia.[1] When a person is under general anaesthesia, unconsciousness is followed by inactivity and lack of perception. The underlying conceptual metaphor is CONSCIOUS IS ACTIVE/PERCEPTION. Another conceptual metaphor that follows, CONSCIOUS IS UP> ACTIVE IS UP, can be seen in phrases such as *to be/go under* or *undergo (general) anaesthesia*.

There are many different types of anaesthesia, but we will focus on the main ones, which also serve as the umbrella terms for the more specific ones. According to the scope of its effect, anaesthesia can be general, regional and local. General anaesthesia means that there is absence of pain over the entire body. In the OED *general* is defined as involving or including all, or nearly all, the parts of a specified whole. Its second meaning is to be concerned with the whole of a certain territory or an organisation, as opposed to *local*. Regional anaesthesia is absence of pain over a portion of the body, such as an arm or leg. *Regional* is defined in the OED as something pertaining to a district, portion of a country, territory, district. Local anaesthesia is absence of pain over a small area of the body. *Local* according to the OED is pertaining to a 'place' or a position in space. Its second meaning is belonging to a particular place on the Earth's surface; pertaining to a particular region or district. From the definitions above, we can see that the human body is perceived topographically, so the underlying conceptual metaphor here is the HUMAN BODY IS A GEOGRAPHIC SURFACE/TERRITORY.

The medicines used in anaesthesiology roughly fall into the following groups: hypnotics, sedatives, analgesics and muscle relaxants. Analgesics can be opioids or non-opioids. Another term for analgesics is narcotics. It is nowadays being used less and less by anaesthesiologists, due to the fact that it has entered jargon and now usually denotes addictive, usually illegal, drugs. The terms used for these anaesthetics hide in them a conceptual metaphor, CONSCIOUS IS ACTIVE. Hypnotics produce *hypnosis*, or artificially induced sleep (OED). Narcotics cause *narcosis*, from Greek *narkosis*, from *narkoun*, to benumb, or a state of insensibility (OED). Sedatives induce *sedation*, from Latin *sedatus* 'composed, moderate, quiet, tranquil,' past participle of *sedare* 'to settle, calm', causative of *sedere* 'to sit'; the act of making calm (OED). The conceptual metaphor CONSCIOUS IS ACTIVE is seen in the etymology of these words where one is asleep, sitting or benumbed. Insensibility, which permeates these definitions, also leads

[1] http://www.anesthesiazone.com/anesthesia-glossary.aspx

us to another conceptual metaphor: PERCEPTION IS ACTIVE. Analgesics and analgesia will be discussed later in the section dedicated to pain.

Sedation has several levels: anxiolysis, moderate and deep sedation, and general anaesthesia. Anxiolysis, or minimal sedation, "is a level of sedation that relieves anxiety but preserves consciousness"[2]. Moderate sedation "is a level of sedation that depresses consciousness and relieves anxiety and pain". Deep sedation "is a level of sedation in which the patient is not easily aroused, but responds purposefully to repeated or painful stimulation".[3] Finally, general anaesthesia, as previously mentioned, "is when the patient is completely unconscious, and not responsive to painful stimuli."[4] The key word here is the word level. As the level of the anaesthetic increases, the level of consciousness decreases, almost as if it is being pushed out gradually. The underlying conceptual metaphor is CONSCIOUSNESS IS A SUBSTANCE. Since our consciousness is governed by our brain/mind, another implied conceptual metaphor is MIND IS A SUBSTANCE, and, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have already observed, this takes us to the conclusion that the HUMAN BODY IS A CONTAINER.

Pain metaphors

Human kind has always searched for a way not to feel pain and anaesthesia, at least when it comes to medical procedures, has achieved this. The basic goal of any kind of anaesthesia is for the patient not to feel pain, to be benumbed, insensible, i.e. to reach the state of analgesia, painlessness (OED). In this part of the paper, we will focus on the conceptualisation of pain.

The examples have been gathered from a myriad of online articles about anaesthesia. We searched for the word *pain* in these articles and observed its collocations.

The first conceptual metaphor is already obvious in one of the main goals of anaesthesia, which is to reach the state where one does not feel pain, i.e. analgesia (painlessness). *Analgesic/analgetic* is tending to remove pain, or a medicine that removes pain (OED). The conceptual metaphor

2. http://www.psanes.org/Legislators/TypesofAnesthesia/tabid/207/Default.aspx

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

hidden in these terms is PAIN IS A HEAVY OBJECT/ENTITY. Other examples of the realisation of this conceptual metaphor are phrases such as *heavy pain* and *pain relief*. The latter example is slightly more obscure. *To relieve* comes from Latin *relevare* 'to raise, alleviate, lift up, free from a burden', from *re-*, intensive prefix, + *levare* „to lift up, lighten," from *levis* 'not heavy' (OED).

Another conceptualisation of pain actually stems from its physical aspect. When a tissue is damaged, actually or potentially, it releases energy. We describe this process as pain and usually modify it with adjectives such as *burning* or *searing*, which leads us to the following conceptualisation of pain, PAIN IS HEAT.

One of the most common ways of describing pain discloses yet another conceptual metaphor. Expressions such as *stabbing pain*, *dull* or *sharp pain*, *acute pain*, *lancinating pain* and *piercing pain* all have one quality in common. They are all experienced as a sensation of being cut or pierced by a knife, needle, etc. The conceptual metaphor behind these expressions is PAIN IS A CUTTING/PIERCING INSTRUMENT.

When we feel pain, we usually become completely immersed in the sensation. It can have such an effect on us that at times it can render us senseless, or in extreme situations, even lead to a fatal outcome. Anaesthesia makes it its primary goal to regulate the level of pain we experience, thus we have *pain management* and *pain control*. These two phrases reveal a conceptual metaphor rooted in the animal world. *To manage* is to handle, train or direct, control, cause to submit to one's rule (of persons and animals) (OED). The same conceptual metaphor behind these is also hidden in the expressions such as *gnawing pain* and *intractable pain*. *Intractable* relates to persons and animals that are not to be guided; not docile or manageable (OED). An anaesthesiologist's task is to tame this pain, to make it yield to the power of anaesthetics; hence we see that the underlying conceptual metaphor is PAIN IS A WILD ANIMAL/BEAST.

MEDICINE IS WAR (Sontag 1977; Hodgkin 1985) is a well-known metaphor. However, if we say that the metaphor is ANAESTHESIOLOGY IS WAR, then we a have a new conceptualisation of pain. In the previous paragraph, we said that anaesthesiology tamed pain, however, in the following expressions we will see that it also battles pain. In order *to fight/block (violent) pain* we use *painkillers*, thus we have another conceptual metaphor, PAIN IS AN OPPONENT/ENEMY.

Finally, pain is something we can describe as scalar quantity. In the expressions *pain assessment* (the determination or adjustment of the amount

of taxation, charge, fine etc. /OED/) and *pain level* we can recognise the underlying conceptual metaphor where PAIN IS A RESOURCE, or taken to a more concrete level, PAIN IS A SUBSTANCE.

Other metaphors

During surgery or any invasive procedure, anaesthesiologists are the ones who pay attention to our heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, levels of oxygen in our blood and tissues, the depth of anaesthesia, heart, lung and kidney functions, etc. In order for the patient to wake up safely and unharmed, anaesthesiologists have to know about his/her health condition. They asses the risks, choice of anaesthetics, and the possible need for further diagnostic and therapeutic procedures with the aim of optimizing the patient's condition for the upcoming intervention. Anaesthesiologists use many drugs which can be toxic, depending on the dosage, or cause allergies. They also apply various invasive methods, which, in order to be efficient, disturb the integrity of the patient's body. Anaesthesia in itself is an artificially induced state that has many attendant risks. Sometimes, during a procedure, even with the expertise of both the anaesthesiologist and the surgeon, complications arise. The most extreme complications can lead to cardiac arrest, and then anaesthesiologists resort to reanimation and resuscitation.

To resuscitate is to revive, restore; from Latin *resuscitatus*, past participle of *resuscitare*, rouse again, revive, from *re-* 'again' + *suscitare* 'to raise, revive' (OED). *To reanimate* in a spiritual and physical sense, from *re-* (back, again) + *animate* (to endow with life) (OED). Even though both actions refer to bringing someone back to life, the underlying conceptual metaphors are different. In resuscitation the metaphor is LIFE IS UP, and in reanimation it is LIFE IS A GIFT. From the latter, we can deduce an even more concrete metaphor, LIFE IS AN ENTITY/OBJECT.

To minimize the adverse effects of both anaesthesia and surgery, an anaesthesiologist keeps track of the patient's vital functions and maintains anaesthesia. In the expression *maintenance of anaesthesia* we can see the underlying conceptual metaphor COUSCIOUSNESS IS A MACHINE, which further on implies that MIND IS A MACHINE. Since, both consciousness and the mind are situated in our body, they are both cogs of a larger machine. The HUMAN BODY IS A MACHINE metaphor is also discernible in the phrase *monitoring of vital functions*.

We have already mentioned the metaphor HUMAN BODY IS A CONTAINER; however, in the following example we will see its more specific realisation. Namely, throughout anaesthesia one of the most important factors is maintenance of normal breathing. This process is called ventilation. Ventilation is oxygenation of the blood through respiration. *Ventilation* is defined as a stir or motion of the air, and its fourth meaning is the admission of a proper supply of fresh air, esp. to a room, building, mine etc. (OED). This expression conceals the conceptual metaphor HUMAN BODY IS A BUILDING. This metaphor tells us how we perceive the body as a structured, sturdy entity that contains multiple compartments and could serve as a place of inhabitation.

The last metaphor is related to the practitioner of anaesthesiology, but can refer to other physicians as well. After the initial examination and assessment, an anaesthesiologist induces anaesthesia. *To induce* is to lead into, introduce, or bring in (OED). Through this, an anaesthesiologist leads us into unconsciousness. There are two underlying metaphors in this setting; AN ANAESTHESIOLOGIST/DOCTOR IS A GUIDE which then further implies CONSCIOUSNESS/UNCONSCIOUSNESS IS A JOURNEY.

Conclusion

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) observed that metaphors 'highlight and hide' certain aspects of a phenomenon, while other aspects are in the background or entirely obscured. If we take the conceptual metaphor HUMAN BODY IS A MACHINE as an example, we can see that we perceive the body as a set of mechanisms that can be controlled by humans. It also implies that we understand the workings of the human body in its entirety, since machines are manmade. What is omitted in this kind of conceptualization of the human body is our lack of comprehensive knowledge of its functioning and the fact that it is governed by natural laws. (Fleishman 2006: 489). Similarly, the conceptual metaphor HUMAN BODY IS A GEOGRAPHIC SURFACE/ TERRITORY highlights the governable portions of our bodies. This implies that the body is divided into sections and that the healing process can be successfully executed if we tend to the infected/afflicted area. However, we know that the body is an intricate system of interrelations of structures and connections. These kind of conceptualisations, though limited, have a very important role in medicine. Physicians are able to orientate better and

focus on the specific areas that need to be tended. However, they have to be aware of the human body as a whole. Their education does offer them this kind of knowledge. Through their education they learn countless new words and concepts. These words and concepts on their own are useless, but together they make a model that has, thus far, proven to be effective in the treatment of many illnesses, diseases and traumas. And this model is constantly evolving. This model is also visible on the level of conceptual metaphors. The conceptual metaphors CONSCIOUS IS UP> ACTIVE IS UP, CONSCIOUSNESS IS A SUBSTANCE, and the HUMAN BODY IS A CONTAINER are, at least when talking about anaesthesia, very much connected. Once we are injected with an anaesthetic, e.g. when we are going under general anaesthesia, our consciousness is 'being depressed/ pushed down and out' of our body, rendering us senseless (typically, this leads to a lying position).

Some metaphors exclude other possible ways of perceiving the human body, health and illness. On the discourse level, Fuks (2009; 57-68) believes that the WAR metaphor is gradually being replaced by metaphors of renewal, springtime and bloom. Similarly, Hodgkin (1985) suggests alternative metaphors, such as, BODY IS A BIOCHEMICAL DANCE and MEDICINE IS COLLABORATIVE EXPLORATION. Furthermore, genetics is a field of medicine that has been evolving rapidly recently and is giving us new insights into the functioning of the body, and with them new conceptualisations. Semino (2008: 151) observes that DNA is being described via an INSTRUCTIONS metaphor, a part of the LANGUAGE/ COMMUNICATION metaphor, used for theory constitutive purposes since the early days of genetics. These alternatives and new emerging terminology might be a herald of a new era in which the idea of our bodies, health and illnesses will change.

The metaphors of anaesthesiology that we identified show us how physicians, at least in this branch of medicine, perceive consciousness and the mind as something tangible, as substances, something that we can manipulate. Only time will tell to what extent this is true.

Pain is regarded as something dangerous, wild and invasive. Expressions focused on pain fail to express what medicine has known for a very long time, that pain, even though unpleasant, is the body's reaction that signals to us when something is wrong, and is actually positive and sometimes lifesaving. If we changed our view of pain, the way it is treated and experienced could change as well. The conceptualisation seen in

the expressions *pain assessment* and *pain level*, PAIN IS A RESOURCE/ SUBSTANCE, could be a starting point.

The human body is complex and still not entirely understood. Medicine is, however, galloping towards new discoveries every day. The language of medicine has to rediscover itself daily in order to keep up with the advancements. The existing medical terms do have their limitations, but if observed in isolation. When they are a part of a larger conceptual model, they fit into the puzzle that is our knowledge and comprehension of ourselves. New findings, innovations and information gradually infiltrate terminology and complement the idea that is the human being.

References

Anesthesiazone.com (16 October 2015) <http://www.anesthesiazone.com/anesthesia-glossary.aspx>

Cameron, L. (2003). *Metaphor in Educational Discourse*. A&C Black.

Fleischman, S. (2001). Language and medicine. *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 470-502.

Fuks, A. (2009). The military metaphors of modern medicine. *The Meaning Management Challenge*, *124*, 57-68.

Hodgkin, P. (1985). Medicine is war: and other medical metaphors. *Br Med J (Clin Res Ed)*, *291*(6511), 1820-1821.

Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In: Ortony, A. (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*, second ed. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 202–251.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2008). *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago press.

Mićić, S. (2009). *Studije o jeziku medicine u engleskom i srpskom.* Beograd: Beogradska knjiga*,* 92-94.

Oxford English Dictionary (1993) Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Pennsylvania Society of Anesthesiologists, Physicians Protecting Partients *(16 October 2015)* <http://www.psanes.org/Legislators/TypesofAnesthesia/tabid/207/Default.aspx# >

Rothwell, D.J. et al. (1993). Developing a standard data structure for medical language – the SNOMED proposal. In *Proceedings of the Annual Symposium on Computer Application in Medical Care* (p. 695). American Medical Informatics Association.

Semino, E. et al. (2004). Methodological problems in the analysis of metaphors in a corpus of conversations about cancer. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *36*(7), 1271-1294.

Semino, E. (2008). *Metaphor in Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Semino, E. et al. (2015). The online use of Violence and Journey metaphors by patients with cancer, as compared with health professionals: a mixed methods study. *BMJ supportive & palliative care*, bmjspcare-2014.

Simó, J. (2011). Metaphors of blood in American English and Hungarian: A cross-linguistic corpus investigation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *43*(12), 2897-2910.

Sontag, S. and Broun, H. H. (1977). *Illness as Metaphor* (p. 343). Center for Cassette Studies.

Van Hoof, H. (1998). Ministudy of English and French. *Translation and Medicine*, 49.

Van Rijn-van Tongeren, G. W. (1997). *Metaphors in Medical Texts* (Vol. 8). Rodopi.

Yu, N. (2003). Metaphor, body, and culture: The Chinese understanding of gallbladder and courage. *Metaphor and Symbol*, *18*(1), 13-31.

UDC 811.111'42
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.2

Danijela D. Đorđević*
University of Belgrade
Faculty of Agriculture

EPISTEMIC MODALITY MARKERS USED AS HEDGES IN RESEARCH ARTICLES

Abstract
Research on hedging in research articles has been increasingly carried out in recent decades. This paper investigates the use of epistemic modality markers as hedges in English and Serbian research articles belonging to different disciplines. The results will show the differences in frequency and types of epistemic modality markers between various scientific disciplines, as well as between the above-mentioned languages. It is hypothesised that epistemic modality markers are used to make statements less categorical and thus decrease the force of a statement, and protect the author from possible disagreements. The research results might have implications for the teaching of English for Specific Purposes, as well as help non-native researchers when writing their articles in English.

Key words: epistemic modality, hedges, academic discourse, English, Serbian.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increasing need for writing articles in foreign languages, particularly in English, which has been considered as a *lingua franca* for a while. Therefore, academic workers, apart from producing articles in their mother tongue, need to publish the results of their research

* E-mail: danidjordje@yahoo.com

in international journals, primarily in English. Besides knowing grammar and lexis, they should master pragmatic competence as well. Thus, when it comes to academic discourse, in particular academic writing, the notion of hedging is unavoidable. To some extent, the notions of hedging and epistemic modality are intertwined and are usually referred to in literature as overlapping notions. Hence, this article aims at investigating the use of epistemic modality markers functioning as hedges in English and Serbian research articles, taking into account four different disciplines: agriculture, civil engineering, linguistics and medicine.

The notion of hedge

The notion of *hedge* was introduced by G. Lakoff (1973) in his famous article "Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts", where *hedges* are defined as follows: "for me, some of the most interesting questions are raised by the study of words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness – words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. I will refer to such words as 'hedges'" (Lakoff 1973: 471).

Since that time, the notion of *hedge* has attracted the attention of a number of linguists. It was G. Lakoff who originally introduced it in linguistics, but over time this notion has changed and overlapped partly or completely with many other notions from the field of linguistics. The notion of *hedge* has been studied from different perspectives, within various theories and models. Markkanen and Schröder (1997) claim that the notion of *hedge* has changed, especially after having been accepted in the fields of pragmatics and discourse analysis. Therefore, currently *hedge* does not relate only to expressions that modify the category membership of a predicate or noun phrase, but also involves modifying the speaker's commitment to the truth value of the whole proposition (Markkanen & Schröder 1997).

The notions of epistemic modality and evidentiality

Regarding epistemic modality, Lyons (1977: 797) defines epistemic modality as "any utterance in which the speaker explicitly qualifies his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed by the sentence he

utters, whether this qualification is made explicit in the verbal component, […], or in the prosodic or paralinguistic component, is an epistemically modal, or modalized utterance."

Coates (1983: 18) claims that epistemic modality is connected with a speaker's assumptions or assessments of possibilities, and that in most cases it points to the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of a proposition.

Palmer (1986: 2, 51) maintains that "'epistemic' should apply not simply to modal systems that basically involve the notions of possibility and necessity, but to any modal system that indicates the degree of commitment by the speaker to what he says. In particular, it should include evidentials such as 'hearsay' or 'report' (the quotative) or the evidence of the senses" (Palmer 1986: 51).

Furthermore, Nuyts (2001: 21) says that epistemic modality can be defined as follows: "…an estimation of the likelihood that (some aspect of) a certain state of affairs is/has been/will be true (or false) in the context of the possible world under consideration."

What is noteworthy, Hyland (1998: 44) states that hedging is an aspect of epistemic modality which is related to a personal judgement based on lack of knowledge, while Halliday (1994) asserts that modality is a part of the interpersonal semantic system of language that mediates between a writer and a reader, and therefore shows the personal involvement of the writer in the text. In addition, Trbojević-Milošević (2004: 34) states that hedges are expressions that make a speaker safe or hedged in terms of his/her commitment towards the truth of a proposition, in case the 'main' modal word is not sufficient, or that the speaker is afraid that a listener can incorrectly interpret his/her commitment towards the proposition.

As for epistemic modality in Serbian, Piper et al. (Пипер et al. 2005: 636) claim that epistemic modality (serb. *persuazivnost* or *inreferencijalnost*) is defined as a graded qualification of a speakers's confidence in the truth of a proposition, giving examples of modal expressions: serb. *bez sumnje* 'undoubtedly', *svakako* 'certainly', *sigurno* 'certainly', *naravno* 'of course', *verovatno* 'probably', *možda* 'perhaps', *teško da (je)* 'it is hardly that', as well as verbs such as *morati* 'must', *trebati* 'should/ought to', *biti* 'be' (Пипер et al. 2005: 643, 644, 645).

When it comes to evidentiality, de Haan (1999) claims that the notions of epistemic modality and evidentiality can be distinguished since they differ in terms of their semantics – evidentials confirm the nature of evidence

for information in a given sentence, whereas epistemic modals evaluate the speaker's commitment towards the given proposition. Therefore, evidentiality and epistemic modality encode two different things – the source of information and the attitude towards information.

Similarly, Aikhenvald (2004: 3) considers evidentiality as a grammatical category whose primary meaning is a source of information, claiming that the categories of epistemic modality and evidentiality are completely separate.

In addition, Nuyts (2005: 11) assumes that evidentiality and epistemic modality are separate, however, related categories, and he uses the term *attitudinal* instead of *modal*.

Similarly, Cornillie (2009) highlights that "evidentiality refers to the reasoning processes that lead to a proposition and epistemic modality evaluates the likelihood that this proposition is true" (Cornillie 2009: 46–47).

On the other hand, Palmer (1986) first claimed that one category belongs to the other. Later, however, Palmer (2001) argued that these two categories are separate, but that there is an overlapping area as well.

In addition, Plungian (2001: 354) states that there is a domain where evidentiality and epistemic modality overlap, and it is a part of epistemic modality where probability is assessed. While an evidential complement can always be seen in an epistemic marker, the other way round is not possible – not all evidential markers are modal, since it is not necessary that they imply an epistemic judgement (Plungian, 2001: 354).

It is interesting to note that the definition of *imperceptive modality* (serb. *imperceptivna modalnost*), that is, *imperceptivity*, stated by Piper et al. (2005: 645) in a large part overlaps with the definitions of evidentiality already mentioned. They state that *imperceptive modality* represents such a form of modality in which the content of the statement is qualified regarding the fact that the speaker is not a source of information he/she states, so that this modality is similar to epistemic modality.

In this paper, evidentiality will be considered as a part of a continuum, together with epistemic modality, so these two categories will be regarded as categories that underlie each other, without drawing any sharp boundaries between them.

Theoretical framework

Bearing in mind the definitions of hedges, epistemic modality and evidentiality, the research was started by taking into account Hyland's (1996: 478) functional definition: "A hedge is therefore any linguistic means used to indicate either a) a lack of complete commitment to the truth of a proposition or b) a desire not to express that commitment categorically." Furthermore, the similar working definition adopted in this research is the one primarily stated by Lyons (1977) and later accepted by Crompton (1997: 281): "A hedge is an item of language which a speaker uses to explicitly qualify his/her lack of commitment to the truth of a proposition he/she utters", emphasizing that this definition applies only to propositions which represent the main speech act in academic writing. Therefore, the aim of this paper was to investigate epistemic modality markers used to show the writer's lack of commitment towards the proposition, thus decreasing the strength of the given proposition.

What is also important for this paper is the investigation in epistemic modality markers from the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) (Halliday 2004: 618). According to SFG, modality construes the region of uncertainty that lies between yes and no (Halliday 2004: 147). It is mentioned that in philosophical semantics probability is referred to as 'epistemic modality' (Halliday 2004: 618). In the SFG context, modality realizes a part of the interpersonal metafunction, and thus the appropriate use of modality is critical to successful communication between the speaker/writer and the listener/reader (Yang et al. 2015: 3). In SFG, the system of modality types comprises modalization or 'indicative' type related to probability and usuality, and modulation or 'imperative' type referring to obligation and inclination. Regarding SFG, two variables of epistemic modality are taken into account: orientation, which refers to the distinction between subjective and objective modality, and between the explicit and implicit variants and value that is attached to modal judgement: high, median or low (Halliday 2004: 619–620).

According to Thompson (1996 cited in Yang et al. 2015: 3), each epistemic modal expression has two parameters: the value indicating the degree of certainty and the addresser's commitment, and the orientation, which points to the linguistics forms of expressing modality and the addresser's modal responsibility. Regarding the value, it ranges from low (possible), median (probable) to high (certain) (Halliday 2004: 620). As for the orientation, Halliday (2004: 620) provides the following examples:

Explicit subjective: I think (in my opinion) Mary knows

Implicit subjective: Mary'll know

Explicit objective: It's likely that Mary knows (Mary is likely to)

Implicit objective: Mary probably knows (in all probability)

Therefore, regarding the values of epistemic modal markers, only low and median values will be taken into account, as they decrease the strength of a proposition, unlike high value epistemic modality markers, which increase the strength of a proposition, that is, act as boosters.

Methodology

This paper tends to investigate the frequencies of different epistemic modality markers (epistemic auxiliary verbs, epistemic lexical verbs, epistemic adjectives, epistemic adverbs and epistemic nouns) used as hedges in English and Serbian research articles across four different disciplines (agriculture, civil engineering, linguistics and medicine), as well as the frequencies of values (low and median) and orientations (explicit subjective, implicit subjective, explicit objective and implicit objective) of these epistemic modality markers.

We started our research by searching through journals from four different disciplines, then excerpting the epistemic modality markers functioning as hedges and writing them down into a separate document. The corpus consists of eight smaller corpora – a corpus of English research articles from the fields of agriculture (FCR[1] i CP), civil engineering (BaE and CaBM), linguistics (JoP and Ling) and medicine (BMCM and NEJoM) and a corpus of Serbian research articles from the fields of agriculture (RiP and PiF), civil engineering (GMiK, IiVK), linguistics (JF i ZMS) and medicine (SAzCL and VP). Research articles in English were chosen from the publications of the journals that possess impact factors. Research articles in Serbian were taken from the publications of journals listed as M24 and M51 according to the categorization of journals of the Ministry of Science and Tehnological Development of the Republic of Serbia. The corpus for this research consists of thirty-two articles, approximately 189,680 words, of which about 120,768 words were recorded in English

[1] Abbreviations of the titles of journals are provided in Appendix 1 at the end of the paper.

corpora and around 68,912 words in Serbian corpora. For the purpose of comparing the results, the frequencies will be counted per 1,000 words, that is, normalized/relative frequencies will be given.

Results and discussion

Firstly, we would like to illustrate different types of epistemic modality markers that are used as hedges in English and Serbian research articles across four disciplines. The types are as follows: epistemic auxiliary verbs, epistemic lexical verbs, epistemic adjective, epistemic adverbs and epistemic nouns.

(1) In the case of ambient cured resins, the elevated temperature *may* result in a much needed post-cure although possibly at the expense of increased residual stresses associated with the different thermal expansion properties of the fibers and the matrix. (CaBM1) (epistemic auxiliary verb)

(2) However, such a distinction *appears* to be impossible to make based on either the immediate linguistic context or the wider discourse context in the corpora. (JoP1) (epistemic lexical verb)

(3) It is also *likely* that concentration solutions for systems with surface sorption or other wide ranging timescales would be faster using this approach. (BaE1) (epistemic adjective)

(4) Spatial uses, such as (10) and (11), feature in all the taxonomies, and are *perhaps* the most intuitive of the categories. (Ling2) (epistemic adverb)

(5) This deterioration may be an *indication* that these environments exposed the specimens to temperatures greater than their glass transition temperature, Tg (Table 2). (CaBM1) (epistemic noun)

(6) Na osnovu dobijenih rezultata *može* se zaključiti da je Pravilnik 87/ 2011 rigorozniji u proceni stepena opasnosti. (IiVK2) (epistemic auxiliary verb)
'Based on the results obtained, it *may/can* be concluded that…'

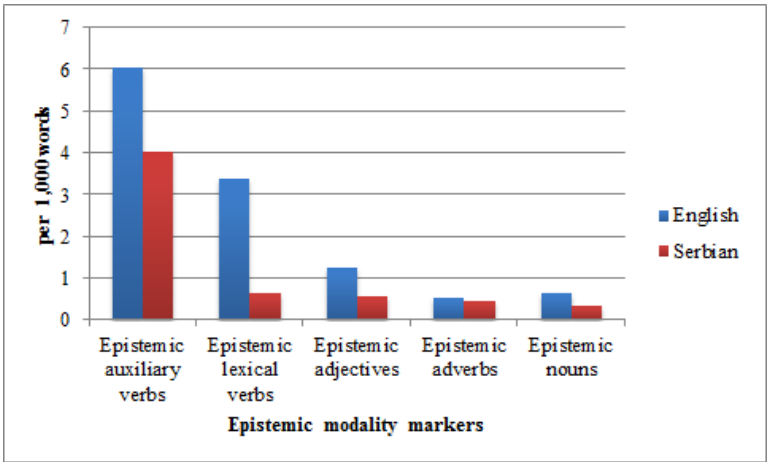
(7) Standard *pretpostavlja* da su oba parametra (indeks žilavosti i faktor rezidualne čvrstoće) nezavisna od dimenzija probnog tela, kao i od drugih promenljivih veličina (npr. raspona oslonaca). (GMiK1) (epistemic lexical verb)
'The standard *presumes* that…'

(8) Један од *могућих* разлога за настанак ове лажне негативности могао би бити у нивоу циркулишућег ГМ, који је код неких болесника испод прага који тест може регистровати. (SAzCL1) (epistemic adjective)
'One of the *possible* reasons for…'

(9) Ова лажна позитивност *вероватно* је последица тога што се гљиве рода Penicillium користе у процесу производње ових антибиотских лекова, а познато је и да ове гљиве приликом раста ослобађају ГМ. (SAzCL2) (epistemic adverb)
'This false positivity is *probably* the result of…'

(10) Posuda pod pritiskom mora da bude projektovana tako da izdrži maksimalni pritisak za koji postoji *verovatnoća* da će se dostići tokom radnog veka posude, /15/. (IiVK1) (epistemic noun)
'…for which there is a *probability* that…'
As we can see from Graph 1, epistemic auxiliary verbs were predominant in both English (6.07 per 1,000 words) and Serbian (4.05 per 1,000 words) research articles.

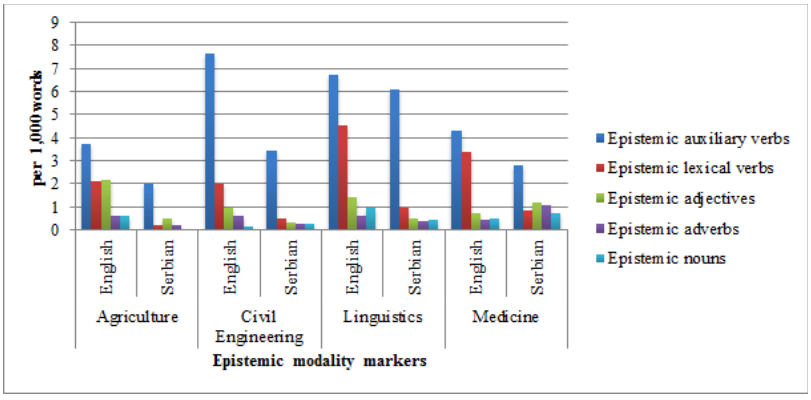
Graph 1. Different epistemic modality markers in English and Serbian research articles



The lowest frequency was recorded for epistemic nouns in Serbian research articles (0.36 per 1.000 words). It is worth mentioning that the frequencies of all epistemic markers in English articles are higher than in Serbian articles.

Furthermore, if we look at Graph 2, we can see various frequencies of these epistemic markers across four different disciplines.

Graph 2. Frequencies of different epistemic markers in English and Serbian research articles across four disciplines



Regarding epistemic auxiliary verbs in English research articles, we can see that their frequency was highest in research articles from the field of civil engineering (7.68 per 1,000 words), and then in research articles from the field of linguistics (6.74 per 1,000 words). Their lowest frequency was in research articles from the field of agriculture (3.71 per 1,000 words). As for epistemic lexical verbs in English, they were most frequent in linguistics research articles (4.53 per 1,000 words), whereas they were least frequent in research articles from the field of civil engineering (1.99 per 1,000 words). Regarding epistemic adjectives in English, their frequency was highest in agricultural research articles (2.14 per 1,000 words), and the lowest frequency was observed in research articles from the field of medicine (0.72 per 1,000 words). Epistemic modal adverbs were most frequent in linguistics research articles (0.63 per 1,000 words), and their frequency was lowest in research articles from the field of medicine (0.42 per 1,000 words). Epistemic modal nouns were most frequently found in linguistics research articles (0.97 per 1,000 words), whereas the lowest frequency was noted in case of research articles from the field of civil engineering (0.12 per 1,000 words).

On the other hand, concerning Serbian research articles, epistemic auxiliary verbs were most frequent in linguistics research articles (6.08 per 1,000 words) and least frequent in agricultural research articles (1.98 per 1,000 words). As for epistemic lexical verbs, their frequency was greatest in linguistics research articles (0.93 per 1,000 words), and the lowest in agricultural research articles (0.21 per 1,000 words). When it comes to epistemic modal adjectives, their frequency was greatest in medical research articles (1.16 per 1,000 words) and lowest in research articles from the field of civil engineering (0.34 per 1,000 words). Again, the frequency of epistemic modal adverbs was greatest in medical research articles (1.08 per 1,000 words) and lowest in agricultural research articles (0.21 per 1,000 words). The frequency of epistemic modal nouns was highest in medical research articles (0.70 per 1,000 words) and lowest in agricultural research articles, more precisely there were no instances of epistemic nouns.

Epistemic auxiliary verbs are predominantly used in English research articles from the field of civil engineering (7.68 per 1,000 words), whereas they are least used in Serbian articles from the field of agriculture (1.98 per 1,000 words). However, their frequency in other disciplines, both in English and Serbian, should not be neglected, as they represent the most used type of epistemic modality markers in our corpus. As for epistemic

lexical verbs, they prevail in English research articles from the field of linguistics (4.53 per 1,000 words). Their lowest frequency is noted in the case of Serbian research articles from the field of agriculture (0.21 per 1,000 words). Epistemic adjectives predominate in English research articles from the field of agriculture (2.14 per 1,000 words) whereas they are least frequent in Serbian research articles from the field of civil engineering (0.34 per 1,000 words). Regarding epistemic adverbs, they are most frequent in Serbian research articles from the field of medicine (1.08 per 1,000 words) while they are least frequent in Serbian research articles from the field of agriculture (0.21 per 1,000 words). Epistemic nouns are most frequent in English research articles from the field of linguistics (0.97 per 1,000 words), whereas there were no epistemic nouns in Serbian research articles from the field of agriculture.

Different values of epistemic modality markers in English and Serbian research articles

At this point, we will give some examples for different values (low and median) of epistemic modality markers used as hedges in English and Serbian research articles across four different disciplines.

37) The lower unit weight and SG of the RCA *may be* a result of entrapped and entrained air within the mortar coatings and mortar chunks. (CaBM2) (low value)

38) This *suggests that* the rule of thumb cannot be simply applied to curved glazings as suggested above. (BaE2) (low value)

39) The apparent decrease in crop N content between stem extension and flowering in this experiment was *possibly* due to a combination of N loss in shed leaves and very dry soil conditions during stem extension which restricted N uptake. (FCR1) (low value)

40) С обзиром на немаркираност субјекта у погледу активности, управо ово *се може* сматрати његовим примарним обележјем. (ZMS1) (low value)
‘…*may/can* be regarded as…’

41) Горенаведено нам *сугерише* да су у датим реченицама у колизији синтаксичка и семантичка валентност управног глагола, из чега следи закључак да не постоје никакве формалне препреке да се субјекат сматра експонентом логичког предиката, тј. фактивним субјектом, те да примарно додатак именује семантички субјекат, чиме стиче статус агентивне допуне. (ZMS2) (low value)
'The abovementioned *suggests* that…'

42) Sem toga, gojazniji i inače imaju nesto viši krvni pritisak, što *možda* odražava efekat gojaznosti *per se*, a ne i neizostavno bolju srčanu funkciju. (VP1) (low value)
'... which *maybe* reflects the effect of …'

43) Finally, the perception of where the boundary between the daylight and the non-daylit area lies is *likely* to have a strong subjective element, so that different individuals will likelymake very different assessments. (BaE2) (median value)

44) Results *indicate* that while conventional indirectness appears to be the favoured method (and constant) across both corpora, there are differences in the directness of request head acts: there were more direct requests amongst the British e-mails and more implicit requests (via particularised implicatures) in the Australian data (Table 2).[15] (JoP2) (median value)

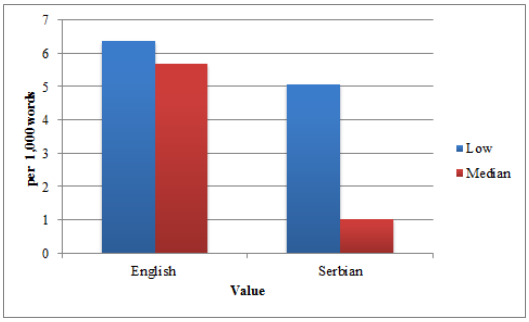
45) Two-stage revision is traditionally regarded as being more effective in treating infection, which *probably* explains the preponderance of two-stage revisions. (BMCM2) (median value)

46) Mogući razlog je, između ostalog, što je u našoj studiji kod živih bolesnika prosečna vrednost kreatinina bila granične vrednosti, *verovatno* zbog toga što su oni većinski imali akutno pogoršanje već postojeće HSI. (VP1) (median value)
'…, *probably* because they …'

47) Posuda pod pritiskom mora da bude projektovana tako da izdrži maksimalni pritisak za koji postoji *verovatnoća* da će se dostići tokom radnog veka posude, /15/. (IiVK1) (median value)
'… there is a *probability* that ….'

