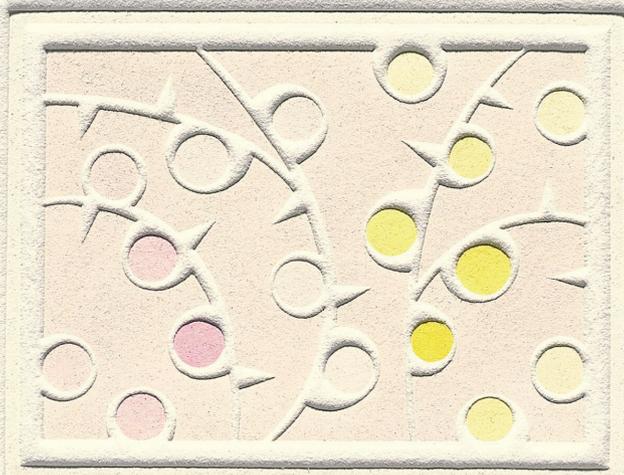


English
Language
Overseas
Perspectives and
Enquiries



Editors: SMILJANA KOMAR and UROŠ MOZETIČ

STUDIES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN SLOVENIA

Slovensko društvo za angleške študije
Slovene Association for the Study of English

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Sdaš

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I.

LANGUAGE

Dušan Gabrovšek

University of Ljubljana

Faculty of Arts, English Department

Connotation, Semantic Prosody, Syntagmatic Associative Meaning: Three Levels of Meaning?

Summary

The paper discusses associative meaning, i.e. one existing over and above the customary denotation, specifically the type arising from a text segment larger than a single word. The idea is of fairly recent origin, focuses on negative and positive semantic effects, and stems from corpus-based findings. Dictionaries are uneven in their treatment of this aspect of meaning. It is suggested that research on this complex phenomenon of associative meaning might be conducted on any of three levels: single-word items (connotation), multiword items (semantic prosody), and broader if vaguer co(n)text (syntagmatic meaning).

Key words: connotation, semantic prosody, syntagmatic meaning, collocational prosody, collocation, multiword lexical item

Konotacija, semantična prozodija in sintagmatski pomen: Tri ravni asociativnega pomena?

Povzetek

Članek obravnava več vrst asociativnega pomena, tj. tistega, ki obstaja poleg standardnega denotativnega in se pojavlja v besedilih v kombinacijah vsaj dveh besed. Ideja o tem pomenu je sorazmerno nova; ukvarja se predvsem z negativnimi in pozitivnimi pomenskimi učinki, prihaja pa s področja korpusnih raziskav. Slovarji ta pomen obravnavajo neenotno. Avtor predlaga, da bi ta kompleksen pojav raziskovali na treh ravneh: v posamičnih enobesednih leksemih (konotacija), v večbesednih enotah (semantična prozodija) in v širšem – četudi manj jasno opredeljenem – sobesedilu (sintagmatski pomen).

Ključne besede: konotacija, semantična prozodija, sintagmatski pomen, kolokacijska prozodija, kolokacija, večbesedna leksična enota

Connotation, Semantic Prosody, Syntagmatic Associative Meaning: Three Levels of Meaning?

1. Introduction: Collocational/phraseological meaning beyond denotation

When looking at collocations as a pervasive phenomenon demonstrating and powerfully illustrating the functioning of a very significant aspect of the functioning of what has come to be known as the co-selection principle, one is struck by the fact that – unlike irregular verbs, tense usage, passives and relatives, reported speech, relative clauses, conditional sentences, and all that jazz – collocations often do not lend themselves to the familiar and charmingly simple right-or-wrong type of assessment. Indeed, it makes a lot of sense to consider the issue in relative terms, basically as one of **lexical acceptability**¹ (Ball 1987, 188), meaning that few collocations can be firmly excluded as impossible, as they range from the unquestionably acceptable to the extremely unlikely, with context often being all-important.² While collocations are all indicative of one type of varied patterns of mutual choice, illustrating the vagaries of combinability and its restrictions, it does seem that in collocability **semantic factors** are usually involved as well, even though they are sometimes quite slight or simply difficult to pinpoint. Accordingly, the search for collocational (a.k.a collocative) meaning regarded either as a distinct collocational contribution to lexical meaning recognized in single-word items or even as a discrete type of lexical meaning³ has resulted in several original suggestions arguing convincingly for the existence of such a meaning. These include the fairly restricted – more specifically, one restricted to collocations – concept of **semantic tailoring** (Allerton 1984), used to refer to the process in which the polysemy of the adjectival collocator is “narrowed down” or “trimmed” by the semantics of the base noun (e.g. *an outstanding success* [‘izjemen uspeh’] vs. *an outstanding debt* [‘neporavnan dolg’], or *regular customer* [‘reden gost’, ‘stalna stranka’], *regular gas* [‘navadni bencin’], *regular duties* [‘običajne dolžnosti’], *regular heartbeat* [‘enakomeren srčni utrip’], *regular verb* [‘pravilni glagol’], *regular features* [‘pravilne poteze’], *regular army* [‘poklicna vojska’]). Another recent idea revolves around a less clearcut but intriguing semantic concept usually dubbed **semantic prosody**, but also variously referred to as **collocational prosody**, **discourse prosody**, or as **pragmatic prosody** (cf. e.g. Stubbs 2002, 65–6,

1 James (1998, 66–74) provides a detailed discussion of *acceptability*, regarding it as a practical notion that is determined by the use or usability of the form in question: When non-linguistic factors militate against the use of a form, we attribute this to unacceptability (ibid., p. 66). Randolph Quirk discussed the concept in a pioneering lecture delivered as early as 1965 (cf. Quirk 1966). The term also has a one-page entry in David Crystal's (2003, 4–5) *Dictionary of Linguistics & Phonetics*.

2 The effect of an **unfamiliar collocation**, as Quirk observed back in the 1960s, may thus be one of diminished effectiveness in communication. He suggested that when confronted with the task of reading with understanding (or writing to dictation) the two grammatically identical and meaningful English sentences, viz. (1) *The table was of polished mahogany and it gleamed in the bright light.* (2) *The car was of corrugated plastic and it swayed in the ploughed sand.*, sentence (1) can probably be assimilated faster and with less error than (2) because *table* collocates with *polished mahogany* (and *mahogany* with *polished*) more often than *car* with *corrugated plastic* (or *plastic* with *corrugated*); polished mahogany is often said to gleam and lights are often described as bright. This implies that “when grammar is a constant, ready comprehensibility may still vary sharply, according to expectedness or unexpectedness in the selection or collocation of words” (Quirk 1968, 234–5).

3 Linguists have suggested different kinds of lexical meaning; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2004, 456–60), for example, recognizes encyclopedic, connotative and affective, stylistic, categorial, collocative, contrastive, and implicative kinds of lexical meaning, plus its cultural aspects and aesthetic aspects (onomatopoeia).

and Stubbs 1995a).⁴ In a pioneering paper, the concept has been defined as “the consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates” (Louw 1993, 157). This paper focuses on the latter phenomenon, thus disregarding other possible ways of exploring the diverse effects of very real – if somewhat elusive – semantic features of words arising from their being frequently used together in a phraseologically salient, or indeed syntagmatically significant, fashion.⁵

2. Semantic prosody: What it is

The term *semantic prosody* was apparently first coined by John Sinclair (Partington 1998, 66–7)⁶ to describe the phenomenon of a **favorable or unfavorable connotation** being contained not in a single item, but rather being expressed by that item in association with others, as e.g. in *to happen* and *to set in*, both of which are habitually associated with unpleasant events. It is “a kind of attitudinal or pragmatic meaning” (Sinclair 2004b, 23) that a lexical item has in addition to “the familiar classificatory meaning of the regular dictionary.” The concept has been defined also along the following lines: “[A] word may be said to have a particular semantic prosody if it can be shown to co-occur typically with other words that belong to a particular semantic set” (Hunston and Francis 2000, 137), as “a feature which extends over more than one unit in a linear string”. Moreover, “discourse prosodies express speaker attitude” (Stubbs 2002, 65). Finally, Warren (2005) suggests that it is the combinatory restrictions of words that can also be seen in terms of semantic prosodies: “That is to say, a particular word typically combines with words of a particular type of – normally evaluative – meaning which is not warranted by generalised meanings.” The concept seems to have been introduced to the public by Bill Louw in 1993, with Sinclair having originally suggested it to Louw (Whitsitt 2005, 283). It is not yet to be found recorded in the standard English dictionaries of linguistics terms such as those by Crystal (2003) and Matthews (2007).

Semantic prosody indicates the phenomenon of words combining not just with chosen other words, but with **chosen meanings**, thus displaying their semantic prosodies (cf. Tognini-Bonelli 2001, 111–6) that appear to be mostly either **positive** or **negative**. In line with this observation, Partington (1998, 66–8) notes that *to commit* and *rife* both collocate with items of an unpleasant nature, so that the unfavorable connotation extends over the entire collocation. Similarly, *to set in* often signals that some undesirable process is being described. Semantic prosody “refers to the spreading of connotational colouring beyond single word boundaries” (ibid., 68) which, importantly, can only be found in certain words. In a broader framework, the term “reflects the [neo-Firthian] realisation that lexical items become infused with particular connotations due to their typical linguistic environment.” Partington (1998, 66) regards it as “one particularly subtle

4 Importantly, these terms need not be used as synonyms but may indicate different albeit related semantic phenomena (see below).

5 Thus e.g. Sinclair (1994, 23 4), in focusing on the *overall* effect of the frequency of co-occurrence, points out that the meaning of words chosen together may differ from their independent meanings in that they are at least partly **delexicalized**. This is the necessary correlate of co-selection. There is a strong tendency to delexicalization in the normal phraseology of modern English; e.g. in *physical assault/damage*, etc., the meaning associated with the adjective is duplicated in one facet of the way we would normally understand the noun. Next, in *scientific analysis/assessment*, etc., the adjective is fairly seriously delexicalized: All it is doing is dignifying the following word slightly. Finally, *full account/range*, etc., are types of reassurance more than anything else, while in *general trend/opinion*, etc., the adjective is simply underlining part of the meaning of the noun.

6 Partington (1998, 68) points out that the term *prosody* was borrowed from J.R. Firth, who used it to refer to phonological coloring which spreads beyond segmental boundaries.

and interesting aspect of expressive connotation which can be highlighted by corpus data.” It can be a crucial aspect of an item’s lexical meaning, underscoring the contemporary conviction that meaning resides in typical combinations of lexical choices or “**collocability**” on the one hand, and typical combinations of grammatical choices or “**colligation**” on the other (Siepmann 2006, 9). But does this mean that semantic prosodies are merely a matter of a single-word lexical item spreading its own connotative influence, in the process imposing certain logico-semantic restrictions, on to its surroundings?

3. Review of literature

The concept of *semantic prosody* has been recently discussed at length, chiefly by post-Firthian corpus linguists following largely in Sinclair’s footsteps, as part of the awareness that “we do not communicate by stringing together individual words, but rather by means of semi-prefabricated lexico-grammatical units” (Siepmann 2006, 9). These researchers include, chronologically and selectively, Louw (1993), Stubbs (1995b, 246 and 2002, 105–8, 198–206), Bublitz (1996, 11), Partington (1998, 65–78 and 2004), Rundell (2000), Cotterill (2001), Hunston (2001), Channel (1999), Schmitt and Carter (2004, 7–9, 20), Whitsitt (2005), and Dilts and Newman (2006, 233), with Hunston (2007) contributing a recent reassessment. Most of the work done on the topic has been in the monolingual mode, with English being for the most part heavily favored; however, there is an English and Chinese perspective on the phenomenon with reference to near-synonyms provided by Xiao and McEnery (2006), while Sardinha (2000) focuses on English and Portuguese. An early cross-linguistic study of this kind is Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (1996). Louw’s own (1993) definition of the concept, not taken up by all later researchers,⁷ is that if several different words all sharing the same semantic trait are frequently used with another word, meaning will be passed, over time, from that group of words to the other word. Louw (1993) himself studied *to be bent on something*, which has a negative prosody (meaning ‘to be completely determined to do something’ but suggesting also ‘something bad’).⁸ The key idea is that “constant proximity between words can lead to promiscuity wherein the meaning of one word or words will be ‘rubbed off’ onto another” (Whitsitt 2005, 284). Nowadays, the concept is so important that even certain textbooks treat it at some length (e.g. McEnery et al. 2006, 82–5, 148–51, *passim*).

4. Semantic prosody: Examples

For some reason, most authors seem to have identified a number of instances of “**negative**” **prosody** and far fewer cases of “**positive**” **prosody**, witness e.g. the frequently cited cases of *to set in* (Sinclair 1987, 155–6, *passim*), *to cause* (typically collocating with *problems, trouble, damage, death, pain, and disease*) as contrasted with *to provide* (typically collocating with *facilities, information, services, aid, assistance, and money*) (cf. Stubbs 1995a, also summarized in Schmitt

7 As Whitsitt (2005, 284–5) observes, Sinclair (1996, 87) emphasized the pragmatic function of semantic prosody, thus dramatically reducing the importance of the semantic dimension as well as the idea of semantic transfer. Stubbs (2002, 65–6) seems to have abandoned both the concept and the term, preferring to use the term *discourse prosody* said to express “speaker attitude.”

8 In his oft-cited paper, Louw points out that writers sometimes diverge from “the expected profiles of semantic prosodies,” thus upsetting the normal collocational patterns. He suggests that when they do so consciously, it is usually with ironic intent.

2000, 78-9), *dealings* (Partington 1998, 72-4), and to *happen* and to *slump* as in *slumped in front of the TV* (Rundell 2000).⁹ Thus e.g. the unusualness of the combination *utterly content* vs. *perfectly content* results from the fact that *utterly* typically restricts the choice of its collocates to words with some negative semantic content (hence the title of Partington's [2004] paper). Similarly, if something is *fraught with* something rather than being *full of* it, we can expect something negative (problems, difficulties, risks, ambiguities, etc.) following the preposition. It might be relevant to try and identify, in a cross-linguistic framework of EFL writing/speaking, recurrent instances of **inappropriate semantic prosodies**, as for instance in *to make an *unforgettable mistake*.

To take another look at the functioning of the semantic “**prosodic constraint**,” the verb *to harbor* (‘to keep/have’) is likewise largely restricted to something undesirable (such as doubts, fears, bad thoughts, and the like).¹⁰ The same reasoning, but in a lot stronger version, applies to the verbs *to wreak* (‘to cause problems or damage’) and *to lurk somewhere* (not only ‘to wait there quietly and secretly’ but also ‘in order to do something wrong’). Next, something that is *mounting* is not merely ‘gradually increasing’ but is typically used about things that cause problems or trouble. Also, one is *doomed to extinction/failure* etc. but *destined for a successful career*. This example, incidentally, suggests the possibility of semantic prosody being the result of grammatical (rather than lexical) collocability, or – to use alternative terminology – of colligational links, as in e.g. *to reek of* [something], ‘to have a strong bad smell’ in both literal and metaphorical senses. But then in such cases the role of the preposition may be difficult to determine in prosodic terms. Further, *to arouse* in one of its patterns (but not all!) demonstrates a close association with “negative” nominal heads such as *hostility, anger, resentment, and suspicion*. McEnery et al. (2006, 83-4) list a selection of items studied recently for their semantic prosody: *happen, set in; personal price vs. personal and price individually; cause, commit, peddle/peddler, dealings, end up verbing, a recipe for, get oneself verbed, fan the flame, signs of, ripe for, underage and teenager(s), sit through, bordering on; provide, career*. All but the last two – which do have a positive prosody – carry an unfavorable meaning. Could this mean that negative semantic prosody is more pervasive than its positive offshoot?

Again, while “there can be no doubt that good-bad evaluation is an important (and previously neglected) component of lexical analysis” (Hanks 1997),¹¹ it is a fact that not all lexical items are assessable on such a scale. Hanks (ibid.) mentions *twig* and *telephone directory* as having no good-bad semantic value, and goes on to point out that, whereas *to incite* has a negative semantic prosody in English (you incite people to bad actions), the evidence of the British National Corpus suggests that *to urge* and *to encourage* are neither positive nor negative, but neutral.

9 Sometimes, the existence of semantic prosody of a given lexical item is restricted, as it were. Thus e.g. Rundell (2000) points out that the generally negative semantic prosody of *happen* is not universal: Where the nature of the event is made explicit (by adding an adjective after the pronoun), the situation is just as likely to be “good” as “bad”: *waiting for something exciting to happen, something magical has happened, nothing interesting ever happens here*. But where the pronoun stands alone, things usually look grim: *don't let anything happen, if anything happened to her mother, nothing happened to either X or Y, if something happened to X*, etc.

10 But the question is whether this results from the connotative aspects of the meaning of the verb *to harbor* itself, which should thus be seen as being responsible for the semantic restrictions, or from its typical combination with the “negative” words just cited, in which case the situation is one of a syntagm modifying the meaning of at least one of its constituents.

11 Roulet's (2007) glossary enters the term *axiological lexicon* and defines it as one that “is made of all the lexemes which express a positive (for instance, *wonderful, excellent*) or negative (*awful, ugly*) point of view of the speaker/writer.”

Furthermore, there are less commonly adduced examples of semantic prosody to be found in the language, some of them illustrating instances of the “phraseological-only” semantic prosody, that is, one where the prosodic meaning is necessarily associated with a multiword item or a pattern rather than any of its constituents in isolation or a single-word lexical item. These include fixed expressions such as *to blow your own trumpet* (BrE)/*horn* (AmE), which, according to the *Longman* (Summers 2005) means ‘to talk a lot about your own achievements’ – but then comes a dash and a note of warning: used to show disapproval. There are also relevant phrasal items with “slots” to be filled, for instance one sense of the noun *catalog*, as employed in the pattern *a catalog of* ____, namely one that is virtually always associated with something undesirable. The *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (Walter 2005) has captured this sense, illustrating it nicely with the example *a catalogue of disasters/errors/crimes/complaints*. Similarly, *the same old* ____ (*story, excuse, faces*, etc.) has a negative prosody, connoting chiefly boredom. Unfortunately, even the best dictionaries are not always successful in capturing this rather elusive aspect of meaning: for example, the prosodically sensitive, as it were, advanced learners’ *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Summers 2005), defines *what with sth* as follows: ‘used to introduce a list of reasons that have made something happen or made someone feel in a particular way,’ thus failing to indicate its negative prosody. Admittedly, the example given does suggest it, but dictionary users surely cannot be expected to conclude from a single example – aside from the well-known fact that examples of use are often virtually ignored by many dictionary users – that the prosody illustrated with it is obligatory.

5. Semantic prosody: Stemming from what exactly?

5.1 Single words

Importantly, as the above examples suggest, semantic prosodies do not necessarily constitute a semantic feature arising exclusively or chiefly from syntagmatic-collocational links. On the contrary – it is an element of meaning that need not be generated strictly on the phraseological, or more narrowly collocational, level, witness e.g. *to cause*, *to provide*, *to harbor*, *to wreak*, and *utter(ly)* as exemplified above. This fact is indicated in some definitions of the concept, e.g. that the most common understanding of the term *semantic prosody* seems to be “that some WORDS, or WORD GROUPS, occur in contexts which are understood by the researcher to have ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ nuances, or *prosodies*” (Dilts and Newman 2006, 233 [my emphasis]). In fact, the distinction is often made between the familiar **connotation**, a term usually used with reference to the associative/attitudinal/evaluative/emotive meaning of a single-word item, and the more recent **semantic prosody** referring to the associative/attitudinal/evaluative/emotive meaning of a multiword item. This type of analysis may include an entire set of semantically related single-word items: For example, among the adjectives expressing the concept of FULL, *complete* (and several “neutral-to-positive” synonyms such as *absolute*, *total*, *whole*, *entire*, *thoroughgoing*, *unqualified*) can be contrasted with the “utter group” comprising *utter* as well as *downright*, *rank*, *arrant*, *consummate* and *unmitigated*, in that the latter group will typically precede a noun indicating something undesirable (for more along these lines, cf. Gabrovšek 2005, 150, 174–5).

5.2 Word patterns, affixes, and collocations

Unless one observes the terminological distinction between *connotation* and *semantic prosody*, one can, then, legitimately observe that semantic prosody is observable, first, in certain single-word items, but at least occasionally as used in certain patterns only (as in *a catalog of* ___ referred to above). Secondly, one can find similar semantic features even in certain affixes such as the adjective-forming suffix *-ridden*, which refers to ‘something unpleasant or harmful’, as in *crime-ridden* and *guilt-ridden* (Rundell 2007, 1280), or *mosquito-ridden* and *disease-ridden* (Summers 2005, 1414). Also, the suffix *-ish* can be, inter alia, ‘the ending of some adjectives that show disapproval: *selfish*’ (Summers 2005) or *clownish* and *mannish*. Third, semantic prosody is clearly present also in multiword sequences only, including those in which it is not to be found in the individual items making them up, e.g. *day after day* and *day in day out* mean not only ‘continuously for a long time’ but also ‘in a way that is annoying or boring’ (Summers 2005). Note, incidentally, that there seems to be no trace of such prosody in e.g. *from day to day* or *day by day*. Perhaps straddling the single-word and multiword-item situations, a look at the ways in which the concept of (COMPLETELY) FULL OF can be expressed in English, as shown in works such as *Longman Language Activator*[™] (Summers 1993) and the online-only WordNet, reveals a number of options some of which display elements of semantic prosody (in the first place *rife with*, *overrun with/by*, and *fraught with*), but in this particular case (also) on the level of grammatical collocations:

- (a tree trunk) **alive with** (ants) {‘full of people, animals, or things that are moving’}
- (roofs) **bristling with** (antennas)
- (a garden) **abounds with** (flowers)
- (a place) **teeming with** (theater-goers)
- (a house) **overflowing with** (guests)
- (slums) **rife with** (crime)
- (a book) **rich in** (ideas)
- (air) **thick with** (snow)
- (an area) **overrun with/by** (locusts)
- (an incident) **fraught with** (danger)
- (silence) **pregnant with** (suspense)
- (a desk) **flooded with** (applications)
- (a book) **replete with** (diagrams)
- (a museum) **swarming with** (tourists)
- (a person) **brimming [over] with** (confidence)
- (a person) **brimful of** (ambition).

Admittedly, it is difficult to prove that in such cases semantic prosody is to some extent dependent also on the preposition following the adjectival or participial head. In fact, in such cases prosodies would rather seem to be part of the lexical meaning of the adjectival/participial head, and thus be regarded as connotation, meaning that the noun following the preposition is selected simply in logical terms, in line with (the restrictions imposed by) its meaning. Indeed, this type of analysis can be done also with single-word near-synonyms, such as *to persist* and *to persevere*, which may have similar cognitive meanings, but widely different prosodic behavior (Partington 1998, 77).

5.3 Casting the net wider

It is quite hard even to suggest with any precision where the starting point, as it were, of this elusive semantic phenomenon might be located, that is, whether semantic prosody is to be regarded as a – largely context-free – feature arising either from

- a) the single-word lexical item itself or even an affix,
- b) its collocations,
- c) idiomatic combinations formed with the item in question,
- d) its wider patterns/patterning,
- e) its typical contexts,

or indeed from some conceivable combination of these factors.

Different cases seem to call for different interpretations. Thus e.g. *never in all my life* must be selected as a fixed expression whenever we wish to emphasize how bad something was (Summers 2005, 1104). This suggests that some prosodies only come out into the open, as it were, when a “neutral” item is used phraseologically. A similar phenomenon, by the way, exists in a grammar-based framework: the *Cambridge Grammar* (http://www.cambridge.org/elt/cge/cge/cambridge_international_corpus.asp) informs us that the passive voice with the verb *to get* is used much more often to convey ‘bad news’ than ‘good news’ (e.g. *He got arrested.* | *We got charged 20 pounds too much.*).¹² In any case, one can also find cases where the neutrality of the base item is at least questionable, as in *to cause* – and to some extent its synonym, *to spark (off)*, although the researchers do not appear to have noticed the latter one, possibly because its negative prosody is not so absolute –, where the verb itself seems to trigger off something negative following: what something *sparks (off)* is characteristically *a debate, an argument, fighting, riots, protests, or problems*. No context needed really. In a similar vein, Mikhail (1994, 333–7) seems to be quite at ease in offering his lists of “good personal qualities” and “bad personal qualities”: The good ones in *e*, for instance, are *earnest, easy-going, effervescent, efficient, effusive, elegant, eloquent, eminent, emulous, energetic, enterprising, equable, equanimous, even-minded, even-tempered, expansive, experienced, and extrovert*. Here are the bad ones beginning in *e*: *edgy, egoistic, egotistic, envious, erotic [sic], evasive, evil, evil-minded, excitable, explosive, extravagant, extremist*. While not everybody is likely to agree with the essential “goodness” or “badness” of the items, many do manage to perfectly connote either of the two on their own, without any supporting co(n)text or collocation.

Whichever way you look at it, it is a fact that “the meaning of a word can often be illuminated by the other words which it tends to co-occur with” (Wierzbicka 1987, 21), so that e.g. comparing the adverbs which the verbs *rebuke*, *reprimand* and *reprove* tend to co-occur with, will yield important clues as to the semantic differences between them: *rebuking* tends to be done *sharply* whereas *reprimanding* tends to be done *severely*; only *reproving* can be done *gently* but cannot be done *sharply*, *severely* not being excluded though it is less likely to co-occur with *reprove* than with *reprimand*. These differences in co-occurrence support the following differences in

¹² Carter and McCarthy (2006)

the semantic formulae: While all three verbs refer to some “bad” behavior by the addressee, only *rebuke* contains the component ‘I feel something bad towards you because of that’; hence the “sharpness” of a rebuke. *Reprimand* is official, not personal, and so its definition refers to a category of people subordinate to the speaker; moreover, it is meant to constitute in itself a kind of punishment – and punishments can always be *severe* (though not *sharp* or *gentle*). *Reprove* does not imply “bad feelings” toward the addressee, and its purpose is purely didactic, corrective, not punitive; there is no reason, therefore, why it should not be able to be done *gently*. Note that Wierzbicka’s analysis implies a semantically identifiable and stable single-word type of item itself associated with a prosodic value, which seems to be then only REFLECTED in the collocations on logico-semantic grounds.

5.4 A brief look at recent insights and dictionary treatment

The concept of *semantic prosody* has been criticized recently (Whitsitt 2005) as being unconvincing – and not only because it has been defined in at least three distinctly different ways that remain largely undiscussed. And there is at least one valiant attempt that was made not long ago to place it on an objective rather than subjective footing (Dilts and Newman 2006).¹³

However that may be, a balanced view of this intriguing phenomenon can be found in Bartsch’s (2004, 156–8) analysis of semantic prosodies in collocations. Here are the results of her corpus-based study of adverb collocates of communication verbs and their positive (=P) or negative (=N) prosodies (*ibid.*, p. 157):

<i>categorically</i>	<i>claim; assert; state</i>	N (strong rejection)
<i>coldly</i>	<i>enquire; query</i>	N (without emotion)
<i>flatly</i>	<i>reject; deny; state</i>	N (complete rejection or blunt statement)
<i>fluently</i>	<i>speak; communicating; cajoling</i>	P (with great ease)
<i>highly</i>	<i>acclaimed; rated</i>	P (approbation)
<i>strictly</i>	<i>speaking</i>	P (stringent)
<i>widely</i>	<i>acclaimed; recognized; acknowledged; reported</i>	P (approbation of an event or achievement)
<i>argue</i>	<i>Cogently</i>	P (convincing)
<i>declare</i>	<i>Ruefully</i>	P (repentance)
<i>talk</i>	<i>incessantly</i>	N (stretching the patience of the listener)
<i>deny</i>	<i>strenuously</i>	N (leaving doubt)

¹³ Note, by the way, that there are linguists who are opposed to Sinclairian linguistics, such as Lindstromberg (1996), whose cognitive approach to teaching prepositions and directional adverbs “is almost diametrically opposed to that described in . . . the corpus-based, lexical phrase approach” (p. 225).

Sadly, dictionaries are far from being equally successful in capturing this rather elusive semantic feature. Likewise, they do not always address the issue in similar terms, and sometimes they even flatly disagree about the type of semantic prosody involved, or indeed about its very (non)existence – witness e.g. the treatment of the verb *to glint* in the sense that collocates with *eyes* functioning as the subject in some of the leading monolingual learners' dictionaries¹⁴ of English:

<i>Macmillan</i> (Rundell 2007)	'if someone's eyes glint, they show a strong emotion such as anger'
<i>Longman</i> (Summers 2005)	'if your eyes glint, they shine and show an unfriendly feeling' ¹
<i>Cambridge</i> (Walter 2005)	'when someone's eyes glint, they look bright, expressing a lively emotion': <i>She smiled at him, her eyes glinting with mischief</i>
<i>Oxford</i> (Wehmeier 2005)	'if a person's eyes glint with a particular emotion, or an emotion glints in a person's eyes, the person shows that emotion, which is usually a strong one': <i>Her eyes glinted angrily.</i> ◇ <i>Hostility glinted in his eyes.</i>

By contrast, most of the leading native-speaker-oriented English dictionaries treat this sense – quite logically, at least to some, given that semantico-prosodic information typically forms part of native-speaker linguistic competence – much more concisely; witness e.g. the 2000-odd-page *American Heritage Dictionary* (Pickett 2000), which defines the verb *to glint* simply as 'to gleam or flash briefly'. One of them, however, namely the *Oxford Encyclopedic*, contradicts the learners' dictionaries (as does, as is observed in footnote 10, an online version of the [learners'] *Collins COBUILD*) as to the type of prosody involved:

<i>Collins</i> (Butterfield 2003)	'to gleam or cause to gleam brightly'
<i>Merriam-Webster</i> (Mish 2003)	'to look quickly or briefly : GLANCE'
<i>Oxford Encyclopedic</i> (Hawkins and Allen 1991)	'flash or cause to flash; glitter; sparkle; reflect' (<i>eyes glinted with amusement</i>)
<i>New Oxford</i> (Pearsall 1998)	(of a person's eyes) 'shine with a particular emotion': <i>his eyes glinted angrily</i>

Can semantic prosody be detected in compounds too? There is no reason in principle why it should not be, though a single example must suffice at this point: While the noun *flame* would seem to have almost none, Paul McFedries's Word Spy web page¹⁵ contains, inter alia, the following entry:

14 The print version of the *Collins COBUILD* (Sinclair ed. 2003) does not recognize this sense, which is why the dictionary is not to be found included in the table. However, an online version of the work does enter it: 'if someone's eyes glint, they shine and express a particular emotion': ... *her eyes glinting with pride...* (at <http://www.collinslanguage.com/results.aspx?js=on&dictionary=cobuild&text=glint>; accessed on 19 December 2007).

15 Available from <http://www.wordspy.com/words/dictionaryflame.asp>.

dictionary flame noun. A negatively-charged message that complains about a person's spelling mistakes, word usage, or grammar.