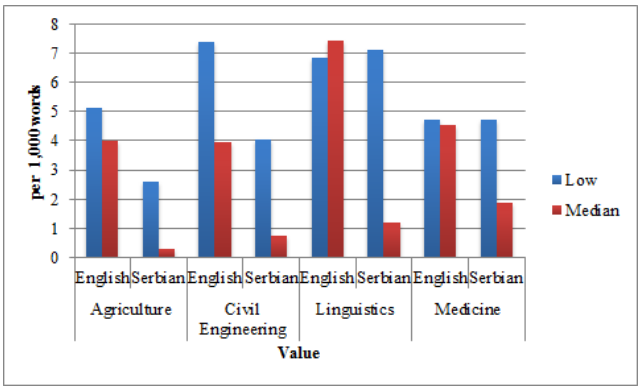
As for the value of epistemic modality markers, we can see (Graph 3) that low value predominates in both English (6.38 per 1,000 words / 5.71 per 1,000 words) and in Serbian (5.09 per 1,000 words / 1.03 per 1,000 words) research articles.

Graph 3. Value of epistemic modality markers in English and Serbian research articles



When it comes to the value of epistemic modality markers across different disciplines, we can note different frequencies (Graph 4). Taking into account the low value in English research articles, we can note that its frequency was greatest in research articles from the field of civil engineering (7.41 per 1,000 words) and lowest in research articles from the field of medicine (4.75 per 1,000 words). Considering median value in English research articles, it can be seen that the greatest frequency is found in linguistics research articles (7.46 per 1,000 words) and the lowest in research articles from the field of civil engineering (3.98 per 1,000 words).

Graph 4. Value of epistemic modality markers in English and Serbian research articles across four disciplines



Regarding the low value in Serbian research articles, the greatest frequency was recorded in linguistics research articles (7.15 per 1,000 words) and the lowest frequency was noted in agricultural research articles (2.62 per 1,000 words). As for median value in Serbian research articles, it was most frequent in medical research articles (1.86 per 1,000 words), and least frequent in agricultural research articles (0.28 per 1,000 words).

The low value was most frequent in English research articles from the field of civil engineering (7.41 per 1,000 words) whereas this value was least frequent in Serbian research articles from the field of agriculture (2.62 per 1,000 words). It is interesting to note that low value was more frequent in Serbian (7.15 per 1,000 words) than in English (6.85 per 1,000 words) research articles from the field of linguistics. As for median value, it was most frequent in English research articles from the field of linguistics (7.46 per 1,000 words). Regarding both low and median values, it is argued that they help writers not be categorical, but more tentative and cautious when presenting their propositions/claims (Yang et al. 2015: 6). Similarly, it is claimed that "authors tend to mitigate the force of their scientific claims by means of hedging devices in order to reduce the risk of opposition and minimise the face threatening acts that are involved in the making of claims" (Martín-Martín 2008:133).

Regarding the orientation (explicit subjective, implicit subjective, explicit objective and implicit objective) of epistemic modality markers in English and Serbian research articles across different disciplines, we will illustrate them using the following examples:

51) While I agree with the judgement of this example, I *think* that it is an exceptional case. (Ling1) (explicit subjective)

52) This *may* represent an overestimate, however, because we cannot be certain that all of these reinfections occurred within 2 years or that all second exchange operations were performed as a consequence of reinfection. (BMCM2) (implicit subjective)

53) This decline in density *suggests* that repeated applications of malathion are toxic to immature or adult spiders, and that late-season populations can not be sustained by re-colonization or in-field reproduction. (CP2) (explicit objective)

54) The scarcity of well-tested models that deal with tillage *likely* explains why few studies considered tillage practices. (FCR2) (implicit objective)

55) У овом раду немамо намеру да представимо исцрпан и свеобухватан, посебно не нов инвентар семантичких јединица, тј. семантичких улога или функција већ *настојимо* да укажемо на правилности и одступања у функционалној, или прецизније, синтаксичкој дистрибуцији централних семантичких улога у српском језику. (ZMS2) (explicit subjective)
'...we *seek* to point to...'

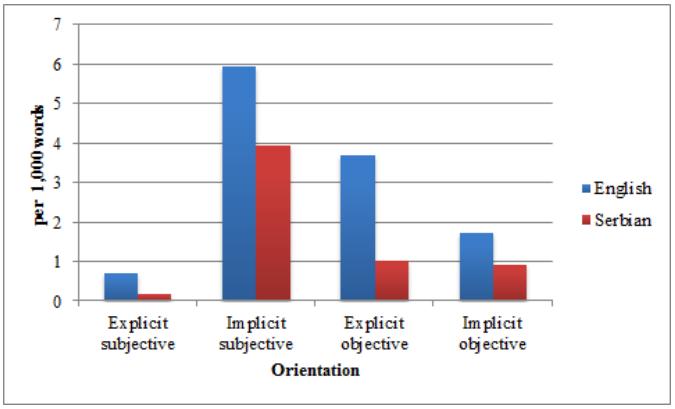
56) Значење овог везника у највећем броју случајева *се може утврдити* у оквиру саме сложене реченице. (JF1) (implicit subjective)
'…*may/can* be determined within the same complex sentence.'

57) Горенаведено нам *сугерише* да су у датим реченицама у колизији синтаксичка и семантичка валентност управног глагола, из чега следи закључак да не постоје никакве формалне препреке да се субјекат сматра експонентом логичког предиката, тј. фактивним субјектом, те да примарно додатак именује семантички субјекат, чиме стиче статус агентивне допуне. (ZMS2) (explicit objective)
'The abovementioned *suggests* that…'

58) Ова лажна позитивност *<u>вероватно</u>* је последица тога што се гљиве рода Penicillium користе у процесу производње ових антибиотских лекова, а познато је и да ове гљиве приликом раста ослобађају ГМ. (SAzCL2) (implicit objective)
'This false positivity is *<u>probably</u>* the result of…'

As for the orientation of epistemic modality markers, we can see from Graph 5 that implicit subjective orientation was the most frequent one in English (5.95 per 1,000 words), as well as in Serbian (3.96 per 1,000 words) research articles. The least frequent was explicit subjective orientation in English (0.7 per 1,000 words) and in Serbian (0.2 per 1,000 words) research articles.

Graph 5. Orientation of epistemic modality markers in English and Serbian research articles



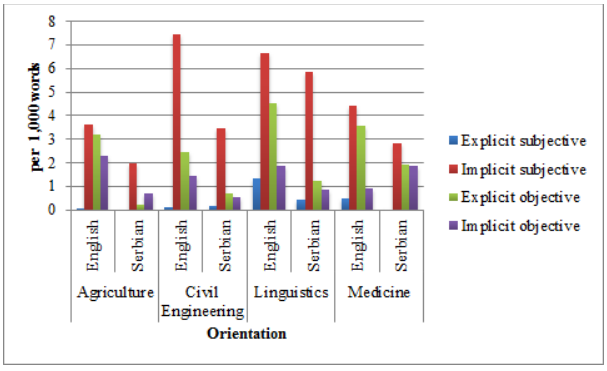
When it comes to the orientation of epistemic modality markers in English and Serbian research articles across different disciplines, we can notice various frequencies (Graph 6).

Regarding English research articles, we see that explicit subjective orientation was most frequent in linguistics research articles (1.30 per 1,000 words) and least frequent in agricultural research articles (0.05 per 1,000 words). Concerning implicit subjective orientation, it can be noted that it was most frequent in research articles from the field of civil engineering (7.45 per 1,000 words) and least frequent in agricultural research articles (3.62 per 1,000 words). Explicit objective orientation was most frequently

found in linguistics research articles (4.51 per 1,000 words), and least frequent in research articles from the field of civil engineering (2.42 per 1,000 words). The frequency of implicit objective orientation was greatest in agricultural research articles (2.27 per 1,000 words) and lowest in medical research articles (0.90 per 1,000 words).

As for Serbian research articles, the frequency of explicit subjective orientation was greatest in linguistics research articles (0.44 per 1,000 words), whereas no examples of explicit subjective orientation were recorded in research articles from the fields of agriculture and medicine. Implicit subjective orientation was mostly used in linguistics research articles (5.85 per 1,000 words), while its frequency was lowest in agricultural research articles (1.98 per 1,000 words). Concerning explicit objective orientation, it was most used in medical research articles (1.93 per 1,000 words), and least used in agricultural research articles (0.21 per 1,000 words). Implicit objective orientation was most frequent in medical research articles (1.86 per 1,000 words) and least frequent in articles from the field of civil engineering (0.54 per 1,000 words).

Graph 6. Orientation of epistemic modality markers in English and Serbian research articles across four disciplines

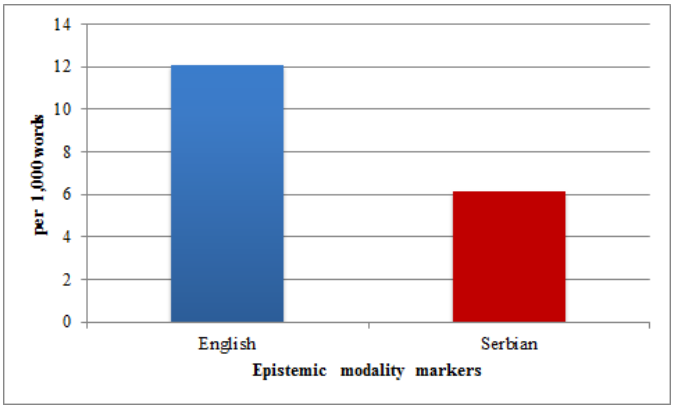


Therefore, regarding both languages, explicit subjective orientation was most frequent in English linguistics research articles (1.30 per 1,000 words) and least frequent, that is, not present at all in Serbian research articles from the fields of agriculture and medicine. As for implicit subjective orientation, the greatest frequency was noted in English research articles from the field of civil engineering (7.45 per 1,000 words) and the lowest in Serbian research

articles from the field of agriculture (1.98 per 1,000 words). Explicit objective orientation was most frequent in English linguistics research articles (4.51 per 1,000 words) and least frequent in Serbian agricultural research articles (0.21 per 1,000 words). Implicit objective orientation was most used in English agricultural research articles (2.27 per 1,000 words) and least used in Serbian research articles from the field of civil engineering (0.54 per 1,000 words). Since it is stated that the subjective source of modality is only present in the explicit subjective orientation modality (Yang et al. 2015: 6), the results suggest that RA writers across all four disciplines actually tend to avoid presenting their research results in an explicitly subjective way. Rather, they use the modality of implicitly subjective orientation, which "'steers the readers' focus to the objective state of the proposition" (Yang et al. 2015: 6). The usage of objective orientation indicates that RA writers tend to move the readers' focus to findings by distancing themselves from the text (Yang et al. 2015: 7).

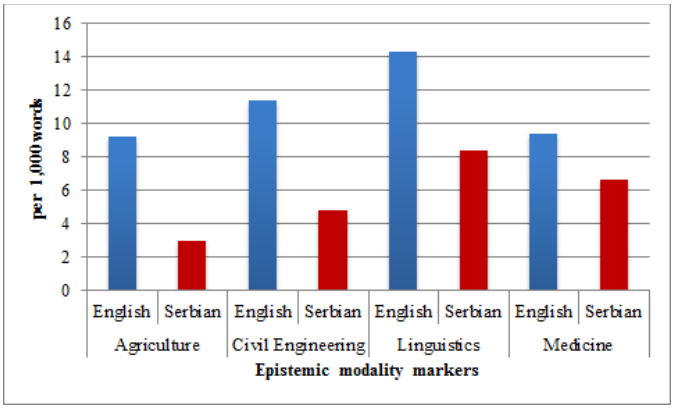
Overall, Graph 7 indicates that the use of epistemic modality markers as hedges in English and Serbian research articles is different. Namely, epistemic modality markers were more frequent in English (12.08 per 1,000 words) than in Serbian (6.12 per 1,000 words) research articles. It may imply that English RA writers tend to use more epistemic marker hedges when presenting their research results and thus decrease the strength of their claims.

Graph 7. Epistemic modality markers used as hedges in English and Serbian research articles



As for the frequency of epistemic modality markers in English and Serbian research articles across different disciplines, we can see various frequencies (Graph 8). The greatest frequency was noted in English research articles from the field of linguistics (14.31 per 1,000 words), followed by the frequency in research articles from the field of civil engineering, medicine and agriculture. The situation concerning the greatest and lowest frequency was the same in case of Serbian research articles. As for Serbian research articles, the frequency of epistemic modality markers were highest in linguistics research articles (8.37 per 1,000 words) followed, unlike in English, by the frequencies recorded in research articles from the fields of medicine, then civil engineering and agriculture. Therefore, the frequency of epistemic modality hedges was highest in English linguistics research articles, and lowest in Serbian agricultural articles.

Graph 8. Epistemic modality markers used as hedges in English and research articles across four disciplines



The different frequency of using epistemic modality hedges may be influenced by the different nature of research, material, methods and (un)availability of instruments. Furthermore, in order to protect themselves from possible disagreements, RA writers tend to use different linguistic devices to present their results and build an appropriate relationship with plausible audience/readers.

Conclusion

It can be argued that the use of epistemic modality markers as hedges implies that RA writers tend to make their claims in a reserved, tentative and cautious way. Our research on epistemic modality markers used as hedges in English and Serbian research articles across four different disciplines has revealed that the frequency of these markers varies in the two languages across four disciplines. It is higher in English research articles across all disciplines, which may imply that English RA writers are likely to make their claims more tentatively. Furthermore, the results imply that RA writers from the field of linguistics tend to use epistemic modality hedges more frequently than the researchers of other disciplines, which can be explained by the nature of research and (un)availability of different instruments, materials and methods. As for the different values of epistemic modality markers, low value has prevailed over median in both languages, implying the writers' tendency to make less certain claims. When it comes to the orientation of epistemic modality markers, the most frequent in both languages and across four disciplines was implicit subjective orientation, which implies that writers are not willing to put themselves in the focus of the readers' attention, but to objectivise their statements.

Some of these findings might well be implemented in instructing non-native, in this case, Serbian RA writers, as well as students when writing research articles in English. The importance of hedging is crucial in academic writing, and great attention should be paid to the proper use of epistemic modality markers as hedges in this discourse. Therefore, this may help Serbian academic workers make appropriate claims for their results and thus publish their research articles in internationally renowned journals.

References

Aikhenvald Y., A. (2004). *Evidentiality*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Coates, J. (1983). *The Semantics of the Modal Auxiliaries*. London and Canberra: Croom Helm Ltd.

Cornillie, B. (2009). Evidentiality and epistemic modality. *Functions of Language*, *16*(1), 44–62.

Crompton, P. (1997). Hedging in academic writing: Some theoretical problems. *English for Specific Purposes*, *16*(4), 271–287.
de Haan, F. (1999). Evidentiality and Epistemic Modality: Setting Boundaries. *Southwest Journal of Linguistics*, *18*, 83–101.
Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (Second.). Edward Arnold (Publishers) Limited.
Halliday, M. A. K. (2004). *Introduction To Functional Grammar* (Third Edit.). London: Hodder Arnold.
Hyland, K. (1996). Nurturing hedges in the ESP curriculum. *System*, *24*(4), 477–490.
Hyland, K. (1998). *Hedging in Scientific Research Articles*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
Lakoff, G. (1973). Hedges: A study in meaning criteria and the logic of fuzzy concepts. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, *2*(4), 458–508.
Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics* (Vol. 2). Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
Markkanen, R., & Schröder, H. (1997). *Hedging and Discourse: Approaches to the Analysis of a Pragmatic Phenomenon in Academic Texts*. (Raija Markkanen And Hartmut Schröder, Ed.)*Research in text theory Untersuchungen zur Texttheorie*. Walter de Gruyter.
Martín-Martín, P. (2008). The Mitigation of Scientific Claims in Research Papers: A Comparative Study. *International Journal of English Studies*, *8*(2), 133–152.
Nuyts, J. (2001). *Epistemic Modality, Language, and Conceptualization*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
Nuyts, J. (2005). Modality: Overview and linguistic issues. In W. Frawley (Ed.), *The Expression of Modality* (pp. 1–26). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
Palmer, F. (2001). *Mood and Modality* (Second Edi.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Palmer, F. R. (1986). *Mood and Modality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Plungian, V. (2001). The place of evidentiality within the universal grammatical space. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *33*(3), 349–357.
Thompson, G. (1996). *Introducing Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold Edward.
Trbojević-Milošević, I. (2004). *Modalnost, sud, iskaz: epistemička modalnost u engleskom i srpskom jeziku*. Beograd: Filološki fakultet, Beograd, Čigoja štampa.

Yang, A., Zheng, S., & Ge, G. (2015). Epistemic modality in English-medium medical research articles: A systemic functional perspective. *English for Specific Purposes*, *38*, 1–10.

Пипер et al. (2005). *Синтакса савременог српског језика: проста реченица.* Београд: Институт за српски језик САНУ – Београдска књига – Матица српска.

Appendix 1

Abbreviations of the titles of journals used for the research are as follows:

English language:

Agriculture:
CP – *Crop Protection*
FCR – *Field Crops Research*

Civil engineering:
BaE – *Building and Environment*
CaBM – *Construction and Building Materials*

Linguistics:
JoP – *Journal of Pragmatics*
Ling – *Lingua*

Medicine:
BMCM – *BMC Medicine*
NEJoM – *New England Journal of Medicine*

Serbian language:

Agriculture:
PiF – *Pesticidi i fitomedicina*
RiP – *Ratarstvo i povrtarstvo*

Civil engineering:
GMiK – *Građevinski materijali i konstrukcije*
IiVK – *Integritet i vek konstrukcija*

Linguistics:
JF – Јужнословенски филолоѓ
ZMS – Зборник Матице српске за филологију и лингвистику

Medicine:
SAzCL – Српски архив за целокупно лекарство
VP 1 – *Vojnosanitetski pregled*

UDC 371.3::811.111
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.3

Jelena Grubor, PhD*
State University of Novi Pazar,
Department of Philology
Novi Pazar, Serbia

ANALYTICAL MEASUREMENT OF L2 SPEAKING PROFICIENCY IN A FINAL EXAM IN ENGLISH

Abstract
The main aim of the study was to determine whether the assumed components of L2 speaking proficiency constitute the construct itself. The subsidiary aim was to check inter-rater reliability, in order to establish whether the raters used similar criteria while testing speaking proficiency. Thirty philological class students were tested individually by two independent raters on five trait categories (pronunciation, grammar, lexis, fluency, content). The results indicate that the ratings are reliable and that the construct of L2 speaking proficiency comprises all of the assumed components. This provides support for the use of a five-trait-category model in testing speaking proficiency in an L2 in practice. However, due to the size of the sample and its nature, the model needs further empirical testing.

Key words: inter-rater reliability, perceived speaking proficiency, trait categories

* E-mail: bram.english@yahoo.co.uk

1 Introduction

Speaking, as a productive skill, is exceedingly difficult to test (Bacham and Palmer 1981). Consequently, assessment and/or testing of speaking proficiency is widely regarded as subjective both in SLA literature and practice, because raters normally use a holistic approach by which a student's level of proficiency is assessed *en général* without any clear criteria in mind. The analytical approach, on the other hand, is less rater-biased, at least due to the fact that raters have some focus of assessment. Since the subject matter of this study is analytical measurement of speaking proficiency, we shall briefly present the theoretical components of L2 speaking proficiency, which is generally considered a 'multifaceted' construct (e.g. De Jong et al. 2012; Housen and Kuiken 2009; Norris and Ortega 2009).

The componential structure of L2 speaking proficiency is normally believed to include complexity, accuracy and fluency, and the individual components themselves are deemed to be multidimensional as well (Norris and Ortega 2009). Broadly speaking, *accuracy* refers to the degree to which the produced language deviates from or conforms to certain norms (Hammerly 1991; Pallotti 2009; Skehan 1998), *fluency* to the speed, ease and smoothness with which learners use their linguistic knowledge in an L2 (Lennon 1990), *complexity* to the diversity, i.e. elaboration and variety of the language produced (Ellis 2003). In the context of perceived fluency testing, complexity may pertain to the intrinsic property of other testing dimensions, in the sense that raters use the level of complexity as a criterion for accuracy, fluency, lexis (Grubor 2013).

Two more dimensions have been reported in research relative to testing L2 speaking proficiency: *lexis* and *adequacy*. The former refers to the 'lexical diversity' (Kormos and Denés 2004) or the 'lexical richness' (De Jong et al. 2012) of the produced language. This variable has not been sufficiently investigated in SLA literature (Skehan 2009), despite the fact that knowledge of vocabulary has proved to be a good predictor of speaking proficiency (Beglar and Hunt 1999; De Jong et al. 2012; Zareva et al. 2005). The latter refers to "appropriateness to communicative goals and situations" or "degree to which a learner's performance is more or less successful in achieving the task's goals efficiently" (Pallotti 2009). Besides the communicative adequacy defined in the previous sentence, there is also the functional (informational) adequacy of speaking, which pertains to the success of conveying messages through speaking (De Jong 2012).

This variable has also been insufficiently investigated in SLA research (De Jong et al. 2007; De Jong et al. 2012; Housen, Kuiken and Vedder 2012; Pallotti 2009)[1], although Pallotti (2009), for example, maintains that it should be viewed not only as a separate dimension of proficiency, but also as a way of interpreting CAF features (i.e. complexity, accuracy, fluency).

There is a considerable body of research dealing with testing *utterance proficiency* within the framework of psycholinguistics. These studies aim at determining the psycholinguistic mechanisms and processes underlying L2 acquisition and the manifestation of the acquired knowledge (Grubor 2013). The scope of our study, on the other hand, is within the area of testing *perceived proficiency* since testing speaking proficiency at schools almost invariably takes the form of teachers' perceptions of students' proficiency levels[2]. Kormos and Dénes (2004) point out that studies on perceived fluency are not very numerous, and this is true of all the other components of speaking proficiency.

In a nutshell, the current study has been initiated by previous large-scale research, which investigated the componential structure of perceived speaking proficiency in a paired-testing format (Grubor 2013). Based on these results, we have made some modifications in the present study (eg. divided the concept of accuracy into grammar and pronunciation), on the one hand, and on the other, we replicated the methodology of the original study to a large extent.

2 Methodology

The main aim of the study was to test the construct of perceived L2 speaking proficiency and determine its components. The selection of independent variables hypothesised to incorporate the stated construct was based on research findings. Generally put, the research has shown that listeners' perception of fluency may be influenced by pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary (e.g. Kormos and Dénes 2004; Rossiter 2009). In addition,

[1] These studies have dealt with the adequacy variable and are, therefore, an exception to the previously stated statement.

[2] The terms perceived and utterance proficiency were developed from perceived and utterance fluency (Segalowitz 2010, cited in De Jong et al. 2013) to emphasise the subjective nature of testing productive skills on the part of teachers in real classrooms. The same term has been used in Grubor (2013).

adequacy was also reported as part of speaking performance (De Jong et al. 2012).

Consequently, we hypothesised that the following trait categories constitute the construct itself: pronunciation (Pron.), grammar (Gram.), fluency (Flu.), lexis (Lex.), and content (Cont.). As we concluded in the initial study (Grubor 2013) and in line with some previous research (eg Bonk and Ockey 2003), we divided the accuracy variable into grammar and pronunciation. Accuracy and fluency represent the variables typically measured in research so far. The former pertained to error-free language (Lennon 1990) relative to grammar and pronunciation, the latter to 'smoothness and ease of oral linguistic delivery' (De Jong et al. 2013) or 'speed and spontaneity of speech' (Grubor 2013). Lexis, in our study, pertained to the range of vocabulary the participants used, i.e. 'lexical diversity' (Kormos and Denés 2004) or 'lexical richness' (De Jong et al. 2012). Finally, no language is produced independently of the communicative context in which any conversation takes place (Grubor, 2013), therefore, the content of speakers' communicative messages becomes particularly significant. The adequacy variable pertained to conveying ideas relevant to the conversational topic (eg whether they responded to the questions they were asked, or conversely, whether they used, for example, circular arguments or lacked any argumentation at all).

2.1 Sample and testing format

The sample recruited for the study included thirty secondary school students, who sat the English school-leaving exam at the Philological Grammar School in Kragujevac, course: Modern Languages. The participants were at the *upper-intermediate to advanced* level, all female (f=30), aged 18 and 19. They had had English for four years, five classes per week, which is approximately 180 classes per year. The sample involved students from two consecutive school years for two reasons. Firstly, the maximum number of students in a philological class is 25, and frequently there are fewer students than this. Secondly, students who have obtained an A in the written test, and who have also had an A in English in the first, second, third and fourth year are exempt from the oral part.

As regards the English school-leaving exam, it consists of the written and oral part. The oral part that we are interested in includes two broad parts. The first part is to do with unfamiliar texts, which cover topical

issues students are acquainted with (eg. genetic engineering, eating habits, beauty, moral issues etc). Students are required to answer questions related to text analysis (eg. derivatives, synonyms, antonyms, grammatical structures etc), and they also have an argumentative conversational topic (eg. *Cloning is acceptable*, *Vegetarianism is a philosophy rather than a practical exercise*, *Beauty is only skin-deep*, *Capital punishment should not exist*)[3]. The second part is to do with the reading assignments that students have had (eg. *To Kill a Mockingbird, Animal Farm, Sense and Sensibility*, etc.) and it included argumentative literary topics (eg. *Atticus as a role model father*, *Not the corrupt doctrine but individuals in power*, *Willoughby and Marianne as a (mis)match*, etc.)[4].

The participants' speaking proficiency level was assessed by two independent raters on a pre-defined six-point scale (range *0*: not at all able – *5*: most able), which included the five mentioned trait categories (Pron., Gram., Lex., Flu., Cont.). Both raters were female, had approximately ten years of teaching experience and no previous testing-specific training with regard to testing speaking proficiency. One of them was the participants' subject teacher, the other was a school colleague. The role of the raters was not equally balanced on purpose. First of all, teachers normally do what the first rater did (ask students questions and sub-questions, listen and assess), whereas the second rater played the role of a *supervisor* (i.e. was not involved in task-setting, but instead was able to focus on the content of the produced language). The raters used the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as a reference point for their assessment as regards the participants' level of speaking proficiency.

2.2 Procedures

For the purpose of analysing the gathered data, we used the statistical programme PASW Statistics[5]. We performed some basic statistical procedures, such as descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, etc.). The main aim of this small-scale, introductory study was to determine whether the assumed components of L2 speaking proficiency constitute the construct itself. With that in mind, we employed the exploratory factor

[3] This part is referred to as "Conversation" in our study.

[4] This part is referred to as "Literature" in our study.

[5] Upgraded version of the SPSS (18.0) statistical programme.

analysis to test the structural form of the perceived speaking proficiency construct (Principal Component Analysis). With a view to bringing such a measurement format into real classrooms, we wanted to determine whether the raters used similar criteria while testing speaking proficiency. In other words, we looked into the reliability of ratings assigned to each assumed trait category and tested the inter-rater reliability using two general approaches (Pearson's Product Moment correlation and Cronbach's alpha).

3 Results

As regards *conversation*, we may notice that the raters assigned quite high values to each trait category, based on the mean ratings (cf. Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics: Conversation

Construct	Rater 1				Rater 2			
	M	Min	Max	SD	M	Min	Max	SD
Pron.	4.62	3	5	.696	4.72	3	5	.663
Gram.	4.46	2	5	.853	4.28	2	5	.936
Flu.	4.74	3.5	5	.481	4.56	2	5	.833
Lex.	4.54	3	5	.676	4.72	3	5	.678
Cont.	4.88	4	5	.332	4.68	3	5	.690

Similar results may be reported for *literary topics* (cf. Table 2). The results of the descriptive statistics analysis, therefore, indicate that the majority of the participants are, on the whole, high-achievers.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics: Literature

Construct	Rater 1				Rater 2			
	M	Min	Max	SD	M	Min	Max	SD
Pron.	4.68	3	5	.610	4.68	2	5	.734
Gram.	4.42	2.5	5	.838	4.42	2	5	.799
Flu.	4.70	3	5	.612	4.68	3	5	.557
Lex.	4.62	3	5	.545	4.76	3	5	.502
Cont.	4.92	4	5	.277	4.76	3	5	.502

With the aim of determining the reliability of the ratings, or statistically speaking, the inter-rater reliability, we performed two general approaches. The first of them was Pearson's Product Moment correlation, which showed consistent ratings. As we can see from the table presenting the results of *conversation*, the correlations (reliability estimate *r*) were strong, positive and of the first level of significance (cf. Table 3). Drawing on researchers in the field of applied linguistics (Brown 2004; Larson-Hall 2010), we subsequently adjusted the inter-rater correlations using the Spearman-Brown prophesy formula, because Pearson's coefficient cannot account for the number of raters in the study. This is important, statistically speaking, because it may influence the strength of correlations, as was the case with only two raters in our study (cf. reliability estimate *r* adjusted). In other words, when the correlations were adjusted according to the number of raters, they were even stronger, indicating very reliable ratings.

Table 3. Reliability estimates (ratings correlation): Conversation

Construct	Reliability estimate (r)		Reliability estimate (r adjusted)
	p	r	rho
Pronunciation	p=.000	r=.888	.941
Grammar	p=.000	r=.915	.956
Fluency	p=.000	r=.846	.917
Lexis	p=.000	r=.889	.941
Content	p=.000	r=.735	.847

With respect to *literary topics*, the correlations, for the most part, were strong, positive and of the first level of significance (cf. Table 4). However, the fluency trait category had the significance of the second-level and moderate-to-strong correlation. Although this correlation was improved when adjusted (i.e. was shown to be strong), still this correlation was the weakest in comparison to other values.

Table 4. Reliability estimates (ratings correlation): Literature

Construct	Reliability estimate (r)		Reliability estimate (r adjusted)
	p	r	rho
Pronunciation	p=.000	r=.808	.894
Grammar	p=.000	r=.799	.888
Fluency	p=.011	r=.501	.668
Lexis	p=.000	r=.794	.885
Content	p=.000	r=.755	.860

The second approach to testing inter-rater reliability is computing Cronbach's alphas (α) for each assessed construct. Howell (2002) maintains that the best way to test inter-rater reliability for cases of raters assessing people is to examine the intraclass correlation. Larson-Hall (2010) explains that

looking into the intraclass correlation will take into account the correlation between the raters, but it also enables the researcher to determine whether the actual assigned scores differ. Thus, we employed the scale reliability (method: Two-way random), which again indicated that the ratings were concordant, judging from the values of Cronbach's coefficients (cf. Table 5).

Table 5. Reliability estimates (Cronbach's alphas): Conversation & Literature

Construct	**Reliability estimate (α)**		**Reliability estimate (α adjusted)**	
	Con.	**Lit.**	**Con.**	**Lit.**
Pronunciation	.940	.885	.941	. 894
Grammar	.953	.888	.955	.888
Fluency	.846	.666	.916	.668
Lexis	.941	.883	.941	.885
Content	.729	.779	.847	.860

Con: Conversation, **Lit**: Literature

After establishing that the ratings were concordant and the raters were in agreement, we went on to test the hypothesis that the five-trait categories constitute the construct of speaking proficiency by conducting the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). We included separate variables for each rater's composite score to check whether the assessed categories would cluster together, i.e. load on the same factor. The extraction method was the Principal Component Analysis. Only one factor was extracted (cf. Table 6), explaining 82.5% of the total variance. This means that Pronunciation, Grammar, Fluency, Lexis and Content constitute one theoretical construct, i.e. perceived speaking proficiency, and that together they explain 82.5% of the said construct.

Table 6. Exploratory factor analysis: Factor loadings > .60

Component Matrix[a]	
Mean	Component
	1
Pronunciation T1	.948
Pronunciation T2	.902
Grammar T1	.937
Grammar T2	.895
Fluency T1	.791
Fluency T2	.929
Lexis T1	.933
Lexis T2	.963
Content T1	.817
Content T2	.951
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. a. 1 components extracted.	

4 Discussion

In this section, we will briefly comment on the results, bearing in mind the stated aims. The first aim was to check whether the raters, despite their lack of training in testing speaking proficiency, were consistent in their subjective ratings of the assumed trait categories. This aim was important because of the validity and reliability of the results in the first place, and also because of potential implications for theory and practice. As Derwing et al. (2004) stated regarding fluency, an examination of the reliability of raters' judgements is essential to determine the construct validity of perceived fluency, which in our case applies to other dimensions of speaking proficiency as well.

The results show that the raters were in agreement, or more precisely, that their ratings were concordant, which is supported by the very high correlations and values of Cronbach's alpha. In other words, despite the lack of previous official training in testing speaking proficiency, these raters/teachers similarly assessed the given categories. Other studies reported similar results, showing no differences with regard to the raters' training (Caban 2003; Derwing and Munro 1997; Munro and Derwing 1999). This may imply that, in general, raters rely more on their experience and intuition than on a set rating scale (Teng 2007), or that the raters measure speaking proficiency with similar criteria in mind.

The second aim was to determine the components of the perceived speaking proficiency construct. Speaking is a very complex construct, and consequently it is difficult to devise an appropriate measurement of oral proficiency, given a wide range of aspects that should or could be assessed/tested (Grubor 2013).

Our results suggest that there is a unique but multifaceted construct of speaking proficiency, which comprises pronunciation, grammar, fluency, lexis and content. In the initial large-scale study, which investigated perceived speaking proficiency in a paired-testing format, it was concluded that there is a unique construct of language use, which further divides into *purely linguistic* and *sociolinguistic* features (Grubor 2013). In the current study (one-to-one testing format), the unique construct includes linguistic features (Pron., Gram., Lex., Flu.) and the adequacy of delivered communicative messages (Cont.).

Finally, although all the correlations were positive and strong, we need to point out that the correlations on the subscale of fluency in literary topics were lower in comparison to all the other values. This raises the question whether one of the raters applied the "speed-and-spontaneity-of-speech" criterion quite rigidly or overlooked the fact that the test-takers might have been deciding on their opinion on the spot, or else may have been unable to remember some instances to support their views. In a word, the inherent nature of 'free topics' included in the conversational part and literary topics is quite different. In the event of discussing certain protagonists and/or events in their literary pieces, the participants might not have had 'ready-made' answers or formed opinions, but instead needed some extra time to shape their thoughts, which might have been misinterpreted as lack of fluency. This finding implies that further research should be conducted in this direction to determine whether there should be different criteria involved as regards giving opinions on literary topics.

To conclude, the results suggest that the scale can be used in the classroom, as was the case with the sample of this study. However, we need to add some words of caution at this point with respect to the limitations of the study. The first one is concerned with the nature of the sample: all the participants were female and they were largely high-achievers. The second one is concerned with the sample size. As we have already pointed out, the number of students in philological classes is quite small, thus it was impossible to include a larger sample. This obstacle can be overcome by replicating the study with tertiary students, or by conducting a study over a few years, thereby obtaining a larger sample. Finally, due to the said limitations, we must emphasise that these results refer only to the sample of this study and not to L2 learners in general.

5 Conclusion

Assessing and/or testing productive skills, such as speaking and writing, reflects a certain amount of subjectivity, even if there are clear descriptors (such as in CEFR). The current study has thus placed emphasis on *perceived proficiency*, because that seems to be the reality of everyday classrooms. Accordingly, we have opted for a more objective measurement system, an analytical, not a holistic one.

The results suggest that there are five dimensions of speaking proficiency: pronunciation, grammar, fluency, lexis and content, or else that these five dimensions play an important role in testing speaking proficiency. The statistical analyses performed have indicated that teachers can use such an instrument in the classroom. The main advantage of the five-trait-category model is that it can readily be employed in schools. In addition, when the speaking skill is 'divided' into certain dimensions such as these, teachers may easily give their students instant feedback on the areas to work on in the future in order to improve their speaking skills. In addition, teachers may devise certain activities which will help their learners to enhance the specific aspects of the speaking skill that they have problems with. In a word, although testing speaking proficiency is indeed subjective, using such a clear-cut model is much more objective than a holistic approach where the teacher's overall impression of the learner's level of speaking proficiency plays the one and only role in giving a grade to a student and enables vague or no feedback at all.

References

Bacham, L. and A. Palmer (1981). The construct validation of the FSI oral interview. *Language Learning*, 31(1), 67–86.

Beglar, D. and A. Hunt (1999). Revising and validating the 2000 word level and university word level vocabulary tests. *Language Testing*, 16(2), 131–162.

Bonk, W. J. and G. J. Ockey (2003). A many-facet Rasch analysis of the second language group oral discussion task. *Language Testing*, 20(1), 89–110.

Brown, J. D. (2004). Performance assessment: Existing literature and directions for research. *Second Language Studies*, 22(2), 91–139.

Caban, H. L. (2003). Rater group bias in the speaking assessment of four L1 Japanese ESL students. *Second Language Studies*, 21(2), 1–44.

De Jong, N. H. (2012). Facets of speaking proficiency. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 34(5), 5–34.

De Jong, N. H. et al. (2007). The effects of task complexity on fluency and functional adequacy of speaking performance. In S. Van Daele et al. (eds.), *Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency in Second Language Use, Learning and Teaching*, Brussels: Contact forum, 53–63.

De Jong, N. H. et al. (2012). Facets of speaking proficiency. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 34(1), 5–34.

De Jong, N. H. et al. (2013). Linguistic skills and speaking fluency in a second language. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 34(5), 893–916.

Derwing, T. M. and M. J. Munro (1997). Accent, comprehensibility and intelligibility: Evidence from four L1s. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19(1), 1–16.

Derwing, T. M. et al. (2004). Second language fluency: Judgments on different tasks. *Language Learning*, 54(4), 655–680.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grubor, J. (2013). The construct of perceived L2 speaking proficiency in a paired testing format. *Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics*, 49(2), 185–203.

Hammerly, H. (1991). *Fluency and Accuracy: Toward Balance in Language Teaching and Learning*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Housen, A. and F. Kuiken (2009). Complexity, accuracy and fluency in second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(4), 461–473.

Housen, A, F. Kuiken and I. Vedder (2012). *Dimensions of L2 Performance and Proficiency. Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency in SLA*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Howell, D. C. (2002). *Statistical Methods for Psychology*. Pacific Grove, CA: Duxbury/Thomson Learning.

Kormos, J. and M. Dénes (2004). Exploring measures and perceptions of fluency in the speech of second language learners. *System*, 32(2), 145–164.

Larson-Hall, J. (2010). *A Guide to Doing Statistics in Second Language Research Using SPSS*. Second language acquisition research series. New York: Routledge.

Lennon, P. (1990). Investigating fluency in EFL: A quantitative approach. *Language Learning*, 40(3), 387–417.

Munro, M. J. and T. M. Derwing (1999). Foreign accent, comprehensibility and intelligibility in the speech of second language learners. *Language Learning*, 49(suppl. 1), 285–310.

Norris, J. M. and L. Ortega (2009). Towards an organic approach to investigating CAF in instructed SLA: The case of complexity. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(4), 555–578.

O'Loughlin, K. (2002). The impact of gender in oral proficiency testing. *Language Testing*, 19(2), 169–192.

Pallotti, G. (2009). CAF: Defining, refining and differentiating constructs. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(4), 590–601.

Rossiter, M. (2009). Perceptions of L2 fluency by native and non-native speakers of English. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 65(3), 395–412.

Skehan, P. (1998). *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Skehan, P. (2009). Modelling second language performance: Integrating complexity, accuracy, fluency, and lexis. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(4), 510–532.

Teng, H-C. (2007). A study of task type for L2 speaking assessment. *ISLS Readings in Language Studies*, 433–446.

Zareva, A, P. Schwanenflugel and Y. Nikolova (2005). Relationship between lexical competence and language proficiency. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 27(4), 567–595.

Literary Studies

UDC 821.111(73).09-31 Hemingway E.
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.4

Sergej Macura*
University of Belgrade
Faculty of Philology
English Department

LICENTIOUS SPLEEN TURNED INTO MELODRAMATIC TECHNICOLOR: A FILM VERSION OF *THE SUN ALSO RISES*

Abstract
The paper discusses a paradigm shift in representing trauma in Modernist fiction, starting from the issue of a large-scale gender role reversal, where assertive women often dominate over passive, submissive men. It goes on to inquire into the possible reasons why *The Sun Also Rises* was not filmed until 1957: certain traits of behaviour in Hemingway's characters were far from suitable for the Motion Picture Production Code until its gradual loosening allowed many of the novel's moral features to be presented in theatres, although major changes still took place. They include: transforming the first-person narrative into a quasi-omniscient third-person perspective, toning down Jake Barnes's bitterness and disillusionment, focusing more prominently on the insatiable Brett Ashley and her lovers, and virtually eliminating the anti-Semitic bias against Robert Cohn.

Key words: Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, film adaptation, trauma, Motion Picture Production Code, gender role reversal, sexual behaviour.

* E-mail: gargantua_xp@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

The concept of *adaptation* in the narrative arts would hardly be possible were it not for the underlying Protean phenomenon of *intermediality*, which enables the transmission of a particular plot from fiction to the more complex appearance of the "same" storyline on the cinematic screen, coupled with the elements of the story world which the readers do not see (or actually hear) on the page, but can only supplement in their imagination. Despite the numerous structural differences between fiction and film, like the absence of (moving) images in novels, and the (frequent) absence of narratorial omniscience and descriptive passages in films, the two forms of art do share two essential properties: the unfolding of a series of modelled events and the framing dimension of time. These overlapping prerequisites make for substantially easier transitions of narrative scripts from one form of art to the other, setting both somewhat apart from the media which do not possess this pair of features. However, it should be pointed out that film production and theory owe a greater debt to theatrical practice and dramatic norms than they do to literary canons, but the relations of drama and film fall beyond the scope of this paper.

Taken in the Foucauldian sense of a *discursive formation*, both forms of art share the same system of abstract elements which establish a pattern of regularity defined in terms of order, correlation, position and function, and they include: objects, subject-positions, concepts and strategies (Macey 2001: 101). This four-element table may also be examined for productivity and accuracy when applied to an immense group of human activities and institutions such as school, hospitals, prisons and the military. The elements may be said to form an immanent paradigm the individual exponents of which function mutably, as they are subject to shifts in taste, technology, aesthetical reception, more recent scientific doctrines and the like. For example, the strategy of projecting films by means of analogue equipment has by now become largely obsolete, but the immanent element of strategy has kept its necessary function intact – the film must be projected to the viewers by *a* means, and the device needs to follow the dictum of function, while the opposite does not apply. Such transformations in the literary practice of Modernist fiction after World War I and in the course of Hollywood production history from the 1920s to the 1950s will be discussed in this paper to probe why the film adaptation of *The Sun Also Rises* at moments diverges from the original work so noticeably that it

raises important questions about the structural, generic and functional differences between the two.

2. *The Sun Also Rises* in the Context of a Changed Trauma Dominant

In the year of this novel's publication (1926), Ph.D. candidates in American literature were still advised that they should be familiar with the production from 1607 to 1890, and American literature was taught in few colleges, usually as an elective course. The situation improved only after World War II, when large numbers of veterans returned from the frontlines, where they had read army-issued paperback Hemingway, which caused a surge in critical interest on this particular topic as the former soldiers furthered their education in college (Hays 2011: 12). On the other hand, the periodicals responded unhesitatingly to the emerging writer's publication of his first novel, and the reviewers approximately split into two general categories: those that expressed their displeasure, exasperation and even disgust at the display of indolent, vapid talk of idlers gathering at Montparnasse and spending their lives in a deluge of drink, and those that praised the fiction for lively sentences abounding in vibrant, colloquial speech, even complimenting the prose for being "athletic," with a compelling picture of character (Hays 2011: 9–10). *The Sun Also Rises* exhibited a sparse, even terse prose style, whose economy signalled a slight turn away from the standard ornate narrative modes that had been practised by the major authors of Modernism, most notably Joyce, Conrad, James and Woolf. Its fast-paced dialogues were often void of tag clauses, thus making additional demands on the reader to become virtually involved in the conversation. The verbal exchange itself suited the label that was given to the novel by a disappointed Allen Tate: "hard-boiled" (Tate 1926, cited in Meyers 1982: 70), so that the register, word choice and the field of reference could resonate much more readily with readers willing to taste a slice of the day-to-day life of American expatriates in Paris commonly known as the Lost Generation. In fact, the book went into its sixth printing before a year elapsed, showing that Hemingway was quite capable of striking a chord with a very large readership in his novelistic d*é*but.

The book's immediate popularity with the public may indicate the inevitability of aesthetic change in the course of any artistic practice, i.e. the necessary shifts in the dominant stylistic formations, which happen

on an unpredictable, non-linear basis, and are usually accompanied by economic, political and historical upheavals like wars, revolutions and extensive ideological transitions. In the case of Hemingway's formative period, the aftermath of World War I opened up a vast discursive expanse for the disillusionment of the innumerable traumatised veterans who bore the weight of the shattered world picture on their shoulders and sought largely unsuccessful ways of coping with the consequences of "the war to end all wars," often dousing their insomnia and shell-shock with copious amounts of alcohol and aimlessly wandering around the incapacitated cities of slowly recovering war-torn European nations. The new cultural sensibility stood in stark contrast to the decades-long official Victorian optimism propagated by political and literary establishments alike, and a post-apocalyptic chasm seemed to have gaped before the survivors of the bloodiest conflict in human history thus far. Jake Barnes's wound symbolises the injuries sustained by millions of young men, and does not only denote impotence as the somatic consequence of mechanical impairment, but suggests a more insidious and less palpable malaise: the powerlessness of the human spirit to avert the course of events that led the protagonists of *The Waste Land*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Point Counter Point* and *The Sound and the Fury* to become representatives of the Fisher King type – pessimistic, disappointed, feelingless cripples amid the modern-day desert (Hays 2011: 11–12).

Another novelty in literary technique foregrounded in *The Sun Also Rises* stemmed directly from the historical occurrences of the age and a large-scale wartime practice of gender role reversal, as hundreds of thousands of shell-shocked men were delivered into the postoperative care of nurses in field hospitals and remote rehabilitation centres far away from the frontline, although the spatial distance could hardly have had an alleviating effect on their mental suffering. This massive turnabout within the social matrix exerted a pivotal influence on the contemporary understanding of male and female subjectivity and power, as Peter Childs notes:

> In World War I, nursing, like shell-shock, both reinforced sterotypes and challenged them. From a traditional perspective, women were the carers, the mother-figures who looked after the men. However, on a larger scale than ever before, men were taking the position of children, establishing a role reversal in which women were active and in control, while men were supine, passive and

> vulnerable. […] According to Sandra Gilbert, for the nurses the role reversal brought about a release of female libidinal energies, as well as a liberation of female anger, which men usually found anxiety-inducing and women often found exhilarating (Childs 2002: 176).

The quoted passage exposes a pattern of behaviour which emerged in the extraliterary universe, and was very soon taken up as a dynamic motif in such novels as Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1916), predating *Mrs Dalloway* by almost a decade. It would be very difficult to find a female character in all of Modernist fiction who performs these functions with such relentless vigour as Lady Brett Ashley does in Hemingway's novel, not least due to his avoidance of complex narrative mediation in the representation of the storyworld at hand.

3. Shifts in Hollywood Censorship Norms

As an incomparably more widespread medium, film was in a position to shape the moral sense of millions of cinema-goers, with an obnoxious side effect of exposing them to news of film stars' countless scandals, debauchery, drug addiction, infidelity and divorces, in a word, to reports of a modern-day Sodom in a very prosperous industrialised country. Aiming at a prevention of collective ethical corruption, the major Hollywood studios and production companies formed the association named the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) in 1922; in turn, their branch-office, the Studio Relations Committee produced in 1927 a list of several dozen sensitive topics that should either be avoided or taken meticulous care of in Hollywood film production before getting the official approval for further distribution and screening. The Committee codified the complaints of local censoring boards and informed producers of their views (Britannica: MPAA par. 1), which concerned eleven prohibited topics – profanity, nudity, the drug trade, prostitution, miscegenation – and twenty-five additional topics – the use of firearms, brutality, gruesomeness, hanging, rape and murder (Prince 2003: 20). Ironically enough, violent subjects were treated with more laxity than those without explicit elements of criminal acts like above, mostly due to the public outcry of religious groups demanding stricter moral fitness, propriety and decency. It was because of the appearance of sound film that the administration had to

expand the code and enforce firm rules on dialogue, but the 1930 Motion Picture Production Code was received with a great deal of scepticism, since many feature films continued to test the boundaries of good taste, using the vague formulation "spirit and letter of the Code" as a distribution loophole. After a serious public outcry in 1934 from a number of religious groups concerned about the congregations' moral attitude, the Code was reinforced with noticeable moral constraints (Hulsether 2011: 120). Much as films generally followed the newly imposed strictures, voices of dissent were increasingly heard against the austerity of the Code as time passed; producer Walter Wanger complained in 1939: "Under the Production Code, it was – and is – almost impossible to face and deal with the modern world" (Leff 1998: 212). Rather than sporadic individual lamentation, it took a collective artistic action to present a challenge to the constraining legislative norms and a series of films defying the rules, like Howard Hughes's *The Outlaw* (1943), together with Otto Preminger's *The Moon Is Blue* (1953) and *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1956), to put the Code to a serious test by grossing large figures at the box office without the PCA Seal of Approval and proving that audiences could no longer be intimidated by the decree's faltering authority. When the Supreme Court granted First Amendment protection to films in the landmark 1952 *Miracle* decision lifting a ban on Rossellini's picture, the Code's effective power indicated serious signs of obsolescence and it needed a thorough revision, which took place in 1956, including the permission to portray interracial marriage, narcotics use and prostitution (Meyerowitz 2014: 305).

With such a turbulent history of Hollywood censorship and its general loosening as it faced the audiences flocking to the allure of provocative prohibition, it is not strange at all that the trailer to the 1957 film opens with a seemingly immoderate qualification: "Twentieth Century Fox brings to the screen Ernest Hemingway's boldest love story, that nobody dared film until now…" It had taken over three decades for the official moral standards in the American film industry to reach the desirably broad level of tolerance and include those modes of conduct that had hitherto been at least unsuitable, often even downright lecherous – the time was finally ripe for the worldwide screening of a story containing adultery, promiscuity, alcoholism, fistfights, elopement and the like, all performed and produced by Hollywood A-listers. It is only natural that the two discursive formations could not follow analogous sets of rules while modelling the original events and their ethical structure, as the censorship in the arts of the original and

of the adaptation branched off both horizontally and vertically: in 1926 nobody would have been allowed to make a film as audacious as the novel, and by 1957 literary censorship still maintained a lead over its motion picture counterpart by permitting even *On the Road* to get into print. The ensuing paragraphs will be devoted to the study of the most noticeable discrepancies between the novel and its film version, which will shed some light on the possible reasons why certain narrative parts were altogether omitted, why a number of dialogues were altered in tone, idiom or order, and try to offer explanations that apply to the cultural context of such intermediation.

4. Some Structural and Ethical Differences and Similarities

The first major shift that we notice in the film is the change in point of view from the homodiegetic narrator Jake Barnes to the cameratic third person, introduced by his voice-over in the opening minute of the film proper, right after the credits run their course. The transition in perspective is also simultaneous with a transition in hermeneutic aptitude, as the novel's immediate staging of the characters' personal histories could probably not be understood so easily by the 1950s cinema-goers as it was by the narrower circles of Hemingway's readers thirty years before. Barnes's lead-in to the film storyworld is superfluous to contemporary readers of the fiction, and it holds a simplified account of their general post-World War I context: "This is Paris of today… Our story deals with another Paris, the Paris of 1922, shortly after what used to be called the Great War. We were part of that spectacular Lost Generation of young people who continued to live as though they were about to die…" (Minute Mark 02:12–02:35) Jake's role as the audience's guide, supplying the most obvious coordinates should not extend for too long into the film after the third-person framework is established and the first-person view structurally eliminated. On the other hand, the disappearance of the pivotal device embodied in the homodiegetic narrator deprives the film version of the inherent personal bias, prejudices, opinions and honestly cynical introspection – no matter how bitter and poignantly straightforward they may have been – which contributed to Hemingway's faster rise to popularity as a relevant masculine voice of the generation in the first place. The film's diegesis begins with Barnes's chance encounter in front of his editorial office with a former US serviceman Harris

whom he had seen in Italy during the war, and the scene, non-existent in the novel, in all probability functions as a connective passage between the brief description of the setting and the genuine plot of the fictional work.

It is the following scene that heralds the frequent absence of the novel's segments from the film version, and it does not provide the viewers with Robert Cohn's background given by the first-person narrator with select details about his days at Princeton, boxing abilities, misadventures with women. In a word, a summary of ten years in the life of a major character does not occur at all on the screen, thus making both the perceiving and the perceived subjects flatter as constituents of the narrative. Barnes here is also a victim of Peter Viertel's simplified screenplay, since from the very outset of the novel he conveys an impression of an amateur outdoorsman and a struggling journalist with a defined taste in more facets of life (including the typically Hemingwayesque themes like bullfighting and a suggested travel to British East Africa), but the film version drastically curtails this dimension of his personality. It is also nearly impossible to witness any activity of Jake's consciousness while viewing the film, although we form most of our ethical picture about the novel through Jake's moral, phraseological and spatiotemporal points of view; the dynamics of his inner life remain permanently unrepresented in the verbal sense, as the filmmakers did not opt for any narratorial comment along film noir lines. One of the reasons for for this decision may lie in the general rule that A-category spectacles should avoid non-visual plot material as much as possible (especially when it does not propel the plot directly but functions as commentary), and that the audiences should consequently be treated to a more direct story experience without verbal explication.

When Jake meets a loose-moraled girl named Georgette in the novel, the entire event takes place on a café terrace during a warm spring night, with a specifically tinged point of view on his part: "…I sat at a table […] watching it get dark and the electric signs come on, […] and the crowd going by […] and the *poules* going by, singly and in pairs, looking for the evening meal" (Hemingway 2004: 12, original italics). The film presents the encounter as occurring in broad daylight, and the characters set up a date in the evening; whereas they go dining in a relatively secluded room of the restaurant, such exhibitions of sudden intimacy do not appear in the movie version. However, the crucial replica which governs the course of Jake's acquaintance with Georgette is not missing, as he makes a frank admission in their conversation that he will not enter into more serious

relations with her: "I got hurt in the war" (Hemingway 2004: 14, MM 12:28–12:30). While riding in a taxi with Lady Brett Ashley a little later, Jake is thinking about his wound, a train of reflection triggered by the electrifying reaction he causes in Brett whenever he touches her, but it is not transparent to the viewer that the film character harbours the same sentiments which provoke so much anguish both to Jake and to Brett. If Jake does mention (and cogitate on) his war wound while in a cab with Brett, the suggestions about the wound being funny or jocular are nowhere to be found in the film scene, since foregrounding Jake's consciousness of his impotence would hardly have been appetising to the masses of cinema-goers enjoying a lighthearted Technicolor distraction. The following episode is not featured in the film even by way of static third-person camera, much less in any form of introspective commentary, which in the novel occupies two pages of recollection uninterrupted by dialogue – Jake spends a lot of time fighting off insomnia, and the reader can sympathise with his state and feel the burden of stretched time as the emotions are being verbalised. He also undresses and looks at himself in the mirror, and we can suppose that he strips naked because the next action he performs is certainly retold without a shred of ambivalence: "I put on my pyjamas and got to bed" (Hemingway 2004: 26). In all likelihood, the image of a sexually incapacitated naked male shot from behind and reflected in the mirror would have been legislatively unacceptable even by the lowered moral standards of the Production Code, so this facet of Jake's life, together with his long hours of chaotic thoughts after which he feels a cessation of the jumbled thoughts in "smooth waves" and starts to cry, was simply skipped over in the film screenplay. The film version consistently narrows the scope of Jake Barnes's emotions and the depth of his observational ability to the effect that it creates an apparently much less sensitive personality whose mental activity does not get a chance to demonstrate a fraction of its reasoning potential.

If Jake loses some of his three-dimensionality in the intermediational process, so does Robert Cohn – the absence of his extradiegetic history and the removal of the analeptic summary given by Barnes do not leave the viewer much opportunity to learn that he had gone through a divorce before meeting Frances, and that she turns unbearably jealous at Jake's mere mention of a female acquaintance living in Strasbourg in Chapter 1. The film version displaces this motif into the early scene where Cohn is sleeping on the sofa in Jake's office, mumbling half-coherently in his

dream: “No, I can’t do it. I can’t, Frances, I can’t. The book… How do you expect me to me to write when you keep after me this way? Can’t you understand, Frances?” (MM 04:55–05:11) The original feature of the two men’s relatively overlapping literary comradeship disappears from the medium of film and eliminates one of their underlying properties, i.e. the artistic streak which the members of Hemingway’s circle generally shared. If the novel is conspicuously autobiographical, and Jake’s character built on the empirical author himself, it is only natural to conclude that the other characters in the novel should express the faithfully modelled traits of the real-life personages they were constructed after. In short, the film systematically dispenses with the characters’ literary aspirations as (at least) an introductory motif, and in so doing, fosters the reduction of the educated Bohemians to the functional level of an aimless, easy-going, intoxicated clique with very little else in mind except whiling away their time in the promiscuity of dancing clubs and travelling to mundane destinations. The excision of Cohn’s efforts in the literary field demanded a symmetrical move with the episode after his return from America, when he feels noticeably lower-spirited than at the beginning of his publishing endeavour, and he also suffers his wife’s harsh criticism for his decision to leave her in favour of Brett before a flabbergasted Jake, who observes: “I do not know how people could say such terrible things to Robert Cohn. There are people to whom you could not say insulting things. They give you a feeling that the world would be destroyed, would actually be destroyed before your eyes, if you said certain things. But here was Cohn taking it all” (Hemingway 2004: 43). Instead of the complicated love triangle, the film only makes a brief mention of Frances (with one minor appearance) and focuses on a variant of Robert who falls in love with Brett without eliciting the audience’s possible sympathy for the years under his wife’s domineering sway; he no longer looks like a man struggling with the prejudiced oppression of different institutions which had formed his character and inferiority complex: being a Jew at Princeton, as well as being taken in hand by both his sentimental partners in succession. Without almost any prior knowledge of Cohn’s prehistory, the viewers can now largely perceive a hopelessly infatuated misfit, and a person who more readily matches the offensive appellation of a “steer” attributed to him by Mike Campbell in the moments of heightened drunkenness and jealousy, ultimately caused by Brett’s profligate sexual manners. Another technical reason, albeit marginal, why the Frances scene was not included

in the film may be sought in the fact that, apart from her several minutes' caustic rant, she also mentions a detail that sounds strikingly pleonastic in cinematography: "You know Robert is going to get material for a new book. Aren't you, Robert? That's why he's leaving me. He's decided I don't film well" (Hemingway 2004: 44).

As many as three chapters (8, 9 and 10) were left out in the film narrative, during which a lot of entanglement takes place. After announcing to Jake that she is leaving for San Sebastian, Brett disappears until Jake and Bill Gorton see her riding in a Parisian taxi some days later. When Frances leaves for England, the secretive Cohn writes him that he will travel to the country for a while, not specifying his destination. Partly due to Lady Brett's refusal to offer Jake a chance to travel with her, partly due to his own business commitment and the plans he made with Bill, he does not realise that she in fact travelled to San Sebastian with Cohn – it takes her own frank admission so that Jake can fully comprehend the increasingly intricate web of relations whose weaving is now under way. When she puts forth an idea to travel to Pamplona hoping that Cohn is bound to turn it down, both she and Jake are surprised by the fact that he embraces the plan wholeheartedly, stating that he "can't wait to see me" (Hemingway 2004: 73). When Bill, Jake and Robert are waiting for the couple to arrive, Cohn demonstrates a perceptible dose of anxiety, further confusing his friends with his "superior knowledge" that they will not come that night, provoking Bill's wonder at the "inside stuff" coupled with the angry remark that Robert should not get "Jewish" for this prescience. Jake insists on following Cohn to the station for this reason: "I was enjoying Cohn's nervousness. I hoped Brett would be on the train. At the station the train was late, and we sat on a baggage-truck and waited outside in the dark. I have never seen a man in civil life as nervous as Robert Cohn – nor as eager. I was enjoying it. […] Cohn had a wonderful quality of bringing out the worst in anybody" (Hemingway 2004: 86). These unnerving intrigues, which colour Brett, Jake and Robert in far more delicate shades of character, are missing from the section of the film that covers the group's journey from Paris to Pamplona and are neatly incorporated with the film's shallower staging of the events that happen with more speed and less psychological depth. In fact, Jake is truly surprised in the film at Brett's sudden absence from Paris, and even more startled at seeing her in the Spanish town, events which accord seamlessly with each other in a melodrama, but are not probable in first-category fiction with a permanently bitter defensive narrator. The complex story of

Jake and Brett's relationship seems void of temporal dynamism and of its numerous undercurrents with all the necessary differences that emerge in the unpredictable process, thus conforming to a series of Brett's loosely supported emotional outbursts and poorly motivated, almost mechanical flings with several men in the plot. The fiction furnishes a longer time span required for Brett to stare at Romero and show her insatiable sexual desire, while Jake is having a conversation with him and Spanish bullfighting aficionados at the next table. The film version has Brett and Jake sitting while Romero and his friends are talking at the table, Romero joining the expatriates almost at once, so the time she spends grazing on the youth's figure is incomparably shorter, perhaps for reasons of decency, like the limited kissing time in Hollywood then. Like many saturnine comments that come from the narrator, the knowledgeable explanations of the complex rituals of bullfighting were also excised from the film version, from the running of the bulls along the streets to the exact order in which they were driven, poked, held in check, to the procedure of killing them with style and dignity while maintaining the maximum exposure on behalf of the torero himself, and the audiences were deprived of a relevant aspect of Spanish cultural anthropology. All that we can see is a pageant of scenes from an awe-inspiring spectacle for the masses, similar rather to a close baseball game than to an elaborately planned ritualistic occasion.

Hollywood plotline clumsiness and episodic performances fit for the gallery perhaps come to the fore when the parallel frustrations of both Jake and Robert reach their culmination in Pamplona. Obviously, both of them function as "steers," each in his own way incapable of consummating his love for Brett, each of them required by Brett to fulfill some of her complementary desires – Jake as a suitable outing partner and Robert as a casual bedroom partner. Naturally, the two cannot clash openly because they do not encroach on each other's territory, but it takes just one spark for both of them to vent out their anger uncontrollably and bring about a tavern brawl worthy of classic Westerns. The novel presents a mounting tension between Mike and Cohn, as the former knows that the latter has meddled with his wife-to-be and drowns his outrage in alcohol, but the anger gets the better of him in the moments when he is flanked by two of Brett's love interests, Cohn and Romero, at dinner in the hotel; first he insults the torero stating twice that the bulls he killed in the corrida "have no balls" (Hemingway 2004: 153), which, to Mike's annoyance, Jake does not interpret to Pedro, who is wise enough to ignore the drunkard. Seeing

that his haughtiness misses the mark with Pedro, he turns to Robert and takes it out on him: "Do you think you amount to something, Cohn? Do you think you belong here among us? […] Do you think Brett wants you here? […] Why don't you see when you are not wanted, Cohn? Go away. Go away, for God's sake. Take that sad Jewish face away. Don't you think I'm right?" (Hemingway 2004: 154) The fistfight with Cohn is only averted by Jake, who persuades Mike to go to a café and reduces the suspense temporarily. During the moments of privacy with Brett, Jake learns from her that she is "mad about the Romero boy," an admission too improper for general audiences of 1950s America, followed by a series of even worse moral stumblings: "I've never felt such a bitch" (Hemingway 2004: 159–160). They find Pedro in a tavern, where Brett sheds her inhibitions instantly and engages intimately with the torero, while Jake hits the ethical bottom by pandering over Brett to the young man with an excuse:

> "I must go and find our friends and bring them here."
>
> He looked at me. It was a final look to ask if it were understood. It was understood all right (Hemingway 2004: 162).

On his departure from the tavern, Jake expresses his sense of disgrace perhaps on the only occasion of such kind in the whole novel: "The hard-eyed people at the bullfighter table watched me go. It was not pleasant" (Hemingway 2004: 162). If we take the author's iceberg theory as a true premise, Jake felt a humiliation by one order of magnitude more powerful than he brought himself to verbalise in the text, which added negative sentiments to the following scene, when a furious Cohn inquires about Brett and Jake swings his fist at him – the novel gives a lapidary account of the boxing moves, and the very same night Cohn offers his apology for the incident.

The film takes visual liberty in the absence of first-person retrospection and presents a deeply agitated Jake spilling wine on a Pedro Romero wall poster, snapping at Bill that he has no idea what he feels like, and even deciding to leave town next morning. Cohn enters the café and argues with Jake, but he does not call him a pimp as in the novel – it is Cohn who starts the fight, and the brawl is given much more discourse time than in the fiction. Furthermore, Cohn's aggression is climbing to its peak when he storms into Brett's room, dealing Pedro so many blows that the entire sequence loses the indirectness of the second-hand account and turns into the depiction of an angry male wreaking his fury on a weaker opponent.

What is even stranger, Cohn in the novel breaks down and bursts out crying, begging for forgiveness from Jake, Mike, Bill and Pedro, which enhances the fullness of his character and increases the amplitude between his worst and his finest traits – it is not amiss to suppose that the screenplay author toned down Cohn's personality to adjust it to the melodramatic stock type of the villain, leaving out many details which contribute to the reception of this tormented young man as a wronged person, not simply as a tongue-tied choleric wrongdoer.

To do justice to the film art, no motion picture is under obligation to follow a scene-by-scene adaptation principle, as it would not have attracted the adequate number of viewers, who have their own expectations horizon in mind when buying tickets on a weekend night: spectacular scenery, very wide shots in lavish colours, impeccable lighting (perhaps sometimes too pronounced), "exotic" locations, and a bittersweet love story given additional decency by the experienced cast's professionalism. This highly standardised product has some advantages over the original work, which lie in its property of depiction, not assertion: the viewer is treated to well-adapted scenography, tasteful interiors, a whole spectrum of vivid colours of ladies' clothes, the palpable directness of physical proximity in *bal musettes*, and most notably of all, the excitement of genuine Spanish bullfighting, which action-wise is as enjoyable as it is lengthy, no matter how much of its cultural depth is left out of focus. Although it plays like self-parody, not the quintessential expression of male existential purity Hemingway thought it to be (Carr 2010: par. 7), it accords well with the breadth of tolerance to inaccuracies and superficiality that the contemporary audiences generously showered the film with.

References

Carr, J. (2010). The Sun Also Rises (1957). (26 November 2015) <http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/91890/The-Sun-Also-Rises/articles.html>.

Childs, P. (2002). *Modernism*. London and New York: Routledge.

Encyclopeadia Britannica. (2013). Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). (17 December 2015) <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Motion-Picture-Association-of-America>.

Hays, P. (2011). *The Critical Reception of Hemingway's* The Sun Also Rises. Rochester, NY: Camden House.

Hemingway, E. (2004 [1926]). *The Sun Also Rises*. London: Arrow Books.
Hulsether, M. (2011). Censorship in Hollywood. In: E.M. Mazur (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion and Film*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 115–123.
King, H. (dir.). (1957). *The Sun Also Rises*. Perfs. Tyrone Power, Ava Gardner, Errol Flynn. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.
Leff, L. (1998 [1983]). A Test of American Film Censorship: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966). In: P.C. Rollins (ed.), *Hollywood As Historian: American Film in a Cultural Context*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 211–229.
Macey, D. (2001). *Dictionary of Critical Theory*. London: Penguin.
Meyerowitz, J. (2014). The Liberal 1950s? Reinterpreting Postwar American Sexual Culture. In: K. Hagemann and S. Michel (eds.), *Gender and the Long Postwar: Reconsiderations of the United States and the Two Germanys, 1945–1989*. Washington, D.C.: Johns Hopkins University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 295–317.
Meyers, G. (1982). *Ernest Hemingway: The Critical Heritage*. London and New York: Routledge.
Prince, S. (2003). *Classical Film Violence: Designing and Regulating Brutality in Hollywood, 1930–1968*. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press.

UDC 821.111(415).09-1 Longley M.
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.5

Tomislav Pavlović*
Faculty of Philology and Arts,
Kragujevac

MICHAEL LONGLEY – THE CAPTIVE OF VARIOUS TRADITIONS

Abstract
Michael Longley (1939), one of the most famous modernist poets of Northern Ireland and the outstanding protagonist of the so-called Ulster Renaissance, was known for his long-standing interest in different cultural traditions or ideological paradigms that gradually became the inspirational sources he drew upon for years. The horrors of First World War experienced by his father, the sectarian violence known as the Troubles that used to shake Ulster for decades, different aspects of the centuries-old protestant – catholic controversy, the Classical heritage of his student days, the tradition of European modernism do coalesce and diverge in Longley's lines. Our analysis will focus upon Longley's poetic techniques transforming the aforementioned motifs into the landmarks breaking open new vistas of Ulster's spiritual landscape. A special emphasis will be laid on the amazing syncretic power of Longley's poetic genius helping us to penetrate the existential *aporias* imposed by a specific *hermeticism* of Ulster, customarily resistant to numerous historical and philosophical explanations.

Key words: Michael Longley, Ulster Renaissance, existential aporias, hermeticism of Ulster

* E-mail: tomislavmp@gmail.com

The poetry of Belfast-born and now legendary Ulster poet Michael Longley (1939) seems to be growing in popularity among the critics even in the decades to come. Fran Brearton warns about the hollowness of the comments that Michael Longley currently suffers from critical neglect and claims that "the publication of the first collection of essays on Longley and the proliferation of articles and high profile reviews of his work over the last decade suggest the opposite." (2003:199) Besides, his appeal of a sage among the contemporary poets originates from some his early statements in which he tries to explain his position as an artist on the politically turbulent Irish social scene. Being reproached on account of his neutral position during the Troubles he stated:

> "I accept, as I must, the criticism of the slogan '*Malone Road fiddles* while the Falls Road burns', the implication that the still and heartless centre of the hurricane is the civic inactivity of liberals like myself. Nevertheless, I have to insist that poetry is an act which in the broadest sense can be judged political, a normal human activity". (Brearton 2000: 272)

Similar statements indicate that Longley's primary interest, since his early years, lies in achieving some kind of balance between his poetic and social self. They also lead us to conclude that Longley wished to obscure some rather controversial features of his poetic sensibility or to repudiate the aspects of he own career that he, in the course of the years, grew to dislike. Michael Longley is known to have belonged, together with Derek Mahon, James Simmons, Seamus Heaney, to the famous Belfast group of poets perpetrating Ulster poetic renaissance under the guidance of professor Philip Hobsbaum who assembled them and organized their first poetic workshops. Hobsbaum taught at the Queens University Belfast and, reputedly, kept a rather close contact with his poetically-gifted students such as, apart from the mentioned, Paul Muldoon, Ciaran Carson, Frederick Ormsby and others. The idyllic picture of the initial stages of the Ulster poetic renaissance comprising the picture of the old master Hobsbaum, himself a talented poet presiding over the meetings of young poets, was shattered by the very members of the group.