Admittedly, perhaps this example is not overly typical. Nevertheless, and in a more serious vein, phrasal items can also show this semantic feature: If you *put somebody through something*, it has to do (but only if the entire sequence is used!) with making someone do or experience something difficult or unpleasant (Summers 2005, 1337). Likewise, *much-vaunted* seems to have a negative prosody on its own, meaning as it does '[of a plan, achievement, etc.] one that people say is very good or important, especially when this may not be true' (Summers 2005, 1079), and so does, say, *self-indulgent*, 'allowing yourself to have or do things that you enjoy but do not need, especially if you do this too often' – used to show disapproval (ibid., p. 1489). Similarly, *to fragment* is not only defined ('to break something, or be broken into a lot of small separate parts'); after a dash, there is also the comment used to show disapproval (Summers 2005, 639). Indeed, an earlier edition of the *Longman* (viz. Summers 1995, but not the current [4th] edition, Summers 2003/2005) treats the adjective *utter* in a "fully prosodic-collocational" manner: There is no customary decontextualized definition at all, but rather the sequence *utter failure/rubbish/fool etc* followed by the definition 'a complete failure etc' indicating the semantic restriction of the common English pattern *utter* + a "negative" noun, i.e. one indicating something undesirable.¹⁶ Finally, if something *breaks out*, and *sets in*, it just has to be something bad; likewise, in [of somebody] *to be in for something*, that *something* just has to be unpleasant – but again only in that particular combination.

On the other hand, a recent thesaurus (Jellis 2002) provides, inter alia, a "compare-and-contrast" boxed feature, where a selection of semantically related single-word items sharing a "core meaning" are given and their semantic specificities briefly discussed. Thus e.g. the article on the "core meaning" TALKING A LOT (p. 893) first provides the entries (*talkative, chatty, gossipy, garrulous, loquacious*), and then goes on to briefly indicate the semantic differences between them:

talkative willing to talk readily and at length; **chatty** talking freely about unimportant things in a friendly way; **gossipy** talking with relish about other people and their lives, often unkindly and maliciously; **garrulous** excessively or pointlessly talkative; **loquacious** (*formal*) tending to talk a great deal.

Gossipy and *garrulous* are the likeliest candidates for negative prosody; moreover, in line with Wierzbicka's treatment (cf. final section of 5.3), in many cases it appears to arise largely from the core meaning of the single-word item itself. Thus a similar boxed feature (also p. 893) comprising the items *talent, gift, aptitude, flair, bent, knack, genius*, illustrating the core meaning of THE NATURAL ABILITY TO DO SOMETHING WELL, shows no trace – clearly on account of the core meaning itself – of negative prosody rearing its ugly head. Should these items, then, be regarded as all carrying positive prosody? Not likely: for isn't the positive aspect of meaning rather (part of) denotation? After all, we need no collocation, phraseology, or co(n)text to establish it.

¹⁶ Phraseological analysis often combines semantic and structural features: The adjective *rife*, e.g., expresses the meaning 'something undesirable is too common,' and the sequence in which it is embedded typically has the structure SOMETHING UNDESIRABLE is/are *rife* in LOCATION/TIME (Schmitt and Carter 2004, 8).

It is not uncommon for dictionaries to ignore this “added” semantic element, so that most dictionaries define, say, *to put an end to something* routinely as ‘to finish something,’ while few elaborate on that prosodically: ‘to stop an activity that is harmful or unacceptable.’ In general, learners’ dictionaries fare much better in this respect than do native-speaker-oriented works. This, by the way, applies also to single-word items, so that e.g. *Longman* (Summers 2005), unlike most native-speaker dictionaries, notes that *terse* – unlike *brief* or *concise* – not only means ‘using very few words’ but also ‘often shows that you are annoyed.’

In any case, matters prosodic are not always interpretable in absolute terms: Aside from the conflicting dictionary evidence given above, I can offer some pertinent evidence coming from the Internet (Netscape, spotted on 21 October 2004), about actor Christopher Reeve’s widow saying that “it is COMPLETELY unfair, but life can be that way” (my emphasis). Similarly, Schmitt and Carter (2004, 8) report that *bordering on* carries the “prosodic” meaning of ‘approaching an undesirable state (of mind)’ in 57 instances of the 100 instances in the British National Corpus, whereas 27 instances refer to a physical location.¹⁷ It is also used to express positive evaluation, but only in nine instances out of the 100 (*ibid.*, 20). However, other instances of semantic prosodies are easier to capture in absolute terms, e.g. *to undergo* and *to experience* in a 1990s version of the *Longman*: you typically *undergo* a change or something bad but *experience* an emotion, physical sensation, a situation, or a problem (Summers 1995).

6. Further relevant issues

6. 1 Relationship with connotation

Apparently, words can have a specific **profile**, either good and pleasant or bad and unpleasant; whenever such a word is uttered, it prompts hearers to expect a following word with a clear (un)pleasant sense – it “sets the scene” for a particular type of subsequent item. Yet it is often difficult to show convincingly the role of collocation in the creation and continued existence of semantic prosody. What linguists frequently refer to as **connotation**, or **connotative meaning**,¹⁸ is, after all, to be found in many single-word items and phrasal verbs (e.g. *compact*, *lean*, *slim*, *lanky*, *skinny*, *notorious*, *to drone on*, *to show off*).¹⁹ Second, one might wonder whether prosody is equally at work in colligational combinations, such as *in league with*?²⁰ Also, is its creation related to onomatopoeia? Moreover, and perhaps more to the point, connotation itself is not quite as clearcut as one might

17 Cotterill (2001) has studied the semantic prosodies of some of the words and phrases used to describe domestic violence at trial, in the O.J. Simpson double homicide case. She contrasts the respective lexical representations of domestic violence in the prosecution and defense arguments.

18 Also known in the literature as attitudinal/emotive/affective/evaluative meaning, sometimes regarded as being either synonymous with or part of a broad-based pragmatic meaning. It is not always restricted to the single-word item, witness e.g. the following definition of *connotation*: ‘the additional meanings that a word or phrase has beyond its central meaning. These meanings show people’s emotions and attitudes towards what the word or phrase refers to’ (Richards and Schmidt 2002, 108).

19 Note the following chapter heading from Partington (1998, 68): “Connotation and Semantic Prosody” (65–78). Significantly, for him semantic prosody represents “the spreading of CONNOTATIONAL colouring beyond single word boundaries” (my emphasis). This seems to imply that it all starts with the single-word item’s connotation that spreads its semantic influence, so to speak, by starting to “tailor” the items in its vicinity – or does it?

20 Here is a fitting example coming from a learners’ dictionary: “If you say that someone is **in league with** another person to do SOMETHING BAD [my emphasis], you mean that they are working together to do that thing” (Sinclair ed. 2003, 814, s.v. *league*).

suppose: It is defined in the standard sources as “an additional meaning” that is indicative chiefly of “emotional associations (personal or communal)” a lexical item has beyond its central meaning, usually referred to as denotation (e.g. Richards and Schmidt 2002, Crystal 2003). But does this really DEFINE the concept? For example, if *December* and *child*, selected in the two reference works just cited as illustrations of connotation, are good examples of items with connotative meaning, how is it that they are not labeled as such in any of the English dictionaries? Second, if the nouns *argument* and *quarrel* are connotation-free near-synonyms, is the closely related *feud* different in that it exhibits negative prosody, or is it rather that its special semantic features (“long,” “violent”), and/or its frequent use in the collocation *a bitter feud* and in the compound *blood feud*, show its intensity or duration without contributing anything semantically negative?

6.2 “Definable semantic sets”

More broadly, as Stubbs (1995a; cited in Schmitt 2000, 78–9) points out, words may habitually collocate with other words from a **definable semantic set**. The words in these sets may carry either positive or negative connotations: e.g. *to cause* typically collocates with unpleasant things such as *problems, trouble, damage, death, pain, disease*, whereas *to provide* collocates mainly with positive things such as *facilities, information, services, aid, assistance, money*. Using *work* with the two words provides further illustration of the difference: *to cause work* is usually considered a bad thing, while *to provide work* is usually looked upon favorably. When examining items such as *cause* and *provide*, one is certainly tempted to conclude that semantic prosody²¹ indeed comes close to the more traditional semantic notion of connotation referred to in the preceding paragraph. Further, if e.g. *to credit* is “neutral” in semantic terms, *to credit somebody with (doing) something* invariably refers to something good and is thus “inherently” positive. In traditional terms, however, connotation has received attention almost exclusively as an element of the lexical meaning of individual single-word lexical items.²²

6.3 Semantic prosody and pattern, and point of origin reconsidered

*Semantic prosody*²³ seems to be related to yet another recent notion, namely that of **pattern**.

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- 21 Studies of the phenomenon of semantic prosody include those done utilizing specialized corpora. For example, Nelson (2004) has studied semantic prosody in business English.
- 22 “**Semantic prosody** refers to the positive or negative **connotative meaning** which is transferred to the focus word by the **semantic fields** of its common **collocates**.” Hatim and Munday (2004, 251)
- 23 The concept (and the terminology used) remains rather complex. It can be seen either as being synonymous with *semantic preference*, as being related to it (Partington 2004), or even as being unnecessary, to be replaced by *semantic association* (Hoey 2005, 22–4). Alternatively, *semantic preference* itself may be interpreted as a broader term (Stubbs 2004, 121): For example, in adjective-noun constructions, *persistent* is often used of medical conditions (semantic preference), whereas in terms of speaker attitudes, it is used of unpleasant topics (semantic/discourse prosody). Maher (2004) says it refers to an “additional layer of perceived meaning, over and above that accorded by lexical and grammatical patterning alone”; “it posits an initial selection of word or phrase in relation to which choices are realised at the lexical, grammatical and semantic levels.” She goes on to discuss Sinclair’s example (given in Tognini-Bonelli 2001, 104) *barely visible to the naked eye*, which is said to reflect an expression of semantic prosody (difficulty experienced implied by *barely*), a lexical choice (the notion of seeing), and the requisite colligation (*to the*). I, for one, believe that *semantic association* and *semantic preference* could be used synonymously, to systematically indicate the frequent co-occurrence of a lexical item with a group/class of semantically related items often referred to as *lexical set*, with *semantic prosody* standing for a different – more specific – semantic syntagmatic notion coming close to connotation.

Thus e.g. two patterns of the verb *to claim*, viz. *claim* + *that*-clause (e.g. *He claims that he has discovered the ideal rock band*) and *claim* + object noun (e.g. *Several nations now claim linguistic independence*), may be indicative of two different prosodies, the former rather negative ('he may say so, but it is likely not true'), the latter neutral ('they are calling for linguistic independence'). Moreover, it is difficult to determine whether prosodic meaning is to be related broadly to any string where it seems to apply, or more narrowly to collocation and perhaps some other phraseological word combinations, and indeed, as a consequence, whether it arises from

- (a) an item's lexical meaning, in which case it can be regarded as being virtually synonymous with connotative meaning
- (b) various types of phraseological units, notably collocations, or indeed
- (c) context (or rather co-text) in general terms, perhaps considered in a kind of pragmatic-textual extralinguistic/experiential framework.

6.4 Difficulties

Even more to the point, even one and the same item is not always necessarily associated with a certain type of semantic prosody; that is, one and the same item can be prosodically different: Warren (2005) observes that *to look forward to a meeting* has a positive prosody, not because of the noun *meeting*, which is evaluatively neutral, but because "as a complement of *look forward to* a positive feature is coerced." However, she adds that these constraints can be cancelled: It is e.g. possible to modify *look forward to* with the adverbial *with mixed feelings*, yielding *Peter is looking forward to the meeting with mixed feelings*, which brings about a change of the interpretation of *meeting* (ibid.). Next, Partington (1998, 77, citing Louw 1993, 171) observes that even different forms of the same lexical item may display different prosodic behavior: "*to build up confidence*" (transitive) is favorable, while "*resistance builds up*" (intransitive) is unfavorable. Hoey (2003), too, provides an example of the way that **semantic association**, defined as the tendency of a word to keep company with a semantic set or class (some members of this set or class will usually be collocates), works. Using *consequence* as an example, he notes that it has semantic associations with concepts of logic, with (un)expectedness, with negative evaluation, and with markers of (in)significance. Of the four, only the third is related to semantic prosody:

- a] logic: unavoidable, inevitable, inexorable, inescapable, ineluctable, direct, ultimate, long-term, immediate
- b] (un)expectedness: likely, possible, probable, natural, unintended, odd, strange, planned-for
- c] negative evaluation: awful, dire, appalling, sad
- d] significance: serious, important, dramatic, enduring, prominent.

Many – but not all – of the adjectives in these semantic categories are also collocates of *consequence*, concludes Hoey (2003).

Not all lexical items display highly regular prosodies such as *to set in* or *to peddle*. Thus Partington (1998, 72) refers to Sinclair’s work where the word *happen* is shown to have a general tendency to collocate with unpleasant events, but this characteristic is not binding, as *happen* occasionally collocates with neutral or even pleasant occurrences.

Finally, *semantic prosody* remains a “contentious term”: Many writers use it to refer to the **implied attitudinal meaning** of a word, whereas Sinclair uses it to refer to the **discourse function of a unit of meaning** (Hunston 2007, 249). Moreover, there seems to be something of a foundational controversy here: While Sinclair (1996) refers to semantic prosody as the outcome of all the choices that a speaker or writer makes, Hoey (2005, 163) envisages the complete opposite of this – the initial impulsion to inform, contradict, praise, etc. If the semantic prosody matches the original intention, presumably the speaker/writer is satisfied.

Let us, by way of conclusion, note briefly that semantic prosody is considered by linguists of the “narrower semantico-prosodic persuasion” to be only one of two kinds of semantic relationships obtaining between collocates, the other being **semantic feature copying**, which is the tendency of e.g. adjectives to collocate with nouns that they share a semantic feature with, e.g. [PHYSICAL] in *physical attack* or [SCIENTIFIC] in *scientific study/experiment* (Bublitz 1996, 6–10). In any case, many combinations are not easy to analyze in such terms, due largely to the interplay of semantics and combinability/usage factors.

7. Conclusions

Is semantic prosody real and worthy of scholarly interest? Definitely. And in language teaching? Another yes, but with a proviso: it is a part of advanced-level L2 skills. In any case, it is significant, being a component contributing to the overall meaning of certain multiword units. Yet there are (still) vexing questions: Is it really (and necessarily so) – and to what extent – collocational, or indeed more broadly phraseological, in nature, and does it really stand for a type of meaning that has “a life of its own,” existing over and above the “basic” denotative (also known as referential, conceptual, or cognitive) meaning of an item that one can actually dissociate it from? This one – doubtless a key issue – is more difficult to answer in absolute terms. To begin with, Hoey (2005, 23) points out that the claim made for semantic prosody that words are colored by their characteristic surroundings has been challenged. Thus it is hardly surprising that semantic prosody has been associated

- (1) more or less absolutely with single-word items considered out of context for their attitudinal meaning existing besides denotation (e.g. *utter, to cause, to provide*),
- (2) sometimes with multiword items only (e.g. *to break out, to cause uncertainty/concern, to go in for something, day after day*), whose constituents on their own either do or do not contain an element of attitudinal meaning, or

- (3) occasionally more vaguely with a lexical item in co(n)text. In line with this view, the translator Taylor (1998, 326), for one, defines *semantic prosody* as ‘the semantic content or force of a lexical item in a given context.’

Furthermore, on another level, semantic prosody can be a kind of “additional,” “separable” meaning, that is, one existing separate from the denotation (e.g. *to credit somebody with [doing] something, to put an end to something, to fragment*), and yet in other cases this does not seem to be the case (*much-vaunted, self-indulgent*). But can this be determined in a foolproof manner? Hardly. However this may be, the analysis can be also carried out in a broader-based if vaguer fashion: Thus e.g. the very term *semantic prosody* can be used to acknowledge the fact that the habitual collocates of the core unit of meaning *naked eye* – more specifically, their semantic constituency – are capable of coloring it; in this case, the coselection of the unit with verbs/adjectives related to the notion of ‘visibility’ activates a semantic prosody which suggests DIFFICULTY (González and Macarro 2000, 107).

Significantly, semantic prosody does not always exist as a straightforward binary yes-no affair, witness e.g. *to get* as used in the passive, or the conflicting dictionary pronouncements about the emotion conveyed when *one’s eyes glint*. Moreover, it is unclear when exactly it exists over and above the denotation in a way that makes it “separable,” and when it is an inseparable part of the denotation. Furthermore, and more theoretically, one might wonder whether the existence of semantic prosodies in phrasal items is a signal that such units should be viewed as holistic units precisely because of that, or also because of that? Next, when and under what conditions can semantic prosody affect wider stretches of text? And finally, the situation is just as unclear when it comes to considering the provenance and “direction”: is semantic prosody a feature of a single-word item (connotation) that extends to its surroundings, in the process coloring some of the items in its vicinity, or is it the other way around (semantic prosody proper)? The evidence suggests that the pendulum can swing both ways: *cause* and *provide*, for example, lend themselves to the single-word-item-spreading-its-influence type of analysis, while e.g. *day after day* and *to put somebody through something* do not.

It seems wise to try to break down the topic into smaller and more manageable components, and thus to restrict oneself to concentrating on

- a) **connotation** as the “additional” meaning of single-word items, identifiable as their semantic property, whether or not considered in a given context
- b) **semantic prosody** as the semantic property arising syntagmatically from certain multiword items (typically but not exclusively collocations²⁴), where a distinction should be made between two subtypes: those where the prosodic feature is present in a constituent (*to cause a fire*) and those where it is not (*day after day*), and

24 Not everybody is likely to go for the broader interpretation, witness e.g. the following explanation from a recent textbook: Semantic prosody refers to the collocational meaning hidden between words, in or Louw’s (2000, 57) terms, ‘a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates’. (McEnery et al. 2006, 148)

- c) **syntagmatic meaning** as a semantic feature only brought into being in a given co(n)text, only observable in a specific string. Thus Taylor (1998, 85) points out that in the utterance *I would stay clear of that rat Jones!*, “the listener would not conjure up an image of a rodent interlocutor, but of a mutual acquaintance reputed, at least by the speaker, to have a deceitful or vindictive nature.”

Aside from varying the terminology (such as by introducing *discourse prosody* instead of *syntagmatic meaning*, and *collocational prosody* as a special subcategory; using *semantic prosody* as the cover term, as I have done in some parts of this survey paper), one might find it wise to try to come up with a catchall term for the three. **Associative meaning**? Or perhaps it is only the last two – semantic prosody and syntagmatic meaning – that are in need of a cover designation, in which case **discoursal meaning** could well fit the bill. Secondly, is this kind of meaning always necessarily negative or positive?²⁵ Intuitively, one would be tempted to say no – but then the binary, dichotomous treatment (good or bad, left or right, rich or poor, big or small, and all the rest) seems to be ever so close to the human mind, and ever so efficient, especially when the categories involved are comfortably broad, as in this case.

If anything, semantic prosody is a significant if complex phenomenon, showing that denotative and associative levels of lexical meaning are both real and diverse while being also strongly interactive, and that in syntagmatic terms the extent of semantic prosody (the stretch of text influenced by it) varies considerably. It is, then, only logical that it should also exist as such, and be treated as such.

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Primož Jurko

Department of translation
Faculty of Arts
University of Ljubljana

Divergent Polysemy: The Case of Slovene *namreč* vs. English *namely*

Summary

Divergent polysemy is a formidable translation problem, especially in L1-L2 translation. In the paper the case of the Slovene-English pair of items *namreč* and *namely* was used to illustrate the most frequent polysemy-triggered translation errors and their corrections. The hypothesis of full transferability of semantic structures from L1 into L2 was identified as one of the sources of errors. Since dictionaries turned out to be of limited use, electronic corpora were consulted to shed more light on the matter; they revealed huge differences in patterns of use between the two terms, which in turn determined the proposed plan of action. Bilingual lexicography, EFL teaching and translator education are key factors in improving the current situation.

Keywords: divergent polysemy, contrastive lexicology, bilingual lexicography, L1-L2 encoding translation, corpus linguistics.

Divergentna polisemija: zakaj ni vsak slovenski *namreč* v angleškem prevodu *namely*.

Povzetek

Slovensko-angleški par leksemov *namreč-namely* je služil za ponazoritev težav pri prevajanju večpomenskih enot, s posebnim poudarkom na divergentni polisemiji. Na tem primeru so prikazane najpogostejše napake študentov prevajanja in prevajalcev, ki v ciljnem jeziku pogosto zmotno predpostavijo enako pomensko strukturo leksema, kot jo ima ustrezna v izvornem jeziku. Prikazane so omejene možnosti slovarjev, z analizo elektronskih korpusov pa smo odkrili velike razlike v pogostosti izrazov v obeh jezikih, kar je bilo odločilno pri določanju strategije za nadaljnje delo. K preseganju stanja lahko največ pripomorejo dvojezično slovaropisje, poučevanje angleščine in izobraževanje prevajalcev.

Ključne besede: divergentna polisemija, protistavno besedoslovje, dvojezično slovaropisje, prevajanje v nematerni jezik, korpusno jezikoslovje.

Divergent Polysemy: The Case of Slovene *namreč* vs. English *namely*

1. Introduction

The present paper was prompted by the fact that the Slovene adverb / conjunction *namreč* is very often almost automatically translated into English as *namely*. While in some (surprisingly rare) instances this produces a good translation, such cases are vastly outnumbered by translations where the choice of *namely* is un-idiomatic at best and simply wrong at worst. In my experience, and as shall be shown, this tricky (yet entirely avoidable) issue is one of the most predictable Slovene-into-English translation errors.

The reasons for this situation are no doubt complex, as in most cases of L1 – L2 translation errors; in spite of this complexity, here we will focus only on those that fall into one of the two groups:

- a) (unjustified) relying on Slovene-English dictionaries (the Slovene-English part of Zaranšek (2006), Grad and Leeming (1990), and
- b) false assumption of full transferability of meaning structures of L1 and L2 items. These two reasons are arguably accountable for most, if not all, errors of the *namreč-namely* type.

2. Error zone

2.1 What is right...

The following examples were all taken from texts translated by Slovene students of translation in their 3rd year of studies. Consider instances such as:

- (1) Le majhna skupina držav, namreč Litva, Estonija in Slovenija, se predlogu ni pridružila. Except for a few countries, namely Lithuania, Estonia and Slovenia, all others agreed with the proposal.
- (2) V predgovoru je omenil dva poglobitna vira navdiha, namreč svojo družino in ljubezen do narave. He mentioned two sources of inspiration in the preface, namely his family and the love of nature.

In the above examples the situation is relatively clear-cut: both *namreč* and *namely* are used with reference to a previously-mentioned entity. They are both used to introduce additional information about that entity, providing the reader with more specific, even name-revealing information.

2.2 ... and what is wrong?

On the other hand, the following examples look deceptively similar to those above:

- (3) Od poglavja do poglavja nam Ihan našteva, kako stres prepoznamo, skriva se namreč v veliki zbirki znamenj, in kako se ga ubranimo...
...stress is *namely disguised in many ways...
- (4) Prejšnjega direktorja Alberta Barbero so namreč po politični liniji odstavili, namesto njega pa nastavili Moritza de Hadelna.
The previous director Alberto Barbera has *namely been ousted for political reasons, and Moritz de Hadeln came to fill the slot.
- (5) Ob avtocestah na avstrijskem Koroškem so namreč začeli zamenjavati prometne napise ...
*Namely, road signs in the Austrian Carinthia are being replaced...
- (6) Gre namreč za domišljen album, ki ...
It is *namely a rather well thought-out album, which...
- (7) Od takrat bodo namreč začeli veljati enotni "potni listi", v katerih bo ...
Uniform pet passports will *namely be introduced at that time...
- (8) Oba koncertna prostora sta namreč dopuščala bolj osebno doživljanje izvajane...
Both concert venues *namely enabled the auditorium to experience the music...
- (9) Festival ima namreč poleg kulturne tudi nalogo spodbujanja sožitja ...
Aside from its cultural role the festival has *namely also ...
- (10) Pri slovenskem jeziku namreč zadošča pisna naloga ...
A written assignment will *namely be enough...

All translations in instances (4)-(10) are wrong. They were based on the assumption that the *namreč-namely* equivalence is genuine in all texts and at all times, which is simply not true. The core of the problem at hand is then to find out just what it is that actually made the translator choose the wrong word and how to stop him/her from doing the same again and again.

3. Dictionary situation

3.1 Encoding dictionaries

The basic reference material in any L1-L2 translation is sure to be the bilingual dictionary for encoding purposes. In our analysis we will take a look at how the largest Slovene-English dictionary (Grad and Leeming 1990) and the most recent one (Zaranšek 2006) present data

relevant to our topic. Although the underlying principle applied in both dictionaries differs greatly, we will not discuss this at any length. Rather, we will focus on how well the dictionaries do what they are supposed to do: lead the translator to an idiomatic lexical choice.

The entry in Grad and Leeming is:

- (11) namreč namely; that is to say; videlicet (krajšava: viz.); (= t.j., to je) to wit; in other words; *nisem mogel govoriti z njim, bil je - bolan* I could not speak to him, as (ali seeing that) he was ill; *eden mojih sosedov, - neki X.Y., ...* one or my neighbours, to wit, one X.Y., ...

And this is the entry in Zaranšek:

- (12) namreč 1. (za pojasnjevanje) namely, that is to say. 2. (za utemeljevanje) in fact: *izumitelj namreč lahko potem patent proda* – in fact, the inventor can sell his patent later on

Namely is the first option listed in both dictionaries, so its popularity among budding translators should come as no surprise. However, if they inspected more closely, they might find it strange if not worrying that none of the examples used in Grad's or Zaranšek's dictionary is translated by *namely*. The polysemous nature of *namreč* is nevertheless far better represented in Zaranšek's entry, which hints at the complexity behind the seemingly straightforward term. The second equivalent has its limitations, as pointed out in (23), but is still a valid choice in many contexts.

It is a matter of fact that skilled student translators do not need to consult the dictionary to fulfil most of their translation tasks. Indeed, if they are familiar with the subject matter of the text, they often already know all the words. However, there will always be cases where the translator is simply in the dark as to how a given lexical item might be rendered in the target language. A reliable encoding dictionary is a good starting point in such instances – but it is only that: a starting point, from which translators should then explore various possibilities of capturing the message of the source text. Thus, before using a translation equivalent for the first time, they are very likely to consult several monolingual dictionaries of the target language, check available language corpora, study parallel texts, and / or even consult colleagues with more experience in the lexical field at hand. When the target language is English, they have one more highly reliable source at their disposal: the EFL dictionary. Let us take a look at some of them.

3.2 EFL dictionaries

Five of the most popular and, by wide consensus best EFL dictionaries – namely the *Longman Exams Coach* (LEC) (Summers 2006), *Macmillan English Dictionary* (MED) (Rundell 2002), *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD) (Wehmeier 2005), *Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary* (COBUILD) (Sinclair 2006) and the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (CALD) (Walter 2005) – were selected:

- (13) LEC: used when saying the names of the people or things you are referring to:
Three students were mentioned, namely John, Sarah and Sylvia.
- (14) MED: used for introducing more detailed information about a subject you are discussing: *Some groups, namely students and pensioners, will benefit from the new tax.*
- (15) OALD: used to introduce more exact and detailed information about sth that you have just mentioned:
We need to concentrate on our target audience, namely women aged between 20 and 30.
- (16) COBUILD: You use namely to introduce detailed information about the subject you are discussing, or a particular aspect of it.
*One group of people seems to be forgotten, namely pensioners...
They were hardly aware of the challenge facing them, namely, to re-establish prosperity.*
- (17) CALD: used when you want to give more detail or be more exact about something you have just said.
*We need to get more teachers into the classrooms where they're most needed, namely in high poverty areas.
I learned an important lesson when I lost my job, namely that nothing is a hundred percent guaranteed.*

Both definitions and examples of use in the above entries clearly show that whenever additional information (usually more precise or specific) about something or somebody is given, the use of *namely* corresponds to that of the Slovene *namreč*.

3.3 Desktop dictionaries

Somehow expectedly, the desktop dictionaries is of little use if the translator needs to check the meaning of *namely* or how it is properly used: this kind of information is simply not needed by its target users, i.e. native speakers of English. Points in case are the definitions provided in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (MW) (Mish 2003) and the *Collins English Dictionary Online* (CEDO):

- (18) MW: namely: that is to say, to wit
- (19) CEDO: namely: that is to say

The entry in both dictionaries given the same paraphrastic equivalent of *that is to say*, and MW added the now obsolete *to wit*; however the Slovene translator who turns to such dictionaries is given no clues as to what to do with *namreč*: translate it as *namely* or not?

In addition to the above two types of words that any translator has to deal with (i.e. those that s/he already knows and those that s/he has never heard nor used before), there is also a third

kind of words: neither fully known nor entirely unknown. It would appear that *namreč* is one of these words; it seems so innocent and harmless (indeed students call it “easy”) that most people will never bother looking the word up in a dictionary (and there are reasons for that, as will be argued); instead of doing so, they will follow their instinct and simply rely on *namely*. And even if they do look it up, chances are they will get it wrong anyway, as we have just seen. We may now take a look at what happens if one says no to dictionaries and relies on what is (believed to be) already known.

4. Transferability assumption

According to *SSKJ* (SAZU 1998), the principal lexicographic reference of contemporary Slovene, the semantic structure of *namreč* is twofold:

- (20) 1. as an adverb it is used to introduce specific information about something that has just been mentioned, as in
midva, namreč žena in jaz; starše obišče enkrat na leto, namreč na materin rojstni dan;
- (21) 2. as a conjunction it is used to explain, justify or give reasons for what has just been mentioned, as in
tekmovalcev je bilo malo, večina jih namreč služi vojaški rok; vseh se polašča nervoza: zdaj namreč gre za velike stvari / redko: avto imam v garaži. Namreč, ko sem ga pustil zunaj, so vlomili vanj.

When the Slovene translator approaches *namreč* with this polysemous structure embedded in his/her idiolect, it is easy to understand why s/he is tempted to translate both examples (20) and (21) with *namely*. However, as my attempts show, all those under (21) will invariably result in an error:

- (22) There were few competitors, *namely a lot of them are in the army. Everyone is getting nervous, *namely there is a lot at stake now. I keep my car in the garage. *Namely, when I left it outside once, it was broken in.

While Zaranšek’s dictionary would lead to an arguably acceptable translation in the second example, the other two would hardly make any sense:

- (23) Everyone is getting nervous, in fact, there is a lot at stake now
 There were few competitors, *in fact, a lot of them are in the army. I keep my car in the garage. *In fact, when I left it outside once, it was broken in.