Heather Cark points out that Michael Longley was one of the keenest in "dismantling the myth of the Belfast group" and quotes his denial uttered in *Honest Ulstermen* Group Symposium held in 1976 that "Derek Mahon, James Simmons, Seamus Heaney and [him]self were the discoveries of

Philip Hobsbaum." (2006: 3) Besides, the poet had his share in dismantling the stereotype generally known as the Irish national feeling or Irishness and Irish poetic tradition. According to Shane Alcobia-Murphy, "Irishness is admittedly unstable category, often defining itself in opposition to the former colonial power …" (2006: 218) In this very respect the identity of Michael Longley, born by English parents and brought up in Belfast, is case in point. Tara Christie quotes Longley's words revealing that as a child he "walked out of an English household on to Irish streets" and felt that he was "schizophrenic on the levels of nationality, class and culture". (2009: 554) Longley, undoubtedly, met certain challenges on account of his mixed Anglo – Irish identity but the most provoking ones originated from the critical pieces concerning his poetic orientation.

Tara Christie claims that: "In the Irish poetic tradition, Longley is marginalized for his Englishness, for what is often interpreted as his Protestant literary Unionism, his poetry's cultural, political, aesthetic, and literary ties to mainland Britain." (Ibid.) Fran Brearton, in an excellent piece of criticism, confirms that Longley is deeply rooted in Irish tradition but draws upon English tradition as well, constantly speculating about Englishness and Irishness urban and pastoral." (Ibid.) Then, in an interview given in 1986, Longley tried to resolve the crucial dichotomy between English and Irish aspect of his poetic being by saying that: "Neither Irish nor English completely" is a "healthy condition", and that it is "out of such splits that I write perhaps". (Brearton 2000: 262)

Some poetic fragments, however, reveal that, in spite if this and several other attempts, Longley cannot easily piece together the two traditions and that, there is nothing less than a kind of abyss between them. In one of his earliest poems entitled "The Hebrides" (*No Continuing City*, 1964), Longley depicts a depressive, deserted area in the Hebrides:

> "The winds' enclosure, Atlantic's premises,
> Last balconies
> Above the waves, The Hebrides -
> Too long did I postpone
> Presbyterian granite and the lack of trees,
> This orphaned stone,
> …
> Day in, day out colliding with the sea …" (2006: 202)

According to Fran Brearton, Longley's formal precision, shifting perspectives and metaphysical conceits are the elements characterizing the poem which, is in fact, done in the manner of Richard Wilbur a celebrated American poet. (2006: 40) Although still young, Longley shows the considerable skill in the building up of some rather complex poetic images. In the initial conceit of this partly autobiographical poem, the author admits that he "shall have left these rocks within the week" speculating simultaneously upon "how summer on the island / Is ill at ease." (2006: 202) The poet is, in the quoted strophe, allegorically presented as an "orphaned stone" embedded in the dismal monolith of "Presbyterian granite". It is clear that by mentioning the "Presbyterian granite" the poet alludes to Protestant background that he cannot possibly quit being compelled to remain, as a castaway, on the desert island having "no trees", to spend "day in, day out colliding with the sea". The water surrounding him may be seen as the Catholic majority of Ireland. The beginning of the poem, evidently, lacks some optimistic tone since poet is, even at that point, aware of his doom of eternal residing between the two hostile worlds.

Another tradition to which Michael Longley remained loyal throughout his life was the one embodied by the classic literature. It is known that Longley studied classic languages at the Queens University in Belfast but he was, in fact, introduced to the classic authors much earlier. According to Heather Clark, Longley during his early days at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, had no opportunity to study carefully Irish language, history and music since the preparatory institution (popularly called Inst) however, "maintained the Unionist status quo in its curriculum." (2006: 17) As a result Longley turned to the Classic literature and translated a lot of Greek and Latin texts which he found quite valuable for developing his own poetic craft. He claimed that the reading of Latin poetry: "… alerted [him] to the possibilities of syntax, which is the muscle of poetry." (Ibid.). Referring to the forced minimalism of modernist poetry Longley stated that he: "… got bored by so much poetry which is written in short, jerky, sentences" and that he particularly liked the "stretching out over a stanza, a sentence, and playing the pauses of meaning against the line endings and trying to make the sentence, the grammatical unit, coincide with the stanzaic unit." (Ibid.)

The poems Michael Longley published in his first collection *No Continuing City* (1969), entitled "Odyssey", "Nausicaa", "Circe", "Narcissus" and "Persephone" indicate the depth of poet's youthful infatuation with the

works classic authors. The first poem in line is composed in traditional, classical sestinas and contains Odyssey's musings on his prolonged sea voyage:

> "And, going out my way to take a rest,
> From sea sickness and the sea recuperate,
> The sad fleets of capsized skulls behind me
> And the wide garden they decorate.
> Grant me an anchorage as your paying guest –
> Landladies I have been too long at sea." (2006: 14)

If we take a closer look at the lines, we are reaching the conclusion that the strict poetic form of theirs is the only quality referring to classic tradition and what Fran Brearton recognizes as the Longley's mythological pretext. She claims that "Odyssey's ten-year wandering at sea are preordained, and they are interspersed with sojourns on islands (literal and metaphorical) of seductive women – Circe, Calypso, Nausicaa – as well as encounters with monstrous females who would literally devour him: Scylla and Charybdis." (2006: 36) Later on, she mentions that the pattern of the old myth is in fact the pattern of "the poet's own past which he can now see objectively, as past." (Ibid.) Having in mind that Longley's lyrical "I", emerging in the first stanza, fuses with Ulysses, the aforementioned mythical heroines are identified as Longley's former girlfriends, " … amateur witches and professional virgins/Sirens and shepherdess all new areas / Of experience … ." (Longley 2006:14)

One cannot but notice that the old myth is, on this occasion, travestied even shattered for the purpose of the author's intention to express adequately his own experience. He does it in nothing less than truly Joycean tradition. In an interview with Clive Wilmer, Longley admitted that at the time he composed his early Homeric poems he "was inhaling Ulysses and got some early sense from him and from Bloom's wanderings." (Impens 2018: 87) Longley's typically modernist reworking of myths can also be found in the poem entitled "Persephone" from the same collection.

The goddess of the underworld is not explicitly mentioned. The poet grieves for her departure since he sees it "through a skylight in [his]brain" whereas hibernating animals "turn above their broken home/And all [his]acres in delirium." (Longley 2006: 21) The dismal wintry conditions caused by the goddess's absence mortify the senses as a kind of an unrelenting fate since "Straitjacketed by cold and numskulled/Now sleep

the welladjusted and the skilled." (Ibid.) In order to intensify the deadly impact of Persephone's abduction Longley keeps enumerating the victims of the fatal change and these are: "The weasel and ferret, the stoat and fox/ Move hand in glove across the equinox." (Ibid.) However, the impression that Persephone's descent is mourned on Greek shores is lacking since the deity that Longley hints at definitely performs her charms on the coasts of Ireland. The landscape that the poet describes is unmistakably Irish and his pronounced passion for depicting the Irish scenery resembles the one his fellow compatriot Seamus Heaney was possessed by to the extent of creating the tradition out of it.

Ancient topics, making the important part of Longley's poetic tradition, are to be found in later collections as well but they coalesce with other equally significant traditions. "The Butchers" (*Gorse Fires*, 1991), got its title owing to Longley's painful frustration with Ulster sectarian violence that broke out in 1960's and ended temporarily when warring factions signed the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. The fusion of the two traditions, the second one referring to sectarian clashes, was explained by the poet himself. He claimed that its creation was inspired by the activities of Shankhill Butchers, the group of radical Loyalists who made their mark in the bloody history of Ulster by slaying a group of Catholics with their butcher knives. (Brearton 2006: 176) Longley draws a strange parallel between Shankill Road and Odyssey's fatherland by saying that "the sort of outhouses and smallholdings that would have been on Ithaca and which were reflected in the landscape of Ireland." (Ibid.) The murderous event is, in the poem, juxtaposed with Odyssey's massacre of suitors upon his return to Ithaca. Odyssey emerges, immediately after the bloodbath, "spattered with muck and like a lion dripping blood/From his chest and cheeks after devouring a farmer's bullock." (Longley 2006: 14) Longley does not spare the audience from the *post factum*, no less bloody details of the event starting from the hanging of the disloyal maidservants to the dragging of "… Melanthio's corpse into the haggard/And cutting off his nose and ears and cock and balls, a dog's dinner." (Ibid.) The episode is according to Richard Rankin Russell even more bestial than Homer's. (2003: 227)

Closely following the original, Longley informs the audience how Odysseys:

> "Fumigated the house and the outhouses, so that Hermes
> Like a clergyman might wave the supernatural baton
> With which he resurrects or hypnotises those he chooses,
> And waken and round up the suitors' souls, and the housemaids',
> Like bats gibbering in the nooks of their mysterious cave …"(2006: 14)

The scene of Hermes taking the souls of suitors and to the underworld concludes the poem. However, the final destination that the god and the souls reach is not the bank of Styx but:

> "… past the oceanic streams
> And the white rock, the sun's gatepost in that dreamy region,
> Until they came to a bog-meadow full of bog-asphodels
> Where the residents are ghosts or images of the dead." (Ibid.)

The region that Longley refers to bears close resemblance to Northern Irish coast and famous *bogland,* Irish moor, which became one of Seamus Heaney's central poetic symbols. In the eponymous poem Heaney introduces the moor as the repository of Irish history a kind of underworld, the burial place for the participants and waste material worn out in the tumultuous Irish historical pageant.

The very same technique of setting the motif of violence of the Troubles in classic context is performed in the sonnet entitled "Ceasefire" (*The Ghost Orchid*, 1995). Longley kept no secret about how he got the idea to compose the poem. In an interview given to Sarah Broom Longley reminds that in August 1994, IRA was "rumored to have been ready to declare a ceasefire" and adds that at the time "he was reading the XXIV Book of the Iliad about the meeting of Achilles and king Priam who came to Greek camp to beg for the body of his son Hector." (Impens 2018: 104) Longley, therefore, compressed some two hundred lines of Homer's text into a short lyric of a great poetic strength so as to "make [his] own minuscule to the peace process." (Ibid.)

Longley's adaptation presents us with a scene in which the two enemies Achilles and Priam, consumed with mutual hatred, convene on a rather solemn, sad occasion that compels them to forget their long-lasting adversity. Touched by the plea of the grieved father who "curled up at his feet" (Longley 2006: 225), Achilles took:

"Hector's corpse in his own hands …
Made sure it was washed and, for the old king's sake
Laid it in uniform, ready for Priam to carry
Wrapped like a present home to Troy at daybreak." (Ibid.)

In the final couplet Priam confides that after the funeral feast during which he sat and talked with Achilles as his best friend, he : " … got down on [his] knees and do what must be done/ And kissed the Achilles' hand the killer of [his] son" (Ibid.)

Jonathan Hufstader in his excellent commentary upon the poem points out that in Homer's version of the event, Priam comes to collect the body of his son upon the order of Hermes whereas Longley "squarely places the initiative with Priam" (1999: 107). The old king therefore appears at Greek camp urged by the highest moral obligation that is to revere the heroic death of his son at which no abasement seems too demanding to bear. Michael Longley, as a poet, shared the same moral obligation compelling him to contribute to the overall reconciliation in Ulster.

Centuries old loyalist – republican controversy that took so many lives in Ulster is, evidently, another mighty tradition that permeates Longley's poetry. However, he cannot resist the impetus to couple it with some other equally strong traditions, apart from the classic one, and this is the tradition of the Great War. The man responsible for Longley's taking too much to it is his father "a belated casualty" of the First World War who was "dying for King and Country slowly." (Longley 2006: 62) The poem in which Longley reveals that his father, a soldier of the British Expeditionary Corps in France, received the wound that almost crippled him, bears the title "Wounds" (*An Exploded View*, 1973). His long and painful death affected Longley so deeply that he could not but start the poem with:

"Here are two pictures from my father's head —
I have kept them like secrets until now:
First, the Ulster Division at the Somme
Going over the top with 'Fuck the Pope!'
'No Surrender!': a boy about to die,
Screaming 'Give 'em one for the Shankill!' (Ibid.)

The battle scream of the Ulster soldier who dies upon charging the German trenches contains the toponym – Shankill Road a very long street in Belfast

notorious for its bloody history of sectarian clashes that lasted throughout the nineteenth century. The dying soldier thus inadvertently links the two distant periods or traditions correlated by their murderous practices.

In the second strophe of the poem the author appears as a kind of a mourner who buries his father "with military honours … with his badges, his medals like rainbows." (Ibid.) Together with him he deposits the bodies of:

> "Three teenage soldiers, bellies full of
> Bullets and Irish beer, their flies undone.
> A packet of Woodbines I throw in,
> A lucifer, the Sacred Heart of Jesus
> Paralyzed as heavy guns put out
> The night-light in a nursery forever." (Ibid.)

It is evident that the three soldiers engaged in the fictitious burial are the victims of sectarian clashes that frequently exploded in 1960s or 1970s, probably caught unaware and machine-gunned by some militant protestant combat group. The fact that they addressed their prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, identifies them as Catholics serving in the regular army units. The juxtaposition of Longley's father, as the belated protestant casualty of the First World War, with the three young Catholics who joined British army emphasizes the devastating effect of the clash of the two conflicting traditions both of which Longley seems to be deeply anchored in.

The last poem, and not only the last one, covered by our analysis casts a light on Longley's ever present readiness to increase the register of different, often opposing, traditions he operates with. Besides, the poem asserts that the religious imagery became another passion of the poet. The religious background of Ulster conflict obviously used to be and still is quite an inspiration for Longley since he develops the complex poetic images universalizing both protestant and catholic perspective. In the quoted fragment of "Wounds", the phrase "Sacred Heart of Jesus" is used to denote the soldiers' nationality but the very fact that the prayer is "paralyzed" by the salvoes of canons shows that the religion is the first victim of war.

The religious symbolism of rather different sort is to be found in "Wreaths" (*The Echo Gate*, 1797), the elegiac tryptich dedicated to the victims of the Troubles. The second sequence of the elegy, entitled "The Greengrocer" reveals the horrible details of the death of an innocent

seller who is murdered by the men who arrived at the store as ordinary customers. To make the impression even more gruesome, the poet informs that the killers found him busy organizing "holly wreaths for Christmas/ Fir trees on the pavement outside." (Longley 2006: 118) The poet then reflects upon some rather strange group of people passing by the crime scene referring to them as:

> "Astrologers or three wise men
> Who may shortly be setting out
> For a small house up the Shankill
> Or the Falls, should pause on their way
> To buy gifts at Jim Gibsons shop,
> Dates and chestnuts and tangerines." (Ibid.)

While the nouns in the last line may be taken as the symbols of impending Christmas time, the arrival of the "three wise men" is rather dubious and resembles the voyage of the three Magi who witnessed Christ's birth. Fran Brearton, however, provides an explanation claiming that their appearance: "might suggest that a First Coming hasn't happened yet, as much as it projects forward to a Second one." (2006: 145)

The third sequence of "Wreaths" entitled "The linen Workers" introduces us to another hideous murder of innocent men. The IRA operatives detonated the time bomb and killed ten linen workers and then we get to know that: "There fell on the road beside them spectacles, /Wallets, small change, and a set of dentures:/Blood, food particles, the bread, the wine." (Longley 2006: 119) The symbols of Eucharist in the last line obviously accentuate the tragedy but the very beginning of the profoundly symbolic sequence is rather dubious:

> "Christ's teeth ascended with him into heaven:
> Through a cavity in one of his molars
> The wind whistles: he is fastened forever
> By his exposed canines to a wintry sky." (Ibid.)

The fantastic and a bit blasphemous scene alluding that Christ himself may have fallen a victim of explosion indicates that those who kill innocent people figuratively kill the Saviour. The main paradox of the poem lies in the fact that both protestant and catholic extremists usually present

themselves as ardent believers. According to Jonathan Hufstader, Longley "is grotesquely reflecting on orthodox Christian belief – the ascension of Christ's whole body into heaven – in such a way as to satirize beliefs and their power to wreak violence." (1999: 96) If teeth go with Christ into heaven," proceedes Hufstader "then Christ goes with the teeth of the slaughtered into the dust." (Ibid.)

In both poems Longley proves himself capable of spanning the distance from the simple symbolism up to the rather profound, intricate symbolic images that are not easily decoded. One is, somehow, under the impression that the key words – religious symbols like the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Christ's teeth, blood, the bread, the wine, the three wise men, occupy an independent position in the lines surrounded by semantically-poor words and expressions with which they do not establish a valid semantic connection.

The poetic quality in question is, according to Roland Barthes, one of the main characteristics of modern poetry. The words of classic or traditional poetry, states Barthes, "… are on the way to becoming an algebra, where rhetorical figures of speech, clichés, functions as virtual linking devices; they have lost their density and gained a more interrelated state of speech." (1970: 46) In modern poetry, on the other hand, the word is: "encyclopaedic, it contains all the acceptations from which a relational discourse might have required it to choose. It therefore achieves a state … where the noun can live without its article, and is reduced to a sort of zero degree, pregnant with all past and future specifications." (48)

The poetic language employed by Longley is undoubtedly the modernist one as well as his handling of myths and the opposing traditions that he masterly transforms. But the modernism of Michael Longley is quite an extraordinary one. Longley always wished to promote the poetry of so-called War poets – Isaac Rosenberg, Edward Thomas and Wilfred Owen as modernist *par excellence*. (Christie 2009: 553) In his interview with John Brown in 2001 Longley stated that: "The war poems of Owen and Rosenberg ring out in my ears like modern versions of Sophocles or Aeschylus. Utterly modern. Huge. Who cares if they are 'Modernist?'" (Ibid.)

On the other hand, he was quite displeased with the poetry of the leading authors of modernism Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. "How many people in the world can actually enjoy them?" wandered Longley. (Ibid.) The lines we analyzed show that the minimalism of speech, intertextuality, sequentiality, the techniques employed by Pound and Eliot simply do not

belong into Longley's poetic arsenal. He, therefore, resolutely rejects the modernist poetic tradition of Pound and Eliot in favour of another one whose protagonists were the fellow- combatants of his father.

This is not the last paradox of Longley's poetry and that is why it sometimes seems rather difficult to generalize upon his achievement. Both critics and the audience are accustomed to consider Michael Longley an outstanding modernist but the analysis proved that his modernism is of a rather different kind. He exploited the ancient myths but, for the purpose of materializing his own chimeras and in this respect he goes hand in hand with Joyce, Eliot and Pound. Not an atheist like Joyce and Pound, Longley is definitely a *homo religiosus* of a kind, a connoisseur of ancient literature and the one who never shared modernist indifference to politics. Unlike Joyce's and Pound's aloofness from politics, he was deeply committed to the political cause of achieving peace in Ulster and for this purpose he coupled the tradition of the Troubles with classic and Christian myth, and the collective memory of the First World War. In his painful journey from one tradition to another Longley seems never to have stepped out of the borders of Ulster. One may reproach Longley for having too much *couleur locale* in his poetic images, that he never elevated his poetic symbols to so universal a level as the one reached by Seamus Heaney or that he never experimented with postmodern techniques like Paul Muldoon. In spite of these limitations Longley's poetic *oeuvre* is one of the greatest not only in Ulster and we may hope that the poet, being still active, may feel inclined to the set off for a journey whenever he notices that there are some new traditions to capture.

References

Alcobia-Murphy S. (2006). *Sympathetic Ink: Intertextual Relations in Northern Irish Poetry* (LIVERPOOL ENGLISH TEXTS AND STUDIES), Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Barthes R. (1970). *Writing Degree Zero*, Boston: Beacon Paperback.

Brearton F. (2000). *The Great War in Irish Poetry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brearton, F. (2003). "The privilege / Of vertigo: Reading Michael Longley in the 1960s". Colby Quarterly, 39, 198- 214., https://pure.qub.ac.uk/ws/files/16136760/The_Privilege_Of_vertigo_Reading_Michael_Longley_in_the_1960s.pdf, Web May 15, 2017

Brearton F. (2006). *Reading Michael Longley*, Highgreen: Bloodaxe Books.
Christie T. (2009), "For Isaac Rosenberg: Geoffrey Hill, Michael Longley, Catal O Searcaigh" in Kendall T. (2009) *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 542-563.
Clark H. (2006). *The Ulster Renaissance: Poetry in Belfast 1962-1972*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hufstader J. (1999). *Tongue of Water, Teeth of Stones*, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky
Impens F. (2018). *Classical Presences in Irsh Poetry After 1960*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan
Longley M. (2006). *Collected Poems*, London: Cape Poetry, Random House.
Russell R. R. (2003). "Inscribing Cultural Corridors: Michael Longley ' s Contribution to Reconciliation in Northern Ireland", Colby Quarterly, Volume 39, no.3, September 2003, p.221-240., https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3441&context=cq. Web April 2, 2017.

UDC 821.111(73).09 McCarthy C.
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.6

Miloš Arsić*
Faculty of Philology
University of Belgrade

REDISCOVERY OF REALITY AND GENRE IN CORMAC MCCARTHY'S *THE ROAD*

Abstract
Cormac McCarthy's post-apocalyptic world in *The Road* is eerily reminiscent of our own in numerous aspects. Material devastation is, nevertheless, in the background of this novel, although it is intertwined with the destruction of words and the very essence of humanity. This paper analyzes the key segments of McCarthy's redefinition of both the conventions of reality and genre in order to show that *The Road* primarily focuses on the loss of humanity rather than on the obliteration of a system or a culture. The true demise lies in the depletion of meaning – the destruction of our world is of secondary importance. The main characteristics of the post-apocalyptic genre and McCarthy's idiom are examined in order to argue this point. The two main protagonists are on a pilgrimage of discovery into the unknown and back to the origins of the New World, to the East Coast. Hope confronts hopelessness when the two heroes, as remnants of a true humanity worth preserving, rediscover the continent by retracing the steps of westward expansion back to the Ocean. The father provides a sense of loss, while the son represents the spark of a new beginning.

Key words: Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*, the post-apocalypse, humanity,

* E-mail: milosars@mts.rs

"...I thought that men had not inquired sufficiently into miracles of destruction. Into disasters of a certain magnitude." (McCarthy, 1997: 94)

As a subgenre of SF and horror, post-apocalyptic fiction focuses on the loss of those features of the present world which, from the author's perspective at least, should be treasured and would be profoundly missed. More often than not, such works turn into exploitation, and audiences are invited to share the author's fears of a cataclysm leading to a regression of values and the social order as we know them. As a rule, the aftermath is what counts, not the Armageddon itself.

Comparing *The Road* to other similar works, such as Philip K. Dick's short story "Second Variety", would not be an easy task. McCarthy's vision of the end of the world is certainly not the first instance of someone warning primarily against expanding the limits of cruelty and the deterioration of the human condition, but *The Road* may nevertheless be the most convincing and the grimmest post-apocalyptic novel to date, not because it depicts the loss of technology or even the destruction of nature.

McCarthy has successfully managed to transcend post-apocalyptic clichés and add new meanings to the oldest human emotion instead of merely abusing it. We are all aware of the extent to which our apocalyptic anxieties are fueled by threats from our own reality – be it wars or terrorist attacks, our fears simply refuse to go away. In *The Road*, fear is a credible motivational force of a completely different kind. Against the bleak backdrop of McCarthy's vision, our own end-of-the-world fears are altered together with the lost world. McCarthy's story is as meticulous and straightforward as it is exceptional.

McCarthy does with the post-apocalypse the same thing he has done with the western so many times before. He utilizes it as a recognizable setting. Depictions of the aftermath and struggle for survival are essential parts of many post-apocalyptic novels, and constitute elementary genre conventions; human relations like love and violence can be tailored either to fit a particular genre and its target audiences, or to surpass them, as is the case with *The Road*. McCarthy therefore makes numerous exceptions to the standards of the genre: among other things, he introduces a new type of hero, redefines the aftermath of the apocalypse and, of course, alters the ending accordingly.

Is *The Road* really a post-apocalyptic novel? When Ely, the only character with a name in this book, says "There is no God and we are his prophets"

(McCarthy, 2007: 19), no one can say for certain whether he is referring to the lost world or the new one. Indeed, there are hints that McCarthy is in fact describing our own reality instead of the post-apocalyptic one. Even though the two worlds appear to be immensely different in almost every aspect, this is not entirely so. As is the case with his other novels, McCarthy relegates the modern world into the background in order to highlight the characters and the ideas that these characters stand for. The rediscovery of reality means that McCarthy strips away our world, by means of a nuclear holocaust, in order to focus on that which is hidden in plain sight.

The heroes

The novel tells the story of a man and his son traveling south, across the scorched wasteland, along the eastern American seaboard about a decade after an unnamed catastrophe set off a nuclear winter that has choked the land with ubiquitous gray ash, killed the vegetation and driven the few survivors to cannibalism. Society as we know it has collapsed: groups of marauders rigged out in barbaric battle-gear roam the crumbling byways in search of the only flesh available – human flesh.

In a world where almost all human values are all but gone, the father and son stand for those worth keeping. The boy's father is as far as one could be from a typical post-apocalyptic hero. His ever worsening cough is as good a signal of imminent doom as is cannibalism and utter destruction. Not unlike the two main characters, the reader too is left in search of hope. Nonetheless, the genre conventions clearly state that there have to be good guys and bad guys, as indeed there are. But McCarthy has redefined the concept of being a good guy in his own recognizable manner. Better yet, we know who wants to be a good guy. The boy is the ultimate good guy, in part because he is unaware of all the horrors of the world. He leads the father on a voyage of finding humanity in post-nuclear wastelands defined by fighting for self-preservation. This is a novel in which perplexing allegories and popular culture blend into one. Throughout both history and literature, newcomers to strange worlds have often been led by guides. On the other hand, however, a dominant, usually male figure, accompanied by a child, has been and still is an icon of popular culture. In a sense, the father and the son may even be regarded as one person.

McCarthy's world in *The Road* is another frontier, except that the father and his son are in a way retracing the conquest of America back to the beginning. In fact, *The Bird of Hope*, which is the name of the ship from Tenerife, i.e. from the Old World, which they see towards the end, could be a new *Mayflower*, and the two protagonists a type of pilgrim or explorer of the New World. Except that this ship heralds the destruction of the reality from which it comes, and consequently hope seems to be lost. So what holds our attention is not a band of fearless survivalists or preppers, but a father and a son, at the end of their tether, always on the verge of extinction, as is the world they inhabit. This process of retracing takes place both in space and in time, and it has several facets to it; it refers to the retracing of human values as well as the nucleus of humanity, such as the father's love for his son or refusal to eat human flesh for sustenance. The father's memories and some of his dreams are also a way of retracing.

Just like John Grady Cole or Billy Parham in McCarthy's *Border Trilogy*, these heroes are often among the last of their kind, and in this case, the last remnants of the true humanity and values which they desperately seek to preserve: "When your dreams are of some world that never was or of some world that never will be and you are happy again then you will have given up (McCarthy, 2007: 160)".

On the other hand, the cannibals in the novel seek only to preserve themselves, and are therefore condemned to a life of solitude, devoid of any human connection, just like the wind-up penguin toys from one of the boy's dreams. They have no "ceremonies constructed out of thin air" (McCarthy, 2007: 45). Without the deeper meaning provided by humanity, any form of sustenance, be it cannibalism or technology, is ultimately futile in this post-apocalyptic nightmare.

The son is being initiated into the world of adults through all the violence and the final loss that he witnesses.

The nothingness of the world

In *The Road*, memories of lost worlds and the nightmares of the new one are closely intertwined; nightmares bear a strong resemblance to reality, just as dreams do to the past. One of the first images we see is the father's nightmare or a nightmarish vision of a strange monster, taking place in a nightmare world. It is a nightmare within a nightmare. Monsters still

occupy nightmares, but once awake, both the father and the son know that in reality the only monsters are human beings, not mutants, as in popular post-apocalyptic fiction, where humanity mutates on the outside. Although this might be a warning that reality actually extends beyond what we remember, perceive or dream, in a world where old meanings give way to new ones, dreams are still what they need to be for human nature – that is, nightmares are still inhabited by monsters, as dreams are by creeks teeming with trout. *The Road* opens and closes with a dream: the nightmare of a monster at the beginning, and a distant memory, or perhaps a fantasy of trout in a creek: "…rich dreams now which he was loathe to wake from. Things no longer known in the world…" (McCarthy, 2007: 111)

There has been an unknown catastrophe, a "long shear of light and then a series of low concussions" (McCarthy, 2007: 45). One imagines a kind of nuclear cataclysm. The world as we know it is all but gone. Corpses scatter the landscape. Ash falls like constant snow, and through this wasteland roam the novel's two protagonists. Days become "more gray each one than what had gone before. Like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world" (McCarthy, 2007: 1). And yet, the barren landscapes of *The Road* are strangely indefinite. According to Northrop Frye, the best among McCarthy's novels "involve characters who journey into landscapes that are simultaneously geographical and psychic, typological and mythic, objectively physical and intensely personal" (Frye, 2003: 116). *The Road* is in fact very much like a mirror: a new world is riddled with echoes of the old one:

> They passed through towns that warned people away with messages scrawled on the billboards. The billboards had been whited out with thin coats of paint in order to write on them and through the paint could be seen a pale palimpsest of advertisements for goods which no longer existed. (McCarthy, 2007: 127–128)

This passage has been read to mean that there are glimpses of apocalypse in our present reality: destruction of nature coupled with both literal and figurative thinning of humanity. The images are so vividly described that they continue to linger in our minds. Only things are named, while characters, apart from Ely, are not. McCarthy's novels are, almost without exception, at least in part a moral judgment on our system. The technological and

economic prosperity of the lost world has introduced the scarceness and destitution of the new.

One example of the striking similarities between the two worlds is the scene in which the father and son discover an underground shelter filled with canned food. In our reality, this food, together with all the other trinkets the father and the son collect, is just as insignificant as they themselves are. In essence, the father and the son look like a pair of vagrants, clad in greasy parkas, pushing grocery carts. In addition, builders of such shelters might even be dubbed strange, if not worse. But in the world of the post-apocalypse, the very discovery of a secret food stash is a miracle. On the other hand however, the two protagonists start a very polite conversation about what they will eat for supper, then they bathe, change clothes and sit down and eat with plastic plates and utensils, like civilized men. They play checkers. The father himself says at one point that they will conjure humanity, if need be: "When you've nothing else construct ceremonies out of the air and breathe upon them." (McCarthy, 2007: 45). At that point, the boy suggests they thank, in their own way, the people who left the food and the shelter for them, thus evoking the humanity that has been lost. We are talking about a boy who has never seen the sun and has no experience of most colors and smells, and who has no home and only a distant memory of his mother. For McCarthy, being civilized does not mean being technologically advanced. The unnamed father remembers and laments his lost love and nature, but never technology. Although he and his son are physically endangered, their humanity is well preserved. Their purpose is to survive, to keep morality intact and to mature, to endure the hopelessness of the post-apocalyptic reality. Nevertheless, their humanity still does not herald a better world.

McCarthy's idiom

According to Cormac McCarthy, all good literature must "deal with questions of life and death" (Woodward, 1992). It would indeed be difficult not to read *The Road* in the light of McCarthy's previous novels, because in it one finds numerous motifs typical of McCarthy's fiction: desolate landscapes, homelessness, lack of any real plot, simple language, no punctuation, extreme violence, no female protagonists, nihilism, scarce and elementary dialogues. As a rule, hope opposed to hopelessness is another key feature

of his style. His characters often leave the only world they know and face a new one, where there is no promise of restoration and no sustenance. More often than not, McCarthy's heroes travel in pairs of people with opposing views of life. Going on the road means leaving one's world and discovering another one, and this novel is no exception. Drifting ash and spindly rubble are characteristic of the McCarthy canon. The world of the post-apocalypse in *The Road*, populated by monstrous remnants of humanity, is just as harsh and unforgiving as the deserts and desolate landscapes of *Blood Meridian* – all of which have been trademarks of McCarthy's fiction. His novel *The Crossing* ends with a nuclear explosion: "...such is the way of the world, in darkess and ashes... (McCarthy, 1997: 87). In *No Country for Old Men*, Sheriff Bell and his deputy at one point leave their cars behind and proceed on horses: so there are many instances of technology being either destroyed or left behind in McCarthy's fiction. Preservation of crucial human values is represented by "carrying the fire", which is another recurrent motif:

> We're going to be okay, aren't we, Papa?
> Yes, we are.
> And nothing bad is going to happen to us.
> That's right.
> Because we're carrying the fire.
> Yes, Because we're carrying the fire. (McCarthy, 2007: 38)

One finds it in *No Country for Old Men* too, in the dream that concludes the novel, not unlike the vision of nature by which *The Road* ends:

> When he rode past I seen he was carrying fire in a horn the way people used to do and I could see the horn from the light inside of it. (McCarthy, 2008: 320)

No Country for Old Men is another one of McCarthy's novels which begins with a memory and ends with a dream. The identity of McCarthy's main protagonists is always created while on a journey: as in many of his novels, once they enter wilderness, new rules apply. The father's knowledge of practical skills is as far away from formal education as the post-apocalyptic world is from the old one. In this way, the father may signify old knowledge that in the end dies with him, which is the knowledge we have now, while the son knows nothing of the old world and is instead focused on humanity rather than on survival. Certainly, McCarthy still adheres to the basic tenets of the post-apocalyptic subgenre and those rules stemming from

common sense – the father is in charge most of the time. He is the link to the lost world. Without him, the son would think of the apocalypse as the only given reality, and there would be no sense of loss. This is perhaps ultimately shown in the scene in which the father recollects a stream of water populated by trout.

Losing one's world is a recurrent theme in much of McCarthy's work. His characters are often left behind when a world from which they originate disappears. This disappearance may be literal, as is the case in *The Road*, or figurative, as in *The Sunset Limited*, where the white professor says that "The things that I love are fragile" (Jones, 2011). Sheriff Bell in *No Country for Old Men* is another protagonist left without the world he's been used to, unable to cope with the new one in a similar way that the father in *The Road* is. In *The Crossing*, Billy Parham at one point meets an old blind man, who lost his world by losing his sight:

He said that as the memory of the world must fade so must it fade in his dreams until soon or late he feared that he would have darkness absolute and no shadow of the world that was... Finally he said that on his first years of darkness his dreams had been vivid beyond all expectation and that he had come to thirst for them but that dreams and memories alike had faded one by one until they were no more. (McCarthy, 1997: 190)

Homelessness and wandering constitute one of primary motifs in McCarthy's fiction. A similar passage from *The Crossing* reads like this:

> He told the boy that...he must cease his wanderings and make for himself some place in the world because to wander in this way would become for him a passion and by this passion he would become stranged from men and so ultimately from himself. He said that the world could only be known as it existed in men's hearts. (McCarthy, 1997: 89)

The end of words

> *"The frailty of everything revealed at last. Old and troubling issues resolved into nothingness and night. The last instance of a thing takes the class with it."*
> (McCarthy, 2007: 28.)