Apparently, the (21) meaning of *namreč* is not present in *namely*, which is definitely the main part of the problem. The translator is thus misled by his/her idea that the L2 item is an exact copy of the L1 item in terms of its meaning structure, which s/he then simply transfers into L2 – this is only one of the contrastive lexicological phenomena that fall in the category of divergent polysemy, which has been very insightfully discussed in Gabrovšek (2005, 120–5). However,

there appears to be a basic difference between sets such as *odvisnost* vs. *dependence* or *addiction*, *tovor* vs. *freight* or *cargo* (ibid., 121) on the one hand, and *namreč* vs. *namely* on the other: one is of course the difference between full or lexical words and grammatical words; yet there appears to be something else. To find out what this might be let us take a look at how the two items are represented in their respective language corpora.

5. Corpora situation: the British National Corpus vs. FidaPlus and Nova Beseda

5.1 Frequency of occurrence

The 100 million word BNC recorded 2,145 occurrences of *namely*. A random selection of 10 hits follows:

- (24) We do not wish to commit the mistake that Woolgar believes is widespread in social science: namely, of suggesting that the only knowledge which is not subject to the influence of contingent historical, cultural, and social processes is that which we ourselves have written.
- They aim at instilling into the children what the Gikuyu call, namely, educating the children in the family and clan tradition.
- It would appear his ideas ran along similar lines to Mignet's, namely to produce a simple, cheap, no-frills aeroplane in which every enthusiastic 'Mr Average' could take to the skies.
- I now turn to the other dimension of culture within higher education; namely, higher education as a cultural experience for students.
- He is also critical of UK policy that prohibits one form of vertical restraint, namely resale price maintenance, while taking a more relaxed view of other restraints.
- In a few areas the proposed treatment will considerably undermine the main purpose of the forthcoming Financial Reporting Standard, namely to reflect the substance of transactions in assets or liabilities.
- What you really want to know is what men always want to know about women, namely would she, if asked, and if not, why not.
- But it does carry a corollary which is fundamental: namely, that for democracy to give in to terrorism is to undermine its own deepest foundation.
- The House of Lords felt there was no justification for assessing one trustee, namely the resident trustee, as, for instance, he had no right or control over the income.
- The role of the private practitioner has, however, been called into question in respect of two of the requirements of an advice agency discussed at the beginning of this chapter, namely the cost and availability of the service.

On the Slovene side the picture looks very different: in the 621 million word corpus FidaPLUS *namreč* occurs as many as 428,012 times, which makes it roughly 40 times more frequent than the English *namely* in the BNC. Let us take a look at 10 randomly selected hits:

- (25) Kot odlična novinarka je namreč znala povedati Američanom, da se v Iranu krepi večina, ki je vse drugačna, sodobnejša in strpnejša.
 Kip svobode namreč izvirno sploh ni bil usojen za New York.
 Najtežji položaj bo namreč nastopil prav v tem obdobju.
 Vse drugo je boljše. e sicer je namreč položaj več kot alarmanten.
 Avtor Komunističnega manifesta je bil namreč dopisnik konservativnega časnika New York Tribune.
 V tiskalnik sta namreč vgrajeni tehnologiji PhotoREt II in ColorSmart II.
 Pa nas vedno izigrajo in pustijo na cedilu. Tisti namreč , ki so dolžni in ki tudi obljubijo, da...
 Takrat se ljudje raje odstranijo, Weinstein je namreč znan kot najzlobnejši šef, kar si jih lahko zamislite.
 Kemična sestava je namreč precej drugačna od padavinske vode.
 Sam je namreč v njej vedno čutil tudi lirično noto.

The 40:1 ratio between the respective frequencies of *namreč* and *namely* is corroborated also by Nova beseda, a 202-million-word corpus of Slovene: the number of hits of *namreč* is 152,487 in the whole corpus. Clearly, such discrepancy merits a somewhat more detailed treatment. In the next portion, parallel corpora of Slovene and English will be briefly consulted to show what happens to *namreč* and *namely* in the course of translation.

5.2 Is *namreč* redundant?

It may just as well be, based on the data obtained from parallel corpora (Evrokorpus, Elan, Trans). The difference between frequencies of *namreč* and *namely*, respectively, is huge; however, what is somewhat surprising is the fact , judging by the way it is translated into English in Slovene texts – by total omission – *namreč* very often appears to be devoid of meaning. Consider the following examples, where this is the case:

- (26) Pretežno izvozno usmerjene dejavnosti v okviru predelovalnih dejavnosti so namreč lani proizvodnjo povečale za 6.5%, preostale dejavnosti pa le za 0.6% (gl. stran 22).
 Mainly export-oriented sectors within manufacturing increased their production by 6.5% last year, whilst other sectors recorded only 0.6% (see p. 22).

Usmeritev namreč posega v tisti socialni sloj, ki si ob sicer ugodnih pogojih za odkup družbenih stanovanj v procesu privatizacije.

This measure would affect social classes that could not afford to buy a state-owned flat in the period of privatisation.

Tako izmerjeni proizvodni stroški so se namreč v enakem obdobju povečali za 1.2%.
 Production costs measured in this way increased by 1.2% in the same period.

Korelacija rangov indikatorjev DT in GKI 12 držav je namreč visoka (0.916. brez Finske 0.932).

The correlation between the country risk and global competitiveness index indicators for the 12 countries is very high (0.916. and 0.932 excluding Finland).

Izvoz blaga je namreč po izločitvi medvalutnih razmerij porasel za 13.2%, uvoz blaga pa za 10.9%, medtem_ko je bil izvoz blaga po tekočih USD v prvih petih mesecih v primerjavi z enakim obdobjem lani večji za 6.6%, uvoz blaga pa za 4.6%.

... inter-currency ratio changes had more influence on exports than imports and one can see that, after inter-currency ratio adjustments, the export of goods increased by 13.2% and the import of goods by 10.9%. However, exports calculated in current US\$ rate increased by 6.6% and imports by 4.6% comparing the first five months this year to the same period last year.

Kaj malo bi namreč pomenilo zgolj državno varstvo pravic in svoboščin, če bi to ne bilo izraz volje in zahteve njenih državljanov

There would be little weight in the mere protection by the state of rights and freedoms, if this was not an expression of the will and demands of its citizens.

V prvih nekaj letih naj bi se namreč na račun zadrževanja rasti plač in socialnih izdatkov omogočalo dodatno investiranje in prestrukturiranje, ki pa naj bi se...

... efforts made to compress wages and social expenditures will in the first years permit additional investment and restructuring expenditure to ease the transition process and sustain growth.

Poljski tržni delež je namreč v primerjavi s slovenskim do leta 1996 bistveno hitreje naraščal, kljub relativni rasti poljskega deleža stroškov dela v ...

Until 1996, Poland's market share had been rising faster than Slovenia's despite Poland's relative growth in the share of labour costs in value added, and Hungary's share rose slower despite a fall in the share of labour costs in value added compared to Slovenia.

Zavlačevanje z izvedbo reform bi namreč upočasnilo gospodarsko rast, s tem pa tudi znižalo davčne prihode, izdatki za pokojnine pa bi še naprej ...

... social protection measures or to prevent a deterioration of the public accounts, if undue delays in the implementation of the above mentioned reforms should slow down the rate of growth of the economy and hence of the tax revenues, whilst the cost of pensions would continue to increase at its present high pace.

It seems hard to argue that the English texts in the above examples lack any information that is present in the Slovene originals, although, admittedly, these examples should be presented in their original context, as it is possible (although not very likely) that nuances of meaning contained in *namreč* were shifted to sentences preceding or following the one discussed. If *namreč* is in fact in Slovene predominantly used as a semantically empty word, this would account for the surprisingly high difference in the overall frequency compared to *namely*. Yet, intuitively, most

Slovenes would argue that *namreč* does have a meaning and that it serves the purpose of making clear that what follows is only a further clarification of the facts stated earlier. On the other hand, such elements stressing clarification may be felt as a patronizing attitude of the speaker/author toward his/her audience/readers – why additionally explain the obvious? Such expressions or even a patronizing tone alone are not well received in any culture, to be sure, but are perhaps particularly painstakingly avoided in English, where patronizing almost equals rudeness. This might be seen as another factor that leads to the omission of patronizing elements and thus contributes to the tendency of translating *namreč* with nothing at all.

Random sampling of the corpora has revealed that in Slovene the predominant use of *namreč* is that of a discourse marker with loose anaphoric reference: in this function it may refer to any fact, circumstance and even complex situation mentioned earlier. According to our findings the (20) meaning of *namreč*, which can be translated into English as *namely*, accounts for less than 1 per cent of all occurrences; however, further and more extensive research of Slovene corpora is needed to corroborate these preliminary results.

5.3 Not only a beginner's problem

Another interesting fact arose from analyzing parallel corpora: even in Slovene-English translations which were done by highly skilled translators, the use of *namely* in the English translation is quite frequently incorrect, as in the following examples from the IJS-ELAN corpus:

- (27) opredeljen kot zadnji, prav gotovo predstavlja pogoj in hkrati oporo prenovi, vprašanje povečanja absorpcijske moči sistema, ki jo dosežemo s pridobivanjem novih znanj in usposobljenosti je namreč odločujoče za vse nadaljnje transformacijske procese. Although the area is mentioned as the last one, there is no doubt that it represents the precondition, and at the same time support, of the modernisation. Namely, the issue of the increase of the absorption strength of the system gained by the acquisition of new knowledge and training is decisive for all further transformation processes.

naj bi namreč na vprašanje, kje so kritične točke ali razhajanja med nacionalnimi in “ evropskimi “ standardi v institucionalnem pogledu, organizaciji ali pravni ureditvi ter predvidela ukrepe za njihovo uskladitev.

Namely, it is supposed to answer the question as to where are the critical points or points of divergence...

Enostavna primerjava policijskih statistik namreč ne more pokazati kvalitativnih sprememb, saj je metodologija zajemanja podatkov prilagojena spremljanju konvencionalnega kriminala. Šele na podlagi

Namely, a simple comparison of police statistics cannot indicate qualitative modifications, since data selection methodology is adapted to the study of conventional crime.

The preceding examples were translated by a team of professional translators, yet are in no way different from those of my students (cf. 2.2), in spite of the fact that the levels of acquired translation skills of the former and the latter differ greatly. What we are dealing with here is not a beginner's translation error, but clearly a danger facing the non-attentive translator at all times.

5.4 The other way around

An additional intriguing fact was provided by Evrokopus: as it is designed to suggest a translation equivalent for any query entered, it was interesting to see that when the direction of translation was reversed, i.e. from English into Slovene, the suggested term for *namely* was *in sicer*. Here too, cases of questionable (if not wrong) “automatic” translation *namely-namreč* were found. In (28) the choice of *in sicer* placed immediately after the comma would lead to an arguably better Slovene rendering:

- (28) restructuring and conversion have two main financial impacts on the producer, namely loss of earnings during the period of conversion and the costs of implementing those measures;
 Prestrukturiranje in preusmeritev imata dva pomembna finančna vpliva na proizvajalca, izgubo dobička v času prestrukturiranja namreč in stroške izvajanja teh ukrepov;

The difference between the use of *namreč* in Slovene texts and that of *namely* in English has received an early treatment in Klinar (1994, 216). The author provides invaluable practical insight with a plethora of translation equivalents, ranging from the ubiquitous *namely* to several other possible lexical choices, such as *that is/was, i.e., for, as, because, the thing is, the reason is*, and even a shift in word order to foreground a certain element in the utterance. All the proposed solutions are illustrated by means of a Slovene sentence and its English translation, so the translator is well-served in his/her search for translation options.

6. Solution?

The answer to the problem above (and a host of similar ones) will have to come from various sources. Bilingual lexicography, EFL teaching and translator education will each have to provide parts of the puzzle.

6.1 Better dictionaries

First of all, a good encoding dictionary will take into account the frequency of a given meaning of a polysemous lexeme in the source language and organize its microstructure accordingly. In such dictionaries, the most frequent meaning is listed first and followed by others with decreasing frequency. This principle has been put into practice since the very beginning of corpus-based lexicography back in the 1980s, when the Collins publishing house led the way with their corpus-driven COBUILD dictionary (Sinclair 1987). Of course, polysemy and divergent

polysemy in particular deserve special attention: here not only possible translation equivalents should be listed, but also guidelines for the dictionary user as to how and when to pick a certain equivalent. In the case of *namreč-namely* highly specific contrastive relationship the wide gap between usages in Slovene and English certainly merits a usage note containing some sort of warning or explanation of the systematic difference. In an encoding dictionary, the entry for *namreč* – in accordance with the above principles – might look something like this:

namreč – (za pojasnjevanje) that is, that was: *nekaj časa je to šlo, namreč, ko je bil še doma* – for a while it worked, that was while he was still at home; (v vzročni zvezi) for, as, because: *Mankoč ima tu rahlo prednost - ima namreč 5 zlatih, 1 srebrno in 2 bronasti kolajn* – Mankoč is slightly in front, for he has won 5 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze medals; (za podrobnejše razlage ali naštevanje) namely: *davčna stopnja bo še nižja, namreč 1,91 odstotka vrednosti* – tax rate will be even lower, namely 1.91 percent of the value

6.2 Better teaching

What can be done in the EFL field? A lot, where lexical topics are concerned. It is understandable and in fact almost universal practice that learners at their early levels are painted a simple picture in terms of lexis, one they can relate to and can use to begin to build their L2 vocabulary. A more detailed and complex rendering of the matter would be counterproductive and only lead to confusion at this primary stage. The potential danger of the boiled-down oversimplified learners' version of the vocabulary is, however, in clinging to it for too long: even advanced students of translation often commit errors that reflect a one-to-one L1-L2 lexical mapping. Unfortunately, things are not that simple and we can only begin to guess at how intricate lexical reality is, let alone an interlingual one. The only question is: when are EFL learners ready to have their idealized lexical picture distorted or even shattered by real-life issues like polysemy, zero derivation, false friends? What is not too early, and not too late? It will ultimately depend on the learner, of course, but certainly no later than at upper intermediate level, i.e. in years 3 and 4 of secondary schooling. Better awareness of the complexity behind words would thus no longer be limited to the lucky few who happen to have that extra knack in foreign languages we often dub talent. Besides grammar and morphology, vocabulary should also be given due weight and more time in secondary school curricula should be devoted to vocabulary-related topics.

6.3 Translator training

In short, in translator training contrastive lexicology is the cure. Once alerted to the existence of lexical problems like collocations, paradigmatic meaning relations, (non-)overlapping phraseology patterns etc, students will gradually become more aware of numerous traps and consequently more cautious in both encoding and decoding. Given the overwhelming size of the topic and its complexity, this is bound to be a slow (in fact never-ending) process. Frustrating, of course. Rewarding? No doubt.

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Smiljana Komar

University of Ljubljana

Faculty of Arts, English Department

The Interface between Intonation and Function of Discourse Markers in English

Summary

The article examines how the function and the distribution of pragmatic markers in spoken discourse are reflected by prosodic means. The results of this preliminary analysis show that the intonation largely depends on the discourse function of a marker, on the one hand, and the speaker's perception of its importance for the ongoing discourse. A vague division can be made between the prosodic patterns of those discourse markers which are strongly involved in the organisation and monitoring of the discourse, and those whose function is more pragmatic.

Key words: linguistics, discourse analysis, intonation

Povezava med intonacijo in funkcijo diskurznihi označevalcev v angleščini

Povzetek

V članku analiziram, kako se funkcija in položaj pragmatičnih označevalcev v govoru odražata v stavčni intonaciji. Rezultati preliminarne analize kažejo, da je stavčna intonacija močno odvisna od diskurzne funkcije označevalca na eni strani in govorčeve presoje, kako pomemben je označevalec za potek diskurza. V grobem lahko ločimo med intonacijskim vzorcem, ki je značilen za tiste diskurzne označevalce, ki imajo bolj organizacijsko in opazovalno vlogo v diskurzu ter tistimi, ki imajo bolj pragmatično vlogo.

Ključne besede: jezikoslovje, besediloslovje, intonacija

The Interface between Intonation and Function of Discourse Markers in English

1. Introduction

In every spoken interaction speakers use a number of different lexical items¹ which at first sight do not contribute much to the contents of conversation, but are indispensable for the organization, structuring and monitoring of discourse, a smooth turn-taking system, as well as the expression of speakers' attitude to the message. Such lexical items are in English *well, now, oh, but, I mean, you know, as a matter of fact*, to mention only a few. In the literature on discourse and conversation analysis these lexical items are often referred to by different names, including *discourse particles, discourse markers, interactional signals, discourse connectives, pragmatic markers, or sentence connectives*. Some of them are used more often with reference to written language, others to spoken. The diversity of names arises from the fact that these lexical items morphologically belong to different parts of speech, are not obligatory and perform different discourse and pragmatic functions.

What is then the purpose of analysing discourse markers? Firstly, discourse markers perform an important role in establishing cohesion in speech. They often have the anaphoric and cataphoric character thus pointing backward and forward in discourse at the same time. Secondly, they are used for organizing and monitoring the topic development. As such they open or close a topic, mark topic boundaries and attract listeners' attention. They introduce reformulated utterances and make reference to shared knowledge. Finally, on a more pragmatic level, they may function as markers of the speakers' view points, their emotional reactions, or to tone down the utterance's effect.

The main question in analysing discourse markers is how speakers distinguish between different discourse and pragmatic functions of the same lexical item. In other words, how speakers know when *well* is used as a topic opening or closing device or as an introduction to a reformulated utterance, or when *I mean* is a face saving expression or a marker that the following statement is a rewording or a clarification of the previous one.

One answer to the question is the position of the marker in the utterance and discourse. But what clues are available to listeners when the marker occupies the same position in the discourse but performs different pragmatic functions? I believe that in such cases intonation often becomes significant.

For this preliminary analysis of the relation between pragmatic markers and their prosodic treatment I chose a sample of the BBC TV series *As Time Goes By*. The choice of the material was governed by the fact that the script contains numerous pragmatic markers and that the actors are aware of their discourse function and know how to pronounce them in order to express that function.

1 Lexical item is a cover term used with reference to single words, phrases or even clauses.

2. Discourse markers, interactional signals and pragmatic markers

Schiffrin, in her seminal work on discourse markers gives an operational definition of them as “**sequentially dependent** elements which bracket units of talk” (1987, 31) and a theoretical definition of them as “members of a **functional** class of verbal (and non-verbal) devices which provide contextual coordinates for ongoing talk” (ibid., 41). The sequential dependence means that markers are items which function on a discourse level and are not dependent on smaller linguistic units.

The list of discourse markers is relatively open and contains lexical items which belong to different parts of speech: *and*, *but*, *or* are conjunctions; *so* can be a conjunction or an adverb; *now* and *then* are adverbs, whereas *oh* and *well* can be adverb, interjection, filler or particle. To complicate matters even more, the discourse markers also include phrases: *in general*, or even clauses: *you know*. Thus it seems reasonable to treat discourse markers according to the functions they perform in a discourse and not according to their morphological or syntactical characteristics.

In Stenström’s model of spoken interaction², markers play important roles as topic organizers and monitors, as well as turn-taking devices. Thus she makes a distinction between discourse markers and interactional signals. Both refer to the same set of lexical items, but the difference lies in their function and position in the discourse. “Interactional signals are used to start, carry on and terminate the conversation” (ibid., 61), whereas “discourse markers are used to organize and hold the turn and to mark boundaries in the discourse” (ibid., 63). The best way to distinguish between them is to view them as “filling a gap in the exchange” (ibid., 60). As such they can make up a turn of their own or they may fill a slot in a turn. Stenström underlines the fact that both discourse markers and interactional signals can fill more than one gap in the exchange and more than one slot in the turn, or can do different things in different places, as well as different things in the same place (ibid., 61).

Interactional signals play an important role in a smooth exchange of turns. As such they can appeal for and provide feedback, respond or involve the listener in conversation. Discourse markers, on the other hand, serve to start or end a conversation, introduce a topic, subtopic, digression or the resumption of the old topic.

With the view of encompassing both discourse and pragmatic functions of markers, Carter and McCarthy introduce the term pragmatic markers to refer to a “class of items which operate outside the structural limits of the clause and which encode speakers’ intentions and interpersonal meanings” (2006, 208). Pragmatic markers thus include discourse markers, stance markers, hedges and interjections.

Carter and McCarthy explain discourse markers as words, phrases and clauses which “link segments of the discourse to one another in ways which reflect choices of monitoring, organisation and management exercised by the speaker” (ibid.). Table 1 presents the most typical words, phrases

2 Stenström’s model of spoken interaction consists of five levels: act, turn, move, exchange and transaction, of which act is the lowest level and transaction the highest.

and even clauses which function in the organisation and monitoring of discourse in English.

Discourse Markers						
Organizing				Monitoring		
Open&-close	Sequence	Topic Boundary	Focus	Reformulate	Shared Knowledge	Responding
so; (all) right; then; now; good; well; OK; anyway; fine; lovely; great.	and; and then; finally; first (of all); firstly; for a start; going back to; in general; in the end; in the first place; last of all; lastly; next; on top of that; second; secondly; so; there again; third(ly); to sum up; what's more	OK; so; yeah; and; right; anyway.	hey; listen; look; oh; well; anyway; so.	as I was saying; as it were; I mean; if you like; in a manner of speaking; in other words; not to say; or rather; so to speak; strictly speaking; that's to say; to put it in another way; to put it bluntly/mildly; well.	you see; see; you know.	right; all right; I see; good; great; fine; OK.

Table 1 Discourse markers in English

Stance markers, hedges and interjections are also pragmatic markers whose functions are to express the speaker's attitude towards the message (i.e. stance markers), to tone down the utterance in order not to sound too blunt (i.e. hedges) and to express different emotional reactions to the utterance or the situation (i.e. interjections). Table 2 presents lexical items which are most typically used as stance markers, hedges and interjections in English.

Stance Markers	Hedges	Interjections
actually; admittedly; amazingly; basically; certainly; clearly; confidentially; doubtless; essentially; frankly; to be frank; fortunately; honestly; to be honest; hopefully; ideally; if you ask me; I'm afraid; I must admit; I must say; I think; in fact; indeed; literally; naturally; no doubt; obviously; of course; predictably; putting (to put) it mildly/bluntly; (quite) rightly; really; sadly; seriously; (I'm) sorry; strictly speaking; surprisingly; thankfully; to tell you the truth; understandably; undoubtedly; unfortunately.	apparently; arguably; by any chance; I think; just (about) kind of; like; maybe; perhaps; presumably; probably; roughly; sort of; surely.	bother; crikey; damn; God; goodness (me); gosh; (good) heavens; hooray; jeez; ooh; oh no; oops; ouch; ow; ugh; tut-tut; whoops; wow; yippee; yuk.

Table 2 Stance markers, hedges and interjections in English

3. Discourse markers and intonation

Intonation performs grammatical, discourse and pragmatic functions in speech. The first mainly concerns the division of speech into intonation phrases (IP) and the location of the nuclear syllable; the second and the third are concerned with different pitch movements whose discourse function is to express the anaphoric and cataphoric references, as well as contrast in meaning, while their pragmatic function is to express speakers' attitudes towards the message and their emotional reactions to the message or situation.

The fact that the same lexical items are used to express both discourse and pragmatic functions is an adequate reason for a closer prosodic analysis with a view of finding an interface between their distribution in discourse, on the one hand, and their discourse and pragmatic roles, on the other.

3.1 Discourse markers and tonality³

Carter and McCarthy (2006, 539) claim that prosodic information helps to distinguish between discourse markers and other parts of speech or clauses. According to them discourse markers often occupy their own intonation phrase and are accompanied by brief pauses. Although this may sometimes be the case, it is nonetheless too unreliable to be regarded as the main distinction between the discourse and non discourse marking of lexical items.

If we take, for example, the expression *I mean* in examples (1) and (2), it is clear that in (1) it is part of the clause structure and as such non discourse marking, while in (2) it has the parenthetical function within a sentence and is thus regarded as a discourse marker:

- (1) *I mean* what I say.
- (2) *I mean*, wouldn't it be better to postpone the meeting.

But when it comes to the division of the two examples into intonation phrases, speakers always have a choice between the marked or unmarked version. It is thus reasonable to expect that the unmarked version of example (1) would consist of one intonation phrase, as in (1a), while in the marked version the speaker may insert the intonation phrase division after *I mean*, as in (1b), and thus emphasise his intention:

- (1a) *I mean* what I say.⁴
- (1b) *I mean |* what I say.

3 Tonality is the system of dividing speech into intonation phrases.

4 The underlined syllables are nuclear or tonic syllables.

Similarly, in example (2), the speaker may separate the discourse marker *I mean* from the rest of the clause in order to emphasise the rewording or the previous utterance or to clarify it, as in (2a), or decide for only one intonation phrase in which *I mean* is not given any special emphasis, as in (2b):

(2a) *I mean* | wouldn't it be better to postpone the meeting.

(2b) *I mean*, wouldn't it be better to postpone the meeting.

The relationship between tonality and discourse markers is not always straightforward; the chances for a discourse marker to be separated from the rest of the clause by an intonation phrase mostly depend on the position of the marker in the discourse (i.e. initial, medial or final in an utterance or a turn), as well as its discourse function (i.e. organising or monitoring discourse). But even there speakers have a choice to express their ideas in such a way as to guarantee successful communication even if it means overriding general guidelines.

3.2 Discourse markers and tones

When discourse markers are treated as separate intonation phrases, they contain the nuclear syllable where a particular pitch movement or tone is realised. The pitch height of the tone can also be significant. The decision with which tone and at which pitch height a discourse marker will be realised also depends on the position and function of the marker and will be discussed in the following.

4. Function and intonation of discourse markers

The purpose of this is to discuss different functions of discourse markers and their prosodic realisations. The discourse markers are divided into those which are mainly involved in the organization of discourse in terms of opening and closing topics or conversation, expressing relationship of sequence between parts of discourse and focusing attention, diverting, shifting and resuming a topic, as well as those which enable speakers to monitor and manage the discourse.

4.1 Organising discourse

Discourse markers play an important role in the organisation of discourse. They are particularly frequent in opening and closing a conversation and in opening, re-opening, closing or temporarily closing a topic. In all these functions most of the discourse markers will indeed have their own intonation phrase since they represent a transition from one topic to another or mark the beginning or the end of a conversation. They are attention seeking devices and as such deserve a prosodic treatment of their own.

According to Brazil's intonation model (1997) the fall (↘) is used to introduce information which is unknown to the addressee, while the high key (↑) expresses contrast to the message in the previous intonation phrase or general knowledge.

In example (3) there are two discourse markers which function as discourse **closer** (*well*) and **opener** (*now*). In both cases the speaker treats them as separate intonation phrases and in both cases uses falling tones uttered in high key:

(3) Jean: ↑↘ Well, | that's all finished. || ↑↘ Now, | what have you been chatting about?

Similarly in examples (4) and (5) the discourse markers *so* and *anyway* are used as topic and subtopic **boundaries**, respectively. In (4) Margaret uses *so* to pick up on information she has learnt and which was interrupted by ordering drinks, while in (5) Lionel uses *anyway* to mark the boundary between his behaviour to his ex-wife and the fact that she has suggested to meet him. They both use separate intonation phrases for the markers and pronounce them in high key and with the falling tones:

(4) Lionel: You didn't like champagne.

Margaret: I didn't like lots of things. | ↑↘ So, | you're married again. || How long ago did that happen?

(5) Jean: Have you shown an interest in her?

Lionel: Good God, | no! ↑↘ Anyway, | she says she's in London for a few days and might we meet for a drink.

Another distribution of discourse markers where there is a very high possibility for them to be treated as separate intonation phrases is when they are used to **focus** the attention of the listener on something that is of high importance. In example (6) Jean uses the marker *look* to draw Lionel's attention to an important fact, namely that she cannot get dressed by 8:30. She pronounces it as an intonation phrase of its own, in high key and with the falling tone:

(6) Jean: ↑↘ Look, | you know what I mean. || I can't possibly be ready for 8:30.

4.2 Monitoring discourse

The process of monitoring the discourse mainly concerns reformulations and monitoring shared knowledge. The function of **reformulations** is to change the wording in such a way that it better fits the context of interaction or speakers' intentions. Whether a discourse marker used in this function will be treated as a separate intonation phrase is less predictable than in the case of discourse openers or closers. The choice of tone is also less predictable. Our analysis shows a pattern in which the discourse markers *well* and *I mean* are most frequently used in this function and are as such treated as separate intonation phrases with either falling or level intonation, as in examples (7) and (8):

(7) Sandy: They're never her own, are they?
 Judy: No way! || ↘ Well, | at least I hope not.

(8) Jean: Oh, credit me with some taste! || I → mean | he's very, very good looking
 but if he has a brain he did a very good job of hiding it.

In **monitoring shared knowledge** speakers check the state of common knowledge for which they use expressions *you know*, *you see* and *see*. According to Carter and McCarthy (2006, 539) the difference between *you know*, on the one hand, and *you see* or *see*, on the other, is that the former assumes that the listener may not have the same knowledge as the speaker, while the latter presumes that the speaker and the listener share the same knowledge or have the same point of view.

The distribution of these monitors is usually at the end or in the middle of a turn and they are often treated as separate intonation phrases. As to the pitch movement, they can be said with either rising or falling tones; if the speaker wants to elicit a response from the listener, the rising tone is more appropriate, as in example (9):

(9) Judy: ... I'm trying, as discretely as I can, to push Alistair into Sandy's
 direction. I mean, she's a smashing girl. Once you get past his ego, he's not
 a bad chap. *You ↗ see?*
 Jean: I suppose I do.

If the speaker does not want a response from the listener, the falling tone is usually used, as in example (10):

(10) Lionel: Dull nights on television, | *you ↘ know*.

Although Carter and McCarthy (2006) do not treat question tags as discourse markers, Stenström (1994) does mention them as lexical items which may function as discourse markers or interactional signals. And indeed they do perform a monitoring function. Depending on the intonation, they may be used to engage the listener in the conversation and invite agreement or disagreement with the speaker. In example (11) the rising intonation on the tag clearly invites the listener to express an opinion:

(11) Sandy: They're never her own, | ↗ are they?
 Judy: No way! Well, at least I hope not.

The tag in example (12), on the other hand, is not felt to be an invitation to respond, but if the listener does say something it is usually in agreement with the speaker's opinion:

(12) Lionel: My God! She can knock it back, | ↘can't she?

Jean: She must've had two bottles to herself.

5. Other pragmatic markers

Hedges, stance markers and interjections are those lexical items which also stand out of the syntactic structure of a clause and which do not contribute much to the main topic of conversation; in other words, their absence does not change the meaning or the grammatical acceptability of the utterance. But they are nonetheless indispensable expressions if speakers want to modify their wording.

5.1 Hedges

Spontaneous speech is an online process, which means that listeners hear everything that speakers intend to say even if it is not perfectly formulated. Sometimes they may, halfway through the utterance, realise that the wording may sound too blunt or assertive so they decide to tone it down by using a hedge.

When it comes to the division into intonation phrases, it would be rather unlikely that hedges were treated as separate IP's unless they also express hesitation on the part of the speaker, as in (13):

(13) Lionel: Look, there'll be no competition. I mean, Margaret and clothes,

| they → just | → sort of | hang on her.

It is far more likely for hedges to be incorporated in the same intonation phrase as the part of the discourse they are referring to. As such they are either completely unstressed (14) or they may be part of the pre-nuclear segment (15), and sometimes even carry the nuclear tone (16):

(14) Jean: She was very glamorous, though, until she started weaving about.

Lionel: Well, that's thanks to old Butterworth's millions, *I suppose*.

(15) Jean: I *sup*↑*pose* ↘some women | do get more attractive the older they get.

(16) Lionel: Does that make any sense to you?

Jean: Well, in a ↘ sort of way.

5.2 Stance markers

A number of adjectives, adverbs, phrases and even clauses are used to express the speaker's attitude or stance towards the message. The prosodic treatment of a stance marker largely depends on its position in the utterance, the context of interaction, but above all on the speaker's perception of its importance for the ongoing discourse.

In example (17) Jean is disturbed by the fact that Lionel's ex-wife is so glamorous-looking although he has always claimed the opposite. Hence her emphatic prosodic treatment of the hedge *honestly* which she pronounces as a separate intonation phrase and with the fall-rise tone which is often used to express an implicature or a contrast – in this case, Lionel's dishonesty.

(17) Jean: ↘↗*Honestly* Lionel, | ages ago when I asked you about her, why didn't you say she was a very glamorous women? I could've lived with that. I wouldn't've liked it, but I could've lived with it.

If a stance marker is a clause, there are good chances that it will be treated as a separate intonation phrase, especially if it is used to introduce an important piece of information which is in contrast with the general idea, as in (18), or common knowledge, as in (19):⁵

(18) Margaret: I don't want to feel better. I'm apologizing for my behaviour, not my life. Oh! *The* ↘↗ *truth* is | I wanted to show Lionel that I didn't remain the dull, boring wife you always thought I was.

(19) Margaret: Well, | *oddly* e↘↗ *nough* | I do remember what information I managed to wring out of you last night. It's a love story?

In both cases the contrastive meaning is highlighted by means of the fall-rise tone.

5.3 Interjections

Interjections are frequently used in speech if speakers want to express their emotional excitement about the message or when they want to warn the addressee about something. Due to this function, they are always treated as separate intonation phrases while the default tone is the fall, as in (20):

(20) Margaret: ↑↘*Oh!* | You're always hungry! | ↑↘*Hey!* | Why don't we all make an evening of it?

5 Margaret, Lionel and Jean know that Margaret had a bit too much to drink the previous night.

Since interjections are emotional and attitudinal expressions, other pitch contours are also possible. In example (21) the interjection *oh* is pronounced with the rise-fall indicating Margaret's amazement about the fact that Jean does not dye her hair but is happy with her natural colour:

(21) Margaret: What's your natural colour, Jean?

Jean: This.

Margaret: ↗↘ Oh!

An additional attitudinal dimension is provided by the key or the pitch height at which the interjection is said. If an interjection is pronounced with the low key, it often sounds either very formal or unimpressed, as in example (22):

(22) Margaret: But I don't think I ever said I found you a very dull, boring husband.

Lionel: ↓↘ Oh!

6. Conclusion

In the paper I tried to shed some light on the prosodic features of pragmatic markers, i.e. those lexical items which are indispensable elements in speech but which at the same time stand out of the sentence or clause structure. I followed the division of pragmatic markers into discourse markers, hedges, stance markers and interjections, as suggested by Carter and McCarthy (2006).

The prosodic analysis which I carried out on a sample of the BBC TV series *As Time Goes By* has shown that the intonation of pragmatic markers is not very straightforward but very dependent on the speaker's perception of how important a particular marker is. There are, however, some prosodic patterns which are more typical of discourse markers on the one hand, and other pragmatic markers, on the other.

Discourse markers whose function is to open or close a conversation or to mark transitions from one topic to another are most likely to be treated as separate intonation phrases. The same goes for those markers whose function is to make reference to shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener. Stance markers and hedges are often incorporated in the same intonation phrase unless the speaker feels the need to highlight a marker for some particular reason.

If a pragmatic marker is treated as a separate intonation phrase, it may be said in a variety of tones; the choice depends on the function as well as the meaning of the marker. Thus the falling tone is expected for those discourse markers which function as openers, closers of topics or conversations, as well as when they function as focusing devices. For discourse markers whose function is to refer to the shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener, two or even three tones are possible; if the speaker assumes that the addressee shares the same information and hence does

not expect a response, the falling tone will be used. If the speaker wants to elicit the addressee's response in order to check the common knowledge, the rise or the fall-rise will be used.

Stance markers and hedges are treated as separate intonation phrases either when they express the speaker's hesitation or when their contribution to the discourse is so important that they warrant special emphasis. In the former case they are often said with the level tone, whereas in the latter, they may be said either with the fall or the fall-rise. The fall introduces a new point of view, whereas the fall-rise is likely to be used when the marker introduces a contrasting stance.

In conclusion I would like to stress the fact that there is some correlation between the intonation of pragmatic markers and their position and function in the discourse. Although the interface is rather arbitrary, there are, nonetheless, some general guidelines which speakers are likely to follow.

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II.

LITERATURE

Michelle Gadpaille

University of Maribor

Faculty of Arts, Department of English and American Studies

Psyche's Daughter of Today: Sara Jeannette Duncan and the New Woman

Summary

The Canadian novelist Sara Jeannette Duncan (1861-1922) constructed a New Woman heroine in the *fin-de- siècle* novel, *A Daughter of Today* (1894). Written in the popular mode of the transatlantic novel, the work engages in debate on the appropriate construction of femininity in art and public life. The heroine, Elfrida Bell, descends from artist, to muse, to model, to painted image—a descent framed by a rival male artist and a hostile London art scene. Represented as Psyche, the heroine undergoes a quest and failure similar to the mythical one. Adaptation of the Psyche myth clarifies the position of Duncan in the spectrum of gender ideologies of the *fin-de- siècle*.

Key words: Sara Jeannette Duncan, New Woman, Psyche, Canadian Fiction

Psihina Hči današnjega časa: Sara Jeannette Duncan in nova ženska

Povzetek

Kanadska romanopiska Sara Jeannette Duncan (1861–1922) je v svojem findesièclovskem romanu *Hči današnjega časa* (1894) ustvarila novo podobo junakinje. Delo, napisano v priljubljeni obliki t.i. prekooceanskega romana, razpravlja o primerni konstrukciji ženskosti v umetnosti in javnem življenju. Junakinja Elfrida Bell izgubi položaj umetnice in postane najprej muza, potem model in nazadnje slikana podoba, kar je plod zarote umetnika-tekmeca ter sovražne umetniške scene v Londonu. Upodobljena kot Psiha se junakinja poda na pot iskanja in, podobno kot njena mitološka "sestra", doživi polom. Priredba mita o Psihi osvetli vlogo pisateljice Duncan v spektru spolnih ideologij fin de siècle.

Ključne besede: Sara Jeannette Duncan, nova ženska, Psiha, kanadska proza

Psyche's Daughter of Today: Sara Jeannette Duncan and the New Woman

1. Introduction

In 1894, the “annus mirabilis” (Pykett 1992, 137) of New Women’s writing, Canadian literature stood poised to contribute several novels about a new generation of women. Sara Jeannette Duncan’s *A Daughter of Today* (1895) is not as sensational in content as many of its British counterparts (e.g., Sarah Grand, *The Heavenly Twins*, 1893; Geroge Egerton, *Keynotes*, 1893), but still boldly modern in its choice of the independent New Woman as heroine.¹

Duncan’s heroine Elfrida Bell is a freethinking rationalist, one of the intellectual elite, who is fitted as much by birth as by talent to storm the European art scene. This she does, following a generation of Jamesian heroes and heroines to Paris. Duncan chose to make the Bell family into Americans, not Canadians; however, there is more than a hint of the autobiographical in this story of a colonial talent who fails in her assault on the stronghold of artistic London.²

The novel exhibits the pattern of unfulfilled narrative expectations common to many novels of the New Woman era. One critic coined the term “boomerang books” to describe such New Woman fiction (Ardis 1990, 140). This is not the predictable progress of the conventional heroine, who moves through courtship and danger to marriage and a happy ending, but a disturbing parabola of failed ambition and thwarted expectation. Unlike earlier heroines, New Woman heroines, including Elfrida, have quests of their own, unrelated to any courtship plot. Elfrida, for example, seeks independence and artistic success and begins her quest strongly in a Parisian atelier. However, the quest for success falters, as Duncan’s heroine becomes entangled in cross-currents of the European art world. In the middle of the novel, the heroine confronts her image in a central pictorial representation, seeing herself imprisoned in a painting by a male artist.

The heroine’s struggles against such artistic (and sexual) commodification are not easily resolved by the conventional happy ending. In Duncan’s *A Daughter of Today*, artistic realism dictates a tragic ending: Elfrida fails at painting and enjoys only one triumph in her literary career. She scorns marriage and acknowledges too late her sexual interest in John Kendal, the painter of her portrait. Fired by ambition, jealousy, and revenge, Elfrida destroys this masterpiece of revealing portraiture and commits suicide, her final artistic gesture. The closure of this novel and others in the genre indicates the paradoxical position of New Women in a novel tradition once dominated by romance. The new heroines’ demands – on the one hand, as women for independence, and, on the other, as artists for voice and vision – conflict with the old demands of the happy ending: an education in proper womanly behaviour, an

1 There has been debate about exactly who coined the phrase “New Woman,” but Ann Ardis argues that it was invented and used by Ouida in May 1894.

2 To take just one example, “Bell” is the surname the novel’s heroine but also the maiden name of Sara Jeannette Duncan’s mother.

acknowledgement of previous mistakes in judgment and acceptance of display as a framed, beautiful, and loved object in the possession of the hero.³ Appearing shortly after *The Picture of Dorian Grey* (1890-91), *A Daughter of Today* is indebted to Wilde for its sense of the sinister interdependence among artist, subject, and painting, as well as the subtle sexual dialectic inherent in the painter/model relationship.

In depicting this complex relation Duncan draws on nineteenth-century traditions of ekphrasis in the realistic novel as well as on mythology to define both the ideal of female beauty and a pattern of unfulfilled female quest. Within the Greek story of Psyche's love and betrayal, Duncan found both a classical counterpart for her own conflicted view on the independence of the contemporary woman, as well as a prefabricated structure of aspiration and failure. As in the myth, female failure is directly related to the objectification of female beauty. Against the background of the Psyche myth, Elfrida's struggle to take literary London by storm becomes a drama of visual commodification, set against esthetic debates current in late nineteenth-century studios and Academies. As painters and critics debated the place of realism or "nudity" in art and literature, Duncan's Elfrida aspires to lead a minor revolution for women in a literary and artistic world where roles have been largely prescribed. A closer look at the Psyche trope is necessary in order to understand what Duncan says about the independent, artistic woman at the turn of the century.

That Duncan should choose this particular figure from Greek myth as the defining motif for her heroine is probably less coincidence than the culmination of a long-standing cultural discourse. Psyche appeared frequently in English and French poetry, prose, painting, and drama in the nineteenth century (Lemaitre). Her story had captured the imagination of the Romantics (Keats's "Ode to Psyche," 1819; 1820), and later the Pre-Raphaelites (William Morris's "The Story of Cupid and Psyche" in *The Earthly Paradise*, 1868). Of the Victorians, Tennyson used a character called "lady Psyche" in the discussion of women's rights in his poem *The Princess* (1847). New translations from the original (by Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Bridges) had given the public palatable poetic versions of the myth. Coventry Patmore's Psyche odes reinterpreted the myth in the context of Christian mysticism, presenting the Psyche story as a vision of God wooing the soul (*The Unknown Eros*, 1877). Less than a decade before Duncan's novel appeared, Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) offered another Christian interpretation for the pagan story. In Chapter 15, Elfrida reads *Marius* with "hungry and hopeless delight," confirming Duncan's familiarity with Pater's popular essay-novel.

The most revealing portrait of Elfrida is the drawing of Psyche for which she receives a medal in Philadelphia (24). Duncan provides a probable source for Elfrida's interest in the myth: William Morris's *The Earthly Paradise*, containing Burne-Jones's illustrations of the legend of

3 Misao Dean's introduction to *A Daughter of Today* affirms Duncan's belief in a gendered agenda for modern fiction: "the attempt to portray a new kind of heroine, substituting an active, thinking subject for the passive, instinctual object of patriarchal fiction" (1988, xviii).

Eros and Psyche, adorns the table in her family living-room (41).⁴ That her award-winning drawing is truly a self-portrait emerges in the analogy between Psyche and Elfrida. The mythological Psyche is punished for seeking to know the identity of her lover (Cupid) who comes to her nightly. The sin of seeking knowledge, of wanting to see the face of love, is close to Elfrida's own "sin" in aspiring as a woman to be an artist also. Despite failure as a painter in the male-dominated Parisian art world, Elfrida posthumously repeats these words for her gravestone: "*Pas femme-artiste*" (392) – emphatically *not* a woman artist. Failing like Psyche at the one "impossible task" (Kestner 1989, 91), Elfrida must settle, as her mythological precursor does, for something other than success and happy endings. Against explicit orders, Psyche opens Persephone's casket expecting the secret of beauty and finding nothing but deadening sleep. Elfrida's corresponding nemesis is not physical beauty, but the mask or persona behind which she has hidden her true self. In her final portrait, this mask is removed, and the space behind is revealed in all its bareness. Psyche is rescued by Eros from her sleep in the underworld but must give up her mortal self in return for this rescue. No romantic love or lover awaits Elfrida after her unmasking; she must give her life to achieve closure and save some sense of identity.

In completing her Psyche-like task, Elfrida's progress is blocked first by the masculine aesthetic of the Paris *atelier*, then by a combination of sexual discrimination in Fleet Street and anti-colonial prejudice in London literary society, and finally by the sexual politics of the male artist's studio. Having failed in Paris to divorce the woman from the artist, Elfrida abandons painting and becomes a journalist in London. An initial success at art criticism brings her into conflict with the painter John Kendal, whose work she has dared to critique. Although Kendal praises Elfrida's emerging critical voice, he resents her intrusion into the world of art criticism; as an American and a woman, she should accept cultural marginalization in the artistic hub of the Empire. Kendal takes control of Elfrida's voice by making her into muse, then model, then painted image.

Kendal's main weapon is painting, which he uses to relegate Elfrida by painting her in a socially embarrassing position. This is the novel's central tableau, a moment when Elfrida gives homage to the eminent British novelist George Jasper (194-5). Wishing to acknowledge admiration for his work, she "half sank on one knee and lifted the hand that wrote 'A Moral Catastrophe' to her lips (194-5).⁵ Lost in adulation, the naïve Elfrida is ignorant of the monstrous breach she has made in the British cultural wall, for she has not been introduced. This offense against society parallels Psyche's affront to Venus: appropriation of the spotlight and of male attention. As outraged spectator of Elfrida's tableau, Kendal takes over Venus's punishing role and makes Elfrida pay for her presumption in usurping centre stage. Elfrida must be "framed" as guilty and made to see herself through others' eyes. His painting of the incident reveals to her the unbecoming false humility of her self-dramatized position:

4 Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833-98); William Morris (1834-96), both members of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Morris's sumptuous proposed edition of 1865, with the illustrations by Burne-Jones was never published. The project, however, inspired Burne-Jones to use the motif of Eros and Psyche in various media. A new edition of *The Story of Cupid and Psyche* was produced in 1974: A. R. Dufty (Ed. & Introd.), William Morris: *The Story of Cupid and Psyche, with Illustrations Designed by Edward Burne-Jones, mostly engraved on the wood by William Morris*. London: Clover Hill Editions, 1974.

5 George Jasper resembles Henry James in his eminence, celebrity and public dignity.

. . . the astonished drawing-room, the graceful half-kneeling girl with the bent head, the other dismayed and uncomprehending figure yielding a doubtful hand, his discomfort indicated in the very lines of his waistcoat. 'A Fin de Siècle Tribute,' Kendal named it (211).⁶

Kendal has painted the scene as if it were the "moral catastrophe" of Jasper's best known work. In Kendal's title, "tribute" is doubly ironic and calls into question Elfrida's motives for public self-abasement, even as it miscodes the painter's own intentions. Far from paying tribute, the painting critically isolates a moment of unctuous self-display. Kendal's fascination with this particular tableau reveals his own perverse need to cut Elfrida down to size.

By painting Elfrida's moment of humiliation, Kendal leagues himself with Jasper to close the ranks of English artists to upstarts, both colonial and female, who invade the foreground and appropriate major roles in the iconography of the cultural picture. For Kendal, painting the incident in the drawing-room is a way of "disposing . . . finally" of the incident: "He knew it could be very effectively put away on canvas" (211). Elfrida has been "captured" on canvas, rendered harmlessly invisible in the midst of her bid for visibility.

Seeking final control of her image, Kendal paints Elfrida again, this time in his own studio and on his own terms. He envisages this final portrait as "reparation" (325) for the former pictorial rebuke, but it becomes an act of retribution: "He had an obscure idea of having inflicted discipline upon her in giving the incident form and colour upon canvas, in arresting its grotesqueness and sounding its true *motif* with a pictorial tongue" (212). Part of his psychological manipulation of his subject involves forbidding Elfrida to see her portrait "in its earlier stages" (344). Like Psyche, she waits in the dark, forbidden the vision that would confer knowledge and power. Elfrida has come full circle, from painter to subject, ceding control of her image to the male artist in a surrender that is partly sexual: "She saw the artist in him dominant, and she exulted for his sake. It was to her delicious to be the medium of his inspiration, delicious and fit and sweetly acceptable" (345). The sexual nature of the artist/model transaction is reinforced by Elfrida's gustatory diction (delicious, sweetly) and also by Kendal's terminology; he calls this portrait his "consummate picture" (346).

This final portrait of Elfrida is so unbearable to her that she must destroy it, for it is not so much her representation as her other self. When finally revealed, the portrait conceals behind its flattering surface another searing indictment of Elfrida:

He had echoed her talk of disguises, and his words embodied the unconscious perception under which he worked. He had selected a disguise, and, as she wished, a becoming one. But he had not used it fairly, seriously. He had thrown it over her face like a veil, if anything could be a veil which rather revealed than hid, rather emphasized than softened, the human secret of the face underneath . . . It was the real Elfrida. (348-9)

6 Kendal's paintings resemble those of Jacques Joseph Tissot (1836-1902), who painted witty exposés of modern London society in the 1870s, concentrating on the contrast between formality of setting and costume and informality of pose and gesture.

For Elfrida to acknowledge the power of Kendal's representation involves "a degree of submission" (349) and a previously unthinkable act of "self-surrender" (351). Kendal, as she rightly perceives, has "stolen" something from her (350); she has been violated, almost sexually, by his act of painting.

Kendal puts Elfrida in her place as model and subject and makes her the silent collaborator in her public unmasking. This humiliation leads inevitably to her need to destroy the painting. Elfrida turns on the portrait in a cold rage dictated by her sense of the artistic symmetry of her act:

The portrait was literally in rags. They hung from the top of the frame and swung over the bottom of it. Hardly enough of the canvas remained unriddled to show that it had represented anything human. Its destruction was absolute—fiendish, it seemed to Kendal. (384)

Like Dorian Gray, she destroys herself along with the portrait, for behind the various masks, the self has dwindled away. Having failed to make her life into a work of art, Elfrida settles for the artistic death. The heroine who once painted herself as Psyche (soul) has had her soul stolen by the demon lover/artist.

In choosing to give Elfrida the face of Psyche, Duncan provides a context for reading Elfrida's failure. If the Psyche legend is "a powerful compound of men's attitudes to women's faithlessness and helplessness" (Kestner 1989, 90), then does Duncan use it to critique the goals of the New Woman generation? Comparison with the Psyche myth does not fully support this contention. Psyche fails because of her inability to resist the secret of beauty. This weakness may be read as signifying traditionally female follies (vanity and curiosity), and thus as asserting female incompetence in the quest. The myth, however, places Psyche's quest in the context of external forces that set the tasks, determine the rewards and generally collaborate in her failure. The parallel forces in the novel are the galleries, newspapers, writers, painters and critics who conspire to keep the young American in her place. Psyche and Elfrida fail with the collusion of powerful external forces, either celestial or social.

Read in this mythical context, *A Daughter of Today* is less an indictment of all New Women and their aspirations than a portrait of an individual whose flaws magnify those of the age. Elfrida suffers from excesses of ambition and self-interest, and a lack of self-knowledge. Even were these defects remedied, however, Elfrida would not have been guaranteed success in either London or Paris. Duncan's *fin-de-siècle* art world held only limited opportunities for women artists and demanded in return the kind of artistic and personal compromise that Elfrida abhors. Another female character, Janet Cardiff, compromises, publishes her tepid novel and gets her man—John Kendal. Duncan, however, treats these achievements with irony, even distaste, and the novel's final paragraph qualifies this couple's "domestic joy" (281). The flamboyant Elfrida haunts their union, and epitomizes the age even as she predeceases it. Elfrida occupies Psyche's threshold position as a "liminal person" (Edwards 1979, 47), whose career declares that the world is yet unprepared to accept the asexual nature of either heroism or artistic talent.

It may be more important to an understanding of this novel to explore it as a novel of ideas, one in which Duncan has her characters act out important debates in the art world of the *fin-de-siècle*. Although the French movement of Impressionism was well under way, it had not been so long before that the French and English art establishments had taken very conservative positions on the definition and evaluation of art. At mid-century, for example, nudity in art was still associated with prostitution (Chu 1992, 39), and undraped figures needed the cover of classical subject matter. On Duncan's London art scene, John Kendal ranks among the adventurous: he exhibits at the Grosvenor, the gallery that led the artistic avant-garde until its closure in 1890 (Ledes 1996). Elfrida, having come from Paris ateliers with liberal views on morality in art, takes an even more radical aesthetic stance in the corresponding literary debate on naturalism. She favours style and subject matter that will capture "the nudity of things" (338) and despises artistic compromise: "Art has no ideal but truth, and to conventionalize truth is to damn it!" (Duncan 159). Duncan has her heroine draw explicit analogies between visual and literary art; thus, Elfrida compares Janet Cardiff's novel to "the class of Academy studies from the nude, which were always draped, just a little" (297).

In contrast, Elfrida's aesthetic follows a cosmopolitan, interdisciplinary path, a route to beauty that is pagan in the Ruskinian sense and that "... embraced Arnold and Aristotle and did not exclude Mr. Whistler, a composite creed, making wide, ineffectual, and presumptuous grasps to include all beauty and all faith" (127). The ruling motif of the *fin-de-siècle* emerges in this overlap between the aesthetic and the moral. Another contemporary writer of Canadian origin, Grant Allen, railed against the conventionalism of English publishing from a similar perspective: "It is almost impossible to get a novel printed in an English journal unless it is warranted to contain nothing at all to which anybody, however narrow, could possibly object, on any grounds whatever" (Allen, *British Barbarians* 1895, ix). Himself the author of a scandalous New Woman novel, *The Woman Who Did* (1895), Allen strove to convince English newspaper publishers that it was possible "to tell the truth and yet preserve the circulation" (Allen, *British Barbarians* 1895, viii). Duncan thus places her heroine in an exact, contemporary publishing context, and plays out in her plot the precise debates on gender, propriety and colonial status that animated literary life in 1890s London.

To exacerbate her literary sins even further, Elfrida tries to import journalism and its techniques into the writing of literature. In her first newspaper job, the young American writes boldly "the graphic naked truth" (100), only to find that "the paper doesn't want a female Zola" (101). Fleet Street wants something modern – "No theories, no fine writing, no compositions. Describe what you've seen and know" (76) – but nothing shocking or too French. Women are tolerated on the margins of London journalism, on certain news beats and certain pages of the papers, but always at the mercy of a judgmental male editor who only sees ladies by appointment (72). In such a milieu, even a good writer cannot get a foot in the door. Seeking a subject, Elfrida is led towards the sordid, sensational life of the chorus girl, and outrages her London friends by doing practical research at the theatre in order to write what she has experienced. Getting a temporary job in the chorus line of the Peach Blossom Company, Elfrida displays her legs on stage with such success that the manager offers her a permanent gig on the tour. Kendal sneaks into the theatre to see this woman in trousers, while Mr. Cardiff is driven to a marriage proposal to save Elfrida from the

ignominy of publication. This young American is, according to the editor-in-chief, “dangerous” (163) and cannot be allowed to import a North-American set of values to the heart of Belgravia, or to breach the walls between journalism and literature. In literary London of the decade, a woman cannot have a voice and legs, too.

It is possible that this episode of literary snubbing may to some extent mirror Duncan’s own experience as a young Canadian writer in London (minus the chorus-girl episode). Duncan contributed to several journals on both sides of the Atlantic and was part of a breakthrough generation that eventually erased most of the stigma of being from the colonies. The titles of her own early monographs show that Duncan practiced precisely the kind of participatory, investigative journalism to which her heroine aspires: *A Social Departure: How Orthodoxy and I Went Round the World by Ourselves* (1890), *An American Girl in London* (1891), and *Cousin Cinderella: A Canadian Girl in London* (1908).

Nevertheless, there was a perception in North America that English culture had high walls—even in the 1890s, as another Canadian writer notes in the same decade: “It is a fashion with some colonial writers to believe that there is a settled determination on the part of English critics to ignore their best work” (Bourinot 1893, 46). Duncan unleashes a satirical pen on this aesthetic narrow-mindedness. In writing as in painting, the London critics of *A Daughter of Today* want something “new and original, but . . . respectable, notwithstanding” (134). Duncan gives the male artist Kendal the role of gatekeeper; he polices the moral boundary of the London art scene because, though Paris-educated, he observes English social codes of respectability: “He was an artist, but he was also an Englishman” (97).

The novel ends with the heroine’s contemplation of Kendal’s painting—a portrait that is simultaneously flattering and damning. Duncan never tells the reader what “disguise” or “veil” Kendal has thrown over the figure of Elfrida in the ill-fated final portrait. The costumed portrait was common; perhaps Kendal chose Cleopatra, who is mentioned in the conversation between painter and sitter. The reader is free to read the word “disguise” metaphorically, or even to imagine that Kendal has painted the subject as Psyche, in a revision of Elfrida’s own early portrait. Whatever the pose or costume, the veil reveals more than it conceals, and Elfrida cannot live with the revelation. In her myopic narcissism she cannot see the bias in the jealous, vengeful gaze of the male lover/painter, nor acknowledge the cultural constraints on the representation of women in mythological portrait painting.

There is no route from this aesthetic impasse to a happy ending. For Elfrida, marriage is impossible—a “form of bondage” (320) in the words of this opinionated New Woman. Nevertheless, Elfrida finds a new variety of bondage in her submission to Kendal’s brush, for she cannot step free from the frame of the painting at the end of her novel. Becoming Kendal’s model has placed her in complicity with his ideological agenda for amassing power himself, while denying Elfrida any entrée to the London art world. She can, and does destroy the painting, but cannot undo the social and psychological consequences of the event. Crossing the boundary between object and subject has been fatal. Thus, Elfrida does not need Kendal’s portrait as her

monument: she crafts her own accompanying scene and script—her death bed and suicide note. This persistent role-playing pushes the end of the novel towards melodrama, even as it provides a glimmer of retroactive triumph for Elfrida.

2. Conclusion

That Duncan retreats to melodrama indicates the difficulty of finding appropriate closure for the New Woman story. One critic argues that the popularity of Psyche as heroine in the nineteenth-century is related to this quest for new narrative patterns: “If marriage is the traditional ‘happy ending’, and death the only, and unsatisfactory, alternative, novelists must devise ways to render happiness without them” (Edwards 1979, 27).

Duncan also chose to avoid the “growing interdisciplinary discourse on sexuality” (Ardis 1990, 50) that characterized other New Woman novels, such as Allen’s *The Woman Who Did*. One could therefore argue that this female author retreats, like her secondary character Janet Cardiff, to a preference for the “slightly draped” subject. The brash Elfrida thus represents the opposing side in an aesthetic debate in which Duncan sides more with Henry James than with George Egerton. It might not be far-fetched to see the novelist as engaged in an aesthetic duel with her heroine. In such a conflict, the ambivalence and variety of the Psyche figure make fertile material for extending the social discourse on the “woman question” towards the aesthetic discourse about realism and representation. On the one hand, Psyche’s aspiration for forbidden knowledge validates a pattern of female ambition and artistry. On the other hand, Psyche’s failure codes female ambition as futile and male rescue as inevitable. The “boomerang” nature of the ending of this updated Psyche narrative depends on contradictions partly pre-existent in a legend about conflicting forms of womanhood, contradictions that mirror the range of gender ideologies of the *fin-de-siècle*. That the aesthetic and the social should be read as parallel texts is also not surprising, since it was common for nineteenth-century fiction to exhibit what Alison Byerly calls a “self-consciousness about aesthetic representation,” which could, in the hands of the female novelist, be “paralleled by self-consciousness about social representation and the role of aesthetics in the constitution of culture” (Byerly 2006, 8).

The novelist appropriates from the myth of Psyche only those elements that conform to her particular feminist and aesthetic agenda. Duncan’s daughter of today mirrors Psyche’s aspiration and struggle, but her tasks unfold in the hostile universe of the London literary establishment. In Duncan’s hands, the borrowed myth points to the cultural cabal that conspires to silence all voices from the margins of gender, class and empire. Duncan, as a colonial newcomer herself, has a stake in the unmasking of this conspiracy and works out the aesthetic problem of the body of the text as well as the body of the heroine. By foregrounding visual representation of the female face and figure as the site of cultural battle over gender boundaries, Duncan contributes to a continuum of representations, visual and verbal, artistic and commercial, which circumscribed the New Woman of the 1890s.

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Brigita Pavšič

Understanding Racism and Sexism in Harry Potter and Stuart Hall's Model of Three Reading Positions

Summary

In the *Harry Potter* book series there are several examples of sexist and racist stereotypes which can distort children's understanding of reality and thus cause them to adopt prejudices and inappropriate judgments. The reason for such strong impact on the young readers can be explained with the use of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model that suggests three reading positions and, as a result, three different ways of understanding one and the same text. The fact that oppositional reading, which allows the reader to assess the text critically, can only be adopted by educated and well-read readers explains why adult help is needed in directing the child reader towards a correct interpretation of such deficiencies of a text and offering a grounded explanation.