Just as the old world, together with the language that carried its meaning is obliterated from reality, as much as from memories and dreams, a new one replaces it. Words are in short supply and the father and son use

even words sparsely, as if they were food or fuel. They travel through the desolate world like words through an empty page, because they are the spark of a new meaning. And while our world disintegrates and is replaced by the post-apocalyptic one, so old meanings give way to new ones, and descriptions of this process are extremely powerful and convincing. The annihilation of the old world continues throughout the aftermath of the apocalypse, not only in reality but in language itself, in memories and in dreams:

> The world shrinking down about a raw core of parsible entities. The names of things slowly following those things into oblivion. Colors. The names of birds. Things to eat. Finally the names of things one believed to be true. More fragile than he would have thought. How much was gone already? The sacred idiom shorn of its referents and so of its reality. Drawing down like something trying to preserve heat. In time to wink out forever. (McCarthy, 2007: 88-89)

So when the son says "I'm afraid", it is the context that provides the origin of this fear. Our imagination intervenes, and we may assume a multitude of things he might be afraid of. Thus the new world provides its own, horrible semantics. The new reality lacks even the most basic elements such as motion, color and flavor, which are about to disappear from memories and dreams as well: "The names of things slowly following those things into oblivion." (McCarthy, 2007: 75). Obliteration of humanity's most sacred moral rules is far more serious than the destruction of the planet. To survive in a post-apocalyptic world, one must find food and shelter to escape physical demise. But what the two main protagonists are doing is avoiding moral demise as well. Eating human flesh would keep them alive, but at the great cost of losing their humanity. The moral decline of the cannibals they are surrounded with echoes the decline of the world. When the father and son explore a house in the hope of finding some food, they instead stumble upon a cellar full of people, who are presumably kept like livestock by the cannibals:

> He started down the rough wooden steps. He ducked his head and then flicked the lighter and swung the flame out over the darkness like an offering. Coldness and damp. An ungodly stench. The boy clutched at his coat. He could see part of a stone wall. Clay floor. An old mattress darkly stained. He crouched and

> stepped down again and held out the light. Huddled against the back wall were naked people, male and female, all trying to hide, shielding their faces with their hands. On the mattress lay a man with his legs gone to the hip and the stumps of them blackened and burnt. The smell was hideous. (McCarthy, 2007: 116)

There is no struggle for survival without the struggle for hope. The boy's mother shows no hope and is therefore unwilling to survive. One of the father's memories is the memory of his wife, who committed suicide. Memories of the lost world include her too, so through memories she is also traveling with them, until the father discards her photograph. The will to survive is fueled by the wish to discover the meaning of life, and in McCarthy's work this discovery takes place a long way from home, in deserts or, in this case, a nuclear aftermath. Dreams and memories are an especially important part of the decay of words. The father is fighting hopelessness for his son's sake, which is in sharp contrast to the cannibals who eat their children to keep themselves alive. The father and son constitute a separate world in which human values still hold sway. The decline of men and of the world are inseparable: in the same way those strange warnings are painted over road signs, the creatures that the father and the son meet strangely resemble humans, like effigies of humans painted over: "Creedless shells of men tottering down the causeways like migrants in a feverland." (McCarthy, 2007: 28)

Conclusion

McCarthy rediscovers the genre and culture, its dreams, hopes and fears, and its history, by retracing the steps back to the Ocean, to the origins, as he has already done so many times before. Throughout the course of this novel, the father tells stories to his son. These stories are also "ceremonies conjured out of thin air" (McCarthy, 2007: 45). The boy at one point notices that they always do the right thing in those stories, whereas in reality they do not. Since *The Road* itself is such a story, this could be read to mean more than one thing, especially when one considers all the ambiguities found in this novel.

The main characters and nature in McCarthy's fiction are often opposed to other human beings, who are designated as an evil presence.

The fate of any world is decided, for better or worse, by those who inhabit it, as one sees in the very last paragraph:

> Once there were brook trout in the streams in the mountains. You could see them standing in the amber current where the white edges of their fins wimpled softly in the flow. They smelled of moss in your hand. Polished and muscular and torsorial. On their backs were vermicular patterns that were maps of the world in its becoming. Maps and mazes. Of a thing which could not be put back. Not be made right again. In the deep glens where they lived all things were older than man and they hummed of mystery. (McCarthy, 2007: 286)

Much of reality for us is indeed bound by what we perceive and say about it. But one does not create and define things by remembering them and giving them names: this is an artificial alteration of reality. It is in this post-apocalyptic world, which many would argue is not worth living in, that the boy must search and find hope, but only within, and not in what he sees. McCarthy obliterates the world so that his readers might be able to see past it: the mother and Ely cannot, and that is why they become prophets of hopelessness. But in this world there is more than meets the eye, more than what can be described. That is why the boy was raised in a reality with no smells or colors – to try and be the carrier of fire and of "patterns of the world in its becoming".

References

Frye, S. (2003). Cormac McCarthy: Uncharted Territories/Territoires inconnus. In Chollier, C. (Ed.), *Wilderness Typology, American Scripture, and the Interpreter's Eye: The Interior Landscapes or McCarthy's Western Novels* (pp. 115-121). Reims: Presses Universitaires de Reims.

Jones, T. L. (Director), (2011). *The Sunset Limited.* [Motion picture]. USA: HBO.

McCarthy, C. (2008). *No Country for Old Men*. New York: Knopf Publishing Group.

McCarthy, C. (1997). *The Crossing*. New York: Knopf Publishing Group.

McCarthy, C. (2007). *The Road*. New York: Vintage International.

Woodward, R.B. (1992). Cormac McCarthy's Venomous Fiction. (August 23, 2015)
< https://www.nytimes.com/books/98/05/17/specials/mccarthy-venom.html >.

UDC 821.111(71).09 Atwood M.
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.7

Milena Nikolić*
University of Belgrade
Faculty of Philology
Belgrade, Serbia

THE MIRROR MOTIF IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *CAT'S EYE*

Abstract
This paper will try to show how the mirror motif is symbolically presented through the images of eyes and water (as symbols of reflection) in the life of the novel's heroine – Elaine Risley. The mirror motif reveals the psychological state of Elaine's mind, initiates changes in her perspective and indicates that reality is only a reflection of what she is able to see at a given moment. The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the stages of painting as a creative act by establishing the internal and external factors that led our controversial painter and narrator to engage in the process of creation, as well as to indicate the significance of creative expression in resolving her complex relationship with Cordelia, the girl who marked her childhood. By identifying the elements of fiction and reality of the main character and indicating their interaction and interconnectedness, we will try to explore the symbolism of Elaine's creative process and determine the extent to which fictional elements have contributed to both her art and perception of reality. Both ontological and psychological theories will be used as a framework for exploring the relation between Elaine's possible liberation from fantasy, which is an indispensable resource for her fictional world, and the potential for identifying the real causes of her traumas and subtle misogyny.

Key words: fiction, reality, creativity, reflection

* E-mail: milenanikolic86@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

In *Cat's Eye*, Atwood's eighth novel, published in 1991, the middle-aged painter Elaine Risley returns to the city of Toronto because of her retrospective art exhibition, after several years of avoiding going back to the place in which she spent her childhood. After spending a long time studying visual arts and working in the area, Elaine becomes a celebrated painter of controversial art, which attracts the attention of feminists and critics alike. The novel explores the life of Elaine from her childhood to a turning point in her life, when she begins to reflect on her past and also analyze her own artistic work. The decisive moment occurs during the retrospective exhibition, in which she reflects on time and examines her artistic formation. Elaine's visual art is a means through which she tries to understand her own self and her world. Through the descriptions of Elaine's paintings, we can see that the protagonist represents the personal and social tensions she experiences.

Elaine's art is as complex as her own subjectivity. It transgresses the conventional modes of representation of the subject. Reflective surfaces such as mirrors, eyes and water represent the shift of the view of subjectivity in the arts from the Greek philosophers' proposition of an unobtrusive author to a more contemporary view, in which artists are aware of their own perception. Supported by the ideas of Lubomír Doležel, the focus of this paper is on identifying real and fictional elements in the protagonist's perception of reality by analyzing the unconventional mirror reflections that dismantle the view of art as a restricted mirror that used to frame the self as a complete subject.

References to reflective surfaces and to vision, such as a variety of mirrors, marbles, glasses, and eyes, are related to the protagonist's creative process. These surfaces have a strong effect on Elaine's artistic creation. Even before she i her career, reflective surfaces attract Elaine, especially the cat's eye marble. In her childhood, Elaine is fascinated by this type of marble and sees it as a talisman with the power to protect her. Her interest in the marble and other reflective surfaces increases when she studies Fine Arts at College. The painter concentrates her studies on "paintings in which there are pearls, crystals, mirrors, shiny details of brass" (Atwood 1988: 335).[1] Later on in the narrative, Elaine paints the cat's eye marble, the pier

[1] All the quotes in the paper are taken from this edition.

glass and other reflective objects in her works. The protagonist portrays a sphere of bluish glass in her painting *Life Drawing* (400), a round object "made of purple stained glasses" in *Three Muses* (445), and a female figure carrying a marble in *Unified Field Theory* (447).

2. Traditional artistic representation

It should be pointed out that Atwood's use of mirrors in the protagonist's artistic process serves as a critique of conventional views of artistic representation. The way visual metaphors are used in traditional artistic representation differs from the way they are presented in contemporary works of fiction. Art is used to be a mirror that faithfully represents the artists' subjectivity and their perception of reality. Some Greek philosophers investigate and explain the process of literary and artistic production referring to a mirror metaphor. The importance of optics in Greek culture is emphasized through Aristotle's theory of mimesis. In *On the Arts of Poetry*, Aristotle defines all types of what he considers artistic representations (poetry, drama and painting) as modes of imitation that differ only in their means, in the objects or in the manner of their imitations (Aristotle 1920: 23). For this critic, literary and artistic representation is described as an imitation of the world or as a mirror, a reflection of nature. He points out that the poet is not fulfilling his role of an imitator when saying this *in propria persona* (Aristotle 1920: 83). He argues that artists should be impersonal and not show themselves in their works. On the contrary, they will dismantle the illusion of art as a mimetic device.

Since the negative power of vision is depicted in Greek myths, such as those of Narcissus, Orpheus and Medusa, many Greek philosophers regard literary and artistic representations as imperfect when associating art with mirror images and other visual metaphors. Unlike Aristotle, Plato and Socrates do not value the supposedly mirroring properties of representation due to the illusion they create. In *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, M. H. Abrams points out that Plato's concept of literary and artistic representations in *Republic* is based on the view that literature and art are as deceiving as the images formed in reflectors such as mirrors and water (Abrams 1971: 30). Abrams insists on the fact that literary and artistic representations are seen as twice distorted from the ideal world, just like reflections in a mirror (Abrams 1971: 34). Similarly

to Plato, Socrates suggests that the "poet is an imitator, and therefore, like all other imitators, he is thrice removed from the King and from the truth" (quoted in Abrams 1971: 8). In this traditional view, the artist's role is not considered to be significant either.

The notion of art as a mirror that helps the artist in his attempt to copy nature predominates in aesthetics, literature and art long after this period. In general, most aesthetic theories developed from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century revisit Plato, Aristotle and Socrates to formulate a view of art in which mimesis becomes a key word. Critics became aware of the presence of the artist's subjectivity in art, but impersonality continued to be present in the notions of representation that constitutes an effective imitation of nature. Mimesis was for a long time valued in literary works and visual arts because, by means of artistic realism, artists could both please and teach the audience. In *The Self-conscious Novel: Artifice in Fiction from Joyce to Pynchon*, Brian Stonehill points out that art is better if the illusion of life supported by mimesis and emphasized by the mirror metaphor is more convincing (Stonehill 1988: 11).

The different theories and concepts of representation in the traditional notions of art either undervalued or emphasized mimesis and illusion as the purposes of art. The focus was merely on an accurate and objective copy of reality. The artist's subjectivity or personal perception of the work of art was mostly ignored. Romantic aesthetic theories started to regard the artist's mind as an active reflector of the external world. Nineteenth-century mirror metaphors in relation to representation explain how artists project their own selves into their works and often highlight artistic creativity and individuality. The reflector is, according to Abrams, reversed, reflecting a state of mind instead of an external nature (Abrams 1971: 50).

In *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds*, Lubomír Doležel argues against the main postulate of mimesis, according to which fictional entities are derived from reality: as such, they are imitations or representations of real entities (Doležel 2008: 18). According to him, even though fiction and reality are intermingled, there should be a clear distinction between the real and the fictional since a fictional universe cannot function as the real world. Doležel's theory of fictional semantics indicates the limitations of the most famous theories of fiction based on the assumption that there is "only one legitimate universe of discourse (referential domain): the real world" (Doležel 2008: 14). If we transformed fictional characters, places and stories into real people, places and real-life events, we would

reduce heterogeneous fictional worlds to the model of a single world based exclusively on human experience.

Doležel's theory is a fertile ground for interpreting the works of Margaret Atwood. The fictional worlds presented in literary works (for instance, the fictional worlds of all Atwood's works) have their own subcategory (the fictional worlds of Atwood's heroines). Since all these worlds are possible worlds in a fictional universe, each of them can be the centre according to which we compare and contrast the others. The main female characters in Atwood's works live in their own fictional worlds, so their perception of reality is quite disturbed by their internal turmoil. The heroines are prone to fantasies, reveries, hypnosis, automatic writing and other ways of leaving the world that is considered to be real. The reality of our heroines is also influenced by fiction and vice versa. In this paper, we will focus on Atwood's use of visual metaphors present in her protagonist's works of art as a means by which the relation between fiction and reality is established. Visual metaphors such as convex, fragmented, and distorting mirror surfaces and distinctive eyes serve as an indicator that art, as a work of fiction, is a reflection of our heroine's distorted perception of reality.

3. Mirrors

In *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing*, Atwood discusses the artist's multiple selves. She claims that artists are "double" because they possess the secret identities (Atwood 2003: 32). As a consequence, writers and artists carry not only a "Jekyll hand" and a "Hyde hand" – a reference to the double identity of the protagonist of the famous novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* – but also a slippery, fragmented, multiple self. To compare how literature and art represent the artist's self through mirror imagery, Atwood refers to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, in which Alice "goes *through* the mirror and then there is only one Alice, or only one that we can follow. Instead of destroying her double, the 'real' Alice merges with the other Alice – the imagined Alice, the dream Alice, the Alice who exists nowhere […] The act of writing takes place at the moment when Alice passes through the mirror. At this one instant the glass barrier between the doubles dissolves and Alice is neither here nor there, neither art nor life" (Atwood 2003: 49-50).

Atwood's analysis of representation shows that, when artists reflect on their own selves through the mirror of art, there is also a process of

dissolution of the fragmented selves. In the same way that Alice's identities are blended once she enters the mirror, artists' selves and their depicted identities reflected in the mirror of contemporary art are also mixed. This view of art as a mirror that problematizes subjectivity by emphasizing several possibilities of representing the existence of the self in different fictional worlds is adopted in Elaine's works.

The visual metaphors and mirror imageries support the complexity of the painter's complex subjectivity and perception of reality. In the first pages, the novel opens with Elaine's notorious assertion that "[t]here's never only one of anyone" (Atwood 1988: 6). The painter looks at the mirror and gives a strange description of her face: "I'm transitional; some days I look like a worn-out thirty five, others like a sprightly fifty. So much depends on the light, and the way you squint" (6). Elaine's self-image in the mirror is described here as a kind of visual representation, a painting or a photograph. Elaine's perception of herself, as in a visual representation, is transitional and also multiple, in the sense that the protagonist seems to be aware of the complexity of subjectivity. However, this does not make her realize that her perception of reality is also complex and distorted.

Later, when the protagonist decides to become a painter, Elaine confesses that her life becomes multiple, and she sees herself in fragments (344) because she also feels that she is split between two places, the University and her parents' house, and between two relationships, her affair with Professor Joseph and the artist Jon.

The chapter entitled "Half a Face" challenges this view of the self, which is represented in the narrative through the images of disfigured and half faces. In this chapter, Elaine's friend Cordelia tells her the story about twin sisters: "a pretty one and one who has a burn covering half her face" (232). The disfigured sister commits suicide "in front of the mirror out of jealousy [and] her spirit goes into the mirror" to take over her twin sister's body (233). In "Names, Faces and Signatures in Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye* and *The Handmaid'sTale*", Jessie Givner claims that "the half-face is one of the most pervasive images of disfiguration" in the novel (Givner 1992: 66). This passage also highlights the possibility of other selves lurking in the unconscious mind, like the beautiful twin who looks at the mirror and sees the disfigured face of her dead sister, as if it were her own.

The reference to a disfigured face is also present in Elaine's paintings *Half a Face* and *Leprosy*. In her work of art *Half a Face*, the painter makes a portrait of her friend Cordelia, but the picture has "an odd title, because

Cordelia's entire face is visible. But behind her, hanging on the wall… is another face, covered with white cloth" (Atwood 1988: 249). While in this picture Elaine plays with the images of half and full faces, in *Leprosy*, she emphasizes the fragmentations and disfiguration of the self when she paints one of her girl friends' mothers, Mrs. Smith, "with half of her face peeling off" (383). Her depictions of half faces reveal that anyone's self is multifaceted and cannot be seen as a simple unity: like reality, an individual's self-images can often be split, fragmented, and distorted.

In "Bridge and Mirror: Replicating Selves in *Cat's Eye*", David Cowart argues that "[t]he art of Elaine Risley – or Margaret Atwood – is a mirror in which one sees an image of the artist" (Cowart 1992: 129). However, Atwood "refines her examination of the shivered self", as *Cat's Eye* also analyzes "the representation of this self in the mirror of art and in the eye of the conscious and unconscious mind" (Cowart 1992: 125). This preoccupation with the artist's self and personal vision in Elaine's artistic development is significant, because Atwood draws our attention to the process of self-representation as a visual practice that is also subjective.

Looking at a mirror, Elaine problematizes ordinary vision as a reflection of herself. While thinking of the people of her past, Elaine asks herself:" Now I think, what if I just couldn't see what they looked like? Maybe it was as simple as that: eye problems. I'm having that trouble myself now: too close to the mirror and I'm a blur, too far back and I can't see the details. Who knows what kind of face I'm making, what kind of modern art I'm drawing onto myself?" (Atwood 1988: 6) She questions her visual perception of friends, family and especially of her own self-image in the mirror because of the limitations of her eyes. Elaine reflects: "Even when I've got the distance adjusted, I vary" (6). She is aware of the variation and indeterminacy of her perceptions. In other words, even if the painter adjusts her self-reflection in the mirror or in her art, she will still have alternative possibilities of representation.

Elaine recognizes that her reflection in some types of mirrors may not sustain her multifaceted self. In this sense, *Cat's Eye* also interrogates traditional representation when the protagonist contests the limitations of flat mirrors and celebrates the openness and distorting qualities of convex reflective surfaces. Elaine has a negative relation with her image projected in flat surfaces, for instance, in the pocket mirror which Cordelia holds "in front of [Elaine] and says, 'Look at yourself! Just look!' Her voice is disgusted, fed up" (175) and, later, in Cordelia's sunglasses: "There I am

in her mirror eyes, in duplicate and monochrome, and a great deal smaller than life-sized" (329). These flat surfaces seem to reduce the multiplicity of Elaine's selves. On the other hand, anamorphic mirrors, with their distorting quality, oppose flat surfaces and the traditional notion of vision which they stand for. Elaine prefers to view her self-reflections in anamorphic surfaces such as the pier glass and the cat's eye marble. These convex surfaces are more effective when it comes to representing the complexity of the painter's subjectivity and perception of reality.

4. Real entity used in fiction

One of the best examples that illustrate Doležel's fusion of the fictional and the real in Atwood's novel is the use of a real work of art – Jan van Eyck's painting *The Arnolfini Marriage*.[2] The pier glass depicted in the painting is van Eyck's discreet departure from realism. It shows the figure of the artist who observes the main figures painted. The painting is signed, ininscribed and dated on the wall above the convex mirror: "*Johannes de eyck fuit hic 1434*" ("Jan van Eyck was here 1434").

According to Doležel, works of real artists become part of a fictional world by their transformation into individualized fictional objects (Doležel 2008: 65). *The Arnolfini Marriage* becomes a fictional object since the protagonist of Atwood's novel, being a student of Art and Archeology who is "fascinated with the effect of glass, and of other light-reflecting surfaces" (Atwood 1988: 355), examines the pier glass depicted on van Eyck's painting. She is aware of the way that van Eyck's pier glass problematizes reflection and perceives the distorting quality of the convex mirror used in this painting.[3] She defines the pier glass as a "magnifying glass" which reflects the figures of the Arnolfini couple "slightly askew, as if in a different law of gravity, a different arrangement of space exists inside" (Atwood 1988: 355). Atwood's fictional world depicted in *Cat's Eye* and her protagonist's fiction presented in the paintings indicate that there is a close relation between fiction and reality. A close connection with reality does not negate the autonomy of fictional.

[2] The Flemish painter Jan van Eyck broke with the monocular vision. He was also one of the forerunners of the self-conscious artistic tradition that was revolutionary in Renaissance, Flemish art. See the Fig.1.

[3] See Fig. 2.

Jessie Givner argues that convex surfaces are instrumental in producing reflections through repeating, although distorting the visible source (Givner 1992: 68). It is precisely this distorting quality of the convex mirror in van Eyck's painting that interests Elaine (Givner 1992: 70). The pier glass fascinates Elaine because it "reflects in its convex surface not only [the Arnolfini's couple's] backs but also two other people who aren't in the main picture at all" (Atwood 1988: 355). Even though in this passage Elaine does not say that the pier glass can also emphasize the artist's own vision of the painting, the protagonist recognizes the power of this convex glass to help her see further, because "[t]his round mirror is like an eye, a single eye that sees more than anyone else looking" (355).

Elaine will use van Eyck's idea in her painting entitled *Cat's Eye,* which the painter calls a "self-portrait, of some sorts". The convex mirror depicted in her painting shows the painter's head "in the foreground, though it's shown only from the middle of the nose up: just the upper half of the nose" (Atwood 1988: 446). Her self-portrait, as a self-conscious work, emphasizes the presence of the artist, who becomes the subject of the painting, simultaneously the viewer and the viewed. Furthermore, the painter also adopts one of the unconventional visual metaphors of the novel in this work: "Behind [her] half-head, in the center of the picture, in the empty sky, a pier glass is hanging, convex and encircled by an ornate frame" (Atwood 1988: 446). Reflected in the pier glass, Elaine describes, "a section of the back of [her] head is visible, but the hair is different, younger" (446). Her pier glass functions as a magnifying lens which distorts Elaine's face in the foreground, revealing the complexity of her self-image and the fact that she feels transitional: both young and old at the same time, as she confesses at the beginning of the narrative.

5. The cat's eye marble

The most significant metaphor that refers to artistic vision and self-reflection is another anamorphic surface, the cat's eye marble. As a metaphor of the eye, the cat's eye marble becomes an emblematic surface of artistic and subjective vision in the novel. It exists as a referential object in the text, as Howells points out in the text "*Cat's Eye*: Elaine Risley's Retrospective Art", signaling its importance as a visual and imaginative symbol (Howells 1994: 210). Similarly to the visual power of the pier glass, the cat's eye

helps Elaine create a different mode of seeing, but it also gives her an alternative representation of the self.

As a girl, when Elaine plays with marbles, she expects to win the cat's eye, which is her favorite, because she first recognizes that this marble represents an alternative and unconventional form of vision. Elaine carries her marble in her pocket, and when her friend Cordelia asks about it, Elaine thinks: "She doesn't know what power this cat's eye has, to protect me. Sometimes when I have it with me I can see the way it sees" (Atwood 1988: 157).

Through the marble, Elaine sees things differently, as she later explains: "I keep my cat's eye in my pocket, where I can hold on to it. It rests in my hand, valuable as a jewel, looking out through bone and cloth with its impartial gaze" (Atwood 1988: 172). As Elaine discovers the partial gaze of the cat's eye marble, she realizes that there are ways of seeing the world other than the vision provided by the ordinary eyes. She finds out that "[t]he cat's eyes really are like eyes, but not the eyes of cats", because the marble also represents "the eyes of something that isn't known but exists anyway, like greens eyes of the radio, like the eyes of aliens from a distant planet" (69). Elaine shows that the cat's eye marble may refer to alternative ways of seeing. In other words, she discovers that, instead of one vision, there are many visions.

7. The third eye

The alternative visionary practices are also presented by the metaphor of the third eye. In this sense, *Cat's Eye* is linked to the story entitled "Instructions for the Third Eye" from her collection of short stories *Murder in the Dark*. It is worth mentioning that, in this story, the narrator defines the third eye by making a distinction between vision and a possible vision: "The former relates to something it's assumed you've seen, the latter to something it's assumed you haven't" (Atwood 2010: 112). The metaphor of the third eye refers to the second type of vision. On the one hand, the actual eyes are limited to a supposed truth – the thing one assumes to have seen – on the other, the third eye "will show you that this truth is not the only truth" (Atwood 2010: 113). This short story, thus, proposes a type of seeing beyond the totalitarian concept of vision and towards alternative visions that best correspond to the artist's third eye, which the cat's eye marble stands for

in the novel. If, when Elaine is young, the cat's eye marble represents a talisman that protects her "already functioning beyond her consciousness as her Third Eye" (Howells 1994: 211), later, when the marble fades away and becomes only a symbolic presence, Elaine begins to use this visionary power of the marble in order to see further. After she becomes a painter, the protagonist realizes that she used to paint things that were actually there, in front of her: "Now [she] begin[s] to paint things that aren't there" (Atwood 1988: 366) – things that she can only see through her newly discovered artistic vision. Cowart argues that the cat's eye marble "is an eye […] and a mirror – the mirror of the mind and of art. It is the eye of the painter Elaine Risley and […] finally, a rich emblem for art and for artistic imagination" (Cowart 1992: 130). Therefore, Elaine adopts the mode of reflection of this anamorphic surface to develop an artistic way of seeing the world, symbolized by alternative and imaginary visual perceptions. Elaine also begins to use the power of her third eye, that is, her cat's eye marble, to see and understand her own selves. In this sense, this visual metaphor stands for a mode of self-representation, especially if one considers the homophonic relation between the words "eye" and "I" in English. Elaine's artistic vision affects the way she reconstructs her memories and represents her own subjectivity. For example, the adult Elaine returns to Toronto one day to stay with her elderly mother after her father has died, and discovers her old cat's eye marble in a purse in the cellar. The marble is a forgotten object that provides Elaine with the opportunity to reflect back on herself and to understand her past, just like in the narrative: as she looks into the marble, the painter sees her life entirely (434).

Givner points out that, in Atwood's poetry and prose, the writer breaks with the "unified I/eye, for she introduces an I/eye which is 'multiple and in fragments'" (Givner 1992: 57). As Howells states, Elaine recognizes the marble as a mark of "the artist's power of vision", which appears again and again in her works as her signature (Howells 1994: 211).

While the visual image provided by our ordinary eyes is restricted, artistic vision functions as a third eye seeing through these limitations. Atwood seems to adopt this powerful concept of artistic vision in *Cat's Eye*, allowing Elaine to portray her complex self and the world beyond the limitations of the ordinary eyes and of conventional artistic representations. Through her brother Stephen Risley's theories about time, space and vision, Elaine understands better how one perceives the world. Stephen proposes a four-dimensional theory and asks Elaine the reason why one can only

perceive reality in three dimensions. When she answers, "that's how many there are", Stephen explains that: "That's how many we perceive, you mean… We are limited by our own sensory equipment... But actually we perceive four" (Atwood 1988: 241-42). Her brother's discussions about the role of vision influence Elaine's own aesthetics, helping her question the ability of the eyes and adopt alternative ways of seeing.

In his scientific concept of perception, Stephen also adds a fourth dimension besides length, height and depth: the perception of time, which plays an important role in Elaine's art work, as some critics have argued (see Howells 1994: 209). But what is significant in Stephen's reflections is how they instruct Elaine to understand the limitations of her own visual organs and to develop an artistic vision that can perceive the complexity of the self.

8. Paintings

Elaine adopts the distorting properties and openness of the anamorphic mirrors – the cat's eye marble and the pier glass – and the visionary power of the third eye. Therefore, her paintings propose alternative visual practices.

In her painting *Deadly Nightshade*, for instance, Elaine paints several eyes. In Elaine's first art exhibition, the painter is asked: "What are all those eyes doing in it?" (Atwood 1988: 383) Elaine does not answer the question, even though these many eyes seem to symbolize the several possible ways of seeing, contesting the existence of a single mode of perceiving the world.

Likewise, her painting *Unified Field Theory* also echoes the concern with many possible ways of seeing. Through the representation of her emblematic cat's eye marble, the protagonist emphasizes the power of visions, as her painting is a reference to an incident of her past. As a young girl, Elaine falls into a frozen stream under a bridge, but believes she is saved by the Virgin Mary. As it is never proved that young Elaine is really saved by the saint, the narrative seems to imply that she sees a sort of apparition, *a* vision, not *the* vision. In Elaine's reworking of this supposed apparition in *Unified Field Theory*, the saint holds "an oversized cat's eye marble" between her hands (Atwood 1988: 447). This painting shows the power of imaginary vision because, while the saint depicted holds

an unconventional visual metaphor, artists may also be seen as having the power to carry and provide imaginative visions represented in their artworks. For Howells, Elaine develops a complex representation of vision in this painting (Howells 1994: 214).

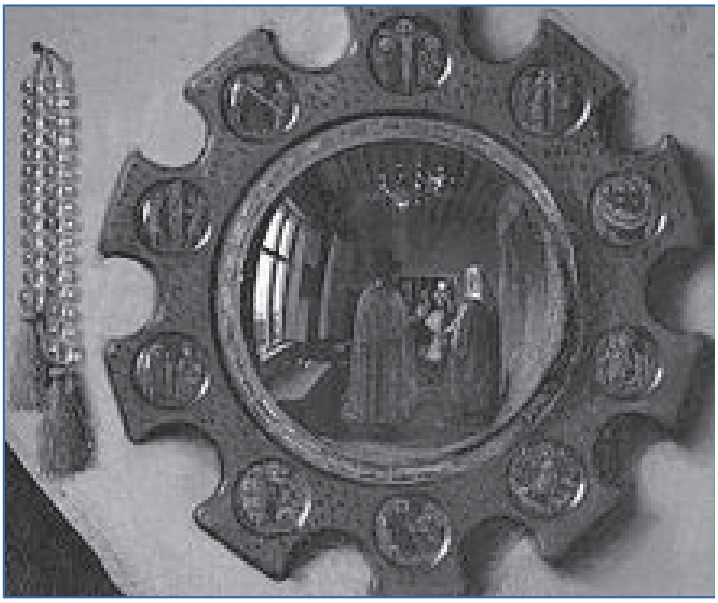
9. Conclusion

Alternative visual practices are demonstrated in Elaine's combination of a vision (represented in the form of Virgin Mary) and a symbol of artistic vision (represented by the marble). Hence, by representing eyes, mirrors and other reflective surfaces in her artworks, Elaine interrogates the ideologies of visual practices. Her visual artifacts depict the relation between the vision and visions in which the socially accepted codes of seeing are challenged by the eye of the artist (Howells 1994: 204). The unconventional visual metaphors, the anamorphic mirrors and the third eye, therefore, underline Elaine's power to represent her complex subjectivity and other people's selves in an alternative way. Elaine goes beyond the limitations of traditional self-representation and conventional visual practice to emphasize the perception of subjectivity and reality as fragmented and slippery in her paintings.

Appendix

Fig. 1. Van Eyck, Jan. *The Arnolfini Marriage*.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnolfini_Portrait)

Fig. 2. *Detail of the convex mirror*
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnolfini_Portrait)



References

Abrams, M. H. (1971). *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. London: Oxford University Press.

Aristotle (1920). *On the Arts of Poetry*. Translated by Ingram Bywater. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Atwood, M. (1988). *Cat's Eye*. New York: Anchor.

Atwood, M. (2010). *Murder in the Dark*. London: Virago Press.

Atwood, M. (2003). *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing*. London: Virago Press.

Cowart, D. (1992). "Bridge and Mirror: Replicating Selves in *Cat's Eye*." In: Theo D'haen et al. (eds.), *Postmodern Studies 6: Postmodern Fiction in Canada*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 125-36.

Givner, J. (1992). "Names, Faces and Signatures in Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye* and *The Handmaid'sTale*." In: W.H. New et al. (eds.), *Canadian Literature* 133, University of British Columbia: Vancouver, 56-75.

Doležel, L. (2008). *Heterokosmika: fikcija i mogući svetovi*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik.

Howells, C.A. (1994). "*Cat's Eye*: Elaine Risley's Retrospective Art." In: Colin Nicholson (ed.), *Margaret Atwood: Writing and Subjectivity*, New York: St. Martins, 204-18.

Plato (1968). *Republic*. Trans. Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books.

Stonehill, B. (1988). *The Self-conscious Novel: Artifice in Fiction from Joyce to Pynchon*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press.

Van Eyck, J. *The Arnolfini Marriage*. 1434. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnolfini_Portrait>

821.112.2.09-13 Wolfram E.
78.071.1:929 Wagner R.
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.8

Andreea Popescu[*]
University of Bucharest

THE GRAIL AS CULTURAL HERITAGE: REVALUATING THE TRADITION OF WOLFRAM'S *PARZIVAL* IN THE LIGHT OF WAGNER'S MUSICAL DRAMA *PARSIFAL*

Abstract
The German Arthurian romance *Parzival* is one of the most challenging texts which were written on the subject of the Grail. It differs from the French authors, though Wolfram claims that he continues the unfinished work of Chrétien de Troyes. The meaning of the poem includes European and Oriental influences, transforming the text into a palimpsest of multiple readings. The German romance has inspired many rewritings, among which is the libretto for Wagner's musical drama *Parsifal*. The paper attempts to analyze the changes brought by the German composer to Wolfram's poem in the context of the late Romantic paradigm by presenting the universal meaning of man's journey towards the sacred.

Key words: Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, Richard Wagner, *Parsifal*, Arthurian romance

The Arthurian legend is one of the main literary achievements of the Middle Ages. It presents in a fascinating way the adventures of the Knights of the Round Table, whose main purpose is to put an end to the magic of the land and to make the ideals of the Arthurian court prevail. The romances centering round such deeds represent an ideal image of human nature facing the temptations of the world. The texts combine in a unique

[*] E-mail: andramara379@gmail.com

manner the Celtic and Germanic sources with the principles and themes of the Christian religion. The romances introduce the concept of life as a quest, namely, the deliberate departure of the knight in order to experience the ultimate adventure of his life. These texts should be divided into two types, namely, poems of quest and poems of adventure. The difference lies in the symbolic meaning of the journey and the spiritual consequences it implies. A quest evolves around the search for a particular object or place, the finding of which may bring light or darkness to the protagonist. During the journey human nature is deeply changed, as the experience cannot be narrated and shared with anyone. The knight leaves knowing what he looks for, and he is prepared for the meetings awaiting him during the journey. The division between poems of quest and poems of adventure corresponds to two important concepts of the medieval romance: the sacred and the fantastic. The fantastic presupposes the concepts of initiation, magical adventures in the labyrinth of the forest, courtly love, honor and loyalty inside and outside the court of King Arthur. The sacred dimension of the legend is more complex, as it implies the confrontation of man with the most intimate aspects of the world and of his own nature. No mistakes are allowed in the sacred realm, since any error brings exile and spiritual loneliness. In this context, poems of quest receive a special meaning, as they identify with the discovery of the sense of life and death.

A poem of quest is organized according to some specific patterns, representing the wish of the knight to discover the mystery of his journey. Such an example is the English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, in which the protagonist leaves in search of his own death. In poems of adventure, what matters is the moral lesson learned by the knight and shared with the rest of the fellowship. On the contrary, in poems of quest human nature is deeply changed, and a failure implies a fall into the abyss of melancholy and despair. These poems correspond to the sacred dimension, involving man's attempt to go beyond the limits of his existence. In the sacred perspective, poems of quest receive a different meaning, as they identify with the search for the innermost aspects of human identity. The poems of the Grail constitute the most challenging and mysterious part of the Arthurian legend. The French tradition represented by the text of Chrétien de Troyes does not offer an explanation of what the Grail is. He simply introduces the object during the procession at the Fisher King's castle. "A maid accompanying the two young men was holding a grail in both hands; she was beautiful, noble and richly dressed. After she came in

the hall bearing the grail, the room was so powerfully lit that the candles lost their light, as it happens with the moon and the stars at sunrise. The grail was made of the finest gold. It was incrusted with various gems, the most beautiful and precious in the world." (de Troyes, 420-421) The enigma of the Grail made it attractive to the medieval poets following Chrétien, who transformed the story into man's search for immortality and the sacred meaning of existence.

The first continuator of the French poet was the German writer Wolfram von Eschenbach, who, in his romance *Parzival* (1220-1230), attempts to provide a conclusion to the unfinished poem of Chrétien. Though it generally follows the same epic line as the previous poem, Wolfram brings in many changes, making his text an original version rather than a simple imitation of his literary model. When analyzing Wolfram's poem, one should bear in mind several approaches that contribute to the puzzle of concepts and ideas provided by the romance. Intertextuality functions at the level of symbols, creating a sort of *mise-en-abîme* of the medieval texts. In the German poem, Wolfram claims that a source of inspiration was the story of Kyot le Provençal, who should be considered as the implied narrator of the poem. The fact that Wolfram hides behind an imaginary author should not be surprising, as it was a common medieval practice not to assume authorship out of the wish to avoid the sin of pride. The fact that Wolfram hides behind a mask is also a game which he plays with the reader, since it is obvious that the narrator is himself. *Parzival* is a romance that intrigues in many ways due to the themes it contains. The hero is the model of an innocent young man who is attracted by the world of King Arthur and abandons his life in the forest, causing the death of his mother. He has all the features which are specific of a Grail knight, namely, physical and spiritual purity, humility, simplicity of the mind, ignorance of the outside world. Yet, the temptation to travel the world is too strong, and he falls prey to it.