Key words: child readers, Hall's model, racism, sexism, stereotypes

Razumevanje rasizma in seksizma v Harryju Potterju in Hallov model treh vrst branja

Povzetek

V seriji *Harry Potter* je precej primerov seksističnih in rasističnih prikazov oseb in situacij. Ker je serija primarno namenjena otrokom in mladostnikom, so ti stereotipni prikazi lahko škodljivi, saj v neizkušenih otroških bralcih sprožajo predsodke in napačno razumevanje sveta. Zakaj neprimerna predstavitev teh tematik tako močno vpliva na otroke, lahko razložimo s Hallovim modelom treh vrst branja tekstov, ki istočasno tudi pojasni, zakaj imajo izobraženi odrasli bralci to odgovornost, da otroke osveščajo o napakah v besedilih in, če je mogoče, ponudijo utemeljene razlage in ustreznejše rešitve.

Ključne besede: Hallov model, otroški bralci, rasizem, seksizem, stereotipi

Understanding Racism and Sexism in Harry Potter and Stuart Hall's Model of Three Reading Positions

1. Introduction

The reviews *Harry Potter* has received since publication have not all been positive. The series has also raised many controversies. Among them, the most frequent are those concerning the racist and sexist portrayal of the characters in the books. The understanding and correct treatment of such problematic topics mostly depends on the reader's reading position. To explain these different interpretations of the text, Hall's model of three reading positions and its use will be presented. This will also help to show why such deficiencies of texts can be damaging for child readers, as well as how to prevent readers from overlooking them. The second part of the article will deal with the most common stereotypical portrayals and problematic issues in the *Harry Potter* series.

2. Hall's model of three reading positions

In his article "Encoding and decoding in the Television Discourse" from 1973, Stuart Hall develops the model of three reading positions (Stankovič 2002, 36). In his opinion the fact that the message was sent does not necessarily mean that it has also arrived at its destination; it is even less certain that it will be understood in the way the sender of the message predicted (ibid.). The public is not homogenous; rather, it consists of different groups of people who have very diverse experience and knowledge and who have significantly different relations towards dominant ideologies. But despite the fact that each individual understands the message in a slightly different manner, the fact that we live in similar if not the same cultures prevents major misunderstandings. "The television message is indeed polysemantic (it has several meanings), but it is not entirely pluralistic (it does not have infinite set of meanings)" (ibid., 37, my translation).

Hall divides the ways of interpretation of a text into three groups (Chandler 2001):

1. the dominant or hegemonic strategy: the reader understands the message and decodes it in terms of the reference-code in which it has been coded. This position is rare.
2. the negotiated strategy: it acknowledges the legitimacy of hegemonic definitions, but at the more restricted, situational level, it makes its own rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule by using particular and situated logics.
3. the oppositional code: the viewer understands the literal and the connotative inflection given by the discourse, but decodes the message in a contrary way as a result of their individual knowledge.

These strategies for interpreting of texts are not strictly detached. In everyday use they are interconnected and the boundaries between them are far from clear. Hall separated them for an easier insight into the intricate system of the understanding of texts.

In the case of *Harry Potter*, the strategies for understanding the text could lead to the following results: a dominant-hegemonic strategy is most likely among readers (especially child readers) from Anglo-American culture and of middle class. The images in *Harry Potter* are closest to these readers. They are familiar to them, therefore, there is little likelihood they would doubt them. This is true for a variety of topics in these books, including issues as problematic as sexism and racism. Because of the innate denial or avoidance of such issues they appear as something normal or unworthy of any special attention. As a result, such themes do not rouse opposition in the readers.

The negotiated strategy is more likely among readers from different cultures: their local particularities and experience become more evident in their interpretation of texts relative to how distant their culture is from the Anglo-American society. These readers might question the scenes in the boarding school, the striving of the Dursleys to have a bigger house and a better car than their neighbours, the rivalry among the schoolfellows at Hogwarts, their desire to have a better and newer version of the flying broom, the theme of witchcraft, etc. With this strategy, the cultural differences between readers around the world become the most prominent. Through this the readers also become aware of different cultures and they learn about them, which enables them to understand different societies more easily. From the perspective of learning about cultures, this strategy is the most important as the dominant strategy is only possible with readers who already know the culture presented in the book because they belong to it. Therefore, they do not learn anything radically new about their own culture; while with the oppositional strategy the cultural differences are not as important as the social experience, knowledge, and education of the readers.

The third, oppositional, strategy is mostly present among educated readers. These readers can assess positive and negative aspects of a book, they can interpret them within the context, and they are also able to refuse them if they deem it necessary. There are few child readers who would be capable of this and, consequently, it is essential that they have teachers and parents to direct them and to teach them the right interpretation of the text, because children take this knowledge into adulthood and then forward it on in the same form they have received it.

Tammy Turner-Vorbeck summarizes Hall's opinion about how it appears as if the media (and through them the hegemonic ideology) only reflect reality while in truth they construct it. Hall agrees with Louis Althusser's supposition that mass media reproduce interpretations from ideas which are embedded in symbols and cultural practices in a manner that serves the interests of the ruling class. However, Hall also claims that the mass media allow ideological struggles. Turner-Vorbeck questions this:

However, how much struggle is really possible when confronted with a capitalist marketing machine that seduces its public through normative messages consisting of comfortable, familiar images and the appearance of 'good, clean fun'? Is it realistic to believe that child culture can be a place of ideological struggle in the face of commodity fetishism? (Turner-Vorbeck 2003, 17)

Ideological struggle is questionable when we consider the influence of the marketing moves of the mega-corporations – especially in children’s literature, since the corporations create values and project fabricated needs onto the consumers. In this way they rob the recipients of these messages of the standards for the assessment of the authenticity of these same messages. When we take into account that traditions are dying out and that traditional values are no longer valid or they are at least not classified in the same priority lists, individuals have considerable difficulty finding a base which would help them orientate themselves in the modern society of consumerism. Therefore, it seems it is also very difficult to take the oppositional stance in interpreting the texts as it is much easier to resign to the dominant or hegemonic strategy when we are being attacked from all sides with proofs that this is the *only* correct strategy.

The biggest problem with all this is that, with the dominant-hegemonic position, readers tend to interpret the presentations of certain troublesome issues as something normal and do not question their accuracy and justification. As mentioned, two such issues in the *Harry Potter* series are sexism and racism. With the dominant strategy of interpretation the reader will think it completely understandable that women do not occupy the leading positions and that they do not have important roles. All the female characters in the books are allegedly of secondary importance for the development of the story. McGonagall is only the Headmaster’s assistant, Hermione is Harry’s helper and she never takes on the leading role, Petunia Dursley and Molly Weasley are housekeepers, etc. This is quite a generalization of the situation in the books, but if the reading is superficial, it might well result in this kind of interpretation. It is therefore essential that parents and teachers warn children of these issues and, in places where they are wrongly presented, explain where the problem lies and what solution would be better.

The same is true of racism. There have been several different explanations of the situation in *Harry Potter* because the books introduce different races in the muggle (i.e. non-wizarding) world as well as different races in the wizarding world. The readers encounter white people, African-Americans, Asians, and also giants, goblins, dwarfs, Veelas, and others. Some critics, like Elizabeth Heilman and Anne Gregory, are unsatisfied with the way some races are presented as superior in comparison to others (this is especially valid of the different races in the wizarding world), or with the fact that some races are ignored while others are in the foreground (as readers we only learn that some of the students are of African-American descent in the third and fourth book, while the main characters are white and are constantly in the centre of attention). It is (nearly) impossible to write a book which would represent all sexes, all races, and all religions equally. But all in all, it is worth calling the attention of children to such examples of would-be equality, as the fact that only those wizards who have lived their whole lives in the wizarding world are afraid of the giants because they have had this fear inured as children. On the other hand, Harry and Hermione do not fear them because they base their relationship towards Hagrid (a part-giant) only on their personal experience and therefore know that not all giants and part-giants are dangerous. Child readers have to be stimulated to think about these instances; only in this way can they come to understand the world and people, our prejudices and false notions themselves. With this (pro)active approach they will learn considerably more and later on in their lives they will be able to enhance their knowledge and forward it to others.

3. Examples of racism

In the essay “Images of the privileged Insider and Outcast Outsider” Elizabeth Heilman and Anne Gregory claim that *Harry Potter* incites racist thinking because it “suggests that it is perfectly acceptable to fear differences among people, and that there are differences that make certain people better than others. These portrayals of deep, biologically rooted difference can possibly serve to reinforce readers’ notions of biological differences among races” (Heilman and Gregory 2003b, 253).

They further explain this by drawing attention to how the people and other magical creatures of mixed origins in the *Harry Potter* books are presented hierarchically. In their view, characters like Hagrid and Madame Maxime, who are part-giants, and Remus Lupin, who is a werewolf, are shown as outcast outsiders in comparison to wizards like Harry Potter, Dumbledore, and others. A slightly more acceptable combination is that of a Veela and a wizard as in the French student Fleur Delacour.

These claims are unfounded if we consider, when analyzing these examples, that the relation of the main protagonists towards these characters is rather different. When it comes to a child’s understanding of the reality the *Harry Potter* books present, it is essential how that reality is seen by the protagonist with which the child identifies himself during reading. In *Harry Potter*, nothing shows that Harry and Hermione would have any kind of prejudice towards Hagrid, Lupin or anyone else exclusively because they are not pure blood wizards. On the contrary, Hermione as a child of two non-wizards, i.e. muggles, proves to be an excellent witch herself and has Harry’s complete trust – and with that she also gains the readers’ trust once they see that it is not always important to be from an old and well-off family and that the characteristics of an individual and their endeavours to do right are considerably more important.

This perspective gains even more prominence if we compare Hermione to Draco Malfoy, who is a descendant of one of the oldest pure blood wizard families. Spoilt, snobbish, and pompous Draco does not present himself to the readers in the most charming light. The way Ron immediately defends Hermione when Malfoy insults her by calling her ‘mudblood’ (one of the worst insults for a wizard who is of mixed descent) makes it obvious to the readers on whose side the ‘good’ characters are and which principles are the right ones. It is unlikely anyone would want to imitate Malfoy, particularly since most children identify themselves with one of the protagonists: Harry, Hermione, or Ron.

But even the three friends differ. When Ron discovers that Hagrid is a part-giant, his reaction is different from Harry and Hermione’s. From his early age, Ron has been taught that giants are evil and dangerous; that (false) belief has always been present in the wizarding world. On the other hand, Harry and Hermione have grown up in the muggle world and have therefore never been taught such prejudices. By showing that the ‘good’ people, too, have prejudices Rowling shows

that prejudice and hatred are not something that other people do. These are powerful beliefs embedded in the culture, which all of us absorb and know, even though we may not be conscious of ever having learned them. (Nel 2001, 45)

By making Ron react in a ‘racist’ way and by showing Harry’s and Hermione’s effort to convince him otherwise and explain the absurdity of such an attitude, Rowling deliberately draws attention to this problematic issue, but although the conclusion to this situation is pedagogic, it is not moralizing precisely because it is Ron who acts wrongly and not one of the corrupt characters.

Solidarity is also shown through Hermione’s attempts to free the house elves who have to work for their masters without getting paid. Hermione founds a club which is supposed to help the elves to freedom and to inform them of their rights. This theme has been largely present in the fifth book in the story about Dobby and Winky, but it has not been completely developed yet as Hermione so far has not been very successful, partly because the elves themselves do not want to be freed. Perhaps Rowling will dedicate a few more words to this theme in the last book in the series.¹

Racism is also shown through Voldemort’s likeness to Hitler – the main common feature being Voldemort’s ‘impure’ origin. Lord Voldemort comes from a mixed marriage: his mother was a witch, his father a muggle who left her when he discovered who she really was. Merope was already pregnant and she died at childbirth. Lord Voldemort or Tom Marvolo Riddle spent his childhood in an orphanage. Despite his mixed origin, or maybe because of it, he is obsessed with pure blood. If it were possible he would erase all mudbloods; this was also the reason for his killing his father’s second family – he tried to erase all traces of his origin (Rowling 2005, chapter 17). Similarly, Hitler tried to promote an Arian race, although he did not even remotely resemble the ideal projected by the Nazis, neither in his physical appearance nor in his heritage.

Philip Nel develops the connection with the Second World War even further. Not only did Dumbledore defeat the dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945 when the Second World War ended; Nel also claims there is another association: “When it seems as though a new war may be beginning near the end of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Dumbledore delivers several rousing speeches with distinctly Churchillian cadences” (Nel 2001, 44). Nel’s commentary refers to the part of Dumbledore’s speech where he says:

Lord Voldemort’s gift for spreading discord and enmity is very great. We can fight it only by showing an equally strong bond of friendship and trust. Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open. (Rowling 2000, 605)

4. Examples of sexism

The second issue Elizabeth Heilman addresses in another of her essays, “Blue Wizards and Pink Witches”, is sexism. She claims that “the *Harry Potter* books feature females in secondary positions of power and authority and replicate some of the most demeaning, yet familiar, cultural

1 At the time this article was written the seventh book had not yet appeared.

stereotypes for both males and females” (Heilman 2003a, 222). She begins the explanation of her theory by listing the number of female and male pupils at Hogwarts: there are 29 girls mentioned and 35 boys. But all important characters are males: Harry, Ron, Dumbledore, Malfoy, Black, Pettigrew, Lord Voldemort and others. Even among the Death Eaters, the evil followers of Voldemort, there is only one woman, Bellatrix Lestrange. Most of the irritating, but not evil adult characters, are female: Mrs. Figg, Professor Trelawney, Rita Skeeter, and Aunt Petunia. “Within the Ministry of Magic, the seat of power, all of the ministers are male except for Bertha Jorkins, who is described as gossipy and absentminded” (ibid., 223). This is true of the first four books. Book five, however, features a female among the aurors, the wizarding police who are after the Dark wizards, Tonks Nymphadora. Additionally, there is also the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, Amelia Bones, and the senior undersecretary to the Minister for Magic, Dolores Umbridge, who is later, for a short time, also installed as Headmistress of Hogwarts.

“Males are represented more often, but they are also depicted as wiser, braver, more powerful, and more fun than females” (ibid.). Female powerlessness is most evident in the portrayal of Hermione, who often shows signs of fear. As an example Heilman cites the attack of the mountain troll when the boys have to save Hermione because she is merely crouching helplessly under the sink and screaming (Rowling 1999, 132). Heilman argues, somewhat inaccurately, that Hermione is supposed to be exceptionally intelligent, but not brave or daring. Further, her knowledge is only of use to the boys while she does not know how to use it or cannot use it. This can be explained through the understanding of Harry Potter as a mythic hero. Both Hermione and Ron are only helping Harry since he is the principal protagonist of the story (Nikolajeva 2003, 127). Although Heilman draws attention to such instances as the Polyjuice Potion which helps the boys to sneak into the Slytherin House, it does not work on Hermione so she has to stay behind; or when Hermione becomes ‘petrified’ but still manages to aid Harry and Ron with the help of a note in her hand which reveals the secret of Salazar’s successor. It is important to stress that in the final battle Harry always fights alone because Ron also fails half way. This happens at the end of each book: in *The Philosopher’s Stone* Ron sacrifices himself on the chessboard and Harry confronts Squirrel alone; in *The Chamber of Secrets* the ceiling of the tunnel collapses and Ron remains trapped; in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* Hermione helps Harry rescue Black and Buckbeak while Ron rests injured in the infirmary; in *The Goblet of Fire* Harry confronts Lord Voldemort while Ron and Hermione watch the competition from the stands for the spectators; in *The Order of Phoenix* Harry has several helpers, among them Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville, and Luna; in the sixth book, *The Half-Blood Prince*, Ron and Hermione stay at Hogwarts while Harry joins Dumbledore in his search for a part of Lord Voldemort’s soul. Another proof of Hermione’s bravery and daring is the scene in *The Chamber of Secrets* when she tries to convince the boys they should make the Polyjuice Potion:

Hermione shut the book with a snap.
 “Well, if you two are going to chicken out, fine,” she said. There were bright pink patches on her cheeks and her eyes were brighter than usual. “I don’t want to break rules, you know. I think threatening Muggle-borns is far worse than brewing up a difficult potion. But if

you don't want to find out if it's Malfoy, I'll go straight to Madam Pince now and hand the book back in ...”

“I never thought I'd see the day when you'd be persuading us to break rules,” said Ron. (Rowling 1998, 125)

Additionally, there are occasions in the series when male characters are scared (including Harry) and they even cry, although Heilman claims this is not true (Heilman 2003a, 225). The first example is Professor Gilderoy Lockhart:

White-faced and wandless, Lockhart approached the opening.

“Boys,” he said, his voice feeble. “Boys, what good will it do?”

Harry jabbed him in the back with his wand. Lockhart slid his legs into the pipe.

“I really don't think -” he started to say, but Ron gave him a push, and he slid out of sight. (Rowling 1998, 223).

Another is Professor Flitwick who starts crying in the same book when he finds out the monster has abducted Ginny Weasley (Rowling 1998, 217). And although Heilman says it would be unimaginable for Dumbledore to react as emotionally as Professor McGonagall reacts in *The Chamber of Secrets* (Heilman 2003a, 225) that is exactly what happens in *The Half-Blood Prince*:

Dumbledore opened his mouth to speak and then closed it again. Behind Harry, Fawkes the phoenix let out a low, soft, musical cry. To Harry's intense embarrassment, he suddenly realized that Dumbledore's bright blue eyes looked rather watery, and stared hastily at his own knees. When Dumbledore spoke, however, his voice was quite steady.

“I am very touched, Harry.” (Rowling 2005, 334-5)

On the other hand, it is Harry's “stupid bravery” that solves all the problems. Here Heilman contradicts her own statement of male characters being depicted as wiser (Heilman 2003a, 223). It is true, however, that in comparison to Hermione's intelligence, prudence, and diligence, male characters, Ron and Harry in particular, could be seen as typically ‘dumb’ males who are only interested in sports (Quidditch), and the newest models of sports cars (in this case the flying brooms) and who try to solve problems by running their heads against a brick wall. If we read the books with this kind of understanding we can come across many instances of stereotypical portrayals. But as already mentioned there are also situations and examples which deny the stereotypes. It all depends on the perspective we assume while reading the books.

Heilman gives another example. In Quidditch, the goals scored by girls do not count much since the most important and the fastest ball is the snitch and the players chasing it are usually boys. The only female seeker is Cho Chang who, instead of searching for the snitch herself, trails Harry (ibid., 226). In *The Order of Phoenix* and *The Half-Blood Prince* Ginny Weasley proves to be a very competent seeker when she substitutes for Harry when Dolores Umbridge forbids him to play Quidditch and later when he has to help Snape as a punishment. The concept of naturally competitive men is supposedly further reinforced by the fact that all the captains are

male (ibid.). In *The Order of Phoenix* Angelina Johnson becomes the captain of the Gryffindor team and she proves to be very competent considering the fact that three of the players in her team are forbidden to play and so she has to find substitutes for them and win the game – a task in which she ultimately succeeds.

Furthermore, according to Heilman, the girls behave ‘girlish’ even during sports when Angelina, Katie, and Alicia start to giggle when they find out they will compete against Cedric Diggory, a tall, handsome boy (ibid.). Harry proves that girls are not the only ones sensitive to the opposite sex. When playing against Cho he is not willing to use the same methods as against Malfoy.

Harry accelerated, eyes fixed on the speck of gold ahead – but just then, Cho appeared out of thin air, blocking him!

“HARRY, THIS IS NO TIME TO BE A GENTLEMAN!” Wood roared, as Harry swerved to avoid a collision. “KNOCK HER OFF HER BROOM IF YOU HAVE TO!” (Rowling 1999, 217)

Heilman claims the female characters are presented in groups, their traits are schematic and sometimes they are completely hazy (ibid., 227). Angelina Johnson, Katie Bell, and Alicia Spinnet form one group, Parvati and Padma Patil and Lavender Brown the second, and the third consists of Pansy Parkinson and Millicent Bulstrode. But in the same manner there are also groups among the male students: Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle (although Malfoy as Harry’s antagonist is presented in greater detail); Colin and Dennis Creevey; Fred and George Weasley and Lee Jordan and finally Seamus Finnigan and Dean Thomas.

Ginny Weasley is “the archetypal girl and is presented as deeply passive, weak, and receptive. She has a crush on Harry, which disables her” (Heilman 2003a, 230). Ginny corresponds to this description only in the beginning when the readers get to know her for the first time in *The Chamber of Secrets*. Through the following books she develops as a character and matures. In *The Chamber of Secrets* Lord Voldemort uses her and Heilman interprets this as proof of her helplessness. This experience, however, does not show her weak character, rather, it shows her maturity in the ability to learn from such an unpleasant event.

“I didn’t want anyone to talk to me,” said Harry, who was feeling more and more nettled. “Well, that was a bit stupid of you,” said Ginny angrily, “seeing as you don’t know anyone but me who’s been possessed by You-Know-Who, and I can tell you how it feels.” (Rowling 2003, 441)

Ginny no longer falls silent in Harry’s presence. Instead, she tells him directly that he is acting stupidly and she even explains to him what it is like if Lord Voldemort possesses one. She also very successfully replaces Harry as a seeker in the Gryffindor Quidditch team. During the school year she falls in love with a classmate as she has long forgotten her crush on Harry, but she breaks up with the boy at the end of the school year when she realizes he values winning in Quidditch more than her. In the sixth book she shows determination and maturity, especially in comparison

to the quiet and shy person she was three years ago. First she takes Harry's side when he is confronted by Hermione, although she is her friend:

"Give it a rest, Hermione!" said Ginny, and Harry was so amazed, so grateful, he looked up. "By the sound of it Malfoy was trying to use an Unforgivable Curse, you should be glad Harry had something good up his sleeve!"

/.../

"Oh, don't start acting as though you understand Quidditch," snapped Ginny, "you'll only embarrass yourself." (Rowling 2005, 496)

And then she calmly accepts Harry's decision to end things between them:

"But you've been too busy saving the wizarding world," said Ginny, half-laughing. "Well ... I can't say I'm surprised. I knew this would happen in the end. I knew you wouldn't be happy unless you were hunting Voldemort. Maybe that's why I like you so much." (Rowling 2005, 603)

Beside Harry and Dumbledore she is also the only character in the books who is not afraid to pronounce Voldemort's name aloud.

Although not all of Heilman's arguments are valid,² it is indisputably true that repeating one and the same negative stereotype influences the readers, especially the young ones who are very susceptible to the messages their favourite books are relating. In *The Half-Blood Prince* Rowling made a step forward in regard to this issue by showing how Ginny developed and by making McGonagall replace Dumbledore as Headmistress after his death.

Sexism and racism, however, are not the only questionable issues in the series when interpreted with the dominant strategy. As an example, John Kornfeld and Laurie Prothro claim that the presentation of family and the relations between family members is also problematic, especially the presentation of families in the muggle world. They suggest that by "relying on stereotypical family roles and relationships to give us a few laughs, Rowling risks reifying family roles and relationships in the minds of her young readers, creating instead a troubling vision of home and family" (Kornfeld and Prothro 2003, 189).

Most family relations in the *Harry Potter* books are supposedly presented as situation comedy, as conventional, superficial, and predictable relations that are far from representative of the diversity and complexity of a modern family. The family members are shown one-dimensionally; the parents are dull in comparison to their smart, sharp children, boys are constantly breaking the rules, which endangers the image of the family in the wider society, both fathers (Weasley and Dursley) are bread-winners, the mothers take care of the home and family (ibid., 189–90).

2 This also results from the fact that the last three books were published after Heilman first published her article. The three books are essential for the understanding of Ginny Weasley's development and the rise of other female characters to the positions of power.

As a different example, Kornfeld and Prothro state a different kind of family in the wizarding world where its members are not relatives, instead, they are connected through friendship and trust. These extended families are the individual houses at Hogwarts which offer shelter to their members. But even in this society there is rivalry present among the four families which is being stimulated even by the teachers and the Headmaster. In the Triwizard Tournament in *The Goblet of Fire*, Harry Potter and Cedric Diggory are prepared to cooperate and they grab the Cup simultaneously. As a result, Cedric dies and that evokes the disquieting notion that working together does not pay off (ibid., 196). Kornfeld and Prothro suggest that through this Rowling shows a plausible portrayal of how people live and work together. However, the competition between houses at Hogwarts leads to conflicts and alienations which is understood to be normal and ordinary by all characters.

5. Conclusion

Hall's encoding/decoding model of three reading positions and all of the above examples illustrate the essence of the problem which, according to Ana Maria Machado, is the following: "Literature without ideology does not exist and therefore the question of which literature is ideologically faultless is essentially wrong. It is much more appropriate to ask: How we should read" (Machado 1995, 101, my translation). It is therefore important that we teach children, who lack experience and education and are thus incapable of assuming the oppositional strategy of interpretation of texts, to read and interpret critically. In this way we provide them with the basis on which they will later be capable of detecting questionable and faulty statements and notions in books (and everyday life) and they will be able to accept or refute them at their own discretion.

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Samo Šalamon

University of Maribor

Faculty of Arts, Department of English and American Studies

The Political Use of the Figure of John Coltrane in American Poetry

Summary

John Coltrane, one of the most influential and important musicians and composers of the 20th century, began to inspire jazz musicians and American poets in the 1960s with the Black Arts Movement poets. His music was interpreted and used for the promotion of political ideas in the poetics of Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Askia Muhammad Toure, Larry Neal and others. This is the political Coltrane poetry. On the other hand, Coltrane's music inspired another kind of poets, the musical poets, which began to emerge in the 1970s. In this case, the poetry reflects the true nature of Coltrane's spiritual music quest. The poets belonging to this group, like Michael S. Harper, William Matthews, Jean Valentine, Cornelius Eady, Philip Levine, Nathaniel Mackey and others, go beyond politics, beyond race or gender. The paper will examine the first type of the Coltrane poetry, where Coltrane's music was used to promote the political ideas of the Black Art Movement in connection with the political movement of Malcolm X. These poets changed, rearticulated and shifted Coltrane's spiritually musical message towards the principles of the black nationalism.

Keywords: American poetry, jazz poetry, poetry and politics, Black Arts Movement, African-American poetry, influence of music on poetry, John Coltrane, Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez

Politična uporaba figure Johna Coltranea v ameriški poeziji

Povzetek

John Coltrane je eden najvplivnejših in najpomembnejših glasbenikov in skladateljev 20. stoletja, saj je njegova glasba spremenila svet jazza in svet poezije ter postavila nova merila v obeh umetniških krogih. Bil je navdih jazz glasbenikom in ameriškim pesnikom že v šestdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja, saj so pesniki gibanja Black Arts kot npr. Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Askia Muhammad Toure, Larry Neal in drugi interpretirali njegovo glasbo v smislu politične propagande. Glasba Johna Coltranea pa je navdihovala tudi drugo, glasbeno vrsto poezije, ki se je pričela pojavljati v sedemdesetih letih 20. stoletja in je izražala resnično duhovno sporočilo Coltraneove glasbe. Pesniki Michael S. Harper, William Matthews, Jean Valentine, Cornelius Eady, Philip Levine in Nathaniel Mackey kot pripadniki te skupine so pisali poezijo onkraj politike, spola ali rasne tematike. Članek se osredotoča na prvo, to je politično dimenzijo Coltraneove glasbe kot vodilo političnih idej gibanja Black Arts v povezavi s politično vizijo Malcolma X. Ti pesniki so spremenili in premaknili Coltraneovo duhovno glasbeno sporočilo v sfero črnskega nacionalizma.

Ključne besede: Ameriška poezija, jazz poezija, poezija in politika, Black Arts gibanje, afriško-ameriška poezija, vpliv glasbe na poezijo, John Coltrane, Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez

The Political Use of the Figure of John Coltrane in American Poetry

1. Introduction

John Coltrane is considered one of the most important musicians of the 20th century. He was a hugely influential musician, who reshaped modern jazz and changed other forms of music at various times, since each stage of his musicianship introduced a new style and movement in the musical development of the 20th century. Along with tenor saxophonists Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, and Sonny Rollins, Coltrane fundamentally altered the playing techniques and the style for the instrument. His massive influence on mainstream and avantgarde jazz began during his lifetime and continued to grow after his death, so Coltrane is considered to be one of the most dominant influences on post-1960 jazz saxophonists and musicians, and has inspired an entire generation of jazz musicians.

However, Coltrane's playing style and compositions did not only influence the world of jazz, but exerted a huge influence on American poetry, which is also why Coltrane is the most often represented jazz musician in American poetry: "Coltrane has probably been the focus of more poems than any other jazz musician, but the portraits of the man and his music vary as much as his own creative endeavors – from bebop and modal music, to hard bop and sheets of sound, and eventually to free jazz" (Feinstein 1991, xix).

The occurrences of the figure of John Coltrane in American poetry were so common that critics and writers began to talk about the genre of the "Coltrane poem": "The 'Coltrane' poem has, in fact, become an unmistakable genre in black poetry" (Benston 1977, 773).

The Coltrane poem became a genre not only in African American poetry but in American poetry in general, and also in poetry on other continents. Poets, white and black, began to write poetry dedicated to the great saxophone player. However, the Coltrane poem took two directions. The first type of Coltrane poetry are the 'musical' poets, where the poetry reflects the true nature of Coltrane's spiritual music quest. The poets belonging to this group, like Michael S. Harper, William Matthews, Jean Valentine, Cornelius Eady, Philip Levine, Nathaniel Mackey and others, go beyond politics, beyond race or gender. The second type of Coltrane poetry is 'political' Coltrane poetry, connected with the Black Arts Movement, especially in the 1960s, which includes poets like Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Jayne Cortez, Larry Neal, Haki Madhubuti, Askia Muhammad Toure and others. In the case of these poets, Coltrane's music was used to promote the political ideas of the Black Art Movements in connection with the political movement of Malcolm X. These poets changed, rearticulated and shifted Coltrane's spiritually musical message towards the principles of the black nationalism.

2. The political and musical context

The beginnings of the political Coltrane poetry go back into the 1950s when the US society was haunted by severe racism, especially in the South, where black and white people were legally separated. It can be seen as resembling apartheid in South Africa, but in America racism was backed up by organisations like the Ku Klux Klan. The Northern states claimed formal racial equality, although the reality was different, which is also seen in many reactions by poets to the social situation, best summed up by Langston Hughes in the poem “Harlem”:

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

And the situation did, indeed, explode. On 1 December 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, the black woman Rosa Parks, refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger. The consequences of her arrest were a year-long Montgomery bus boycott, which went so far that the bus companies had to desegregate the buses. The leader and initiator of the new movement was Martin Luther King.

The newsocial situation also influenced jazz musicians such as the tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins,¹ who recorded his groundbreaking album *Freedom Suite* in 1958. The album is revolutionary from more than a musical standpoint. Kofsky claims that this album represents the “first time a political message was so clearly attached to a piece of music by a black jazz musician” (Kofsky 1970, 50). Sonny Rollins openly stated his opinion about the situation in the States in the liner notes to the album:² “America is deeply rooted in Negro culture: its colloquialisms, its humor, its music. How ironic that the Negro, who more than any other people can claim America’s culture as its own, is being persecuted and repressed, that the Negro, who has exemplified the humanities in his very existence, is being rewarded with inhumanity” (Rollins 1958).

The year following *Freedom Suite*, the composer/bassist Charles Mingus recorded his “Fables of Faubus” on the album *Mingus Ah Um*, which had been intended to include lyrics for his stance against desegregation. However, the record label Columbia insisted that the album be recorded only instrumentally. One year after Mingus’ album, the drummer Max Roach recorded *We*

1 Sonny Rollins is considered one of the most important tenor saxophone players in the world of jazz, having also a major influence on musicians of younger generations.

2 The album had a major impact also on Amiri Baraka, whose poem “The People Burning” clearly shows the influential raging power of the music. The album represented for Baraka a call for the revolution. The poem also contains a criticism of the “failed” Harlem Renaissance and the integration attempts in the 1950s, since Baraka compares his generation to the one of their fathers:
See appendix 1 on page 98

Insist! Freedom Now Suite, which clearly promoted a political message. The album presented Roach's political awareness, which had already become apparent in his 1958 recording *Deeds, Not Words*. This work can be easily connected with the Civil Rights Movement, as confirmed by the last two tunes of the album, "All Africa" and "Tears for Johannesburg," showing the Civil Rights Movement struggle for rights and freedom in the USA and the struggle for independence of African Americans and Africans as well. Feinstein connects jazz in this sense with Hughes's deferred dream, questioning whether jazz could have been some sort of warning to "white America", an instrument for promoting political and cultural ideas: "Was jazz a warning to white America, a pounding of the drums that the savages were loose and waiting to avenge themselves? Was this Langston Hughes's deferred dream now exploding?" (Feinstein 1997, 63)

The racist tensions continued, and in 1963 Martin Luther King decided to launch a non-violent assault on Birmingham, Alabama, which was still the capital of segregation. The jails of Birmingham were becoming filled with 2,500 protesters; however the authorities had to give in, which represented the greatest victory for the civil rights movement. The protests had a massive impact, since in the following ten weeks 758 demonstrations against racism took place and 14,753 arrests were made in 186 US cities, with the historic march on Washington as the high point. However, the situation deteriorated when on the Sunday morning of 15 September 1963 a bomb, planted by white racists in the basement of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, killed four black girls aged between 11 and 14.³

The music, especially jazz in its freer form again reflected the social situation that emerged in the USA. Many jazz musicians, like Sonny Rollins, showed their anger by openly supporting the new radical movement of Malcolm X. In this case, music reflected the social situation and also reacted against it. Derek Wright says that jazz and literature should not be taken out of the social context:

literature and jazz should not be discussed as though they are completely separate things, in reality, they are both subsets of a larger culture, and they cannot be taken out of that context. Both of these art forms seek to express the realities of life as experienced by the artist. You can't begin to understand jazz as an art by simply discussing its musicality, without addressing the broader social and cultural forces at work. It's not enough to talk about this musician's solo or that musician's composition, without understanding the experience that led the musician to write the song or to play the solo the way they did. (Wright 1996)

Wright continues to draw the connection between music and social context: "It was an outpouring of deep anger, dissatisfaction, or remorse that related to the conditions the artists found themselves in. The world around the artists had a massive effect on their playing and the moods they conveyed" (Wright 1996).

3 The poet Dudley Randall reacted to the tragic event with his poem "Ballad of Birmingham," written in 1969. The poem alludes to the bombing of the church in Birmingham by using a dialogue between a mother and her daughter before and after the tragedy.

This holds true for jazz musicians such as Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus, Archie Shepp and Max Roach, where the political and social context played an important role. Martin Smith sees Mingus, Roach and Rollins as the three key jazz musicians who supported the movement.⁴ Smith even mentions the codified message in Coltrane’s music, which many poets and movement leaders attached to Coltrane. However, I maintain that such was not the case for Coltrane’s music and personality; the highly spiritual thinking in his music had nothing to do with the political context. This does not mean that Coltrane was unaware of the happenings surrounding him, but his music did not reflect the politically militant context around him, at least not consciously. His music served Coltrane’s own spiritual purpose, in contrast to the political awareness and activism of the music of Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus, Archie Shepp or Max Roach.

3. Poets of the Black Arts Movement

Poets like Amiri Baraka, who was one of the main followers of Black Nationalism, used not only the figure of Coltrane to make political statements regarding the position of the Negro in America, but also jazz musicians such as Thelonious Monk, Albert Ayler or Ornette Coleman, as we can see in Baraka’s poem “In The Tradition,” where the jazz musicians John Coltrane and Albert Ayler, the funk/pop icon Stevie Wonder and the black political leader Malcolm X are all on the same level, carrying the title The Black Arts:

But just as you rise up to gloat I scream COLTRANE! STEVIE WONDER!
 MALCOLM X!
 ALBERT AYLER!
 THE BLACK ARTS!

The last line of the “In the Tradition” example shows, how important was the Black Arts Movement, to which Baraka belonged to. For the Black Arts Movement, music, especially Coltrane’s music, was a fountain of ideas and it served the movement as a model for black expression in arts. Music, along with writing and other arts, was seen as a vehicle to fight racism and oppression, while at the same time promoting the political stance, as we can see in Baraka’s poem “Black Art,” which reveals the poets’ and the movement’s political ideas:

*We want a black poem. And a
 Black World.
 Let the world be a Black Poem
 And Let All Black People Speak This Poem
 Silently
 Or LOUD*

The main concepts for the Black Arts Movement were put down in Larry Neal’s 1968 essay “The Black Arts Movement,” where Neal explains that the movement’s programme has basically four

4 “This music was proud to be black and clearly inspired by the civil rights movement, but its message was codified. But there were artists like Charles Mingus, Max Roach and Sonny Rollins who openly supported the movements” (Smith 2003).

parts: an assumption that its basis is already in place; second, the destruction of the “white thing” is a main motivation; third, it takes into account black interests; and fourth, it is, inherently, an ethical movement. Neal continued with his political and artistic manifesto in his poetry. In 1969, he wrote the poem “Black Boogaloo” with the message of how black music should be a source of inspiration for black writers to promote the ideas of liberation and black power. Neal’s ideas are written in the same aggressive tone as Baraka’s:

*Stop bitching. Take care of business. All get together all over America
and play at the same time. Combine energy. Combine energy. Play to-
gether. Wild screaming sounds*

...

*Calling all Black People.
Calling all Black people.*

However, Baraka and Neal were not the only ones using the well-known free jazz musicians to promote their own poetics and politics. One of the three most important Black Arts Movement poets besides Baraka and Larry Neal, Askia Muhammad Toure, also uses jazz such musicians as Sun Ra⁵, Pharoah Sanders, Milford Graves and Coltrane in the poem “Extension” to promote his call for freedom and action:

Let the Ritual begin:

*Sun Ra, Pharoah, Coltrane, Milford tune up your Afro-horns;
let the Song begin, the Wild Song of the Black Heart:
E X T E N S I O N over the crumbling ghettos, riding
the deep, ominous night – the Crescent Moon, Evening Star;
the crumbling ghettos exploding exploding: BAROOM, BAROOM!*

This poem from Toure’s collection *Juju* connects the free jazz movement with the politics of Malcolm X, where again Coltrane is co-opted by the political movement. Toure himself and the Black Arts Movement connected the new musical revolution with the new political movement, implying a political background to the new music, as Toure said in a recent interview: “This new revolution in consciousness, led by Trane, Sun Ra, Pharaoh Sanders, etc., was complemented by the fiery cadences of minister Malcolm X, who functioned as prophet/visionary, a goad & griot of a revolutionary, Eastern morality emerging among us...” (Lewis 2004).

The Black Arts Movement represented for poets like Toure, Baraka, Neal and others a change in their thinking as black individuals; the Black Arts Movement represented a way to find the black poetic expression, the true black aesthetic. These poets reacted, on the basis of the failed Harlem Renaissance and the “integration attempts”, against white hegemony. The new Black Aesthetic

5 Sun Ra was one of the most important jazz composers in the genre of avantgarde jazz. Initially, he also closely identified with the aggressive black political movements, when he saw his music own music has crucial in educating and liberating blacks. Later in his career, disillusioned by the aims of the black power movements, Sun Ra denied feeling closely connected to any race.

of the Black Arts Movement, based in New York, used the new innovative experiments and approaches of musical improvisation, which led to vernacular, thematic and linguistic experiments, mixed with the political message of Malcolm X. In the introduction to *Black Music*, Baraka also hints at a political background for the music of Coltrane or Ornette Coleman, claiming that this music cannot be understood without some attention to the attitude which produced it:

We take for granted the social and cultural milieu and philosophy that produced Mozart... The socio-cultural philosophy of the Negro in America (as a continuous historical phenomenon) is no less specific and no less important in any intelligent critical speculation about the music that came out of it. And again, this is not a plea for narrow sociological analysis of jazz, but rather that this music cannot be completely understood (in critical terms) without some attention to the attitudes which produced it... A printed musical example of an Armstrong solo, or of a Thelonious Monk solo, tells us almost nothing except the futility of formal musicology when dealing with jazz... Coltrane's cries are not "musical," but they are music and quite moving music. Ornette Coleman's screams and rants are only musical once one understands the music his emotional attitude seeks to create. This attitude is real, and perhaps the most singularly important aspect of his music. (Baraka 1968, 14)

Baraka easily connected the aggressive thoughts of Black Nationalism with the innovative, aggressive sound of Coltrane, connecting the spiritual music with the political situation of the time.⁶ Baraka connected his own poetics of the "murderous impulse" with Coltrane's "destruction" of western musical forms, since the latter took the famous Tin-Pan-Alley⁷ tune "My Favorite Things" and turned it upside down. It is clear, nevertheless, that Coltrane's was a purely musical context, one used and interpreted by Baraka to promote his own political poetics, as Harris says: "Baraka also wants to take weak Western forms, rip them asunder, and create something new out of the rubble. He transposes Coltrane's musical ideas to poetry, using them to turn white poetic forms backwards and upside down. This murderous impulse is behind all the forms of Baraka's aesthetic and art" (Harris 1985, 15).

Won-Gu Kim also argues in his article about Amiri Baraka that Coltrane and Charlie Parker "did not base their art solely in the demolition of Western forms" (Won-Gu Kim 2003), but just took the "western musical" forms as a starting point for their musical quests. This conclusion again shows the adaptive and interpretative liberty that Baraka took in portraying the John Coltrane figure as the new revolutionary ideal. That Coltrane was preferred over Charlie Parker by Baraka is also understandable, since Parker's music was bebop and was, in comparison with Coltrane's free music, out of time. Another reason could be that Parker was already being used by white poets,⁸ the Beats, who saw in Parker the new romantic genius, especially because of his drug

6 Feinstein makes a similar claim regarding the "wrong" interpretation of Coltrane's sound and music: "Baraka interprets Coltrane's music in this light, linking the direct, aggressive sound of Coltrane's tenor with the political temperament of the time" (Feinstein 1997, 120).

7 Tin Pan Alley tunes are compositions of New York music publishers and songwriters, like Irving Berlin, Hoagy Carmichael, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern and others, who dominated the popular music in the US in the late 19th century and early 20th century.

8 For Baraka, jazz is a truly African-American idiom, one which was exploited by the Beat poets in the 1950s just because "jazz was

addiction problems:⁹ “the poets writing about Parker in the fifties were dominantly white writers who almost never confronted any of the social issues of race, oppression, or protest – issues that were crucial to the emergence of bebop” (Feinstein 1997, 91).

That John Coltrane became the leading figure for the movement is also interesting when one considers that he, unlike the other jazz musicians, never made any direct political-musical statements. Feinstein also wonders why *A Love Supreme*, with its spiritual message, served as the theme for the movement, while Sonny Rollins made even more direct and aggressive political statements with his album, *The Freedom Suite*: “Sonny Rollins, to whom Coltrane was initially compared unfavorably, made a far more directed political statement with his record, *Freedom Suite* (1958)” (ibid., 144).

One of the reasons is that Sonny Rollins and Charles Mingus made direct statements regarding their political views, and their music was not as revolutionary in musical terms as Coltrane’s. Baraka explains in his autobiography why Coltrane made such an impression on him, and why he also became the unwilling hero to Baraka and other Black Arts Movement poets:

We heard him blow then, long and strong, trying to find something, as Miles stood at the back of the stage and tugged his ear, trying to figure out what the fuck Trane was doing. We could feel what he was doing.... That Five Spot gig with Monk was Trane coming into his own. After Monk, he’d play chorus after chorus, taking the music apart before our ears, splintering the chords and sounding each note, resounding it, playing it backwards and upside down trying to get something else. And we heard our own search and travails, our own reaching for a new definition. Trane was our flag.... They [the new black jazz avant-garde] all could play, and the cry of “Freedom” was not only musical but reflected what was going on in the marches and confrontations, on the streets and in the restaurants and department stores of the South. (Baraka 1984, 176)

One further reason involves Coltrane’s highly energetic and free music, which was released during the 1960s, when the racial tension was at its peak.¹⁰ Cook and Henderson explain that the incredible energy behind Coltrane’s music and his persistence on his spiritual quest puts Coltrane very close to Malcolm X: “What Coltrane signifies for black people because of the breadth of his vision and the incredible energy behind his spiritual quest, Malcolm X signifies in another way – not as musician, but simply and profoundly as black man, as Black Experience, and that experience in process of discovering itself, of celebrating itself...” (Cook & Henderson 1969, 110).

suddenly part of the lingo, the image” (Feinstein 1997, 66). This can be may of the main reasons, besides the time factor, why Parker was not taken by Baraka as the new symbol.

9 As Feinstein puts it, “Charlie Parker represented the ultimate in hipster mystique: frantic genius, coupled with romanticized overindulgence” (Feinstein 1997, 93).

10 Although Coltrane made no direct political statements, his music was so dynamic and loud that the Black Arts Movement poets could identify with it, and use it as a tool to promote their ideas: “in the sixties, Coltrane’s music, played ‘out loud,’ enabled poets of the time to break down the ‘closed doors’ of African-American silence” (Feinstein 1997, 125).

However, Coltrane denied a direct relationship between his own music and Malcolm X's militant ideas. One thing that connected both of them was their determined pursuit of their own goals, as Craig Werner says in his book *A Change is Gonna Come*: "Coltrane and Malcolm shared a determination that could be boiled down to a clear central message: '*Change the world. Now*'" (Werner 1999, 125).

Camal says that "both men were highly spiritual and both were willing to challenge their previous assumptions and accomplishments in a life long quest for the Truth" (Camal 2004). He also continues that they "both sometimes chose to express their ideas through a violent discourse (Coltrane was often described as an 'angry tenor' by white critics) even though they both believed in ideals of peace and brotherhood" (Camal 2004). The idea of violence might be true for Malcolm X; however Coltrane's angry sound did not serve to achieve political goals or to express anger. It was merely the style of a saxophone player who technically challenged himself in saxophone playing by introducing new techniques. The connection between both leaders, the musical leader and innovator of the time and the political activist, has been created and used by the Black Arts Movement to promote their political stance.

3.1 Amiri Baraka and Coltrane's music

One of the clearest examples of the connection between these leaders is Baraka's political use of the Coltrane figure in his poem "AM/TRAK," where Baraka equates Coltrane with Malcolm X by naming him "the spirit of the 60s", the "Malcolm X in New Super Bop Fire":

*Trane was the spirit of the 60's
He was the Malcolm X in New Super Bop Fire
Baaahhhhh
Wheeeeeee...Black Art!!!*

For Baraka, Coltrane became in this case an "unsung hero" of his poetics and of the poetics of other black nationalist poets, acquiring characteristics of rage and anger. Baraka imposed his own ideology onto Coltrane's music. Feinstein describes Coltrane as a musical embodiment of black nationalism and black nationalist poets:¹¹ "the outspoken African-American poets of the sixties adopted Coltrane's sound as a musical embodiment of black nationalism in the United States, and some of the most explosive poetry from that period is steeped in the music of that time" (Feinstein 1997, 116).

The poem "AM/TRAK" is built from five different contextual levels. In the first part of the poem Baraka puts Coltrane on a pedestal, which shows the importance of the legacy of the saxophone great:

11 Cober-Lake describes Coltrane's music in the hands of Black Nationalist poets as a statement and tool of politics: "The music, first, was a statement of a politicized Blackness" (Cober-Lake 2004).

*Trane,
Trane,
History Love Scream Oh
Trane, Oh
Trane, Oh
Scream History Love
Trane*

The next three parts of the poem deal with Coltrane's life – his beginnings in various bands, his musical development and his influences like Miles Davis or Thelonious Monk, his battles with drugs and alcohol, the hostility of critics, and, finally, the triumphant achievement of the great John Coltrane Quartet in the fifth part of the poem, where Baraka enumerates the whole quartet (with McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones), and some of the albums that the band recorded (*Meditations, Expression, A Love Supreme*):

*Jimmy Garrison, bass, McCoy Tyner, piano, Captain Marvel Elvin
on drums, the number itself – the precise saying
all of it in it afire aflame talking saying being doing meaning
Meditations
Expressions
A Love Supreme*

The fifth part of the poem is the strongest part in promoting the political stance of Baraka, and also in showing how important Coltrane's sound was for the promotion of the African-American legacy, music, art, and freedom:

*black blower of the now
The vectors from all sources – slavery, renaissance
bop charlie parker,
nigger absolute super-sane screams against reality
course through him
AS SOUND!*

Towards the end of the last part of the poem Baraka mentions Coltrane's highly spiritual album *Meditations*, to which Baraka turned while in jail. The album's spiritual title and intention contradict Baraka's use of Coltrane's music since this album supposedly told him what to do:

*And yet last night I played Meditations
& it told me what to do
Live, you crazy mother
fucker!
Live!*

*& organize
 yr shit
 as rightly
 burning!*

However, Baraka constantly used Coltrane’s music to promote his own political ideas, regardless of what Coltrane’s primary intentions with his music were. An example of such imposing of ideas is Baraka’s poem “I Love Music” from 1987, where Baraka takes the compositions which Coltrane played, “Like Sonny,” “My Favorite Things” and “Giant Steps,” and attaches his marxistic nihilist ideas to them:

*I want to talk to you
 my favorite things
 like sonny
 giant steps, life itself, fire can be, heart explosion, soul explosion, brain explosion.
 can be. can be. can be. aggeewheeuheeeaggeeee. aggrrrrrruuuuaggg.*

On the other hand, Baraka’s interpretation of Coltrane’s music is understandable, since the majority of Coltrane’s later albums contains fierce and almost “aggressive,” in terms of musical experimentation, saxophone playing by Coltrane. Feinstein describes Coltrane in the hands of Baraka as a martyr: “an everpresent inspiration to whom Baraka turns while in jail, and, by implication, throughout his life” (Feinstein 1997, 121).

An example of Baraka’s lifetime inspiration of Coltrane occurs in one of his latest poems “Wise 4,” where Coltrane is again connected with the revolution through the metaphor of black and red fire:

*in those crazy dreams I called myself
 Coltrane
 bathed in a black and red fire...*

Coltrane followed revolutionary events; he even played eight benefit concerts in support of King. He also recorded and wrote tunes inspired by the struggle of Martin Luther King – “Reverend King,” “Bucks against the Wall,” and his album *Cosmic Music* was dedicated to King. It is said that Coltrane even wrote the tune “Alabama” in response to the bombing in Birmingham. His saxophone lines are supposedly patterned according to Martin Luther King’s funeral speech. The whole tune reflects the movement of King’s speech, since Elvin Jones’s drumming rises to crescendo of rage, which represents the point where King transforms his mourning into a statement of renewed determination to struggle against racism. Jones wanted this drumming crescendo to signify the rising of the civil rights movement. Baraka describes the tune “Alabama” in the liner notes of the album *Coltrane Live at Birdland* as following: “a slow delicate introspective sadness, almost hopelessness, except for Elvin, rising in the background like something out of nature... a fattening thunder, storm clouds or jungle war clouds. The whole is a frightening emotional portrait of some place, in these musicians’ feelings” (Jones 1963).

However, this can again be just propaganda on the part of poets like Baraka to promote the political agenda of the time, since Coltrane never described himself as a political activist. His musical pursuit was purely personal, although the Black Arts Movement proclaimed him as its musical and influential hero. Feinstein questions, therefore, even the overly politicized message that is connected with Coltrane's tune "Alabama": "According to various writers, none of whom cites primary sources, Coltrane incorporated not only his own emotional response but the rhythms in King's eulogy as well. Although this song might be considered an overt political gesture, Coltrane throughout his career made no direct statement about his association with the Civil Rights Movement" (Feinstein 1997, 116).

During the recording session for the tune "Alabama," Coltrane said that "the music it represents musically, something that I saw down there translated into music from inside me." Coltrane again denied the connection between politics and his own music. However, Camal offers an argument that "the very nature of the music and the timing of its recording make it impossible not to link it to the events taking place in Alabama, around the South and in the nation's capital that year" (Camal 2004). Camal's argument does not stand on solid ground, especially if we consider the interview that Coltrane gave to Frank Kofsky, the author of *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*, where Coltrane was compared with Malcolm X. Coltrane, whom Kofsky saw as a god and, on the other hand, as a stereotypical black musician supporting the movement around Malcolm X, again refused any connection with Malcolm X's ideas and "side-stepped many of the loaded questions in an effort to emphasize his primary concern – the creative act" (Feinstein 1997, 119):

Kofsky: Some musicians have said that there's a relationship between some of Malcolm's ideas and the music, especially the new music. Do you think there's anything in that?

Coltrane: Well, I think that music, being an expression of the human heart, or of the human being itself, does express just what is happening. I feel it expresses the whole thing – the whole of human experience at the particular time that it is being expressed. (Kofsky 1970, 225)

Still, Coltrane's aesthetic revolution was linked to the revolutionary explosion in the Northern cities of the USA. Coltrane attracted and played before audiences of the most politically advanced blacks. King and the other leaders of the Civil Rights Movement were soon overpowered by the revolution of the new generation of leaders such as Malcolm X and the Black Panthers, which began to realize the radical movement. For Baraka and for many of his contemporary African American nationalist poets, Coltrane "articulated the passion of a decade remembered for extreme expressions of and attacks against racism" (Feinstein 1997, 121). Even though Coltrane rejected any connection with Malcolm X, what the Black Nationalist poets saw in Coltrane was the new musical code and the new aggressive sound of the music. They did not respond to what he said in his interviews; they responded to his music and adapted it for their own purposes.

3.2 Jayne Cortez's "How Long has Trane Been Gone"

Jayne Cortez's poem "How Long has Trane Been Gone" is another poem where the poet equates Coltrane with Malcolm X, with the same aggression Baraka uses in his poetics – "Rip those dead white people off your walls Black people":

*And how many more Tranes will go
before you understand your life
John Coltrane had the whole of
life wrapped up in B flat
John Coltrane like Malcolm
true image of black masculinity
...
John Coltrane
Rip those dead white people off your walls Black people
your walls Black people
black people whose walls
should be a hall
A Black Hall of Fame
so our children will know
will know & be proud
Proud to say I'm from Parker City, Coltrane City,
Ornette City,
Pharoah City living on Holiday street next to James Brown
Park in
the state of Malcolm*

Coltrane is in this poem the "true image of black masculinity," like Malcolm X, and is therefore also connected with the poets' message to "Rip those dead white people off your walls Black people". An important part of the poem to promote Malcolm's message are also the allusions to jazz musicians Charlie Parker, Ornette Coleman and Pharoah Sanders, next to John Coltrane. Cortez metaphorically says that all these musicians are together with Coltrane part of Malcolm X's state.

3.3 Sonia Sanchez's "a/coltrane/poem"

One of the leading Black Arts Movement poets, who also used the figure of John Coltrane in the political context, was Sonia Sanchez, who dedicated one of her most famous poems to Coltrane – "a/coltrane/poem":

*a lovesupremealovesupremealovesupreme for our blk
people.
BRING IN THE WITE/MOTHA/fuckas
ALL THE MILLIONAIRES/BANKERS/ol*

...
BRING IN THE WITE/LIBERALS ON THE SOLO
SOUND OF YO/FIGHT IS MY FIGHT
SAXOPHONE
TORTURE
THEM FIRST AS THEY HAVE
TORTURED US WITH
PROMISES...

This poem ends her collection *We a BaddDDD People*, which with its jazzy rhythms of Coltrane's tunes "Brother John" and "My Favorite Things," carries the political message to burn capitalist millionaires and promise-breaking liberals, so that African Americans might rise and take their deserved position. Sanchez's use of jazz improvisation, with words spread all over the page, containing a political message also occurs in her poem "on seeing pharoah sanders blowing," from her first collection *Homecoming*, where she criticizes the "white whore america". The same political message can be found throughout her early poetry, with high peaks in poems like "malcolm" – "fuck you white man. we have been curled too long. nothin is sacred now. not your white faces nor any land that separates until some voices squat with spasms."

The poem "a/coltrane/poem" also contains an element from Coltrane's playing, transformed into the political and poetic context: his screeching saxophone playing of free jazz. Feinstein talks in this case about the angry expression of the Black Arts Movement to vent their rage and anger against the white America: "But in the Coltrane poetry, the "scream" is most often not for "the time"; it is, instead, the angry expression of African-American demands for justice, for equality of opportunity... The description of Coltrane's sound as a scream became, in many cases, a way to vent outrage at the white establishment..." (Feinstein 1997, 123).

The aesthetic scream of Coltrane's jazz was used in a way to express outrage against the white establishment, as Feinstein puts it. Malcolm X was connected with John Coltrane as a central force of the movement. Larry Neal, one of the leaders of the Black Arts Movement, said that Malcolm X was like jazz in reminding poets of the music of Charlie Parker and John Coltrane – a music that was a central force in the emerging ethos of the Black Arts Movement.

Sonia Sanchez uses this scream in a paradoxical connection with the spiritual "A Love Supreme." This album carries Coltrane's positive message of peace; however the "aggressive" playing of Coltrane evoked in Sanchez the idea of revolution and uprising against the white community, Coltrane's music is seen as "a love supreme" for the black people, while Sanchez found a phonetic equivalent to Coltrane's aggressive saxophone lines:

yrs befo u blew away our passsst
and showed us our futureeeeeee
schreech screeech screeeeech screeech
allove/supreme, alove/supreme a love/supreme.

A LOVE SUPREME
 ScrEEEcCHHHHHH screeeEEECHHHHHHHH
 SCReeEEECHHHHHHHH SCREEEECCCCHHHH
 SCREEEEEECCCHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
 a lovesupremealovesupremealovesupreme for our blk
 people.

3.4 Carolyn Rodgers’s “Me, in Kulu Se & Karma”

Another poet who uses the “idea of the scream” to show her anger is Carolyn Rodgers. Her poem “Me, in Kulu Se & Karma” discusses her freedom using the screaming music and playing of tenor saxophone players Pharoah Sanders and John Coltrane:

*sweet sweeeeet and its
 me in the sky moving that way going freee where pha
 roah and trane playing in my guts and its me and my
 ears forgetting how to listen and just feeling oh
 yeam me I am screammmmmmmmming into the box and the box
 is screammmmmmmmming back, is slow motion moving sound...*

The poem alludes to Coltrane’s album *Kulu Se Mama*, which marked Coltrane’s departure into more adventurous free form improvisation, while it also featured Pharoah Sanders on tenor saxophone, besides Coltrane’s classic quartet. Rodgers supports her cry for freedom with another album from the period, Pharoah Sanders’ *Karma*. Rodgers blended both albums in the title of the poem, since both albums carry a spiritual message with free jazz playing. *Karma* was Sanders’ third recording as a leader and can be seen as a kind of a sequel to Coltrane’s *A Love Supreme*, especially if we consider the 32-minute long composition “The Creator Has A Master Plan.”

3.5 Haki Madhubuti’s Don’t Cry, Scream

According to Feinstein, the most representative political poem from this period, also making use of Coltrane’s scream, is Haki Madhubuti’s *Don’t Cry, Scream* “for it reflects the demands made by many African-American poems from the sixties” (Feinstein 1997, 127):

*naw brother,
 i didn’t cry,
 i just -
 Scream-eeeeeeeeeeeeee-ed sing loud
 SCREAM-EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE-ED & high with
 we-eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee ee feeling
 WE-EEEEEEeeeeeeeeEEEEEEEE letting
 WE-EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE yr/voice
 WHERE YOU DONE GONE, BROTHER? Break*

Madhubuti, like Sanchez, uses the scream through the phonetic equivalent of Coltrane's playing, from his album *Ascension*, to promote the political revolutionary ideas.

4. Conclusion

Poets like Baraka, Sanchez, Madhubuti, Neal and other Black Arts Movement poets in the 1960s used the "aggressive sound" of Coltrane and can be even seen as having incorrectly interpreted his music. They used his music only to break through with their own political ideas. Coltrane's music was in this sense an instrument for the ideas of the Black Arts Movement in connection with the black nationalists. Since Coltrane was one of the more spiritual jazz musicians in the history of jazz, the poetry of the Black Arts Movement did not reflect the true nature of Coltrane's music. Coltrane, as a black musician and a black person, did of course support the ideas of equality, but still he was not trying to mix his musical message with the ideas of Black Nationalism. This makes a certain sense and coincides with the poem that Coltrane wrote for the album *A Love Supreme*, which reflects Coltrane's belief in God and his belief in world peace:

*I will do all I can to be worthy of Thee o Lord
It all has to do with it.
Thank you God.
Peace.
There is none other.
God is. It is so beautiful.
Thank you God. God is all.*

The album *A Love Supreme* and others of Coltrane's spiritual albums like *Om*, *Ascension* or *Meditations* influenced on the one side the musical poets, like William Matthews, Jean Valentine, George Economou, Sascha Feinstein, Michael Stillman, and especially Michael S. Harper;¹² while on the other side, the political Coltrane poetry, especially the Black Arts Movement poets, saw in Coltrane an opportunity to express their political ideas. The musical type of Coltrane poetry is presently alive as ever in the world of poetry, since Coltrane and his music continue to be an inspiration for poets around the globe. The political Coltrane poetry had its highlights in late 60s, while nowadays we can only see its traces in poetry which tries to awake and affirm the African American legacy and history, as we can see in the poem "Dear John Coltrane" by A.B. Spellman, where the poet remembers his "flight for freedom", combined with Coltrane's slow blues:¹³

12 "In many respects, the more volatile Coltrane poems of the sixties allowed subsequent writers to be less overtly political; at the very least, they allowed the poets who followed to concentrate more on the rich legacy of jazz rather than the intensities of rage" (Feinstein 1997, 128).