In order to understand the meaning of Parzival's journey, one should take into account the stages of initiation which the knight goes through. Starting with the meeting with five knights and ending with the procession at the Grail's castle, the romance can be decoded as a search of man for the right path in order to find the way towards God. The hero himself should be seen as a symbol of the Soul of man hesitating between Faith and Doubt, eventually reconciling with the divinity. Given this line of analysis, the specific features of a Grail poem should be considered. Space is a concept

which corresponds to the environment in which the quest takes place. It is both the space of the wasteland and that of the castle, but it is also the inner space of the human soul, which needs to be changed in its turn. It is also the land of the supreme initiation in the mysteries of the beyond. It is an environment in which man evolves by transforming it into a personal projection of his moral development.

Space can be divided in two: the Arthurian land and the land of the Grail. In such poems, Camelot is no longer the ideal sheltering the fellowship of the Round Table. When Parzival decides to leave for the Arthurian realm, he commits the first sin, which causes the death of his mother and his exile from the Grail. He wants to be a part of the Arthurian elite fellowship The Arthurian space becomes a land of temptation and of destruction, quite the opposite to the one found in poems of the fantastic. The space of the Grail constitutes the ideal for the knight, as it opens the road towards the divine. Poems of the sacred are more profound, and they propose a specific approach to the mysteries of human nature. The space relating to the Fisher King and the Grail castle constitutes the ideal for the knight, who needs to obtain the knowledge found in the world of common adventures. The Grail dimension is superior to the one of miraculous journeys in the forest, and that is why the elect must understand that he is in a different space and that he has to act accordingly. Wolfram introduces this difference, which he inherits from the French poet. Parzival fails because he does not understand that he is in another dimension, and he applies wrongly the same rules as in Camelot. He has to cope with the desolation of the Fisher King's realm, which is caused by the wound inflicted to him by the Painful Blow.

In anthropological terms, one should set the opposition between the concepts of the sacred and the profane as they are analyzed in the treatise of Mircea Eliade. According to Eliade, the sacred is made up of small islands of sacredness, which the protagonist needs to discover in order to find the meaning of his quest. On the contrary, the profane attracts by being homogeneous, neutral and common. It is often difficult for the protagonist to distinguish between these spaces, and then his journey is in danger. In the German romance, the sacred is threatened by the surrounding profane space of knightly adventures. The sterility of the land is identified with the disease of the king. The wasteland surrounding Munsalwaesche needs to be lifted by the ritual question: *What does the Grail serve for*? The dying forest is a mirror reflection of the fears and doubts of the knight during his

encounter with the unknown of the sacred dimension. The illness of the king is reflected in the disease of the land, because the king and the country are intimately connected. The wasteland surrounding the Grail castle is a sign of a great sorrow which must be lifted by the elect. The failure before the Grail brings about great melancholy and sadness. Wolfram humanizes his hero by focusing on the spiritual torment he suffers after having failed the Grail. Differently from the French text, which presents the situation in an abstract way, the German poet has a more compassionate and sympathetic view of his protagonist. He sees the test as a ritual which should have cured the land and the king at the same time. He ascribes to it the values of a rite of purification meant to cleanse the human soul and open it towards the sacred revelation. The chance he gives to Parzival to return to the Grail is a part of his wish to show man's quest for identity and the spiritual significance of his destiny. Wolfram's text centers on the relationship that Parzival has with the Grail itself, considering that identity and redemption depend on the assimilation of the unknown by man.

The Grail itself has particular features which are found only in Wolfram's text. It is a green stone called *lapis exilis* (the stone of exile), and it is known as the stone which fell from Lucifer's forehead when he was thrown out of Heaven after the defeat of the devils in the war against God. The emerald is so heavy that only a maiden can carry it, and it functions as an anesthetic for Amfortas's wound. It is an original description which Wolfram makes, but it is in accordance with the new philosophy circulating at that time. The poem was written during the Crusades, when the miraculous of the Orient was entering the western world. The stories coming from the Holy Land told of marvelous palaces and beautiful gardens, revealing a world which surpassed the grey daily existence of the medieval man. In Wolfram's text, the influence can be seen in the concept shaping the Grail quest and in the implied meanings of the sacred object itself. Like the French poem, the German romance does not explicitly talk about a Christian Grail, but rather links it to some older strata of religious beliefs. The connection with the angels' revolt introduces the theme of pride, because of which they are doomed to live in "darkness visible" (to quote Milton). The Grail could thus be considered as an object through which evil endured. What makes it an instrument of healing is the devotion its servants have towards it and the loyalty for the king. By putting the ritual question, Parzival defeats evil and gives a new meaning to the Grail. Since the time he first fails, the hero endures moral agony and has to make penitence in order to overcome

his spiritual pain. A failed ritual must be cleansed by an equally strong punishment, when the knight gets to the bottom of sadness before rising as a new man. The precious stone is reminiscent of the light of heaven, but it is a dim light, as if the darkness of the fall has diminished it.

The magic and the enchantment of the Orient become part of the medieval mentality, which can be seen at the level of the concepts shaping the meaning of the Grail. Wolfram links it to ancestral traditions telling of old beliefs. The connection with the angels' revolt introduces the theme of pride and revenge characterizing the devils and causing their fall. The green color of the stone stands for the concepts of faith and death. The Grail represents either the faith which the knights have that one day the malefic magic of the land will be lifted and that Amfortas will be healed. Death is implied in the idea that those revolting against God pay for their sins. It is a spiritual death, as Parzival suffers deep agony in the desert of his own despair. Only by enduring penitence at the hermit's abode can he overcome his pain. The Grail is part of a ritual of initiation because by healing the king the knight heals the object too. It is a sort of identification in the mirror of the owner and the object which he owns. Parzival must make the right choice before accepting to be a part of the elect at Amfortas's castle.

The Oriental influences point towards another meaning of the Grail, namely, the one of the alchemical stone. The lapis is not only the stone of exile but also the stone of knowledge. The exile is a self-imposed isolation in a land seeming to appear out of nowhere before the eyes of the traveler. The alchemical stone originates from the belief that gold can be obtained from base materials. Gold is both the supreme matter and a means of getting knowledge and wisdom. Wolfram suggests that the Grail as the alchemical stone is one of the basic interpretations of the object. Exile originates in the deliberate retreat from the world because of the special type of space surrounding Munsalwaesche. Thus, space corresponds to an elusive land appearing out of nowhere before the eyes of the traveler. It increases the belief that the castle cannot be found by any common person, as only the elect may see it. It has special features which make it invisible to common eyes. Wolfram ascribes to it enchantment and magic like the ones found in *The Arabian Nights*. The concept to which he refers is the so-called Veil of Maya.

Coming to the castle for the first time, Parzival is blinded by the errors he has made during the journey. He has abandoned his mother, has followed

the advice of Gurnemanz about courtly good manners, has preferred the Arthurian court to the protective forest and has lost his innocence because of physical love. The Veil of Maya has already trapped him in its illusions. Due to it, "things appear to be present, but they are not what they seem." (Lochtefeld, 433) The Maya principle is a way of concealing the true nature of things by making man discover the truth in his own soul. He must make the right choice, as the veil is changing and symbolically it is unreal. It corresponds to a land of dreams in which man can get lost and miss the initiation path. Parzival does not understand what he sees because the veil is too dense and mist covers his eyes. The Grail itself is a mystery, as it does not accept the knight in the castle among the elect. The first coming to Munsalwaesche should be taken as a prelude to the second coming, when the hero knows where he is and what he has to do. Understanding the nature of the Grail equals understanding the deepest aspects of one's soul. It is a genuine exploration which ends with the discovery of human identity. Identity is made of the memories going back to the deeds of his father Gahmuret in the Holy Land and all the other deeds to come. The mystery surrounding the Grail and the procession invite Parzival to see the truth beyond the Veil of Maya and to choose the right path in the labyrinth of his own soul.

In the context of the Grail, Wolfram offers an original perspective on human destiny. Chrétien leaves his poem unfinished, concentrating on Gawain's adventures, and so does Malory in his prose version. The German poet talks about a great sorrow, which is quite unusual in a text full of Oriental miraculous beliefs. In a certain manner, he returns to the early medieval tradition, which used to underline the skepticism and the fatality that man felt regarding his existence. The early medieval thought focused on the impossibility of man to shape his own destiny, as his fate had been already decided by the divinity. Wolfram's text makes a sort of a cultural bridge between epochs. Man's option is to choose either good or evil, light or darkness, life or death. The duality of terms is reminiscent of Oriental Manichaeism, in the sense that it implies a complementary vision, and it depends on man to keep them in balance. According to an Old Persian belief, Manichaeism introduces a dualistic cosmology describing the struggle between a good spiritual world of light and an evil material world of darkness. During the evolution of mankind, light is gradually removed from the inferior material world, and it is taken to the world of the spirit, whence it had once come from. Manichaeism is in accordance

with Wolfram's view, since the green stone of Lucifer, namely, the Grail, is an instance of a dualistic vision of the object. Man's identity depends on the struggle between light and darkness. Together with the Veil of Maya, the double nature of the emerald prevents man from accomplishing the quest. The mission of the knight is to transform the sadness of loss into the joy of revelation, due to the recovery of light in the Grail castle.

Wolfram's poem is the most human of them all, as in it Parzival is a man struggling to get out of the wasteland he has been traveling through. Light or darkness is the consequence of man's choice. In this context, the wound of Amfortas is itself a source of evil, because it prevents the knight from understanding the true nature of the Grail. It is a sort of a dark barrier between the mystery of the object and man's wish to know. The second coming to the castle is the chance given to the knight to repent and redeem himself by asking the question. Initiation occurs only when the protagonist has given up all the ties with the common world, which tries to draw him back to temptation. He is offered two alternatives, the good one of the Grail and the evil one of the surrounding world. Whe he first comes to the castle, Parzival is dressed and armed as a knight for battle. In the second case, he is a humble and penitent man. The warrior turns into a servant of God. Parzival is allowed to heal Amfortas and take his place as king of the Grail. His son Lohengrin will be the knight with the swan in the future German poems. From the image of a man tormented by the injustice of God, he becomes the abstract image of a savior isolated from the common world of knightly deeds and enjoying the light of divine revelation.

This exemplary story is also a modern way of exploring the drama of man who fulfills his ideal by losing all that once connected him to the world. The feeling of exile and isolation is found in the musical drama *Parsifal*, composed by Richard Wagner. It is his last opera and it can be considered as his musical testament. Composed in 1882, *Parsifal* was restricted to Bayreuth for almost 30 years, according to Wagner's wish. It was considered a religious rite, and the performances had to take place in the musical theater Wagner had built there. Differently from Wolfram's text, the German composer introduces some elements like the Spear and the Redeemer, which link the opera to the Christian tradition. The religious scenes are completely in the style of a musical drama, as *Parsifal* is a piece of music and a stage festival. The beginning presents a new vision on the medieval legend. Wagner changes the role of the characters in Wolfram's poem. Gawan is a sort of medicine man, bringing herbs that are supposed

to cure Amfortas's wound. In Wolfram's text, he has adventures paralleling the story of Parzival, actually following the tradition of Chrétien. One of the most important moments in the first act is the monologue of Gurnemanz about the fight which took place between the magician Klingsor and the knights of the Grail. During it, the sacred spear came into the possession of the magician, who uses it to destroy Munsalwaesche and its people. The prophecy about the savior tells of the hope that one day a man will come and restore the spear in the hands of the protectors of the Grail.

Wagner insists on the words of the prophecy as a linguistic leitmotif: "*Pity makes you wise.*" It is the reflection of Schopenhauer's concept *Mitleid*, which is found in his theory about love and compassion. The libretto also introduces the Romantic idea, which is actually taken from the ancient Greek theatre, about the disequilibrium in the universe and the role of the tragic hero in bringing harmony back again. Parsifal changes from the innocent savage into a man aware of the mistakes he has committed, looking for the redemption of the Grail. The manner in which he is introduced in the story is by having him kill one of the sacred swans living near the castle. In an allusion to the German tradition of the legend about the knight with the swan (and to *Lohengrin*, possibly), Wagner insists upon the spiritual purity of his hero. Parsifal is opposed to the sophisticated and mysterious society of the Grail. Killing the swan is a terrible murder, but Parsifal does not understand the true meaning of his act. He has killed hope, love and beauty, which are symbols of the Romantic paradigm. Instead of bringing salvation, the hero brings disaster, adding to the pain of the Grail people. Yet, he does not know anything about the place he is in, and his future moral evolution depends on the memories he acquires during his spiritual development. The melancholy characterizing him would be a parallel to the nostalgia he feels in the medieval romance when he sees three drops of blood on newly fallen snow.

The first coming to the castle is a failure, although the protagonist sees the Grail. He watches the Eucharist performed by the Grail, which brings comfort to Amfortas and the court. The text mentions the words of the religious ceremony while the Grail is perceived as a great light enchanting the people. Not only is Amfortas alleviated of his pain, his father Titurel also is. The latter is a sort of a living dead who survives in a tomb due to the Grail. Wagner uses a tradition which appears after Wolfram in French and English romances, telling about the father of the Grail king, Joséphé, who is a direct descendant of Joseph of Arimathea. He is the one who

brought the Grail to Britain, where it was lost. Wagner links the Grail to a Christian history, which did not exist in Wolfram. It is most interesting that in the period of late Romanticism he returns to the medieval tradition of the *sanguis realis*, a reminiscence of the faith characterizing the medieval thought. It is proof that, in the context of Wagner's work, the opera is a sort of reconciliation with the divinity after the cycle of the *Ring*, as a return to the faith of *Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser*. The protagonist does not meet the world of the Arthurian fellowship, as he is only a part of the deep forest, where he has been raised by his mother. In the case of Wolfram, it was important to mention the genealogy of the knight, because the courtly ideal was essential at that time. In the medieval text, the protagonist was the son of a noble knight and of an aristocratic lady. The courtly ideal represented the rule of the best, and it respected the French tradition describing the fellowship of the elect.

An interesting addition brought by Wagner is the presence of the garden of pleasures, created by Klingsor, in which he tries to trap Parsifal and turn him away from the quest. In the context of Wagner's musical drama, it is a life alternative offered through magic, a sort of rewriting of Ortrud's magic in *Lohengrin*. The world of the Grail is a very old world, full of sins, in which people like the father of Amfortas are kept alive due to the sacred power of the Grail. He resembles a Norse deity, coming from the entrails of the earth and being brought to life due to a spell. The condition to enjoy the Grail is to have faith and to love. These ideas are uttered by a chorus, talking about the triumph of good over evil and pity making people wise. These features are obtained through suffering and penitence, which do not point to any religion in particular. The moral lesson which he offers to the public is an abstract one about friendship and generosity, as a modern view set against the principles of late Romanticism and its focus on the human revolt against the divinity. Romanticism recuperates the medieval paradigm by cleansing it of any dogmatic approaches and getting to the essence of humanity, which is filtered through the Romantic concepts.

In the opera, the focus is on human emotions and relationships with others. It comes in contradiction to the medieval text, in which the knight suffers for himself and feels little empathy with the others. The failure before the Grail is caused by the abandonment of his mother, but he suffers more, as he did not ask the redeeming question. In Wagner's drama, the situation changes, as, during the first meeting with Kundry, Parsifal is

reminded of the protection his mother used to offer him and of the way in which she took care of him in the forest. Kundry's purpose is to make the protagonist forget about his mother, even to despise her, as she did not let him enjoy the pleasures of love. The feminine character of the drama, Kundry, is herself a temptress serving Klingsor, who changes into a penitent woman looking for the light. She almost succeeds in winning Parsifal over and in luring him into the trap of physical love. She is rejected when the hero reveals himself as the man guided by God. The image of his mother haunts him, but at the same time strengthens him for the ultimate meeting with the Grail. During the journey, the protagonist must concentrate on the quest, which may be seen as the poetic evolution of man transcending the limits of the common world.

In the essay *Religion and Art*, Wagner says that "when religion becomes artificial, art has a duty to rescue it. Art can show that the symbols which religion would have us believe in are actually figurative. Art can idealize those symbols and so reveal the profound truth they contain." (Wagner, 41) The Romantic paradigm to which the opera belongs introduces the concept of art as salvation for man, replacing the old theme of nature characterizing Romantic imagination. The manner in which Wolfram portrayed his protagonist followed the rules of the medieval mentality by turning him into a sort of abstraction. Wagner gives Parsifal his human side back in terms of the late Romantic theory. He is an artist meant to find his way in the world, which equals a choice in favor of solitude and loneliness. The artist/poet/musician cannot fit in a daily common existence, as he has a supreme vision, which brings him before the beauty of the universe. Owing to imagination, he can see the cosmos and through his art recreate it in his work. Owing to his vision, he actually sees the beauty in his own soul, and he enters in a deep communion with the soul of the universe itself. He is a maker, a demiurge, as he recreates the divine act of creation in his work. The cost of this revelation is solitude, isolation, a denial of the world and a self-imposed exile. The path he takes is difficult, but rewarding in the end.

Though Wagner mentions the Redeemer in his text, the role of saving the world belongs to man and not to some divine authority that is invisible to human eyes. In the German poem, the errors made by Parzival were caused by his misunderstanding of the nature of the Grail. In Wagner, Parsifal seems to already be above human temptations. One of the reasons for which he succeeds is the fact that he is different from the

others. In the German poem, Wolfram insisted on the habitual features of a Grail knight, namely, purity, humility and devotion to the quest. The purpose was to show that he belonged to a superior world and not to the Arthurian court, doomed to perish. In Wagner, King Arthur's court is not present at all. During the musical journey, the protagonist sees that he has to break with the common world if he wants to succeed. The world is tainting and destroying spiritual purity. This view is in accordance with the Romantic paradigm talking about the man of genius whose role is to recreate in his art the image of universal beauty. The cost of this vision is spiritual loneliness and the impossibility of finding happiness. The world of Kundry or Gurnemanz appeal to him, but he correctly chooses the one of Amfortas and the Grail, because he cannot give up his quest. He resembles Tannhäuser, the penitent pilgrim looking for illumination and the love of God. The spear is identified with a means of support during the journey, though it symbolically relates to Amfortas's wound and the disease affecting the land.

After vanquishing Klingsor, Parsifal holds the spear which the magician has stolen from the people of the Grail. Thus, the hero gets another connotation, namely, that of a traveler, a pilgrim looking for salvation, and an answer to the enigma of his existence. Besides the Biblical allusion, the spear is the counterpart of the sword cutting through Amfortas and causing the wound which destroyed the land and the king. Cutting instruments stand for separation and delimitation. Parsifal clearly delimitates himself from the world of humans as any artist should do. An important aspect of the musical drama is provided by the moment in time when Parsifal arrives again at the Grail castle. It is Good Friday, a day of sorrow and of great pain. Different from the first coming he is now the mature man, feeling melancholy and spreading wisdom. Gurnemanz receives him again, acting like a guardian of the threshold who welcomes the elect after a long journey. He is teaching Parsifal the mysteries of the Grail, as the hero is now worthy of knowing about the mysteries of the sacred rite. Wagner gives him a beautiful role, which is different from the one in Wolfram, in whose text he prevents the ritual question by his wrong advice. He assumes the role of the hermit in Wolfram's poem when introducing Parsifal to the mysteries of the Grail. It is the power of human love and kindness that makes the hero enter the castle, redeem Kundry and heal Amfortas. The Grail does not appear, it is mentioned in the end. One may understand that it is not

necessary anymore as an object. It is avpart of the human soul, made up of the deepest and most intimate emotions which man has.

A feature of late Romanticism says that salvation comes through humans and not from the divine authority anymore. Modern doubts have already started to influence the previous paradigm. The power of compassion and generosity towards others (Kundry, Amfortas) makes Parsifal enter the castle and redeem its inhabitants. Parsifal becomes a projection of the power of the Grail, as in the end he emerges among its people, bringing light instead of the darkness of the tomb. Amfortas is cured and peacefully dies after his father has already passed away. The apparently rigid rules of the medieval romance melt into the late Romantic shapes, anticipating modernism. In Wagner's drama, the story grows in a crescendo of musical emotions until it reaches the final apotheosis, ending with the music of Good Friday, standing for reconciliation with human suffering.

The answer provided by the opera is not in an object, no matter how precious it is. The answer lies with the human soul, the empathy it has towards others and the deep faith man has in himself. The end of the musical drama is provided by the infinite melody which Wagner uses, and it reflects the reconciliation of man with his destiny. The music of Good Friday brings peace and harmony. The musical testament of Wagner not only recreates the poem of Wolfram, it raises it to the level of the supreme initiation and revelation of human emotions. The story of Parzival/Parsifal becomes one of man looking for light and finding it in the Grail of his soul. The redeemed man is allowed to take part in the liturgy of the Grail, reminiscent of the Eucharist and the supreme divine sacrifice. The message is one of deep emotion felt by the human who has eventually found his place in the world.

References

Blamires, David (1966), *Characterization and Individuality in Wolfram's Parzival*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Chrétien de Troyes (1991), *Arthurian Romances*, London, Penguin Books.

Eliade, Mircea (1995), *Sacrul si profanul*, Bucuresti, Editura Humanitas.

Lochtefeld, James (2002), *Maya*, in *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, New York, Rosen Publishing.

McDonald, William (1998), *Wolfram's Grail*, arthuriana 8.1.
Wagner, Richard (2007), *Religion and Art,* The Wagner Library.
Wolfram von Eschenbach,(1980) *Parzival,* London, Penguin Books.

UDC 821.111.09-31 Lodge D.
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.9

Svetlana Milivojević Petrović*
Faculty of Philology
Belgrade University

TRANSFORMING THE REALIST NARRATIVE MODE IN *THE BRITISH MUSEUM IS FALLING DOWN*: DAVID LODGE'S LITERATURE OF EXHAUSTION

Abstract
David Lodge was one of the many novelists in the 1960's who felt that the novel form was at a crossroads. Due to the immense pressure on the aesthetic and epistemological premises of literary realism, many novelists considered two routes branching off in opposite directions: one led towards the neodocumentary, fiction as history, or the other way round; the other led towards metafiction. Despite being drawn to metafiction, Lodge retained a modest faith in realism: he was not prepared to accept the assumption that history and reality were so appalling and the human situation so disastrous that realism could no longer be a fitting response to reality. Having produced two realistic novels in the early 1960's, Lodge responded to the widespread feeling that realism and the novel form were in a crisis, reflected memorably in John Barth's influential essay "The Literature of Exhaustion", by tackling metafiction on his own terms, moving freely between the realistic and the metafictional mode. What he produced was a narrative about a thoroughly realistic subject, namely, young Catholic parents struggling with the perils of contraception while trying to adhere to the official doctrine of the Catholic Church. The plot, encompassing a single day in the life of its protagonists, unfolds through a series of delightfully witty parodies of the literary styles of a number of major writers, among them James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka. The paper will analyse how Lodge's narrative strategy in his first overtly experimental

* E-mail: svetmp@gmail.com

novel, relying mostly on pastiche, proved that the creative possibilities of literature, despite widespread misgivings, were far from exhausted.

Key words: David Lodge, realism, metafiction, pastiche, the novel at a crossroads, literature of exhaustion.

The 1960's were a period of great social turmoil and far-reaching changes of the ideological paradigm of the West, which gave rise to high expectations of sweeping social changes, the result of which would be a better, more just world. In the sphere of literature, this decade was marked by a widespread feeling that contemporary literature was undergoing a crisis that might easily mean its end as a creative activity. Typical of this feeling were dire prophecies of the death of the novel form, the death of the author, that literature as such, especially its realist mode, was a spent force in creative terms. Thus the American author Ronald Sukenick in his characteristically titled book *The Death of the Novel and Other Stories* (1969) maintains that the contemporary writer is forced to practically start from scratch, for reality does not exist, God as the omniscient narrator has died, so that "…now no one knows the plot" (Bradbury 2001: 375). His view was echoed by the British experimental writer B. S. Johnson, who was of the opinion that the 19th-century narrative novel was "exhausted", and that a new random literature was required to accurately reflect the disorderly nature of reality and the modern chaos (Bradbury 2001: 371). And when it comes to exhaustion, the single most influential essay written along those lines was most likely John Barth's "The Literature of Exhaustion" (1967), wherein he also claimed that literary realism was "used up" (Bradbury 2001: 370). The figure of the author did not escape this general process of deterioration in the realm of literature unscathed either: in his equally influential essay "The Death of the Author" (1967), Roland Barthes argued that it was impossible for a writer to locate him/herself in the text as the "real" author, the reason being that the writer was written by language itself (Bradbury 2001: 373).

David Lodge was certainly aware of the urgency of these issues, both in his capacity as a literary practitioner (he published four novels during the 1960's) and as a literary scholar (in 1960 he became a lecturer at the University of Birmingham, where he eventually became Professor of English Literature, leaving this post in 1987 to become a full-time writer). In his essay "The

Novelist at the Crossroads" (1971), Lodge acknowledged that, although most novels published in England at the time belonged to the category of realistic novels, the pressure of scepticism on the aesthetic and epistemological premises of literary realism was so intense that many novelists were considering two routes branching out from the crossroads: one led to the non-fiction novel, and the other to what the American scholar Robert Scholes called "fabulation" in his influential study *The Fabulators* (1967).

Scholes coined this term to describe the fast-growing class of 20th century fiction that violates the conventions of realistic fiction in a variety of ways by means of radical experiments with subject matter, form, style or temporal sequence, blurring traditional distinctions between what is serious or trivial, tragic or comic. In rejecting realism, authors whom Scholes refers to as "fabulators" "posit the world as a fabrication of competing semiotic systems which never correspond to material conditions" (Waugh 1984: 19). As such, fabulation is a variant of metafiction, self-referential or autorepresentational fiction that provides within itself a commentary on its own status as fiction and as language, and also on its own processes of production and reception (Hutcheon 1984: xii).

While Lodge admitted to being drawn to metafiction, he refused to give up on realism, retaining, as his fellow writer and colleague at the University of Birmingham Malcolm Bradbury put it, a "modest" faith in it. Lodge, quite simply, as Bradbury observes, refused to "accept the assumption that history and reality were so appalling, the human state so disastrous that realism could no longer be a response" (Bradbury 2001: 376). Lodge admitted as much in an essay written two decades after he originally examined the position of the novelist at the crossroads entitled "The Novelist Today: Still at the Crossroads?" (1992). Restating his "modest affirmation of faith in the future of the traditional realistic novel", with which he concluded the original essay, Lodge went on to conclude that the original generalisation he posited back then, namely, that "We seem to be living through a period of unprecedented cultural pluralism which allows, in all the arts, an astonishing variety of styles to flourish simultaneously" still held good. Equally importantly, he added that he was "struck by how sturdily traditional realism ha[d] survived the obsequies pronounced over it by Scholes, and by a number of other writers and critics in the Sixties and Seventies, and how clearly it remain[ed] a serious option for the literary novelist today" (in the 1990's, that is, but this essentially holds true in the 21st century as well) (Lodge 1997: 6).

In the three decades spanning his literary career from its beginnings in the early 1960's to the publication of the latter of the two essays referred to above, Lodge produced a total of eight novels, moving freely between the realistic and the metafictional mode, occasionally combining the two. In doing so, he produced an impressive body of work that both affirmed the vitality of realism and explored interesting metafictional possibilities. In the context of the present conference, "Tradition and Transformation", it would be of interest to examine how Lodge, in his first metafictional experiment, transformed the traditional realist narrative mode to great effect, producing a metafictional narrative about a perfectly realistic life situation, often with hilariously comic results.

For Lodge, the crossroads he spoke of in his essays came in 1965. Having published two novels of "scrupulous realism" (Lodge 1983: 169), *The Picturegoers* and *Ginger, You're Barmy*, in 1960 and 1962 respectively, Lodge felt it was time to try something new. As he explains in the afterword to the 1981 edition of his third novel, having been commissioned to write a satirical revue for the Birmingham Rep in 1963, together with Malcolm Bradbury, working in the comic mode opened up new horizons for him. Lodge discovered in himself a zest for satirical and parodic writing, which liberated him from the restrictive decorums of the realistic novel. The result was *London Bridge Is Falling Down* (1965), his first novel "that could be described as in any way experimental" (Lodge 1983: 169).

However "modest" his faith in realism may have been, Lodge was not prepared to accept claims such as the one made by Robert Scholes that film had made literary realism redundant. He was aware, on the other hand, that British writers, by and large, tended to be excessively committed to realism and resistant to non-realistic literary modes (Morace 1989: 15). As he would expound in his essay "The Novelist at the Crossroads", instead of opting for one of the two forking paths at the crossroads (the fabulation/metafiction advocated by Scholes or a variant of the "empirical narrative" such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* /1965/, based on a non-fictional premise), the novelist could adopt a third course of action, building his/her hesitation into the novel itself (Lodge 1971: 22). The result would be what Lodge termed "the problematic novel", a work in which the writer could remain loyal to both reality and to fiction, giving up on the nostalgic illusion of being able to reconcile them. Following in the footsteps of Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759), the author of a problematic novel makes "the difficulty of his task… his subject" and "invites the reader

to participate in the aesthetic and philosophical problems that the writing of fiction presents" (Lodge 1971: 23-24). The problematic novel provides, as the critic Robert Morace points out, a way of continuing the development of the novel form instead of breaking with it altogether or maintaining the realist tradition as a literary anachronism (Morace 1989: 15).

Writing *The British Museum Is Falling Down*, Lodge produced, as Morace aptly observes, his own variant of the literature of exhaustion: an English-style parodic collage "in the guise of a seamless comic realistic novel" (Morace 1989: 132). At this point we need to remind ourselves that John Barth's 1967 essay was originally widely misunderstood as yet another one spelling out "the death of the novel". Clarifying matters retrospectively in his 1980 essay entitled "The Literature of Replenishment", Barth suggested that his earlier essay was actually about "the effective 'exhaustion' not language or of literature but of the aesthetic of high modernism", and that, rather than advocating the apocalyptic view of the fate of the novel form, he had only meant to say that a particular stage in its history was passing and to point possible directions for further development from there (Barth 1984: 206). Bearing in mind the publication dates, it turns out that Lodge spontaneously and intuitively prefigured Barth's suggested way out of the impasse, replenishing the traditional realist narrative by resorting to parody and pastiche.

Lodge was, in his own words, well aware of the risks of extensive use of parody and pastiche, the main danger being the possibility of "puzzling and alienating the reader who wouldn't recognise the allusions" (Lodge 1983: 170). Indeed, when the novel was originally published, very few reviewers recognised the full extent of the parodies involved, many made no reference to them whatsoever, and some even complained that the novel was "somewhat derivative without perceiving that this effect might be deliberate and systematic" (Lodge 1983: 171).

While later readers run the risk of going to the opposite extreme and focusing solely on the novel's parodic aspect, Robert Morace is certainly correct in pointing out that in Lodge's first overtly experimental novel "realism and parody, life and literature, feed on and reflect each other, creating a comical but nonetheless disturbing confusion of realms" (Morace 1989: 132-133). Although the novel is filled to bursting point with very funny situations and observations, it is at the same time a perfectly realistic story about a single day in the life of Adam Appleby, a postgraduate student painfully aware of the fact that he will, in all likelihood, be unable to finish

his PhD thesis on the long sentence in three modern English novels before his scholarship expires. To make matters even more complicated, there is an ominous possibility that, having given birth to three children already, his wife Barbara might be pregnant again, her period being worryingly late. Their problem in that respect was shared by many young Catholics who adhered to their church's doctrine on birth control, which forbade the use of contraceptives. Adam's rueful realisation that "Literature is mostly about having sex and not much about having children. Life is the other way round." (Lodge 1983: 56) sums up their situation with wonderful wit, and has since deservedly found its way into a number of dictionaries of modern quotations.

Much of Adam's day is spent in and around the British Museum, in whose Reading Room he toils away at his thesis. Various mishaps and crises that befall him are narrated in the literary styles of ten different writers, some of them well-known literary figures (among them Graham Greene, D. H. Lawrence, Ernest Hemingway or Henry James), some rather obscure ones (such as Baron Corvo, whose opus Lodge studied in some detail while working on *his* MA thesis on the Catholic novel from the Oxford Movement to the present day, also in the British Museum's Reading Room; Corvo's style provides a delightful excursion into fantasy when Adam imagines himself as the Pope issuing an encyclical in which he grants the faithful freedom of choice in the matter of contraception /Bergonzi 1995: 7/).

Due to the restricted format of this presentation, we shall limit ourselves to analysing briefly the greatest literary debt owed by *The British Museum Is Falling Down*. As Lodge readily admits himself, it is to James Joyce's *Ulysses* that he owes much of his inspiration when it comes to the overall narrative technique. Even a brief overview reveals numerous similarities between Lodge's slim volume of what appears to be a conventional realistic novel and what Robert Morace describes as "Joyce's mammoth literary museum of densely textured modernist prose" (Morace 1989: 135), some of them not necessarily obvious on a first reading, such as the parallels between Adam Appleby and Leopold Bloom pointed out by the critic Dennis Jackson: like Bloom, Adam "becomes increasingly disoriented as his day progresses, and his perceptions of life around him become increasingly phantasmagoric". Also like Bloom, Adam "keeps his mind constantly fixed… on his home and his wife; he suffers because of his religion; and he has fantasies of grandeur (which, like Bloom's, are always followed by some sort of comic diminution)" (Morace 1989: 136).

It was while pondering the problem of how to present Adam's marital problems, even if only briefly, from another perspective, that of his wife Barbara, that Lodge "belatedly" realised how Joyce, limiting the duration of the action of *Ulysses* to a single day, varying the narrative style from one episode to another and, most importantly of all, having Molly Bloom become the subjective consciousness of the final chapter and give "her own wry, down-to-earth, feminine perspective" of her marriage, provided an ideal basic model for the narrative structure of *The British Museum Is Falling Down* (Lodge 1983: 171). With characteristic modesty, Lodge refers to this flash of inspiration as "writer's luck" (Lodge 1983: 171), but it is owing to his creative ingenuity that his variation on Joyce's classic has lost none of its freshness half a century after it was originally published. Where Joyce relied on Homer, Lodge resorted to sometimes "wickedly funny" (Morace 1989: 137) parodies of a number of writers, additionally varying his text with passages written in the style of newspaper reports, advertising jingles, encyclopaedia entries, plot summaries and letters to the editor. And while Molly Bloom ends her monologue with a life-affirming "yes", Barbara Appleby ends hers with a postmodern "perhaps". This is entirely fitting in view of the fact that, even though it turns out at the very end that Barbara is not pregnant after all, the Applebys' other existential problems remain, providing a firm realistic basis to a novel characterised by wild parodic flights of fancy. Faced with the threat of exhaustion of the realistic narrative mode, Lodge found a way of moving ahead by moving back, of demystifying the literary past by parodying it (Morace 1989: 137), thus effectively replenishing its expressive potential.

References

John Barth (1984), "The Literature of Replenishment", *The Friday Book: Essays and Other Non-Fiction*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, pp. 193-206

Bernard Bergonzi (1995), *David Lodge*, Northcote House, Plymouth.

Malcolm Bradbury (2001), *The Modern English Novel 1878-2001*, Penguin, London.

Linda Hutcheon (1984), *The Narcissistic Narrative – The Metafictional Paradox*, Methuen, New York and London.

David Lodge (1971), *The Novelist at the Crossroads and Other Essays on Fiction and Criticism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
David Lodge (1983), *The British Museum Is Falling Down*, Penguin, London.
David Lodge (1997), "The Novelist Today: Still at the Crossroads?", *The Practice of Writing*, Penguin, London.
Robert Morace (1989), *The Dialogic Novels of Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville.

821.111.09-31 Woolf V.
821.111.09-31 McCann C.
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.10

Jelena Pršić[*]
Sports Academy
Belgrade, Serbia

TIME LAPSE AS SPACE FOR CONTACT: THE CHARACTER AND THE CITY IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *MRS DALLOWAY* AND COLUM MCCANN'S *LET THE GREAT WORLD SPIN*

Abstract
The paper deals with the motif of time lapse in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* (2009) – two novels belonging to different literary and cultural traditions, yet sharing one of their main themes: *the relationship between the hero and the city*. Accepting Elizabeth Grosz's term *interface* as best describing the relation between bodies and cities, the paper emphasises that both novels are largely based upon the body-city *interface* and aims to prove that they both have specific instances of *temporal* interruption, which serves as a *spatial* body-city interrelation. The focus is on two most illustrative scenes: the aeroplane scene in *Mrs Dalloway* and the tightrope-walking scene in *Let the Great World Spin*.