13 The poem "Did John's Music Kill Him?", from Spellman's earlier period, under the influence of the Black Arts Movement, shows Coltrane combined with the Black Arts Movement idea of "black is beautiful." Spellman uses various compositions that Coltrane played to promote the Black Arts Movement ideas: then john. little old lady/ had a nasty mouth. summertime/ when the war is. africa ululating/ a line bunched up like itself/ into knots paints beauty black.

*later, different station, cold room dimming
 it's you, john, trane's slow blues
 now it's your line that opens, & opens
 & opens, & i'm flying that way again
 same sky, different moon, this midnight
 globe that toned those now lost blue rooms
 where things like jazz float the mind
 this motion the still & airless propulsion
 i know as inner flight, this view
 the one i cannot see with my eyes
 open. i hear the beginning approach, &
 i know the line i traveled was a horizon
 the circle of the world, another freedom
 flight to another starting place...*

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Appendix 1

*Got to remember just where I came in. Freedom Suite,
some five six years ago, Rollins cradling the sun, as it rose, and we
dreamed then, of becoming, unlike our fathers, and the other cowboys,
strong men in our time, raging and clawing, at fools of any persuasion.*

Tadej Braček

Gradec Primary School, Slovenia

Fact, Myth and Legend in Matthew Arnold's *Westminster Abbey*

Summary

The paper deals with the multilayered elegy "Westminster Abbey," which was not given a lot of attention by Matthew Arnold's critics. The poem is dedicated to Arnold's life-long friend Dean Stanley, who was, like Arnold himself, "a child of light." The term refers to their common fight against Philistinism in the English society of the time. As the poem is about a real person, it contains real data, such as excerpts from Stanley's life, described in the form of praise. However, the poem also introduces the old Saxon legend of consecration of the Abbey, namely the consecration by the light, performed by the First Apostle (St Peter) himself. In addition to the legend, Arnold also used some classical Greek allusions to depict the late Dean's character. In one of the allusions, Stanley is associated with Demophon, whose immortality was never achieved due to the fault of another human, and in the second he is transformed into an everlasting oracle of the Abbey using the Trophonius, a builder of Delphi, metaphor. All elements of the poem form a homogenous eulogy, making it worthwhile reading for English scholars and students, and possibly a candidate for the English poetic canon.

Key words: Matthew Arnold, Arthur Stanley, elegy, eulogy, Victorian poetry, Philistinism, poetic metaphor

Dejstva, miti in legende v elegiji Matthewa Arnolda *Westminstrska opatija*

Povzetek

Članek obravnava večplastno elegijo »Westminstrska opatija«, ki ji kritiki Matthewa Arnolda niso posvečali kaj dosti pozornosti. Posvečena je Arnoldovemu dolgoletnemu prijatelju dekanu Stanleyju, ki je bil, kot Arnold sam, »otrok luči«. Ta termin se nanaša na njun skupni boj proti filistrstvu, ki je bilo prisotno v takratni angleški družbi. Ker pesem govori o resnični osebi, vsebuje tudi resnične podatke, kot so na primer dejstva iz Stanleyjevega življenja, ki so predstavljena v obliki hvalnice. Poleg tega pa pesem bralcu predstavi staro saksonsko legendo o posvetitvi Westminstrske opatije, ki bi jo naj posvetil sam Prvi apostol (Sv. Peter). Poleg te legende Arnold v pesmi uporabi tudi klasične oz. grške aluzije, ki služijo opisovanju dekanove osebnosti. V eni izmed njih je Stanley poistoveten z Demofonom, spet v drugi pa se spremeni v večni orakelj Westminstrske opatije, pri čemer Arnold uporabi metaforo grškega arhitekta Trofonija. Vsi ti elementi tvorijo homogeni slavošpev pokojnemu, ki je literarno delo, vredno branja tako za študente kot proučevalce angleške literature. Potrebno bi bilo razmisliti o uvrstitvi pesnitve v angleški poetični kanon.

Ključne besede: Matthew Arnold, Arthur Stanley, elegija, slavošpev, viktorijanska poezija, filistrstvo, poetična metafora

Fact, Myth and Legend in Matthew Arnold's *Westminster Abbey*

1. Introduction

This elegy, or, better, eulogy, was written on the occasion of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley's burial in the Abbey itself on July 25, 1881. Stanley was the 27th Dean of Westminster Abbey and a close friend of Arnold's. The affiliation began in their pre-Oxfordian days, at Rugby School, where they were both educated by Dr Thomas Arnold, Matthew Arnold's father. Stanley was a liberal thinker, even more liberal than the sharp-quilled Arnold, who in spite of the theological differences between them, supported Arnold in his literary career, and due to his scholastic and moral influence, opened many doors to his recognition. Stanley was also a biographer of Arnold's father and the editor of his works (Williamson 1971, 749–61). Because of all the help Stanley provided to the younger Arnold, it is not surprising that in this poem, Stanley is called "a child of light" (Arnold 1895, 181). Although the poem is "an interesting reflection of a significant relationship in Matthew Arnold's biography and ... a means of studying the transmutation that occurs when biography becomes poetry" (Williamson 1971, 761), it also stands for a unique blend of historical facts – such as the events from Stanley's life, Greek myths, used as allusions to his life, and legends, such as that around the consecration of the Abbey. However, the critics of Mathew Arnold's poetry have not considered the poem one of the most prominent pieces of Victorian poetry, nor have anthology editors included it in contemporary canon. I call this an injustice. The situation is similar to that of metaphysical poets of 17th century England. Their poetry clearly offended Johnson, as he, the man of Romanticism, was unable to accept the fact that the rational can be mingled with the emotional; "to shew their learning was their how endeavour," he wrote (Hammond 1974, 50). Arnold's poem "Westminster Abbey" is by its title perhaps unattractive, due to the mass tourism associated with to the building itself; however, the poem is rich in sophisticated conceits and hyperboles, which appeal to the modern palate. In addition to this, the poem draws readers' attention to the less known historical/mythical data about the Abbey, which increases their awareness of English culture as well. My paper will disclose those elements of the poem which make it a genuine piece of literature, and call for artistic re-evaluation and inclusion in the English poetry canon.

2. The Christian legend and Stanley

The poem opens with three rhetorical questions concerning the life and death of the Dean:
... now is pass'd into the night?

Couldst thou no better keep, O Abbey old ...
The presence of that gracious inmate, light?–

What, is the happy glow so soon expired? (Arnold 1895, 181)

The visual imagery of lightness with its contrast “night” may refer to Arnold’s idea about Philistinism expressed in his essay on Heinrich Heine, where he states that “Philistine must have originally meant, in the mind of those who invented the nickname, a strong, dogged, unenlightened opponent of the chosen people, of the children of the light” (Arnold 1914, 121); but the images would prove not so effective were they not associated with the legend presented in the four stanzas to follow. The official website of Westminster Abbey states that on a plot of land called Thorney Island, “a small Benedictine monastery [was] founded under the patronage of King Edgar and St Dunstan around 960 AD” and that the consecration of the church occurred on December 28, 1065 under King Edward the Confessor, who also built it in honour of St. Peter the Apostle (Westminster Abbey 2008). However, Arnold in his poem goes considerably further back in history and names Sebert, king of the East Saxons, as a true builder of the church. Sebert is, historically speaking, truly one of the possible establishers (in the year 604) according to both Edgar’s charter, and also according to the writers Ailred of Rievaulx, Sulcurdus, and Gervase of Canterbury. Richard Sporley, who was a monk at the abbey in 1450

carries the period of its erection as far back as the year 184, when king Lucius is supposed to have embraced Christianity. [At the time the place] was not only dedicated to religion, but [was also] a place of royal sepulture, as well as the repository of regalia. In the persecution under Dioclesian, he adds, it was converted into a Temple of Apollo. (Dugdale 1817, 265–6)

The story of the consecration of the church, as used in this poem, is given by Sulcurdus, who lived at the time of William the Conqueror, who was also the first British monarch to be crowned there.

The legend has it that the night before the consecration of the church, a Saxon fisherman met a stranger, who asked to be taken to the other shore, where the Abbey stood. The man went toward the minster, and then the whole exterior building began to shine. The interior was illuminated as well, and there was a divine smell present in the air, and happy carols were heard. The stranger then returned and the church stopped shining. He revealed himself as “the fisher from the Lake of Galilee” (Arnold 1895, 183), which meant that the visitor to the Abbey was the First Apostle. He instructed the fisher to tell King Sebert in the morning “how his St. Peter’s Church in Thorney Isle/Peter, his friend, with light did consecrate” (*ibid.*, 183).

As the abbey itself foretold, in the poem many times mentioned, “boon” from God, with which we become acquainted at the beginning of the poem (*ibid.*, 183), it was only a matter of time then before this boon materialized. Nevertheless, the people had to wait for more than twelve hundred years for the gift from heaven. In the meanwhile

Arts came, and arms, and law,
And majesty, and sacred form and fear;
Only that primal guest the fisher saw,
Light, only light was slow to reappear. (Arnold 1895, 184)

We can see from this stanza that the Abbey survived turbulent times in English history. Especially interesting is the mentioning of the “sacred form and fear.” These words might allude to the

English Reformation led by Henry VIII, and reversed for a while by his daughter Mary I. In 1535 Cromwell was appointed Vicar-general, and after estimating the possessions of the Church, the Parliament, after the introduction of his bill, in 1536 passed a law which aimed to dissolve all monasteries with an income of 200 pounds or less. Large monasteries were excluded from the 1536 Act, but from 1537 on the government started to convince them to dissolve themselves and give their land to the Crown. By 1540 the process was over and the monastic life ended (Newcombe 1995, 59, 61). The process was, ironically, not so much sacred as it was profane; it dealt primarily with the property of the Church rather than religion. Light could hardly appear in such material circumstances.

Then, in the time of Arnold “The promise of the prime/seem’d to come true at last” (Arnold 1895, 184). Arthur Penrhyn Stanley was the chosen one, the spring after winter’s darkness, the man predestined by the Apostle many centuries ago. It is an extremely bold remark on Arnold’s part to claim that the Abbey itself and even St. Peter announced the coming of Dean Stanley. The announcement comes close to that heralding Christ’s birth. By associating his friend with miracles, we can see the deep respect and admiration that Arnold felt towards Stanley. The Dean is described as being in possession of:

Bright wits, and instincts sure,
And goodness warm, and truth without alloy,
And temper sweet, and love of all things pure,
And joy in light, and power to spread the joy. (Ibid.,184–5)

The anaphora as well as the six-fold repetition of “and” reinforce the qualities that Stanley had. The common dominator of all the features is purity of spirit. Here we may remember that although Arnold and Stanley were sometimes in dispute over issues such as Arnold’s attacks on certain clergymen or Stanley’s overly optimistic solutions to ecclesiastical issues, the purpose of elegy/eulogy is to pay tribute to the deceased one, and not to show them in a bad light – hence all the seemingly exaggerated bursts of thanks (hyperboles) and elaborate metaphors (conceits).

3. Classical allusions as biographical metaphors

In speaking about metaphors, allow me to mention the most obvious and extensive one using a classical allusion. Not only Stanley was the light, he was also given “light” by some, presumably divine, source. “And on that countenance bright/Shone oft so high a light,” Arnold states in “Westminster Abbey” (185), before delivering an allegorical image of Demophon (*Sylva Rhetoricae*), son of the king and queen of Eleusis, who was bathed in fire (light) every night. As a child, Demophon was child nursed by Demeter, the Greek Earth Goddess (*Encyclopedia Mythica*). Arnold explains how one night his mother, Queen Metanira, found him lying in the fire and screamed. The ritual of burning Demophon’s mortality, performed every night, was thus broken and he had to live the life of a mortal (*Columbia Encyclopedia*). “In some chance battle on Cithaeron-side/The nursling of the Mighty Mother died” (Arnold 1895, 186). The utterance of the Earth Goddess can be

understood as a critique of those who undermined Stanley's work, aimed to bring good, a "boon" to people. The Goddess said: "O ignorant race of man!/Achieve your good who can/If your own hands the good begun undo?" (ibid., 186). It is again a rhetorical question, a frequent figure of speech in this poem, which means that all the good work is done in vain if the person for whom some beneficial deed is performed begins to undermine it. This refers to Stanley opponents, mentioned later in the paper.

Most noticeable is the blend of Christian and Ancient Greek belief systems, which is reflected in the visual light/fire imagery. As already mentioned, St Peter was supposed to consecrate the Abbey by light, but then the blessing "in desert ice of subtleties was spent/or drown'd in mists of childish wonderment" (ibid., 184). The second example of extinguishing of holy fire can be derived from the second myth of Demophon – not Homeric as the previous one was – but the one provided by Apollodorus. Our mythographer states in it that the surprise of finding Demophon in fire resulted in his death in the flames. Shortly after that the Goddess Demeter left the kingdom of Eleusis (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online 2008). The third part of the same light image consist of Arnold's descriptions of Stanley, namely that he had a "countenance bright" (Arnold 1895, 185), that he was a "bringer of heavenly light" (ibid., 186) and "light's fair nursling" (ibid., 187). Now let us link all the elements to illuminate the blending of the belief systems: St Peter, the Goddess Demeter and also Stanley himself are the same person. They all wanted to do good for the Abbey. However, St Peter's work was destroyed by the strivings of reason, which are, according to the poem, opposite to the Christian faith, or temporarily invisible as the result of people's immature responses to Stanley's liberal thinking. Demeter wanted to make Demophon immortal, but she failed due to improper responses as well. The same happened to Stanley, who had to endure "deadly airs" by his enemies.

In the poem Arnold applies the first-mentioned Greek myth to his friend's life more specifically:

On thee too, in thy day
Of childhood, Arthur! did some check have power,
That, radiant though thou wert, though couldst but stay,
Bringer of heavenly light, a human hour? (Ibid., 186)

Of course, the logical answer to the question is 'no.' No one, as in the case of Demophon, interrupted the spell which aimed to make Stanley immortal. Nevertheless, Arnold continues the next stanza as if the answer were 'yes.' "Therefore our happy guest/Knew care, and knew unrest" (ibid., 187) as all the descendants of Adam and Eve do. While enumerating the calamities to which Stanley was exposed, Arnold scolds his opponents in line 125: "And men ignoble harass'd him with strife." The occasions on which Stanley could have been harassed might have been when "Stanley defended [Bishop] Colenso in Convocation against charges of heresy [and when he fought] "against the forces of bibliolatry and Philistinism" (Williamson 1971, 758). Arnold was his ally in the battle against the latter two negative human characteristics, and wanted "to illuminate and improve mankind ... by affirming the value of literature" (Shumaker 1962, 387).

Ultimately, as “... deadly airs his strength did undermine” (Arnold 1895, 187) Stanley had to die. His death is gloriously described since the Dean’s life was glorious: “And light’s fair nursing stupor first invades/And next the crowning impotence of death” (ibid., 187). Here we can see the poet’s craftsmanship, as he first intensifies the state of dying – stupor preceding death, and, secondly, creates an ingenious oxymoron in the last verse of the stanza – “crowning impotence.” The force of death in the end inevitably wins over everyone, no matter how “bright” one is.

The mood of the subsequent, fourteenth, stanza remains the same, and they are both critical “of men with mind [still] ... darken’d and astray” (ibid., 184). Death remains the topic of the stanza; however, this stage of Stanley’s life is once more generalized by putting forward the Greek myth of Trophonius and Agamedes, the builders of the temple of Apollo at Deplhi (The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia). When they finished building the temple, they “a meed required” (line 136). The god said to them to them to “live happy [for seven days], then expect your perfect meed!” (Arnold 1895, 187). After seven days they both died in their sleep. Although this occurrence seems ironic to the modern reader – i.e. that the makers of a masterpiece received death as payment for their work, Arnold sees their respective peaceful deaths as the ultimate prize: “Death, death was judged the boon supreme indeed” (ibid., 187). The agent of the cited verse is missing; however, we can conclude that it should end in ‘by God,’ as the previous lines in the stanza refer to Him. The same prize was given to Stanley who “served men nobly, and acceptance found” (ibid., 188).

What draws attention to the analogy between the two ancient architects and Arnold is that according to another legend, Trophonius “was swallowed up by earth and transformed into an Oracular Daimon (Spirit)” (Theoi Project). This was an appropriate destiny for a man, whose father was Apollo and whose name means ‘nourisher of the mind’ (Theoi Project). All pieces of the metaphorical puzzle now logically come together. Stanley’s spiritual father was Thomas Arnold who acted as Apollo for both young men – Stanley and Arnold. He was an oracle, a producer of truth. Stanley, his ‘son,’ alias Trophonius, is buried beneath the Abbey and is made an oracle, as the poem’s final stanza will prove.

Stanley’s death was for his own self just the natural end of the life path after the great work he had done for people. Arnold asks the readers then: “What could he better wish than then to die/And wait the issue, sleeping underground?” ‘Nothing more,’ we are apt to answer since we know the late Stanley’s qualities, ‘let him wait in peace for the last judgement.’ After he had seeded the goodness in people, his work “underground” now becomes to wait for the results, the fruits of his labour. At the end of the fourth, and especially in the third to the last stanza, Arnold is unsure whether the influence of Stanley will remain with the people of England or whether they will lose themselves in “folly revived, re-furbish’d sophistries/And pullulating rites externe and vain.” Narrow-mindedness was something both Arnold and Stanley fought against together. He is also afraid that “a church once large [would be] ... grown strait in soul.” There is a pun on “large” here which could signify the Anglican *Broad* Church party, of which Stanley was the leader (Williamson 1971, 749). Landow (n.d.) writes that

this loosely associated group of intellectuals in the Church of England in many ways represent what has become liberal twentieth-century Protestantism. ... Broad Churchmen emphasized that the Bible, though in some sense divinely inspired, was not ... literally true in every detail, and that therefore the scriptures should be read metaphorically or even mythologically.

The *Party* therefore refused to believe that the Bible should be read literally, and now when their leader was dead, Arnold predicted that the Church would try to get “strait” again, and read the Bible literally, without understanding the underlying metaphorical language.

The penultimate stanza is the most personal one. In it Arnold compares his life-long companion Stanley to his father, Stanley’s mentor at Rugby and later in his professional career:

Even as my father, thou—
 Even as that loved, that well-recorded friend—
 Hast thy commission done, ye both may now
 Wait for the leaven to work, the let to end. (Arnold 1895, 189)

Dr Thomas Arnold was “well-recorded,” owing to Stanley’s publication of the *Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold* in 1844 (Williamson 1971, 754). The image of leaven, as used in bread, creates a picture of their life work and influence growing; it is also just a matter of time when the obstacles will fall and “the boon of life [will be able to] struggle through” (Arnold 1895, 184); this refers to the gift of life which both men nourished and conveyed to the others during their careers.

4. Conclusion

The eighteenth and final stanza recapitulates, as Shakespeare does in the final couplet of his sonnets, what was spoken of till now; it turns again to the legend of the Abbey’s consecration, as well as reminding us that we are reading a eulogy. Arnold starts the stanza by addressing the Abbey and comforting it with the words that it should “fear not but that thy light once more shall burn” (Arnold 1895, 189). The poet explains how this will happen. The “transfigured walls [will] be touch’d with flame” (line 178), when “from lip to lip will pass his name” (line 180) – the line with which the poem ends. The whole idea of this stanza had been captured before in Shakespeare’s “Sonnet XVIII,” if we take the “eternal lines” from the verses “Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his shade/When in eternal lines to time thou growest” (Shakespeare 1990, 1194) in a broad sense. According to Arnold, Stanley will be immortalized by other people pronouncing his name, as some sort of a chant, and by this means he will stay in the memory of the British nation. However, as the poet “believed that ‘knowledge’ comes primarily through literature – and most specifically through poetry – he argued that religion, which had traditionally informed humans about themselves and their existences, would soon be overtaken and then replaced by poetry” (Davis 2006, 369), we can understand the last stanza in the same sense in which the above-cited Shakespeare’s “lines” are usually interpreted, i.e. that by Arnold’s piece of writing and by readers’ reading and responding to it, the late Dean will be forever written in the annals of history (this in spite of the fact that Stanley, as a clergyman, would probably not

have agreed with poetry's victory over religion). What is more, Arnold even contradicts himself in predicting the victory, as he in this eulogy picks up an undoubtedly religious story for its frame and assigns his friend the crown of the "Saviour's happy light" (Arnold 1895, 184).

Although the classical allusions are larger in number, the main frame metaphor of "Westminster Abbey" remains the legend of its consecration. It appears that Arnold introduced the two classical conceits to this poem due to his desire to educate and enlighten people via literature, especially poetry. In this sense, we could justly call Arnold a child of light as well.

I believe that I have shown the elements of the poem which make it a worthwhile reading for academic as well as casual readers. The genius of Arnold can especially be seen in his ability to produce several kinds of meaning of facts, myths or legends he incorporates in his poetry. In this sense he comes close to the metaphysical poets: like them, Arnold was not understood by the readers and critics of Romanticism. Due to the value "Westminster Abbey" presents in the sense of quality of expressed thought, and better understanding of English culture in general, it should be considered as a serious candidate for the canon of English poetry.

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Ana Vogrinčič

University of Southampton / ISH,
Ljubljana Graduate School of the Humanities

Gossip, Gift and Commodity in Francis Coventry's *History of Pompey the Little, or, The Life and Adventures of a Lap-Dog* (1751)

Summary

Francis Coventry's *History of Pompey the Little* represents one of the better known examples of today otherwise neglected eighteenth-century English novels of non human-characters. By pointing at thus far unacknowledged dimensions of the text, the article challenges the established reading of the book as put forward by Liz Bellamy in the theory of the 'novels of circulation'. According to Bellamy, the peregrinating animals and objects of these narratives represent circulating commodities and thus symbolize alienated commercial society. Demonstrating that Pompey the lapdog rather functions as a gift and a gossip, this essay offers an alternative interpretation which opens up a different perspective on Coventry's representation of society. Following from this, the paper aims at situating *Pompey the Little* within broader socio-cultural context of eighteenth-century England, as well as reflects on its place in fiction of the period. As such it advocates socio-historical approaches to literature.

Key words: eighteenth-century English fiction, novels with non-human characters, commercialism, sociability, gossip.

Obrekovanje, darovanje in potrošništvo v delu *History of Pompey the Little, or, The Life and Adventures of a Lap-Dog* (1751)

Povzetek

History of Pompey the Little Francisa Coventryja je eden najbolj znanih primerov danes sicer že precej pozabljenega žanra angleške proze osemnajstega stoletja, tj. romana, kjer v vlogi glavnega junaka nastopa predmet ali žival, v našem primeru pes Pompey. S tem ko pokaže na še ne opažene dimenzije besedila, članek preizprašuje etabliirano razumevanje dela, kot ga v svoji teoriji t.i. 'romanov kroženja' uveljavi Liz Bellamy. V njenem branju pohajkujoče živali in predmeti, ki prehajajo od enega k drugemu lastniku, predstavljajo krožeče tržno blago in posredno simbolizirajo odtujeno potrošniško družbo. Pričujoči esej pokaže, da je vloga Pompeyja bolj kot prodajnemu artiklu bliže funkciji daru in da pes deluje predvsem kot opravljivec, kar ponudi alternativno interpretacijo romana, ki omogoči drugačen pogled na Coventryjevo podobo družbe. Prispevek želi Coventryjevo zgodbo umestiti v širši družbeno-kulturni kontekst Anglije osemnajstega stoletja in ponovno premisliti njen položaj znotraj proze tega časa. Kot tak tukajšnji premislek sodi med primere družbeno-kulturnega pristopa obravnavanja literature.

Ključne besede: angleška proza osemnajstega stoletja, romani z nečlovečnimi junaki, opravljanje, družabnost, potrošništvo.

Gossip, Gift and Commodity in Francis Coventry's *History of Pompey the Little, or, The Life and Adventures of a Lap-Dog* (1751)

1. Introduction

Although considered minor eighteenth-century fiction, *Pompey the Little* received its share of attention in past literary debates. The popularity it gained in its time, the non-human narrator, Coventry's connections with Fielding – all of this incited sufficient interest for it even to be published by the elite Oxford University Press.¹ A considerable number of things regarding the book have therefore already been told.²

Rather than lingering on the already known, I would like to discuss Coventry's narrative through the lens of the subgenre to which it is said to belong – the novel of circulation³ – and try to think about how it engages with certain issues of its time – notably the representation of the society – thereby assessing fiction as a social, historical and cultural form. After redefining the title hero as a device rather than a character, and briefly locating the work in the wider contextual frame with regard to the contemporary fiction, reception, and the generic conventions, I will move away from the literary aspects into exploring the more particular traits of Pompey's peregrinations, and conclude by framing the essay within the socio-historical approaches to literature.

Nearly all discussions of *Pompey the Little*, almost as a rule, refer to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's praise of this short narrative.⁴ Indeed, it is curious how this 'learned lady', an avid reader and respected writer, singled out this rather peculiar book. After receiving "the case of Books" from her daughter and reading for a whole day and part of the night, Lady Mary reports back. In a letter from February 16th 1752 she comments on *Peregrine Pickle*, on the inserted *Memoirs* by Lady Vane, on the *Parish Girl*, but she does not get too excited about any of the books in particular, until towards the evening, when

Candles came, and my Eyes grown weary I took up the next Book merely because I suppos'd from the Title it could not engage me long. It was Pompey the Little, which has really diverted me more than any of the others, and it was impossible to go to Bed till it was finish'd. It is a real and exact representation of Life as it is now acted in London, as it was in my time, and as it will be (I do not doubt) a Hundred years hence, with some little variation of Dress, and perhaps Government. I found there many of my Acquaintance.

1 The Oxford edition came out in 1974, which is even before the reorientation of literary studies into the less canonical literature of the eighteenth-century from the mid-1980s onwards (Hunter 2002).

2 The introduction to the Oxford edition by Robert A. Day certainly represents an authoritative study of the work. It also includes a list of bibliographical references and of related criticism.

3 See L. Bellamy (1998), but also C. Flint (1998), F. Johnston (2003).

4 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689 1762) was a poet and a writer, but is most famous for her letters, which represent a valuable account of eighteenth-century society in England and abroad.

Lady T[ownshend] and Lady O[xford] are so well painted, I fancy'd I heard them talk, and have heard them say the very things there repeated.

[*Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. R. Halsband 1967, III/4]

This lucid insight certainly draws one's attention. It is exact, informative and – gossipy. As I will try to show, the notion of gossip is something which importantly characterizes the book itself.

2. Where is the dog?

It is significant that Lady Mary nowhere mentions that this is (supposed to be) a history of a dog. Because in fact, it is not – the subtitle notwithstanding. Pompey is indeed a lapdog, and we do learn about his life, but we learn much more about his successive owners. This makes the title itself a sort of a statement, inscribing the text within a certain tradition, while escaping it at the same time.⁵ It quickly becomes clear that the scrupulously-recorded Pompey's date of birth, his family origins and the time of his death, with a summary of his character traits in the end, is in fact all that resembles a proper biography. The presence of Pompey the lapdog is theoretical rather than practical. He is simply not very important. Throughout the book we are offered very little sense of what he is like or what he thinks; he functions like a cipher, at most mirroring his owners' characters and thus adapting a new role with each ensuing chapter. This impression is strengthened by the third person narrative in which Pompey is passively handled from one owner to the other, being either lost or found, given to or disposed of, bought and sold, but never actively engaged in what is happening, which makes Coventry's constant referral to him as a hero even more ironic, and again underlines his play with the established generic conventions, a common occurrence in the print culture of the time.

All this, however, only makes Pompey a much better narrative device. The dog obviously serves as a string on which the episodes are threaded, and as such functions as an efficient handle to introduce a variety of characters and events, a motley range of morals and manners. Characters differ in status, as well as in age and genre; each brings his or her own stock of concerns (and gossip!), and so the reader is presented with a whole panorama of issues, although they more or less all, each from its own angle, shed light on the fashionable London society.⁶ While moving spatially from Italy to England, from London to Bath, then to Cambridge and back to London, Pompey goes through 23 different owners. Despite some attempts for unification – such as establishing superficial, usually retrospective connections between the characters, and in the end returning Pompey to one of the first owners – the narrative dissolves in a number of micro plots which generate new stories and amplify the impression of all-inclusiveness, and of encompassing all social types, personality profiles and different occurrences. It is at once universal and particular, just as Lady Mary observed.

5 In the introductory chapter Coventry first scoffs at the “present taste for life-writing, where no Character is thought too inconsiderable to engage the public Notice”, and then offers the readers a history of a dog, asserting that his hero is just as entitled to one as all the “Vagrants, Parish Girls, Chamber-Maids, Pick-Pockets and Highwaymen” (1974, 5).

6 Among others, Pompey resides with an Italian courtesan, with an English fop, a widowed countess, with a nouveau riche family, a milliner and a nobleman.

What might be read as a failed attempt to produce a story of a dog thus reveals itself to be a well-planned strategy. As his repeated apologies for having so long neglected the hero clearly show,⁷ Coventry seems to know exactly that he was subverting expectations and he even appears to be having fun with it.

Relocating the hero from representing a character to serving as a device opens up many new possibilities. First, it allows the introduction of a variety of topics without an effort to tie them together, thus avoiding the often difficult task of bringing various scenes within the perception of one hero: A non-human protagonist can report on what is otherwise concealed, it can go or be present where other people cannot. And second, being devoid of volition, of human comprehension and moral judgement, it can serve as a very convenient technique for the satirical representation of the world: the author can hide behind the uninterested observer, an innocent dog, and even though the account is offensive in itself, the reader can be the only one to blame for perceiving it as such. It hardly needs to be stressed that *The History of Pompey the Little* is indeed a satire.

3. Historical and literary contextualization

This device was not new. Non-human narrators appear already in ancient legends and folktales; even before the Aesop's talking animals (*Fables*, 6th century B.C.), and examples of them being used as a device for linking picaresque narrative through a satirical lens also date at least as far back as Apuleius' *Golden Ass* (about 160 B.C.). Cambridge-educated Coventry might have well been familiar with these and also with medieval literature of the sort, but he was much more likely to have read the more recent French and English examples.⁸ This notwithstanding, *Pompey* was the one which ignited the mid-century boom in novels about non-human subjects or inanimate objects and "established it as an autonomous narrative form within Britain" (Bellamy 1998, 119). What was regarded as new and innovative, and was indeed distinctively different from historical prototypes, was the stress on the satire, using the naïve onlooker to ridicule the chosen target; or, as observed by Walter Raleigh, "the novelty [...] consisted in the scandal and scurrility that [these novels] made it excuse" (1894, 192). As such the device was very convenient for *roman à clef*, "a work of fiction in which actual persons are presented under fictitious names" (Cuddon 1999, 475), originating in seventeenth-century France and, by the time of 'our' book, already well established in England. According to Lady Mary, this is obviously the case with *Pompey*.⁹

7 E.g. "If the foregoing dialogue appears impertinent and foreign to this History, the ensuing one immediately concerns the Hero of it; whose Pardon I beg for having so long neglected to mention his Name" (1974, 17); and the title of chapter vii reads: "Relating a curious dispute on the immortality of the soul, in which the name of our hero will but once be mentioned" (1974, 34).