Key words: Virginia Woolf, Colum McCann, *Mrs Dalloway*, *Let the Great World Spin*, time lapse, *interface*, body, city.

[*] E-mail: ena.ena211@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Mrs Dalloway (1925) and *Let the Great World Spin* (2009) could be described as two largely different novels. The former, written by the British modernist writer Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), is a stream-of-consciousness novel focusing on one day in the 1920s and mostly on one life – that of a married woman who constantly recalls and questions her past choices. The latter, an American contemporary novel written by the Irish writer Colum McCann (born 1965), presents several personal stories, mostly set in the 1970s and told over a few days, which are all connected but also disparate in a certain way.

However, there is a characteristic typical of both of these fiction works, so conspicuous and significant that it seems to call for a close examination and comparison. What they have in common is one of their main themes and preoccupations: *the relationship between the body and the city* – London and New York City respectively.

In her essay "Bodies-Cities" (1992), Elizabeth Grosz views the *body* as a certain integration of physical and psychosocial sides of a human subject, that is, as a "sociocultural artifact" (Grosz 1992: 241). On the other hand, the *city* refers to all living and non-living, material and non-material, concrete and abstract elements of an urban entity (Grosz 1992: 244). According to Grosz, the relationship between the body and the city is "a two-way linkage that could be defined as an *interface*, perhaps even a cobuilding" (Grosz 1992: 248, author's italics).

Accepting this view, we will emphasise in this paper that both these novels are largely based upon the body-city *interface*, while our main goal will be to prove that in both *Mrs Dalloway* and *Let the Great World Spin* there are instances of a certain time interruption, which serves as a most obvious and most complete contact between the character and the city. This *time lapse* or *a stoppage of movement through time*, in its individual manner in each case, creates a *space* or *spatial movement* in which a specific connection between the human body and the city occurs. Space, in this case, is understood in two different ways: as geographical/physical/literal and as personal/psychological/metaphorical.

When we think about time interruption, we may ask what it really means and in what way time can be interrupted, disturbed, halted in anyone's life, even if fictional. However, things become clearer when we consider the difference between *objective time*, on the one hand, which

continues regardless of any individual experience or public events, and *subjective time*, on the other, which does not always obey the rules of the clock as we know it. It is then this subjective time that stops following objective time and "freezes" at certain points in these books.

2. 'What are they looking at?' said Mrs Dalloway to the maid who opened her door. (Woolf 1996: 33)

Mrs Dalloway follows Mrs Clarissa Dalloway's morning walk through London on a sunny June Wednesday in the 1920s, her later preparations for a party she is to host that same evening, and finally, the party itself. As a stream-of-consciousness novel, it presents the world (the city of London – its streets, parks, people, the social milieu, everyday life) through the eyes of individuals, that is, from subjective points of view. Mostly, this is the perspective of the main heroine – Clarissa, whose thoughts overwhelm her daily occupations. Still, there are frequent shifts from Clarissa's consciousness to other characters' minds and their own points of view, so that there is a network of subjective perspectives, most of which are told over several pages, repeated a number of times, and woven into one whole – Clarissa's special, yet ordinary day. *Her* special, yet ordinary day, however, is simultaneously an ordinary *London* day, as she is Mrs Dalloway, the wife of Richard Dalloway, an influential London politician. Her main duty is socialising with the crème of Londoners. All her activities in London (at home or outside her house) create an *interface* between her body and the city – its streets, shops, Clarissa's acquaintances, shopkeepers, nature, and so on. In addition, other people, whose minds we enter from time to time, are all directly or indirectly connected to Clarissa.

Roughly speaking, time and space in this novel take turns in an interesting and almost incredibly regular manner. David Daiches observes that, in this novel, "[w]e either stand still in time and move from character to character, or we stand still in space, remaining with one character and moving up and down in time with his consciousness" (Daiches 1945: 64). In other words, whenever the narration comes to a lapse in time – an interruption in the process of thinking that travels to the past and then goes back to the present, there is a movement in space, which allows for a change in the location of a point of view, that is, a change of the character thinking.

Agreeing to a certain extent with Daiches, we must add that deeper narrative functions of time and space in this novel, and thus also their overall relationship, could be understood as being somewhat more complicated than this. When we observe characters in *Mrs Dalloway*, standing still in space mostly indicates not only a movement through time, but also a movement through *personal, subjective* time, which ignores the *common, objective* flow of time. There are scenes in which something provokes a disturbance in the city life, so that what follows is a period of a few *objective moments* during which there is a *subjective timeout*. Several (objective) minutes or many minutes tick in the background, they come and pass, are spent and gone, yet for one person or a number of people nothing happens during this period – nothing in the sense of what should be done as part of everyday, common-sense routines. Their subjective clock has been started and a *subjective time lapse* initiated. They may walk, or wander, or run through their past or present, in the process of their thinking, of course, yet, objectively speaking, they do nothing. Still, this time lapse allows for a certain *spatial* body-city interaction, despite the superficial immobility of the characters and of the readers' attention.

Usually, it is Clarissa's thoughts that travel through time, during her city walk. Repeating Rachel Bowlby's words, Laura Marcus mentions "the *flâneuse*, the female version of the *flâneur*[1] (stroller)" (Marcus 2004: 63) as present in Virginia Woolf's works, especially in an essay in which the city walker sheds the identity known to others and becomes part of the city, being turned into "an enormous eye"[2] (Marcus 2004: 63). Clarissa, therefore, is a *flâneuse* whose identity (already mixed with the city's identity), flows into urban images, which then strongly influence her stream of thoughts. She goes back and forth through her memory, questioning her past and present, experiencing a mixture of feelings – positive and negative, happy and sad ones.

It is then Clarissa's stream of thoughts that mostly gets interrupted by the outside world as she walks, at the same time providing a space for an even closer and more immediate contact with London – both *physical* (she does not move but she is aware of her exact position in the city) and *psychological* (the outside world influences her mind, frequently recalling a memory).

[1] Baudelaire's term (See Marcus 2004: 63-64).

[2] "An enormous eye" is Virginia Woolf's term (See Marcus 2004: 63).

However, there is a scene in which a more global temporal "freezing" occurs and a sequence of spatial shifts between different people, that is, their minds, takes place. This global time interruption could be termed a *group subjective time lapse*, as, despite the fact that it happens to a group of people, it is still the opposite of objective time. It is a scene with an aeroplane flying over London and advertising a kind of sweet by writing the word "toffee"[3] in the clear sky. This short flight, not more than several minutes long, we believe, causes a uniform reaction in the people below it. From the very moment they spot it, their bodies, as well as their current intentions, errands, everyday activities, life in its ordinary guise, seem to "freeze", their heads and eyes remaining the only moving parts of them: "The sound of an aeroplane bored ominously into the ears of the crowd. There it was coming over the trees, letting out white smoke from behind, which curled and twisted, actually writing something! making letters in the sky! Everyone looked up" (Woolf 1996: 23). The people in the street stop their "horizontal" contact with the city – the one dictated by objective time and daily chronology, and begin their "vertical" communication with an urban event. This communication, literal in real space but also reimagined and recreated in the space of their minds, is imposed on them by a time lapse governed by subjective points of view oblivious to the clock heard in the background. At the same time, it is imposed on the readers as a spatial movement from one consciousness to another.

Repeating Virginia Woolf's note that, by walking through the city, a man turns into "an enormous eye", Laura Marcus says that "the 'eye' sees pure beauty, pure colour, receiving the sights of the modern city as works of art […]" (Marcus 2004: 64). Similarly, the eyes of these Londoners absorb the scene in the sky. Although, when first heard and seen, the aeroplane is felt to be an ominous sign, reminiscent of the war that ended several years before, it soon turns into a benign art-oriented advertising aircraft: "All down the Mall people were standing and looking up into the sky. As they looked the whole world became perfectly silent, […] and in this extraordinary silence, in this pallor, in this purity, bells struck eleven times […]" (Woolf 2004: 24).

In this skilful and pleasant act, there is nothing but beauty, regularity and spotlessness, which seem to overwhelm the whole world visible or known to the watchers' eyes, that is to say, the entire city or, at least, its

[3] Although critics and readers disagree on what the word (or phrase) written in the sky actually is.

best, most central, most urban part. In other words, the aeroplane can be said to represent the modern man, equipped with the latest inventions and ultra-creative ideas.

Still, the message it leaves behind by letting out white smoke is confusing. The advertising letters are more or less clearly seen depending on the position of each person, or their personal visual skills; therefore, each individual interpretation of the word is different:

> A C was it? an E, then an L? Only for a moment did they lie still; then they moved and were rubbed out up in the sky, and the aeroplane shot further away and again, in a fresh space of sky, began writing a K, and E, a Y perhaps?
>
> "Blaxo," said Mrs. Coates in a strained, awe-stricken voice, gazing straight up. […]
>
> "Cremo," murmured Mrs. Bletchley, like a sleepwalker. With his hat held out perfectly in his hand, Mr. Bowley gazed straight up. […]
>
> "It's toffee," murmured Mr. Bowley – […]. (Woolf 2004: 23, 24)

Since almost nobody knows what this aeroplane advertises, the letters seem to find their way into people's minds as a possible answer to the question of where the lost meaning of the post-war life is, what it is, or why and when it has been lost. They may ask themselves (or the skies) if this epitome of the modern man is in fact a "key", and if so, what it really says. The way they understand the written word, therefore, is also dependent on their emotional state and degree of optimism. Unfortunately, in each individual case, the letters as read, although different, are almost always such that they do not form a meaningful word, or the right one to say the least. Even the man who deciphers the word as "toffee" does not seem content or familiar with his discovery. In addition, each letter disappears so fast, almost before the next letter has been fully shaped. The lost meaning of life, even before it has been newly found, disperses into pure nothingness again.

Seemingly paradoxical is the fact that this event happens at the very end of Mrs Dalloway's morning errand; therefore, she does not entirely participate in this group subjective time lapse. Already near her house in Westminster, she might be aware of the noise the aeroplane makes, yet cannot see its letters or its intention at all. However, her very absence

from these shared, yet individual reactions is exactly what makes us think of *her* at this moment. We metaphorically connect Mrs Dalloway with the aeroplane, which can be said to highlight her personality or anticipate her behaviour. Freedom, artistic skill and style, and power to impress are the characteristics of both the aeroplane and Clarissa (her womanly dominance will be more obvious at her party). Clarissa's messages to herself, to her former suitor, who will visit her later that day, and to the readers, are as ambiguous as the aeroplane's message is. Moreover, just as she cannot see the letters the aircraft makes, she is not able to read herself. Clarissa has also left a train of letters, meanings, and combinations behind her, and, like those in the sky, hers also vanish uncaught. In truth, she cannot see the letters, perhaps not even the aeroplane, but she notices the walkers' stunned reactions to the sight. As if responding to their impolite stares at *her*, she pronounces the question upon entering her house: "What are they looking at?" At one of them, at London, at reality, at a sky show mirroring their own selves, we may reply.

3. Get the tightrope walker up, [the judge] said again to his bridge. Now. (McCann 2009: 274)

Similar to *Mrs Dalloway* in that subjective points of view have precedence over an objective perspective, *Let the Great World Spin* is more of a circle of personal stories than a network of them. Unlike *Mrs Dalloway*, in which the thoughts of most characters are repeated in random, usually unpredictable ways, taking up small passages from time to time, *Let the Great World Spin* unwinds several perspectives that *spin* towards one central event. Each point of view crucial for the novel as a whole is given a separate chapter, almost always of some length, and, despite presenting an individual experience, each is connected to other perspectives through shared time and space, which always revolve around the central event.

Time and space in this novel, just as in *Mrs Dalloway*, have important narrative roles, even though here the total amount of time spans more than one day. As Jonathan Mahler states, "[a]lways in the background are a time and a place – the waning days of Nixon and Vietnam, and New York in the 1970s" (Mahler 2009: 2). However, in the previous novel objective time ticks in the background throughout the book, that is, the hours of the day strike and die out, we forget them, and the narration as such never

turns back to any of these hours. In this novel, on the other hand, different characters, whose voices one after another are heard in a chosen sequence, lead the narration in such a direction that, sooner or later, it comes back in time to one umbrella situation, or their common connector: New York City, August 1974, a man walking in the sky.

The central event concerns a man walking on a tightrope between two newly built Twin Towers and happens on an August morning in 1974. As it happens, the day is a Wednesday, just like the day taking up the whole of *Mrs Dalloway*. As an unexpected, unusual and highly dangerous feat, especially due to being done at a great height, it causes a disturbance in New York and a reaction in New Yorkers. Some of the reactions come from people on the ground – the man's immediate audience formed on the spot; other reactions come from the police, almost ridiculously helpless in their trying to thwart the intended walk from one tower to the other; others still are expressed by some people who are not in the streets, or do not even see the man. Whatever the reaction it provokes is, or wherever it occurs, this public event serves as an *interface* between the tightrope walker and New York – an interrelation in which this unusual *flâneur* seems to lose his identity and estrange his body to become part of his surroundings, while his (direct or indirect) urban audience seems to turn from a group of indistinguishable city dwellers into individuals who consider the man on the wire one of the city's awe-inspiring rarities. Therefore, notably similar to the aeroplane in *Mrs Dalloway*, this tightrope walk disturbs an ordinary city morning and provokes an urban *group subjective time lapse*, which, admittedly, is here more elaborately interspersed with *individual subjective time lapses*. Again, everyday duties and habits stop and turn into out-of-ordinary thoughts, or simply thoughts as such. Just as they do in *Mrs Dalloway*, the *objective minutes* (still profitably used by many non-watchers) are mocked, declined and "frozen" from *subjective point(s) of view*, left to arrive unwanted and be gone unused and wasted. The "horizontal" relationship with the city stops and makes room for "vertical" communication – a literal as well as imaginary space within which New Yorkers stop walking, stop and look, stop to think. During this pause, we hear the overall, seemingly omniscient narration of this *interface*, yet the narrator seems to enter the minds of the watchers and reveal their individual reactions, turning the readers' attention in space from one perspective to another:

> Those who saw him hushed. […] It was a silence that heard itself, awful and beautiful. Some thought at first it must have been a

> trick of the light, something to do with the weather, an accident of shadowfall. Others figured it must be the perfect city joke – stand around and point upward, until people gathered, tilted their heads, nodded, affirmed, until all were staring upward at nothing at all […] But the longer they watched, the surer they were. […]
> Up there, at the height of a hundred and ten stories, utterly still, a dark toy against the cloudy sky. (McCann 2009: 3)

The walker makes the watchers form an attitude to life – to the endangered life of the man above them, but also to life *per se*, since the time lapse the walker initiates introduces us both to their own lives and existence in general. The tense dilemma of whether he will fall or not, or whether he will do it on purpose if he does fall, takes up their current stream of thinking. This stream has previously been occupied by trivial, ordinary thinking, which, on a life importance scale, can be equalled to no thinking at all. Now, some of them want him to fall, probably led by an opinion that anyone who risks so much deserves to be punished, while those who are interrupted in their money-making business should at least be awarded with a film-like death. Others want him to stay on the wire, identifying with the man who, after all, as they may see it, risks his life so as to please the spectators. However, none of them seems to remain indifferent:

> There was a dip before the laughter, a second before it sank in among the watchers, reverence for the man's irreverence, because secretly that's what so many of them felt – Do it, for chrissake! Do it! […] while the others […] felt viable now with disgust for the shouters: they wanted the man to save himself […]
> […]
> Don't do it! (McCann 2009: 6, 7)

The walk in the sky also interrupts a meeting of mothers whose sons were killed in the Vietnam War, at Claire Soderberg's home, Claire being the narrator at the same time. Their regular mo(u)rning, filled with tear-provoking memories of their sons, is for several moments disturbed and their consciousness focuses on the city event. They cannot see the walker from Claire's flat, yet, one of them, Marcia, retells her experience as a watcher of the spectacle (which is still going on outside), from before her arrival at Claire's: "It's a guy, says Marcia, on a tightrope. I mean, I didn't

know it right away […], but what it is, there's a guy on a tightrope" (McCann 2009: 94). The report influences the mothers in an ambivalent way. On the one hand, it turns their thoughts from their dead sons to another topic – a situation that can assume the characteristics of an interesting, mind-relaxing show. On the other hand, the fact that it is all about a male person, presumably young, who is likely do die at any moment, and in whose vicinity there is a helicopter, makes Marcia think of her own dead son, who died in a helicopter accident. She shares this impression of hers with the other mothers and most likely makes all of them (Claire definitely) think of their own dead sons. In this manner, the report on a man walking in the sky augments and highlights their sadness. The helicopter trying to reason with the tightrope walker reminds Marcia of her son to such an extent that, almost hallucinating, she interprets the walker's stunt as her own son's visit to her. She cannot stay on the spot to see if he will fall, but not because or not *only* because she could not stand one more death. As she confesses to the other mothers, it is not the fall that frightens her. On the contrary, it is the man's stay on the wire or safe grounding that would break her heart. His staying alive would leave her disenchanted, as it would clearly and unequivocally tell her what she already knows but refuses to accept – that it is *not* her son but someone else.

Marcia's impression leaves Claire unsure what it really is that bothers her so much about the tightrope walker. She is doubtless angry with the stranger who, unsolicited, interrupts her morning gathering and certain that this anger is somehow connected to her own son Joshua, who died in Vietnam when four grenades hit a café in which he was sitting. However, for a period of time she cannot detect the reason for such feelings. Finally, after daydreaming for a while, she realises that what actually troubles her is the fact that, of all the possible ways of dying, the tightrope man has chosen such an unusual way – death by tightrope. By doing so, by ostentatiously demonstrating his original (wish for) dying, and by "[t]hrowing his life in everyone's face" (McCann 2009: 113), no matter whether he dies or not, or whether he wants to die or not, the man is "[m]aking her own son's [life] so cheap" (McCann 2009: 113). We do not hear the perspectives other than Marcia's and Claire's here, but we assume that the other mothers also remember their own children at this point. By "nodding slowly" to Marcia's account, they not only sympathise with Marcia, but empathise as well. Each of their sons died in a unique way, yet, as Claire suggests, all of them – women of different social status, habits, and points of view,

are united by a common problem – "[d]eath, […] [t]he world's oldest complaint" (McCann 2009: 107). Silently but empathetically adopting Marcia's reaction as their own, the mothers suggest that, although Claire is the narrator, it is not only Claire whose "head [is] *spinning*" (McCann 2009: 82, italics added) endlessly towards the memory of her son, nor is it only their posh hostess who knows that "[s]o much more than photographs keep[s] the dead alive" (McCann 2009: 79).

Unlike the grieving mothers, a grieving father, Claire's husband, Judge Solomon Soderberg, whose son's death "pierced him" (McCann 2009: 236), "[does not] talk about the war [and] [s]ilence is his way out" (McCann 2009: 89). Taking a taxi to his workplace on the same August morning and being busy at work, the judge misses the tightrope man's walk and is informed about it only afterwards. Yet, he seems to find a way to make up for it and be influenced by it in a postponed time lapse of his own.

As the walker gets arrested after his mission has been carried out successfully, he is about to appear in a court of law and be tried for his illegal behaviour. Judge Soderberg, tired of everyday city cases, wishes that the walker be appointed to him, realising that this is "[o]ne of those out-of-ordinary days that ma[kes] sense out of ordinary days" (McCann 2009: 247). He acknowledges how huge in its difference and originality this offence is in a long sequence of similar, boringly repeated cases. The judge's ordinary thinking turns into an interpretation of the walker, which concludes that in this city without true monuments, that is, with no care for the past or even anything material to remind it of the past, he is "such a stroke of genius[,] [a] monument in himself. He […] made himself into a statue, but a perfect New York one, a temporary one, up in the air, high above the city" (McCann 2009: 248). By almost identifying the man with a New York in which he would like to live, the judge shows his underlying anger at his society. He has reckoned the war "just, proper, right[,] […] fought for the very ideals that [have been] under assault in his court every day" (McCann 2009: 263), and continuously blamed himself for somehow "instilling the battle mentality" (McCann 2009: 263) in his boy. Still, at times "he want[s] to agree with Claire that war [is] just an endless factory of death; it made other men rich, and their son [was] dispatched to open the gates, a rich boy himself" (McCann 2009: 263). In this sense, the society in which the judge lives and which he professionally represents seems to be borrowing its people's sons never to return them, having used them

for its own personal wars. The walker's case, as another personal (though only *personally* fought) war, appeals so much to the judge that, after being appointed the walker's case among a number of other offences, he finally decides to make an illegal act himself – to juggle the cases around, so as to charge the walker with an offence lighter than regular:

> It was obvious that the tightrope walker had never been arraigned before. The first timers were always dazed. They came in, huge-eyed, stunned by it all.
> […]
> Soderberg made a split second of eye contact. Broke his own rule, but so what? The walker understood and half nodded. What could Soderberg do with him? How could he manipulate it? […] He'd play it smart. Pull something unusual from the hat. […] Who's on first? [The bridge] showed him the calendar and he skimmed down quickly over the cases, flicked a quick look at the sin bin, sighed. He didn't have to do them in order, he could juggle things around […]. (McCann 2009: 265-266)

Later that day, the judge arrives home and retells the walker's case to his wife, informing her that, having decided to cooperate with the Port Authority, who want to use the walker's act to publicise Twin Towers, he charged the man "a penny per floor", that is to say, one dollar 10 pennies in all, the towers being 110 floors high. The second part of the walker's charge will be another tightrope performance. However, in addition to making it once again clear to us that the tightrope walker's offence has led the judge to ridicule the whole judicial system and cooperate with the offender, he also reveals that the highly unusual event in New York has the power to make him truly happy, in spite of his chronic desperation. Claire informs us earlier that, in addition to silence, "chatt[ing] […] about his court cases, the insane litany of the city" (McCann 2009: 89) is for Solomon another "way out" of grief, and now this emotional vent seems to reach a level higher than usual. The way in which he tells all this in the evening, from the perspective of Gloria, Claire's new friend, is indicative of the fact that the time lapse is still going on in the judge's mind, now suspending not only his professional dissatisfaction, but his fatherly grief as well: "Solomon clapped his hands together: he was enjoying himself now" (McCann 2009: 318).

If we then go back in time to the very trial that day and focus on the judge's last words in his chapter: "[g]et the tightrope walker up", by

which he issues an order for the walker to be called out and tried for his offence, we could easily reinterpret them as the judge's wish for the man to be returned up there among the clouds, on the wire. He might want him to continue his role of an extraordinary offender who can come up with a historic event in the middle of New York's "everyday present" (McCann 2009: 248) and add some spice to the "mundanity" and "[b]eaurocratic babysitting" (McCann 2009: 253) of the judge's overestimated profession. In this way, the judge offers some significance to the blankness of his personal childless existence.

4. Conclusion

Starting from Elizabeth Grosz's definition of the body-city relation as "an *interface*, perhaps even a cobuilding" (Grosz 1992: 248, author's italics), which presents bodies and cities as not only mutually interacting, but also as overlapping, co-creating and strongly influencing each other, we have stressed that *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf's modernist novel, and *Let the Great World Spin*, Colum McCann's contemporary novel, are both based on such a relation between the characters and the city. Also acknowledging that time and space play crucial roles in the narration of each book, our principal aim was to point out that in both novels there is a time lapse – a subjective halt in objective time, a sequence of "frozen" moments, which functions as a space for a perfectly close *interface* between the body and the city. In this *interface*, characters initiate a two-faceted spatial interaction with the city. They obviously communicate physically (often visually) with a city event, but the city spectacle also triggers a process of thinking, opening a psychological space. This stream of thinking allows them to try and penetrate the mind and/or meaning of the person/thing in focus. However, almost as a rule, they end up thinking about their own lives, problems, needs, losses, or life *per se*. In this way, the characters seem to communicate with themselves, their own past, present, or unknown future. In doing so, they finally suggest that their own selves, their past, present, and future, as well as living as such, are always inextricably linked to the city in which they live.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, a *group subjective time lapse* is provoked by an advertising aeroplane flying over London. The aeroplane scene disturbs the city's current routines (objective time) and directs the minds of the

watchers towards the sky, thus also revealing their own emotional state (subjective time). By failing to find the meaning in the letters that the aeroplane leaves behind, they convey the message that, unfortunately, their personal as well as group optimism in the post-war life is at a low level. Clarissa Dalloway, in spite of not being one of the spectators, can be linked to the aeroplane, as it metaphorically represents her by underlining her ambivalent feelings and anticipating her impressive appearance among people. By looking at the aeroplane, the watchers thus also observe her as one of London's symbols and as one of themselves at the same time.

The central event in *Let the Great World Spin*, a man's walk on a wire between New York Twin Towers, is what functions here as a *group subjective time lapse*, strikingly similar to the one in *Mrs Dalloway*. This act, carried out during one August morning in the 1970s, halts the city's ordinary activities and strongly influences its direct and indirect audience. The people on the ground stop performing their duties and forget about their jobs, leaving objective minutes on their own, and create a space for a group as well as individual subjective field of interaction with a city's highly unusual event. The walker causes ambivalent feelings in their minds, making two groups of spectators – those for and against his success. In this way, two points of view regarding life and social relations in general are revealed: selfish alienation and selfless identification. Here, however, this *group subjective time lapse* more easily turns into *individual subjective time lapses*, as the narration scans in more detail many (more or less) individual reactions to the man's walk. The tightrope walker, thus, has an impact on a group of mothers who mourn their sons killed in the Vietnam War, gathered at Mrs. Soderberg's home. The impact here is two-sided as well – the man shifts their thoughts from sadness to entertainment; however, it inevitably makes them associate the man with their dead, but in their minds continually reborn, sons. Judge Soderberg experiences a postponed time lapse, also initiated by (as he sees it) this extremely unusual and therefore enormously thrilling offence. Thinking about the walker, whose walk he has unfortunately missed, the judge has a space for a personal refreshment of his memory, filled with fatherly sadness and disappointment with his career. His excitement, aroused by the walker's (mis)deed, is so great that he finally decides to diminish the walker's sentence, making it virtually negligible. In doing so, he seems to envy, but simultaneously glorify and reward the man's ability to reach the sky, fight his own self-imposed battle, and eventually remain alive, curiously optimistic, and inevitably, though

inadvertently, innocent. In addition, such an interesting case makes the judge, at least for a while, enormously and truly happy.

Mrs Dalloway and *Let the Great World Spin*, therefore, are two novels connected not only by common themes and related narrative methods, but also by an unusual manner of presenting the body-city relation as one of their main subjects: time lapse as space for *interface*.

References

Daiches, D. (1945). *Virginia Woolf*. London: Editions Poetry London.

Grosz, E. (1992). Bodies-Cities. In: Colomina, B. and J. Bloomer (eds.), *Sexuality and Space*, Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 241-253.

Losseff, N. and J. Doctor (eds.) (2007). *Silence, Music, Silent Music*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Mahler, J. (2009). The Soul of a City. *The New York Times*, 29 July 2009. (16/05/2015) <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/02/books/review/Mahler-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>.

Marcus, L. (2004). *Virginia Woolf*. Horndon: Northcote House Publishers Ltd.

McCann, C. (2010). *Let the Great World Spin*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Woolf, V. (1996). *Mrs Dalloway*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.

UDC 82.09
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.11

Lena S. Petrović[*]
Department of English
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Niš

KNOWLEDGE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: REVISITING THE SNOW/LEAVIS CONTROVERSY

Abstract
The paper is a response to an important observation Professor Darko Suvin made in 1999, namely, that stances must ultimately depend on circumstances, and in particular to his warning that the circumstances marking the turn of the century demand a revision of our assumptions of what the knowledge that truly matters is. Now, as the circumstances shaping our social and political existence deteriorate, the concern about the diminishing role of humanist education, as opposed to scientific or specialized training is voiced with increasing urgency and apprehension. Part of the changing paradigm within cultural and literary studies is the will to re-assess the position of F. R. Leavis. Thus Leavis's response to C.P. Snow's *Two Cultures*, for several decades merely an object lesson in bad academic manners, is now being revisited as an integral part of his life-long 'mental fight' for the conception of humanist studies as the irreplacable source of criteria that would counter the general tendency of what he called the technologico-Benthamite culture to misuse science in ways that cheapen, impoverish and dehumanize life. The Leavis/Snow controversy, as well as the contemporary debate concerning the humanities, I will argue in the concluding part of my paper, can be read as the latest version of the

[*] E-mail: lena.petrovic@flfak.ni.ac.rs

paradigm clash dramatically transposed in the stories of two archetypal knowers – Faust and Prospero.

Key words: F. R. Leavis, C. P. Snow, the humanities, literature, science, knowledge, university

Rather than an application of this or that newly hatched theory in an analysis of this or that particular literary or cultural phenomenon – the tacitly agreed upon academic convention concerning conferences and symposiums – my contribution consists of doubts and dilemmas that have accumulated in the years I have spent trying, not as successfully as I might have wished, to combine the widely undisputed rules governing the academic profession and my own feeling about the kind of knowledge that the study of literature provides, and that could or should be exchanged to the benefit of the students and wider reading public. I thought I knew, and I still think I know, the answer, but the gulf separating my view of the matter from the one implied in the bulk of scholarly pursuits and their published results worldwide has so deepened, that I have felt for some time that this question – what do we, university teachers, live for, what, ultimately, do we live by? – might well be the only important issue still left to arise in a conference. It is, of course, a paraphrase of F. R. Leavis's "What for – what ultimately for? What, ultimately, do men live by?" (Leavis 1972, 56) – his central formulation concerning the teleological questions he believed literature has the power to initiate. A natural association, for as a student and teacher of English literature I was brought up on the principles of Leavis's criticism, introduced to the literary section of the English Department in Niš in 1976, and passionately upheld to the last, by the late Professor Vida Marković. All Leavisites in those times, we were committed to the belief that the quality of the mind shaped by intense personal engagement with the questions that great literature inspires would ultimately make a difference in the moral condition of the wider community. (It may now sound as a naïve belief, but not if one assumes that the only meaningful way to pursue whatever happens to be one's vocation is to assign to it an absolute value.) That is how I watched with incomprehension as Leavis's chief principles were denounced and repudiated, rashly, maliciously, stupidly, as it seemed to me, by one new school of criticism after another, without, however, fundamentally changing my own, increasingly precarious, position. Now it is with considerable satisfaction that I hear, have heard for the last ten

years, Leavis's name invoked with ever greater urgency, and see his long forgotten controversy with C. P. Snow brought back to the general public's attention.

The Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow, F. R. Leavis's famous (or rather infamous) reply to Lord Snow's 1959 Rede Lecture published as *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution,* was reprinted in 2013, with an introduction by Stephen Collini.[1] A short while before this new edition of what, for decades, has been a byword for academic excess, in an anticipatory *Guardian* review of the book, Collini points out that in more than 50 years since its first appearance circumstances have changed, requiring a serious reconsideration of what once appeared as the pamphlet's flaws and a better appreciation of its merits. Collini is not alone in his urge to correct the adverse judgment of the part Leavis played in the controversy, nor, as I have already noted, of his entire contribution to English studies. Leavis's unfailing, combative commitment to the crucial social significance of literary and humanist disciplines is now, in the conditions that only can be described as a pervasive crisis of the university, emerging with a new relevance, while his ferocious reply to C. P. Snow, even for his former critics, has acquired the status of the classic of cultural criticism Leavis confidently predicted.

For the sake of those who may not be familiar with the Snow/Leavis debate, I will very briefly restate the chief arguments of both sides. In his Rede Lecture, Lord Snow proposed that we live within two antagonistic cultures, one the result of scientific discovery and technological invention, the other, which he also called "traditional", the less palpable domain conjured by literary intellectuals. Having begun his career as a research scientist at Cambridge – a short-lived affair whose end seems to have been brought about by his less than outstanding abilities – he undertook to write novels (which, incidentally, his gentlest critics said were "almost completely unreadable") (see Kimball 1994), Snow felt qualified to pronounce authoritatively on both. His verdict was in favor of scientists, who, he claimed in a famous phrase, had the future in their bones. Capable as they were of raising the standards of material living, scientists provided social hope. Thus, in Snow's opinion, they had an answer to the inherent

[1] Delivered at Downing College as Richmond Lecture and first published in 1962, Leavis's reply to Snow was reprinted in his 1972 *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses on Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope.* The whole book, in fact, is an eloquent elaboration of the argument presented in *The Two Cultures?*

tragedy of human condition: we live alone, or more poignantly, we die alone, but in the meantime there was to be more of everything – "more jam", as he confidently predicted – to consume. Literary intellectuals, on the other hand, were "natural Luddites". Having nothing more substantial to contribute than railing and whining at the price of technological progress, they were merely an obstacle to this hopeful course.

Leavis was outraged – not so much by what C. P. Snow said, as by the fact that it earned him immediately the status of a sage and pundit. On the strength of his Rede Lecture, Snow, who had never before participated in the government, was offered a position in the Ministry of Technology by Harold Wilson, and the published version of his talk found itself in students' reading lists on both sides of the Atlantic. Utterly insignificant intellectually, Leavis claimed in his reply, Snow deserved attention because he was a portent. "His significance lies precisely in what his unmerited elevation tells us about the society which accorded him such standing," Stephen Collini explains, (Collini, 2013) and goes on to justify Leavis's shock tactics: to effectively combat this lazy habit of automatically accepting only what is already familiar, there was no other way but to transgress all the limits of academic politesse. Urged by the momentousness of his task, Leavis disregarded all academic good manners, and in his Richmond Lecture proceeded to demolish Lord Snow's every single pretense to distinction: he exposed both the vulgarity of Snow's style, and the portentous ignorance it conveyed – of history, of civilization, of the human significance of the Industrial Revolution, and, most of all, of art ("As a novelist", Leavis charges relentlessly at the very opening of his lecture, "he does not exist, nor has a glimmer of what creative literature is, or why it matters".) With equal vehemence, he denounced Snow's ignorance of science. ("Of qualities that one might set to the credit of a scientific training", or indeed "of an intellectual discipline of any kind," he proceeds mercilessly, "there is no evidence", either in Snow's fiction or his lecture.) (Leavis, 1972: 47). Leavis's scorching ironies misfired, though. The well-bred friends of Lord Charles joined together to defend their minion, and the literary community were practically unanimous in condemning the lecture – too personal, too destructive, too rude, too Leavis! (Collini 2013). In the following decades it became an object of fashionable derision, along with what was called Leavisite literary criticism, which was subsequently ousted from the universities world-wide – with what, I believe, were dire consequences for literary criticism, the university and the world.

To understand Leavis's position, it is necessary to see that it was not science itself that he attacked in his lecture, nor even the idea of economic prosperity. Rather than "more jam tomorrow" (the phrase Snow liked well enough to repeat several times, whose callous utilitarian connotation revolted Leavis), he turned against the moral blindness underlying the failure on the part of C. P. Snow and his admiring public to distinguish between wealth and well-being. Rather than economic prosperity in itself (surely one of the priorities in the world nowadays, when half of humanity go hungry!), he thundered against the axiomatic status accorded to the idea that economic prosperity – in the already prosperous Western countries?! – was the exclusive and overriding goal of all social action and policy. For how else, one may wonder, was "jam" to be justly distributed, or indeed the impulse to use scientific discovery for unbridled destruction held in check, if not through an exercise of moral intelligence, the human faculty whose sole provenance in the university were the humanities, and literary studies in particular? It was this property of literature – at least the kind that constituted Leavis's Great Tradition – and of the arts to heighten awareness and expose false teleologies that constituted the great rationale of Leavis's contention that there can be only *one* culture, and that it depended for its moral coherence and sanity on the role the humanities were allowed to play within the university. Having their own centre in literary studies, the humanities were to hold a central place in the university, which then might become an irreplacable source of the criteria that would counter the tendency of the technologico-Benthamite culture to misuse science in ways that cheapen, impoverish, dehumanize and destroy life[2].

Life, indeed, was the absolutely crucial term, the key criterion of value, aesthetic and ethical at once, in the critical vocabulary Leavis developed

[2] Compare the conclusion to a 1994 re-assesment of the Leavis/Snow controversy:

> We live at a moment when "the results of science" confront us daily with the most extreme moral challenges, from... prospects of genetic engineering to the more amorphous challenges generated by our society's assumption that *every* problem facing mankind is susceptible to technological intervention and control. In this situation, the temptation to reduce culture to a reservoir of titillating pastimes is all but irresistible... We are everywhere encouraged to think of ourselves as complicated machines for consuming sensations — the more, and more exotic, the better. Culture is no longer an invitation to confront our humanity but a series of opportunities to impoverish it through diversion. We are, as Eliot put it in *Four Quartets*, "distracted from distraction by distraction." C. P. Snow represents the smiling, jovial face of this predicament. Critics like Arnold and Leavis offer us the beginnings of an alternative. Many people objected to the virulence of Leavis's attack on Snow. But given the din of competing voices, it is a wonder that he was heard at all. (Kimball 1994)

to analyse and evaluate both literature and culture. For Leavis, as for Blake, 'Life' was a necessary word, indicating in Blake's mythic universe the ability of the imaginative Los to welcome the novel and the unknown, and hence the necessary opposite to the limited Urizen's rational impulse to chart, classify, master and close the vital game. (Leavis, 1972: 14-15) Refusing theoretical abstraction, like Blake, Leavis too prefered to define his central critical term by example, pointing the way life declared itself in the language of the authors from Shakespeare and Blake, to George Eliot and Lawrence, as a verbal embodiment of a reverent, imaginative openness before untried experiental possibilities.

In the literary theories that came to replace Leavis's, his key concepts, including life, awareness, perception, responsibility, maturity, were denounced as vague, and his entire ethical approach dismissed as unsufficiently theorised or worse, secretly reactionary[3]. Science and technology which, unchecked by any humane consideration, had in the meantime come to dominate the realm of social decision and action, began to condition the structure of university studies, where the humanities soon acquired the status of poor relations compared to the massively favored exact sciences, and finally penetrated literary studies themselves, where the ideal of objective, value-free, neutral, 'scientific' analysis of texts or the laws generating their meanings, became, and for some practicioners remained, the order of the day[4]. But if scientific analysis, such as narratology, in its relentless Urizenic pursuit of abstractions, saw its ultimate goal to be the reduction of complex human experiences embodied in literarry fiction to algebraic formulae, its sequel, the anti-scientific, poststructuralist literary theory also betrayed its initial promise by exhausting its whole purpose in the spectacular deconstruction of the last scrap of meaning literary texts might communicate. For while this new Theory repudiated scientific objectivity, it was also eager to demolish any philosophical foundation indispensable to consistent interpretation — of literature, the self, or

[3] Those who refused to join the almost unanimous adverse judgment of Leavis's criticism were few. One of them was Philip French. In his *Three Honest Men*, he brought together F.R Leavis, E. Wilson and L. Trilling, as teachers, critics and men of unique integrity and supreme dedication, representing a genuinely democratic tradition in literary criticism, the loss of whose prestige at the time of Leavis's death in 1978 he found surprising and deplorable.

[4] Indeed, as I have had the opportunity to witness in my own Department, often to the extent that any ethical perspective immediately signals a failure of methodology, an absence of scientific rigor, and is irritating.

the world. If the structuralists before them merely ignored teleological questions, the 'why' and 'what for' of literature, the poststructural analists subverted or discredited them, thus also refusing to envisage literature as a moral or social force. Promptly, as was the case with Lord Snow's confident reflection on material prosperity as the exclusive goal of science and purpose of knowledge, now the new Pyrrhonist doubt about the legitimacy of any knowledge and meaningfulnes of any goals was accepted by a dazzled academic readership as a liberating insight. Yet, the crucial effect of this deconstructive move, precluding, as it did, the articulation of alternatives, ethical, social, historical, was to (re)produce patterns of thought that, for all their anarchy, were in deep complicity with the post-Cold War globally oppressive political and economic processes. Thus, whether rigorously scientific, or spectacularly playful, both these major trends of literary and cultural theory failed to generate an effective resistance to the enemy that beseiged the academia from without, the neoliberal, market-oriented conception of education: the managerial mentality that has since penetrated the universities has turned the potential centers of opposing consciousness Leavis had hoped for, producing thoughtful citizens capable of intervening in social decision making, into fund-raisers, spawning technically trained, docile profit-makers.

As the crisis deepens, alarm signals are flashed: among those who remember F. R. Leavis in their warning messages, I want to glance at two for a further elaboration of the way the seriousness and responsibility of Leavis's vision were bound up with the quality of his own language. Thus, describing our contemporary plight in Apocalyptic terms, Fred Inglis, a cultural historian, notes in his 2011 re-evaluation of Leavis's work "Words As Weapons" that while the old order is breaking down, economically, environmentally, meanigfully, the language in which the disaster is addressed, in the political debate, media, and in university departments alike, is the quantifying managerialist language in which it is impossible to tell the truth. Leavis, he reminds us, forged his own idiosyncratic language of truth-telling: a special idiom inspired by exemplary writers, in which "responsibility is to be found in the poise of language balanced between the rendered reality of the experience and the sincerity with which it is properly felt and judged". No mere polemicist, Leavis deployed it to give solid life to his own solidly grasped moral and political alllegiances, from which, like other great moral critics of British civilization and its awful failings – J. S. Mill, Ruskin, Morris, or Leavis's admirer E. M. Thompson

– he refused to depart despite his growing isolation: "Year after year, unafraid of reptetitiveness, undaunted by the wholly English device on the part of the noble Lords, who stood in as figureheads for Benthamism – which was to murmur in pained, well bread incomprehension at Leavis's vehemence – he kept up his solitary fussilade, untill tired out, he died in deep depression." Now in the circumstances of social and spiritual death-in-life, Inglis concludes, it will prove to be the responsibility of teachers of the humanities and like-minded allies in social science, to rediscover a language capable of speaking of matters of life and death, whether in lectures, books, seminars and conferences: "The language to hand is Levis's, and we had better learn to speak it, before it is too late." (Inglis 2011).

Stephan Collini brings up the question of language too: first, as already mentioned, in the argument justifying *The Two Cultures*' infamous manner of address, but then also within a more general framework of viable cultural criticism. In both these senses, Leavis was up against the rhetoric of hackneyed abstractions. To have responded to Snow's lecture in a cautious scholarly manner of partial disagreement instead of exposing it relentlessly as "a document for the study of clichés" would not have received the necessary attention, and perhaps would even have confirmed Snow's reputation of a sage. In such cases, Collini argues, it is the whole mechanism by which celebrity is transmuted into authority (Collini, 2013) that needs to be exposed: not one or another particular view, but the poverty of the mind, the systematic limitations of the perspective underlying such "habit of unawareness" –and the astringent criticism required for the task is the mode that gives offence, which is the risk the cultural critic has to take if he is to alert his audience to their errors of judgment. The language required for the articulation of the critic's positives is a greater problem. If the options sustaining the ideological status quo are couched in clichés, abstract phrases repeated so many times that they have acquired the status of self-evident truth – what Leavis called currency values, like verbal coins rubbed smooth by being constantly circulated in a particular social world – one must not resort to still other abstractions in order to convey a sense of radically new possibilities, and yet to be recognized as saying something new at all, this is precisely what one is forced to do. The system seems to be closed, but as this renewed interest in Leavis indicates, not completely, or not permanently. For what has now, amidst the cliché-saturated clamour of social discourse ('democracy', 'human rights', 'tolerance', 'war on terrorism', 'threat to peace', 'nationalism', 'mondialization'), become clear is that

effective dissent is a matter less of abstract definitions of new aims and more of saving the public language from a ritual murder practised upon it daily. This is the provenance of literary criticism of the kind Leavis and his followers practised before it was declared elitist and unscientific. Authentic cultural criticism depends primarily on the critic's ability, cultivated in his intimate contact with literature, to attend scrupulosly, patiently, with alert sense of fine ethical discrimination, to the changing sense of words, as they are made to migrate promiscuously from one context, one frame of reference, to another: and by the very syntax, rhythm, pace of his own speech, to compell the readers to do so and thus alert them, before they can quickly and effortlessly swallow their daily ration of numbing banalities or mystifications, to the radical alterity of his own proposed vision.

This combination of literary understanding, linguistic competence, and cultural analysis Collini proposes to call "slow criticism". It is, he suggests, the only efficient cure for the impotence of the present day public chatter, including prestigious critical literary and cultural discourse: to replace their fast, smooth, but superficial idiom, we need "slow" criticism, that which "by its indirection and arrest, causes readers to lose their habitually confident footing and stumble into more probing and effective thinking". For what other weapon does a critic have at his disposal in a battle against "such formidable social forces, the fashion-driven chatter of so much journalism, over-abstraction of so many official documents, the meaningless hype of almost all advertising and marketing, the coercive tendentiousness of all that worldly wise, at-the-end-of-the-day pronouncing", but "a closer attentiveness to the ways words mean and mislead, express truth and obstruct communication, stir the imagination, and anaesthetize the mind?" Leavis, with his angry spoken tempo, may not strike one as an obvious recruit for "slow criticism", but in fact his syntax, abounding in pauses, imbedded afterthoughts, painstaking search for the accurate nuance of meaning, a straining against the limits of blandly self-contained propositions which soon congeal into clichés, is the only language that can disturb us into awareness. (Collini, 2013).

While it confirms the contemporary relevance of Leavis, Collini's slow criticism, I feel, is an unlikely strategy to be embraced within the university. In fact, the hope that the crisis of the university is a reversible process, and that a larger social recovery might start within its precincts in some concievable future, has become untenable to most serious analists. Terry Eagleton, a Marxist literary critic, is an example. The additional reason why

I choose to dwell briefly on his views, more radical and less optimistic than those of the previous authors, is that Eagleton used to be one of Leavis's most eloquent (and, I believe, misguided) critics: his main objection derived from a fundamental, but, as I see it, rigidly understood, Marxist principle that the world must be changed and not only interpreted. As a bourgeois liberal, Leavis, according to Eagleton, never seriously entertained the posibility of a revolutionary change that would lead to a more eqitable society than the capitalist one, his ambition being limited to ensuring the spirtual survival of the educated elite. While supporting the bourgeois in his privilege, the English studies, for critics such as Leavis, could be relied on, as once was religion, to check the potentially revolutionary impulses of the oppressed working classes: by throwing them a few patriotic novels, they were to be detained from throwing up barricades. (Eagleton, 1983: 22-30) Some years later, while visiting our English Depatment at the University in Niš, and in response to my question, Eagleton was pleased to inform me that the Leavis/Snow controversy was a long forgotten affair in the Britsh academia, and dismissed the matter with a condescending shrug. I will not argue with this surprisingly unfair distortion of Leavis's significance, except to note that in 1998, browsing through the autumn issue of *the European English Messenger,* I came across Eagleton's revaluation of Leavis's work, defending the latter's notions of universal moral values and essential human nature – a target of Eagleton's own former criticisms, and still an anathema to contemporary constructivists – as sound thinking, not at all incompatible with the Marxist theory of eventual human emancipation. In two of his recent texts, "The Death of the Intellectual" (2008) and "Death of the University" (2010), although without mentioning Leavis's name, Eagleton responds to the contemporary condition of British higher education and the general fate of knowledge in a language that is immediately identifiable as Leavisite:

> What we have witnessed in our time is the death of universities as centers of critique. The humanities, introduced in the 18th century "to foster the kind of values for which a philistine world had precious little time", and "launch a critique of conventional wisdom", are now completely isolated from other disciplines, financially slashed, and disappearing. Since Margaret Thatcher, the role of academia has been to service the status quo, not challenge it in the name of justice, tradition, imagination, human

> welfare, the free play of the mind or alternative visions of the future. (Eagleton, 2010)

This is why there are remarkably few intellectuals hanging round universities. For, like Darko Suvin before him, Eagleton reminds the reader that the intellectual is not the same as the academic. Unless they are in the humanities, where they collaborate in the cults of postmodern incomprehensibility, "academics", Eagleton specifies, "spend their lives researching such momentous questions as the vaginal system of fleas". Intellectuals have the rather more arduous job of bringing ideas to bear on society as a whole: the intellectual is the one who understands the forces shaping the world (a world in which, according to WFP hunger statistics, 3.1 million childrean under five die every year of starvation) and wants to explain it to those who do not. In the university, which is now similar to transnational corporations, he cannot do so: there potential intellectuals become mere academics – "a largely disaffected labor force confronting a finance-obsessed menagerial elite." (Eagleton 2008) Or they leave to embrace the precarious existence of free-lance intellectual trouble-makers[5].

To illustrate these options, I need to make a short digression. Aurora Morales, a writer and activist of combined PuertoRican and Jewish origin, comes to mind immediately as one such independent, or rather "certified organic" intellectual, as she refers to herself in the eponymous essay from her 1998 collection *Medicine Stories: History Culture and the Politics of Integrity*. The organic food metaphor she chose to convey her sense of what an intellecual, as opposed to postmodern academic, is derives from her rural backgound and the habit of eating home-produced food: unrefined, unpackaged, full of complex nutrients that get left out when the process of production is too tightly controlled. By analogy, she felt that the ideas she carried with her have been grown on the soil and by the methods familiar to her; unlike imported knowledge, in shiny packages, with empty calories and artificial, hers is open to life, the earth still clinging to it. To keep it meaningful and vital, she refused to trim it to satisfy the requirements of academic presentability. To make it marketable, she felt it had to be refined,

[5] For a recent commentary about the neoliberal war on higher education see (Schwalbe 2015). A cogent analysis of conservatizing forces operating against universities as centers of critical thought, his "The Twilight of the Professors" also refers usefully to publications such as Russell's Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals* (1997), and Frank Donoghue's *The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities* (2008).

abstracted beyond all recognition, all fiber taken out of it, boiled down untill all vitality was oxidized away. The refusal did not happen at once though: although she had always felt awkward in conference halls, suspecting that the doors were too narrow and that vital parts of her would have to be left behind before she could enter the lecture room, she nevertheless lingered for a while. Repelled by the humiliating impenetrability of the language in which postmodern academic thinking came wrapped, she nevertheless thought for a time that it was the question of her own lack of training, and that the slick new arrangement of words just needed to be acquired. But finally, instead of complying and learning how to arrange the published opinions of other people in a logical sequence, restating one or another school of thought on the topic, she kept to her own homegrown wisdom. She found her validation outside the conference rooms, in the tradition growing out of shared experience: in real situations in the everyday lives of men and women suffering the same oppression, or poems that arose out of the same fenomenon of truth-telling from personal knowledge. (Morales 1988: 67-74) Relying entirely on that personal knowledge – "lived experience", as Leavis would have called it – for a direction in her life and work, Morales has joined numerous resistence movements in her own crusade against all kinds of political discrimination in a highly stratified, militarized, corporate world.

In a telling contrast to Morales' intellectual and moral integrity, Martha Nussbaum, Professor of law and ethics in the University of Chicago's philosophy department, and a widely recognized authority on moral philosophy, exemplifies how academics prosper by compromising with the corporate world. Hypocrisy is, in fact, what most offends in her *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*. Published in 2010, it is a work of an academic posturing as an intellectual. The title itself, conjuring as it does the Leavis/Snow controversy, would make us expect Nussbaum to defend an updated version of the former's position. Indeed in the first part of her book, Nussbaum seems to be doing just that: her concern is with education, specifically with the precarious state of the arts and the humanities worldwide. With the rush to economic profitability in the global market, the humanities and the arts are being cut away as useless frills; the values they promote, such as imagnation, creativity, rigorous critical thought, compassion, sympathy, those that are crucial to preserving a healthy democratic society, are losing ground everywhere, as nations prefer to pursue short-term profit by the cultivation of the useful

and highly applied skills suited to profit making (Nussbaum, 141-142). She even implies that the humanities are not merely neglected but positively *feared*: they foster the "freedom of the mind, [which] is dangerous, if what is wanted is a group of technically trained, obedient workers to carry out the plans of elites who are aiming at foreign investment and technological development" (Nussbaum 2010: 21). In short, for the greater part of her book, Nussbaum's premise seems to be that democracy and economic growth are incompatible and require special kinds of education, developing mutually exclusive sets of skills. What might arouse certain doubts, however, is the way she exploits the term democracy for its "currency value" – failing, that is, to make a necessary disctinction between its merely nominal use and its real meaning. Resorting to this cliché, instead of questioning it – is the democracy she is so anxious to preserve real to begin with? – Nussbaum can already be seen as a secret defender of the system she is apparently criticising. The sudden turn in her argument confirms these doubts. In a kind of abrupt *cogito interruptus*, Nussbaum begins to contradict herself, asserting that the humanist disciplines she hitherto represented as crucial to responsible citizenship, but antagonistic to growth-oriented economy, must be preserved precisely because they are essential to economic prosperity too: imagination, creativity and critical thinking (compassion and sympathy are conveniently omitted) are what makes for flexible, open minds, and these are indispensible not only to democracy but also to innovation in business. (112)

This is true, but as Jane Newbury points out in the conclusion to her critical review of the book, it does not mean that the two can sit comfortably side by side. Indeed sientific innovation in the pursuit of economic growth has lead to some of the most shocking atrocities, and these also demanded setting aside some of the qualities cultivated through literature and the arts – qualities that Nussbaum herself as a moral philosopher regards highly – such as "the ability to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person". Thus, Newbury sums up, "while education in the humanities may prepare the students for either democracy or growth, this book does not convincingly convey how it can prepare them *for both*". (Newbury 2011). Newbury's final judgment of Nussbaum's argument is that it is flawed. Mine is harsher. In view of the fact she herself registered, namely, that Nussbaum could have pursued her "education-for-democracy" line of thinking – by suggesting more eqitable economic possibilities, measures, approaches, those compatible with the genuinely democratic assumption

that human beings are much more than means to profitable ends – but did not, I can only dismiss her whole argument as deliberately deceptive, of the kind one has learnt to expect from a liberal bourgeois academic, traditionally pleading for human rights and freedom of thought, as long as it does not affect the capitalist profit-oriented economy. Nussbaum has also contributed to this tradition in her other published work[6]; it is the tradition to which C. P. Snow's pronouncements, though far cruder, on the utilitarian merits of scientific as opposed to humanist education, also belong, but to which F. R. Leavis – who subjected to his thoughtful, 'slow' critical scrutiny the consequences not only of crassly profit-oriented education, but of the entire project of mass culture, rashly taken for a triumph of democracy – was an uncompromising enemy.

By way of conclusion, I would like to place the Leavis/Snow controversy in an even wider context, or rather to see it as having its analogy in the tradition of philosophical thought. For if it is a contention about the kind of knowledge that matters, I seem to re-discover a comparable dilemma in a reference, made in an interview by our eminent philosopher Mihajlo Marković, to two chief orientations in the history of modern philosophy. He admits that, in terms of the theoretical foundation of science, the greatest improvement has been the achievement of what might summarily be called positivism, the orientation that has its beginning in Russell's and Moor's neo-realism, goes through the phase of logical empiricism in the period from the 20's to the 30's, when it thrives as the most influential school of thought, to finally become, under the name of "analytical philosophy", "the philosophical instrument of mature bourgeois society: neutral, uncritical, safe, focussed exclusively on the acquisition of pure knowledge".

Incomparably more inspiring, in Mihajlović's opinion, but also more uncomfortable for any ruling system, and hence receiving meager material support, is critical philosophy: it had its origin in Marx, and developed through the work of his gifted followers, like Gramsci and Lukacs, the Frankfurt and Budapest Schools, Lucien Goldman and the philosophical community called *Praxis*. This orientation has re-endorsed critical thinking, the humanist tradition and the forgotten reflexion on virtues and values. It revived and renewed the ancient idea of "theory", which blends knowledge and morality, science and ethics. It is this school of philosophy that can only

[6] For a reference to her specious argument in favour of cosmopolitism, see (Petrović 2008: 423-434.)

help humankind reach the necessary critical self-awareness and discover the way out of current contradictions.

Elaborating his point further, Marković adds that

> it would be fatal for humankind if philosophy were to be reduced to "scientism" and deprived itself of critical thinking. Nowadays the dangers of ethically neutral thinking have become obvious, the one which only recognizes the rationality of the means ("instrumental rationality") and refuses to judge the "rationality of the ends", because this is allegedly not the business of science or philosophy, but professional politics. (Miletić 2002: 454-5)

Finally, I believe it correct to see the Leavis/Snow controversy, reflected as it is in the mutually opposing schools of contemporary philosophy, as also a more recent episode in the much longer historical tension between two conceptions of knowledge originating at the very beginning of the modern era, when science first disentangled itself from the swaddling clothes of holistic magic practiced by Florentine humanists, and became the crass utilitarian power/knowledge of Bacon and Machiavelli. The first to respond critically were, as always, artists: what kind of knowledge do men ultimately live by? The answers were dramatized in Faust and Prospero, two archetypal knowers. Both magicians, they practiced their magic for entirely different purposes: Marlowe's Faust, the prototype of hubristic, Machiavellian scientist, lost his soul to the devil – not to demonstrate Marlowe's medieval superstition against *curiositas*, but to warn that the world in which knowledge is misused for illegitimate power is a soulless world, hell being a proper metaphor for its imminent fate. The contemporary connection has been made repeatedly, but the most pertinent one in this context is John Adams's opera *Doctor Atomic*: Marlowe's Faust, gorging himself on the vision of infinite power and wealth he will obtain by constructing "even stranger machines of war", becomes in Adams's opera the historical Oppenheimer, insisting on the use of the atomic bomb as an ultimate uncontestable demonstration of his country's power to destroy life. Prospero's skill is a means to a wholly beneficial end: like Bruno, and Ficino, who practiced their magic as a way of enhancing their creative potentials and for poetic inspiration, Prospero too is an artist, claiming for his magic no other power in the world than that which Shakespeare exercised in his Globe – which was, of course, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the

time his form and pressure. Its ultimate purpose is the self-knowledge that can restore to the erring individual and deluded nations alike their own estranged souls, and thus renew life: as happens at the end of *The Tempest*, when, as Gonzalo sums it up, "all of us [found]ourselves/When no man was his own" (V.i.).

The consequences of banishing this kind of knowledge from the university for the 21st century students have been articulated recently by a Canadian postgraduate in a living, urgent idiom that tunes in remarkably with the voices of Leavis, Morales, Marković and Shakespeare, which I have so far endeavored to recreate. His summary may serve as an apt conclusion of my own argument:

> Once universities are sanitized of all pertinent issue of justice, the human heart begins to ossify. We become saturated with abstraction, aimlessly navigating through a sea of incoherent standardized test scores and rigid curricula, curricula that does not conform to our innate yearnings for existential knowledge and relevance. And when this process takes root, moral paralysis prevails (Shaw, 2013).

References

Adams, J. (music), Sellars, P. (libretto). (2005) *Doctor Atomic*. First performed at the San Francisco Opera House on October 1, 2005. http://www.earbox.com/doctor-atomic/ January 10 2016.

Collini, S. (2013). Leavis v Snow: the two cultures bust-up 50 years on. *Guardian*. 16 August 2013. http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/aug/16/leavis-snow-two-cultures-bust. Retrieved 20 May 2015.

Eagleton, T.(1983) *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Eagleton, T. (1998) "F. R. Leavis" [revaluation], *The Europenan English Messenger*, VII. 2 (Autumn 1998): 49-51.

Eagleton, T. (2008) Death of the Intellectual. Red Pepper. www.redpepper.org.uk/death-of-the-intellectual/. Retrieved April 20, 2015.

Eagleton, T. (2010). The death of universities. *The Guardian*, Friday 17 Decembar 2010.http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/17/death-universities-malaise-tuition-fees

French. P. (1980). *Three Hones Men: Edmund Wilson, Lionel Trilling, F. R. Leavis: A Critical Mosaic*. Manchester : Carcanet New Press.

Inglis, F. (2011). Words as Weapons. 5 May 2011. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/cn/features/words-as-weapons/416001.article. Retrieved 10 July 2015.

Kimball, R. (1994). "The Two Cultures" today. *The New Criterion*, Vol. 12. No. 6. 10. http://www.newcriterion.com/articles.cfm/-The-Two-Cultures-today-4882. 4 June 2015.

Leavis, F. R. (1972). *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses on Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope*. London: Chatto&Windus

Miletić, M. (2002). Filozofija kao način života: razgovor sa Mihailom Markovićem, *Teme*, 3, Juli-Septembar 2002. (449-462)

Morales, A. L. (1988) Certified Organic Intellectual: On Not Being Postmodern, *Medicine Stories: History, Culture, and the Politics of Integrity* Cambridge MA: South End Press. (67-74)

Newbury, J. (2011):Book Review: Not For Profit by Martha C. Nussbaum. http://postgrowth.org/book-review-not-for-profit/ Retrieved May 11 2015

Nussbaum, M. (2010). *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Petrović, L. (2008) Umetnost pod pritiskom: Makjuanova *Subota. Jezik, književnost, globalizacija: Zbornik radova sa Trece medjunarodne multidisciplinarnekonferencije*. (Ed.) Milosavljević, Lj. Niš: Filozofski fakultet. (423-442)

Schwalbe, Michael. (2015) Twilight of the Professors. Counterpunch. http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/06/05/twilight-of-the-professors/. September 1, 2015.

Shaw, T. A. (2013) The Seeds of Hope, Dandelionsalad. https://dandelionsalad.wordpress.com/2013/08/12/the-seeds-of-hope-by-tristan-a-shaw/. Retrieved 10 january 2015.

Shakespeare, W. (1963) *The Tempest.* New York: New American Library.

Suvin, D. (2004). *Circumstances and Stances*, PMLA, Vol. 119, No. 3.

Interviews

UDC 929:821 Bigsby C.
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2017.9.12

Radojka Vukčević

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY

Christopher Bigsby, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the Royal Society of Arts, is an award winning academic, novelist and biographer. His first novel, *Hester*, won the McKitterick Prize. *Beautiful Dreamer* (2002) was an American Library Association Notable Book. With Don Wilmeth, he won the Bernard Hewitt Award for Outstanding Research in Theatre History and the George Freedley Jury Award for the Cambridge History of the American Theatre. He has also received the 'NAFSA Education Abroad Leadership Award'. His biography of Arthur Miller was shortlisted for the James Taite Black Memorial Prize, the Sheridan Morley Prize and the George Freedley Memorial Award. It was a CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title for 2009 and was joint winner of the American Studies network Award. His is also winner of the Betty Jean Jones Award for Outstanding Teacher of American Theatre and Drama.

As a broadcaster, he presented Radio 4's Kaleidoscope for over eight years, as well as Radio 3's Third Ear and Radio 4's Off the Page. He was also presenter of Radio 3's First Night and Radio 4's Present Voices, Past Words and The Index as well as presenting editions of The Archive Hour and Centurions. He has made television programmes on John Steinbeck, Mark Twain, and Edith Wharton. He has reviewed for a number of national newspapers (including The Guardian, The Independent and The Daily Telegraph) and his programme notes have appeared in theatres throughout the UK, in Australia, Canada and the United States. For 18 years he was Director of the British Council's flagship Cambridge Seminar and has travelled widely on its behalf.

He has published some fifty books, including a recent two-volume biography of Arthur Miller and his latest novel, 'The Hotel'.[1]

Christopher Bigsby has agreed to speak for *Belgrade BELLS* in September 2016 during Salzburg Seminar, where I was privileged to meet him.

BELLS: It is well-known that you have published some fifty books in familiar fields, which is more than impressive. It is even more impressive that you have given a great contribution to each of them. As an award winning academic, novelist and biographer, you have devoted yourself to many fields: American drama, literature and culture; British popular culture; media; fiction writing, etc. How would you rank your interest in them?

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY: As you will see from my CV, I have bounced around somewhat in my interests, though the American theatre has taken up much of my time. This may seem eccentric, probably is eccentric, in that immediately to hand is a British theatre which is a deal more convenient. I have written about Joe Orton and Stoppard, while editing a book on the English theatre. I also personally know quite a number of British playwrights and am even an off-stage character in a Pinter play. Knowing how sinister they can be I asked him what this character was like. He said, 'don't worry. He's alright.'

BELLS: Is it possible to describe the pathways of your contributions to each of these fields? Can we say that each decade in your academic writing has been following what was going on in the world of writing.

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY: I got interested in the American theatre when I spent a year as a Fulbright student in, of all places, Kansas State University – don't ask – where I saw a student production of Albee's *The Zoo Story*. I was bowled over by this and drove, with some friends a hundred miles or more to see the road version of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* A few years later I wrote a book about him and got to know him personally, as I would, in time, David Mamet and Arthur Miller. I would write a three-volume introduction to the American theatre, but before doing so wrote *The Second Black Renaissance*, about African-American novels,

[1] The short bibliographical note was taken from http://www.christopherbigsby.com/

plays and poetry from Richard Wright onwards, having previously been interested in black writing, early on editing a two-volume collection of essays. In time I would meet and interview a fair number of black writers including James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Amiri Baraka, Alice Walker and Toni Morrison – once dancing with the last in a bodega in Spain! I got to know a number of writers because for a number of years I worked on the side for the BBC, domestically and on World Service. Somewhere along the line I wrote a book about Dada and Surrealism, a subject on which I knew nothing (it is about to be re-issued), and edited a couple of books on popular culture because I had always believed that the best way to study a culture is to look at its popular culture, something to which I would return many decades later when I wrote a book about American television drama because suddenly, and to many people's surprise, quality television was coming from a country which had not specialised in such for many decades. I wrote a book about Holocaust writing because I started to write a book commemorating W.G. Sebald, a friend and colleague here at UEA, and got sidelined as I followed his interest in other writers. So, as you will see, my career was not planned but had a fair degree of serendipity about it. I would jump from subject to subject. I have just finished a book for CUP on 21st Century American playwrights, largely because I realised that I had got out of touch and needed to tune in again.

BELLS: Apart from significant academic writing, you have been working on a very special mission: popularizing the world of writing through other media, such as radio and TV. How do you see the present moment in the light of this relatively recently recognized important connection?

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY: As to my work in radio and TV, this now largely lies in the past though I was heavily involved for many years presenting a whole range of programmes, not always involving writers. This occasionally took me to the States and Canada. This was how I got to know Joseph Heller and Margaret Atwood, the latter when I was making a programme about the arts in Toronto. I took her out for dinner and only realised when the bill was presented that I had left my wallet in the hotel so that she had to pay. I did make up for it later when she came to UEA and I could take her out, this time not relying on her to shell out. I've never much liked appearing in GTV, which I have done very infrequently. I did, though, make an interesting programme about Mark Twain whose *Huckleberry*

Finn was first published in England because someone had altered one of the illustrations in the American edition to give one of the men an erection. This gave us a problem in that we wanted to show this on television while trying to be discrete. So the camera slowly zoomed in and then faded at the last moment. I also made a programme on Edith Wharton, filming at her home, and one of John Cheever, talking to his wife and daughter who had just published a biography of her father in which she revealed his bi-sexuality. Naturally, her mother was proud that she had published a book but not pleased by its revelations. I was so nervous that my first question, on camera, began 'John Cheever was not a man to expose himself …' I froze but then everyone started laughing, including wife and daughter.

BELLS: Your life long project on the two-volume biography of Arthur Miller has probably brought some special insights into the connection of this great dramatist and his works. Would you share with *Belgrade BELLS* some special moments you had experienced while working on it: the excitement while reading the documents…?

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY: As to the biography of Miller, I had known him for many years. He didn't want a biography and I didn't want to write it, never having written one before. On the other hand I used to stay with him fairly frequently and he used to send me his new plays and I would send him a critique. One day, at a party, he introduced me as his biographer and I thought, "shit, now I'm going to have to write it.' He kept many boxes of material for me to sort through, so I would get up very early and work on it until lunch which his wife, the great Magnum photographer Inge Morath would prepare.

BELLS: On mentioning your name, what most scholars have in mind is your great contribution to American drama. Is it possible to rank American modern dramatists?

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY**:** How do I rank American dramatists? Sometimes I don't think people realise how unique was the period between 1946 and 1959 which saw O'Neill's last great plays, Tennessee Williams best work and four Miller classic plays, plus the first work of Albee along with Hansberry 's *Raisin in the Sun*. Since then we saw Mamet and Shepard, the emergence of African-American writers. My top plays, though, would be *Long Day's*

Journey into Night, A Streetcar named Desire and *Death of a Salesman*, but I imagine there would be few dissenters. In my new book I talk about nine new playwrights (seven of them women, two African-American and one Taiwanese-American) though I could have included many more if I had been allowed the space. There is, though, no standout playwright to put beside the classic figures, though Tracy Letts is a particular favourite.

BELLS: You have also told us much in your recent study *21st Century Television Drama* about this genre. How do you see its future in comparison with theatre plays?

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY: TV drama in America continues to flourish, though none with quite the bite of *The Wire*. I spend a lot of time watching American TV long-form dramas, too much time to tell the truth. The BBC has at long last awoken and is producing worthwhile drama. I think that the new American television drama has also played its part in stimulating excellent material from France, Sweden and Denmark.

BELLS: *Writers in Conversation with Christopher Bigsby* in a few volumes must also have given you a lot of work and joy?

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY: *Writers in Conversation* originally included many of the interviews I did for the BBC. Subsequent volumes, however, were based on a literary festival which I have run at UEA for the last 24 years. That has, indeed, been a great pleasure. It has also been an education as I spend each summer reading my way through the work of writers from around the world ready for the festival in the autumn. There is a preponderance of British writers for obvious reasons but again it has become the basis for some friendships with writers as did the British Council Cambridge Seminar which I chaired for 18 years and which again led to friendships with writers, which has been one of the great pleasures of my life. As a result of meeting John Fowles at this, I accompanied him around Italy doing public interviews with him. He had had a stroke and after half an hour he would forget details of his books so that it was my job to help fill in any blanks. At one staged my wife insisted he should go back to our hotel to watch Norwich City who were playing Bayern Munich. It was not that she had any interest in football but our two sons were going to the match and she was convinced that she would see them in a cut away. Believe it or not, she did. The camera cut to the crowd, and there they were.

BELLS: Among many awards there is one I must single out: you are also winner of the Betty Jean Jones Award for Outstanding Teacher of American Theatre and Drama. How important is teaching when compared with many other fields you have been dealing with?

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY: I greatly enjoyed teaching, though I no longer do that, other functions having taken over (though I do supervise some undergraduate dissertations along with the occasional PhD).

BELLS: You have won many awards for your non-fiction writing but you also won the McKitterick Prize for your first novel (of five), *Hester*, while your novel *Beautiful Dreamer* (2002) was an American Library Association Notable Book. TV plays, radio drama, short stories and poetry are other genres you have been sharing your imagination and craft with. Which is your dearest, most entertaining, painful …?

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY**:** As to novels, I wrote the first one not knowing whether it was any good. I got up at 6am every day and wrote 1000 words before breakfast, never re-reading. Finally, I finished and pressed the print button. In those days printing took an age so I took myself off to watch television. Uniquely, an agent took it and I had a publisher in days. This has never happened again. I wrote another, *Beautiful Dreamer*, in three weeks. That has never happened again. Indeed the publishing world has now become very difficult. I write for my own pleasure and as a break from other kinds of writing.

BELLS: Thank you for taking time to talk to *Belgrade BELLS*.

Notes to contributors

Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies (Belgrade BELLS) is an annual peer-reviewed academic journal issued by the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia.

The aim of the journal is to provide an international forum for current investigations in English theoretical/applied linguistics and anglophone literary/cultural studies.

The journal welcomes original research papers, book reviews, scholarly interviews, conference reports, and commentaries.

Manuscripts should not be longer than 10.000 words and should be submitted electronically: belgrade.bells@gmail.com

Submission deadline: 1 August 2018

Contributions should be in English. Contributors whose native language is not English are asked to have their manuscript carefully checked by a native speaker. Manuscripts should conform to the style sheet available on the Belgrade Bells website:
http://www.belgrade.bells.fil.bg.ac.rs/

CIP – Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

811.111+82

BELGRADE English Language & Literature Studies / editor-in-chief Jelena Vujić. – Vol. 1 (2009)– . - Belgrade : Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, 2009– (Belgrade : Čigoja štampa). – 24 cm
Godišnje. – Drugo izdanje na drugom medijumu:
Belgrade English Language & Literature
Studies (Online) = ISSN 1821-4827

ISSN 1821-3138 = Belgrade English Language & Literature Studies
COBISS.SR-ID 170838540