8 Notably, Le Sage's *Le Diable boiteux* from 1707, translated into English a year later as *The Devil upon Two Sticks*; and Charles Gildon's *The Golden Spy* from 1709. The *Tatler* and the *Spectator* also published a few short stories, among others one with a shilling and one with a drop of water as the main character (*Tatler*, no. 249, 1710; *Spectator*, no. 293, 1712).

9 She recognized Lady Townshend, the wife of Charles third viscount Townshend, in Lady Tempest; and the Countess of Orford, the wife of Robert Walpole, 2nd earl of Orford, in Lady Sophister, but also saw her proper self in the hypochondriac Lady Qualmsick. Another sign for this being a *roman à clef* are the numerous concealed names with a dash between the first and the last letter, for which Day provides the proper reference (e.g. F-t for Foot, H-le for Hoyle etc.). There are other examples of the sort, e.g. Smollett's political satire *Adventures of the Atom* (1769).

If the linking device itself already enables the introduction of a variety of topical concerns,¹⁰ references to real, usually well-known personages create an even stronger sense of actuality and of the present. *Pompey the Little* abounds with the names of fashionable venues, contemporary celebrities and literary characters.¹¹ All these references are needed as, according to Ronald Paulson, the subject of a satirist is “the microscopic imitation of the topically and immediately commonplace” (1967, 22). “The presentness of the present”; “the language about and of the living”, which according to Mikhail Bakhtin represents one of the archetypal traits of the novelistic (2004, 15), is enhanced by the endeavour to accompany each episode and each individual profile with a characteristic discourse, resulting in an orchestra of voices and creating a vivid acoustic portrait of the age. Again, this is something that Lady Mary herself observed, admitting that she “fancy’s she heard them [Lady T and Lady O] talk.” This too contributes to the gossipy quality of the narrative. What is more, the panorama of idioms is reinforced by the hybridity of genres, creatively intertwined throughout the text. We are offered everything from a sentimental romance (Hillario’s duel story) to a theological dispute (on the immortality of the soul); a coffee-house debate, a moral tale, and much more, resulting in a proper Bakhtinian polyglossia.¹²

It is something of a contradiction that despite the hotchpotch of voices, the one of the author remains the loudest. In contrast to the majority of non-human heroes, Pompey is not the narrator. Consequently we meet with much more direct authorial presence. Even though the author is pretending to talk in the name of the dog and remains anonymous, the fact that he does not even provide a frame story – which was almost a rule with novels of non-human characters (and very common in general) – makes the dog disappear even more into the background, and more openly than is usual for this subgenre, suggests that what he is supposedly thinking stands for the author’s own commentary.¹³ Scorn against the *nouveaux riches*, contempt of the luxury of the times and critique of the general moral corruption in *Pompey the Little* thus reveal a great deal about conservative views and the general discontent of this young Anglican curate of aristocratic origin.

10 Issues referred to in the text include marriage, seduction, adultery, servants’ (mis)behaviour, duelling, wagering, and more generally: conspicuous consumption, politics, charity; all this and more along with a variety of occupations – from doctors and lawyers to students and inn-keepers. The range of themes perhaps accounts for many male owners of the lapdog – something which one would sooner attribute to the female kind.

11 Several titles Coventry refers to are the same as the ones Lady Mary mentions in her letter along with *Pompey* (see p. 1), which all the more proves the actuality of the context. Moreover, some of the stories very much resemble plots of the popular novels of the time; I think I have for example recognized allusions to *Moll Flanders* in Jack’s adventures (ch. xviii), and to *Clarissa* in the tragic story of Mrs Carlyle (ch. ix, part ii). Apart from that, Coventry uses many classical references. The name Pompey itself could in fact be read as a (mocking) reference to the great Roman emperor, alluding to the dog’s Italian roots and noble pedigree.

12 The origins of some of the chapters can be traced to specific issues of the contemporary newspapers: e.g. the mating scene in chapter vi very much resembles an episode described in the *Spectator*, no. 323, 1712. But what was upon the publication of *Pompey* seen as innovative and fresh, was later, after the trend took off, renounced as “ill farrago” of everything the writers can pick up (see the *Critical*, 1752, no. 52, 477–78 in Tompkins 1932, 49). The negative response these novels met with could be at least partly attributed to their abundance which revealed the repetitive pattern and perhaps diminished the appeal, if only in the eyes of the reviewers. There is much more to point at in *Pompey* regarding the bakhtinian understanding of the novelistic, notably the significance of laughter, but this cannot be explored in the present paper.

13 Even as an intermediary the author makes but for an unreliable narrator, oscillating between omnisciently reading Pompey’s mind and just *assuming* what he thinks, which only contributes to the general impression of the dog as an empty shell, used according to its role in the individual chapter.

His pushy and ironic, sometimes even openly manipulative voice, addressing the reader throughout the book, according to the opinion of the many, undoubtedly positions Coventry among the followers of the so-called Fielding school.¹⁴ Despite the many similarities¹⁵ and regardless of Coventry's own acknowledgment of the master,¹⁶ important differences, however, should not be ignored, especially as the two elements essential in Fielding – the complex plot and the heroes of flesh and blood – are at least underdeveloped, if not entirely missing from the life of a lapdog. Besides, other influences need to be acknowledged, and not only the ones Coventry pointed to himself (namely, Pope and Swift); certainly Smollett's harsh physical comedy (numerous scatological motifs appear throughout the book), farcical elements and grotesque episodes with caricatured characters, as used in *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748).

But what concerns me more is the not entirely soluble question of the novelistic and the canonical. As superficial as this may sound, and despite the many references explicitly referring to it as a novel,¹⁷ the general impression after having read *Pompey the Little* is not one of a novel. We are inclined to think, somewhat teleologically, that novels should have a beginning, a middle and an end, a more or less clear storyline, an insight into the private; that they should offer the experience of empathy, a portion of psychological intimacy, emotions and some notion of individual subjectivity. *Pompey* hardly brings any of this.¹⁸ But even if I dare to suggest this is an episodic prose fiction rather than a novel, this does not in any way lessen its (socio-)historical and cultural value.

4. The circulating commodity

Even though *Pompey* inspired a whole flood of more and less bizarre chain-stories about non-human heroes that abounded throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, this distinct type of prose fiction was not granted with any particular label¹⁹ – not until fairly recently, when Liz Bellamy in 1988 significantly defined it as 'the novel of circulation'.

14 Fielding's school is usually referred to as being opposed to Richardson's, the other major influence in the development of the eighteenth-century novel. *Pompey* is certainly closer to Fielding's satirical, rather vulgar vagabond narratives, than to Richardson's sentimental, domestic epistolary novels.

15 What the two certainly have in common is the ever present mock-ironic attitude; a ridicule of the vanity and hypocrisy of fashionable life, the Tory rhetoric, but also the stylistic devices: characterizing names and self-referential chapter titles. Coventry even came to be regarded as "minor Fielding" (Day 1974, xi). For the cross-references, see also *An Essay on the new species of writing by Mr Fielding* (1751), allegedly written by Coventry himself; and Fielding's *Modern Glossary* (*The Covent Garden Journal*, no. 4, 1752).

16 Coventry himself openly refers to Fielding as his model in the dedicatory letter in the third edition (1752), as well as in the novel itself (1974, xli-xlv and 107).

17 Among others, see Raleigh (1894), Tompkins (1932), Bellamy (1998).

18 A level of unease with the label is apparent early on. Lady Mary Montagu does not refer to it in any generic sense; neither does the *Monthly Review* which simply describes it as the 'work' (February 1751, iv/316-317). Day rather oddly names it an "essay in fiction" (1974, x). Flint safely talks about prose fiction (1998) and so does, somewhat inconsistently, F. Johnston (2003). All this certainly accounts for it not being included in the canonical histories of the novel.

19 The contemporary reviews refer either to individual titles or use other already familiar genre descriptors. This perhaps tells us something about the literary culture of the mid-eighteenth century, when different things were tried out and then abandoned before they were even labelled, but it also says something about the modern literary scholarship and its tendency to order and classify, even retrospectively.

These were novels, based neither on the adventures of an individual, nor on the correspondence of a group of friends, but on the exchange of an inanimate object. The central character – a penny, a bank-note, a dog, a cat, a peg, a hackney carriage or whatever – is passed from person to person, sold, exchanged, lost, found, swapped and so on, and recounts its adventures, its thoughts, and the characters it encounters in the course of its life (1998, 119).²⁰

The argumentation behind the term was sufficiently persuasive and it was quickly picked up. Judging from what has already been said regarding *Pompey*, the shift in emphasis from who the heroes were to what they were doing makes sense indeed. Pompey is certainly primarily important in what is happening to him (in what he is ‘doing’ as a device), and not in what he is (a dog). As such he is effective even when he is passive. When pointing to another element that these characters have in common apart from being non-human or inanimate – namely, the fact that they all circulate – what comes into the forefront is the deeper meaning of the device, revealing a certain idea and image of the society behind the satirical surface, which ascribes to the subgenre a whole new meaning.

A society represented through the lens of the circulating hero cannot possibly give a sense of a safe, unified realm. Featuring people only connected through a narrator in transit, it is depicted as fragmented, atomized and alienated. The fact that the central hero circulates, or is passed around randomly, necessarily implies the lack of human interaction: Pompey cannot share his experience with the owners, nor can they share theirs among themselves, which inevitably results in a lack of sentiments and affective links. In Bellamy’s words: “The novel of circulation provides a paradigm of the alienation” (1998, 120).

Add to this that circulation is primarily associated with currency, notably money, and given the fact that the predominant type of the eighteenth-century circulating hero was in fact a piece of money (a guinea, a rupee, a shilling, or a banknote),²¹ while many other inanimate objects took a form of mere commodities, and the genre reveals itself as being utterly engaged with the idea of commerce and exchange as the driving force(s) of the story, as well as of the society at large. Unsurprisingly, the anti-commercial rhetoric of Tory tradition, pointing at the “new commercial system as a source of social instability and a challenge to the values of the old nobility” (Bellamy 1998, 124) became characteristic of the subgenre. This clearly corresponds with Coventry’s political beliefs.

It is very easy to accept the new term, the novel of circulation, without further reflection. But Bellamy did not only provide a name, she also produced a concept. Therefore, by using the label, one inevitably implies a certain understanding of the subgenre. This necessarily had its

20 The term was first proposed in Bellamy’s (unpublished) PhD thesis ‘Private Virtues, Public Vices: Commercial Morality and the Novel, 1740 1800’ in 1988, but it did not attract much attention until her monograph came out ten years later (*Commerce, Morality and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, 1998).

21 See for example: C. Johnstone: *Chrysal or the Adventures of a Guinea* (1760); H. Scott: *Adventures of a Rupee* (1781); *The Adventures of a Silver Penny* (anon., 1786); *The Adventures of a Silver Three-Pence* (anon., 1800).

consequences. The ensuing discussions²² only rarely addressed the question of the genre of these narratives (something that still obviously preoccupies Day in his study), and the type of the protagonist, too, ceased to raise interest. They all, however, saw the circulating hero as emblematic of the burgeoning consumer culture. Bellamy's label, avoiding reference to the protagonist, seems to have done away with many contested issues.

It is useful to check the broader context in which Bellamy carried out the (re)conceptualization of the subgenre. Her initial (1988) as well as the ensuing elaborated study (1998) both dealt with the larger social issues, the market relations and commerce in particular. This might well account for her 'slip' already in the definition itself, perhaps betraying her preoccupation with the currency and commodity narrators.²³ While acknowledging Bellamy's key contribution to the understanding of the long neglected subgenre, and recognizing the significance of the term, one should nevertheless remain attentive to its limitations.

5. The public and the private

There is no denying that Pompey also functions as a commodity, to an extent at least. He circulates through society in an arbitrary way, just as money does. It is true that he is not exactly being bought and sold, but he is certainly often exchanged (for a golden watch, or a pint of porter, for a dram of brandy, for oysters). As such he undoubtedly fits into the concept of the novel of circulation.

But there is more to it than that. Even though Coventry's lapdog is not a very convincing representative of his species, we are nonetheless dealing with a dog. This invites me to look behind the relationship of commodity exchange. Lack of emotions and Pompey's inertness notwithstanding, he nevertheless 'belongs' and 'is owned'. Different from a guinea or a pincushion, his (exchange) value does to a degree lie in the affectionate links, regardless of how cursory they are. Pompey is not only a commodity; he also functions as a gift and as property. The shifts of his status, of the way he is 'used', reveal his position in the relation to the public and the private, and indicate the extent of the emotional involvement.²⁴ As a commodity he belongs to the act of exchange, to the public realm; as a property he is part of the private; but as a gift he is somewhat conflating the two notions and pending in-between: while the idea of commodity implies multiple, repeated exchange, the gift is defined by a single gift-giving and getting act.²⁵

22 A. Douglas 1993, C. Flint 1998, F. Johnston 2003.

23 Even though her label successfully avoids the difficulty of bringing together ontologically different beings – from objects to animals and transmigrating souls – something the previous descriptive terms (such as the 'it-narrator novels' or 'novels of inanimate-characters') failed in doing – she herself does not seem to realize this, at least not according to the previously quoted passage (see the previous page). After exclusively referring to the inanimate objects in the first sentence, she readily mentions dogs and cats in the next one.

24 This does not need to be an affection expressed towards the dog himself, but rather the defining characteristic of the context in which he appears. When, for example, Lord Marmazet (ch. x, part ii) sends Pompey as a surprise gift to his wife, neither he nor she shows any special feeling for the dog, but the idea the episode conveys is nevertheless that of their mutual attachment.

25 The notions commodity, gift and property have been the subject of many theories and appear in various, often contested definitions (see e.g. A. Appadurai, C. Campbell, M. Douglas), but my interest was not in the concepts themselves; only in what they reveal in relation to the text and the subgenre.

The above sketch brings forth other dimensions of the circulation which go beyond the focus on the mere economic relationship and invite a somewhat different sense of eighteenth-century society. Without impinging on the idea that the subgenre underlines the nature of the commercial state, I will try to show that the circulating device also illuminates other, less visible, but nonetheless crucial effects of commercialization.

To that end two crucial long-term effects of the eighteenth-century commercialization boom first need to be outlined.²⁶ On the one hand, the increased (financial and 'physical') availability of goods (luxuries, or at least imitations of luxuries) accelerated the already extraordinary upward mobility of the English people²⁷ and contributed to confusion on the social map. This made social divisions, which had once been much more visible, difficult to discern, producing a need for new orientation signals, especially as the side-effects of commercialization also aggravated city anonymity.

On the other hand, commercialization and industrialization importantly affected the relationship between the public and the private. That eighteenth-century England saw a growing division between the two realms has, by now, become "a received wisdom" (Meyer-Spacks 2003, 3). Although the theory of separated spheres, notably the extent of the division, has been thoroughly contested (see e.g. Vickery 1993, Shoemaker 1998), the general idea of the divide remained more or less unchallenged. I cannot afford to reflect on this any further, but suffice it to say that the separation of home and workplace, with working men and home-alone wives, substantially re-defined gender roles and, alongside this, significantly changed the nature of the public and the private themselves. The two realms transformed in a way which, on the one hand, opened up the sphere of pronounced intimate privacy (something which Meyer-Spacks elaborates on (*Privacy* 2003)); while on the other, established the specific type of the public, the proto-democratic, state-concerned public sphere, as it was famously defined by Habermas (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* 1962, Eng. transl. 1989).

What concerns me here, however, is the often neglected, albeit crucial, dimension of the above described reformation, namely a large 'bel' left in-between, an intermediary space that could be described as the sphere of sociability. Because of the enhanced divide between the private and the public, sociability, providing the 'ground' where the two could be breached, became the context of marked importance. Belonging just as much to the private as to the public,²⁸ it at once exposed and helped to order the confusion. Because it always to some degree classified its audience, creating easier discernible micro societies, it provided a context where the signposts could successfully operate and where labelling as such was the subject of conversation. It is no coincidence that eighteenth-century England was recognized as the 'age of sociability'.²⁹

26 I am referring to the so called 'commercial revolution', the shift from mercantilist to capitalist economic system with all its effects, as outlined by N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J.H. Plumb in *The Birth of the Consumer Society The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (1982).

27 For comparison with other nations, see R. Porter (1982).

28 Although sociability is in itself a fluid intermediary sphere, it is nevertheless possible to talk more specifically about either the private or the public sociability, with a tea-party at home as an example of the first and a visit to a pleasure garden as an example of the second. There are many references to various types of sociability in the studies of the eighteenth century, but only few attempts to define it (see Simmel 2000; Russel, Tuite 2002, Langford 1989).

29 G. Russell and C. Tuite assert that eighteenth-century England regarded sociability as a value in itself (2002, 5 6); L. Klein discusses

This is the area where *Pompey the Little* is predominantly at work. There is no trace of the proper public sphere there. In fact, it seems the lack of it is deliberately enhanced. By depicting *the* place of the public debate – the coffee-house – as a stage of irascible men feigning knowledge (chapter xiv), and not as the one of serious and reasonable conversation, Coventry seems to suggest that the public sphere, if it at all exists, is definitely not functioning. The public in *Pompey the Little* is limited to the (public) sociability, the leisure and pleasure, where the opinion of the aristocratic ‘world’ is all that counts.³⁰ This is the platform against which the private is measured.

Alternating between a commodity, a gift and a property, Pompey successfully exposes the gulf between the private and the public, *alias* the sociable. What we are allowed to see by witnessing the owners’ behaviour in their individual or family privacies on the one hand, and in the sociable context in the other, confirms the deception of appearances.³¹ Another thing which contributes to the general impression of hypocrisy is that even when given as a present, Pompey is never an honest gift. To be sure, the recipient might take it as such, but in fact the previous owner just wants to get rid of the animal.³² Meanwhile, those who really want the dog (Hillario, Lady Tempest, Aurora), openly ask for it, which does not fit into the concept of a gift either; and even in this case Pompey rarely comes gratis.³³ In revealing the state of things and juxtaposing the two sides, Pompey is taking the role of a guide, removing the masks and pointing at the contradictions. A legitimate heir of the ‘spies’ in the preceding novels of the similar kind, he takes advantage of being allowed to be present where other people cannot be, which makes it easy to lay bare the duplicity and fraudulence of almost everybody he encounters. It is very important that he can hear the gossip. In fact, the sphere of sociability is manifestly the sphere of gossip.

6. Gossip

As one of the instruments to find a way around the puzzling social world, gossip gained importance in eighteenth-century England. In *The Fall of Public Man* Richard Sennett traces the meaning of gossiping from the court culture of the middle of the seventeenth to the urban society of the mid-eighteenth century (1978, 60–3). While in the former, gossip was understood as a legitimate type of public discourse, a way of establishing social contact,³⁴ in the latter – in a period when “material conditions of life made people appear like unknown quantities to each other” (Sennett 1978, 62) – it becomes a privileged source of information, a sign of confidence and friendship, more personal and more valuable, but important overall as an aid for locating people on the social map.

how the eighteenth century importantly defined public in terms of sociability (in Haslett 2003, 4). See also P. Clark’s introduction to *British Clubs and Societies* (2002).

30 In chapter iv (part ii) Count Tag defines ‘the world’ as the *grand monde*, “the people who are in the round of assemblies and public diversions” (1974, 129–130). For similar understanding, see Fielding’s *Modern Glossary*, under the entry “*No body*: all the people in great Britain except for about 1200” (*Covent Garden Journal*, no. 4, January 14, 1752).

31 Walking around in rags at home, but wearing lavish cloths for the public, father Frippery provides a typical example (ch. vi, part ii).

32 After Pompey interrupts her romantic dreams, Aurora ‘gives’ him to her milliner (ch. iv, part ii); and when Lord Mazmaret grows weary of the dog, he ‘donates’ him to the poor Rhymer, thus somewhat perverting the concept of the patronage (ch. xi, part ii).

33 By giving her the dog, Hillario, for example, secures himself a free entry to Lady Tempest’s *ruelle* (ch. iv).

34 “Gossip was unrestrained exchange of information about other people; their sins, affairs, or pretences were dissected in the greatest detail because in the court most of these intimacies were common knowledge” (Sennett 1978, 60).

What Pompey is doing could in many ways be described as inviting us to participate in gossip. The feeling after reading is indeed one of skimming through a tabloid or glancing at a series of snapshots. The fact that we are dealing with a type of *roman à clef* certainly contributes to this impression.

The importance of gossip in *Pompey the Little* ties in well with the aforementioned role of Pompey as a gift and as a commodity. Gossip can well be defined as a type of news, as it certainly “involves an exchange of information” (Meyer-Spacks 1985, 21–2). As such, and depending on the context, it might operate as either: a gift or a commodity. This was undoubtedly the case in eighteenth-century England. Consider about buying magazines with gossipy sections which multiplied from the mid-century onwards,³⁵ or about paying an entrance fee to be able to catch some gossip at a *ridotto*. Buying *roman à clef*, or even more importantly, the Key to go with, could also count as gossip commodified. But just as well, gossip could have come as a certain kind of gift, creating “a feeling bond” (Hyde 1983, 56). Considering that a gift is never just a gift, as it always implies commerce in social capital,³⁶ which is certainly true of gossip, the notions seem all the more connected.

Throughout the book, Pompey conveys and incites gossip; he is a subject of gossip and – for the most part – witnesses gossiping.³⁷ It is only when he becomes a part of the dispute, whereupon his legal status is about to be defined, and where he is reclaimed as a property, that the circulation stops and the story comes to an end. The marble monument with an epitaph in his honour, erected in Lady Tempest’s garden, functions as a badge of ownership. However, it also bears a mark of conspicuous consumption – together with property another defining notion of eighteenth-century England.

If Sennett offers historical explanation of the significance of gossip, Patricia Meyer-Spacks (1985) explores the uses of gossip as a narrative device. In *Pompey the Little* gossip is indeed much more than just a motif. It assumes many functions. Most explicitly it appears as an action in itself. Characters gossip all the time: when Cleora and Cleanthe backbite Hillaro (ch. III) gossip takes on a function of confident intimacy; Count Tag’s gossiping about what’s new in high society (ch. IV, part II) provides also an efficient self-portrait. That Coventry refers to these trifling chit-chats as ‘conversations’ only enhances their triviality. But gossip also impels plots. Once the news about the real Jack-the highwayman is spread, he has to fly Bath (ch. XX). Idle talk as it is, gossip is nevertheless of consequence. Operating in the transit field of sociability, as “the most ‘public’ form of a private mode” (Meyer-Spacks 1985, 5), it affects both. When the eminent Bab Frightful appears at Mrs. Frippery’s drum, she assures it will be mentioned in the circulating gossip of the town. Recognizing references, notably the allusions to real personae, the reader receives his or her share of gossip as well.

35 E.g. the *Town and Country Magazine* (1769–1795) with the famed *t te t te* section, the *Rambler Magazine* (1783–1790), and the *Morning Post* (1790–1899).

36 The idea that gifts are never free as they create obligation of a reciprocal exchange, and that gift-giving can often be self-interested, was introduced by M. Mauss in *Essai sur le don* (1923–24), the first anthropological study on gift-giving.

37 Examples abound. In chapter IV Pompey ‘conveys’ the gossip about the Italian courtesan; in chapter IX (part II) he intentionally follows lord Marmazet to satisfy his curiosity by finding out more about the mysterious Mrs. Caryl; later on he is used in a prank which incites gossip about William, the womanizer (ch. XIV, part II); and throughout the book he listens to servants, gossiping about their masters (e.g. ch. V, XI).

The way characters are introduced also reads as gossip. Each new owner is represented with a summary of his or her background history – something which already implies that (s)he could not have been leading an exactly exemplary life, as it is usually the numerous (mis)adventures that make for someone's 'history'.³⁸ Neither the ones who gossip, nor the ones gossiped about ever appear in a very flattering light. As becomes a satire, Pompey indeed, does not meet many of the virtuous kind.

Summing all this up, gossip in *Pompey the Little* reads as a way of learning and knowing things; as a strategy for bringing in the topics, and as such almost represents a micro epistemology in itself. Even the concluding thought of the philosophical 'Dissertation upon Nothing' – "ex nihil omnia fuit" – reads as a kind of gossip motto (1974, 111).

What is most significant in relation to the subgenre in question, however, is the way in which non-human characters, by sharing the insight into gossipy secrets, turn the reader into a complicit voyeur. This links well with the observation that circulating heroes tend to be little (Johnston 2003). As slippers and pins, atoms and fleas, they can peregrinate freely in all the hidden corners of every day life and witness the titillating private scenes. Smallness links well with the gossipy particulars. It is exactly the smallness in size, duration and value that seems to allow for greater perception and offers a certain kind of power (Johnston 2003, 152–4). Not only is Pompey a *lap-dog*; the narrative abounds in detail. Lady Mary could not have made that remark about the dress, if this was not the case (see the quote on the first page of this essay).

But the fact that small protagonists circulate or 'are circulated' is just as important. The two elements readily connect. It is almost as if a circulating hero could best express himself in the form of gossip. This is what the term 'novel of circulation' seems to neglect.

7. Conclusion

There is no doubt that Pompey is a 'circulating' hero. But tackling 'his' story from the perspective of the gossipy narrative reveals a more complex picture of the society it satirizes in a manner that takes us beyond the term and points at other compatible, but nevertheless importantly different characteristics of the subgenre. The society as portrayed in *Pompey the Little* certainly is one of commodity exchange, but – figuring also as a gift (albeit not for free) and as gossip – Pompey enables us to read its characteristics on the level of changed codes of behaviour, revealing a society which is just as gossipy as it is commercialized.

So as it turns out, the dog is nevertheless important. It was the fact that I could not accept Pompey as a mere commodity that encouraged me to think what else he is telling the reader about how people felt about the world in which they lived. As such he certainly reveals a lot – enough to prioritize the socio-historical importance of *Pompey the Little* over the literary.³⁹

38 Especially with regards to women, 'having a history' in the eighteenth century implied they could not have been leading an exactly exemplary life. For a nice explanation of the phrase, see C. Lennox: *Female Quixote* (1752, book II, ch. IV., vii).

39 For the introduction to the socio-historical approach to literature, see J.P. Hunter: "The novel and social/cultural history" (in Richetti 2002, 9–34).

In this context it is well worth mentioning that real, ‘outside’ gossip accompanied the book from the start. Soon after being first published anonymously, in February 1751, rumours speculating about the author’s identity appeared, with Fielding as the most probable candidate.⁴⁰ Further hearsay was triggered by the peculiar, three-part review in the *Monthly*, with extracts as if by incident extending from February to April edition (1751) and thus repeatedly advertising the book. Day speculates that this might have been a deliberate token of approbation, a personal favour of the editor, Griffiths or Cleland (1974, xii). As behoves a book which makes gossip one of its central concerns, *Pompey* quickly became the talk of the town and attracted a considerable amount of attention.⁴¹ It is not certain whether the Key was ever written, but the characters undoubtedly evoked recognition. Lady Mary even recognized herself. Symbolically, her reception of the text brings together all the crucial elements I have dealt with: receiving the book as a gift and returning a gossipy letter about what she had read, Pompey’s journey comes full circle.

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40 Coventry himself revealed authorship only in the third, revised edition, thus sustaining an air of mystery for almost a year.

41 It attained at least eight editions by the end of the century (with two pirated in Dublin); two French and one Italian translation(s) and the name Pompey took off as well (Day 1974, xiii).

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Uroš Mozetič

University of Ljubljana

Faculty of Arts, English Department

E. E. Cummings: From Parenthesis to Personality (Part II)

Summary

The paper presents the unique oeuvre of E.E. Cummings, who claims an outstanding position in the heritage of American poetry, as a case of *Bildungsdichtung*. This status is largely due to his highly innovative and iconoclastic approach to poetic composition, starting from his early rebellious endeavours drawing on an astounding variety of non-standard and downright shocking potentialities of the English language (including such peculiar linguistic and stylistic idiosyncracies as drastic changes of the syntactic English word order, shifts at the morphology and word-formation level, unorthodox use of punctuation, extravagant typography and spacing or arrangement of space between the lines, a diversity of meters and rhymes, as well as seemingly eccentric imagery), to his later and invariably maturer poetic diction – the diction of one who has apparently come to terms with the world and his fellow-beings, realising that genuine wisdom resides in the understanding and forgiveness of the inherently fallible human nature rather than in its continuous sardonic scrutiny.

Key words: E.E.Cummings, uniqueness of rhetoric, poetic truth and human truth, epiphany

E.E.Cummings: Od oklepaja do osebnosti (2. del)

Povzetek

Članek oriše umetniški in človeški razvoj ameriškega pesnika E.E.Cummingsa, ki ima v ameriški književnosti poseben sloves. Utemeljen je na Cummingsovi nezmotljivi avtorski govorici ter vrsti njegovih izvirnih posegov v ustaljeno pesniško dikcijo, ki jo spoznava za preživeto, iztrošeno, neprepoznavno in zatorej vredno temeljite prenove. Takšno prenovo najde Cummings v mnogovrstnih preigravanjih skrajnega dometa angleščine ter njene leposlovne izraznosti, od osupljivih jezikovno-slogovnih bravur, kot so na primer drastično spreminjanje ustaljenega skladenjskega reda, premiki na oblikoslovni in besedotvorni ravni (posamostaljena raba glagolov, zaimkov, prislovov in veznikov), neustaljena raba ločil (zlasti oklepajev) ter velike/male začetnice, nenavadna tipografija in razmiki oziroma razporeditev prostora med verzi, preigravanje raznoterih oblik metruma in rime, do navidez čudaškega podobarstva in drugih retoričnih ter vizualnih prijemov. Razprava sledi razvoju avtorjeve pesniške in osebnostne konstelacije, ki jo zaznamujeta mladostno vihravo uporništvu ter poznejši zreli uvid v bistvo človeškega poslanstva.

Ključne besede: E.E.Cummings, revolucija retorike, pesniška in človeška resnica, epifanija

E. E. Cummings: From Parenthesis to Personality (Part II)

2. The significant *i*

The very first collections of Cummings' poetry, *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923) and *♫ [AND]* (1925), while not yet displaying the full range of the author's linguistic and stylistic virtuosity, already introduce all the themes to which he would adhere for the rest of his life: (1) love, especially in its relationship to the outside world and to death, following the well-known paradigm *Eros–Thanatos*:

*i speak to
thee with a sword
and thou art silent
thy breast is as a tomb
softer than flowers
Come hither
O thou is love not death?* (Cummings 1972, 27)

which takes up nearly half of his work; (2) a merging with the urban environment – the streets of cities and metropolises:

*Paris; this April sunset completely utters
utters serenely silently a cathedral...* (Ibid., 93)

– and with nature:

*Thou aged unreluctant earth who dost
with quivering continual thighs invite
the thrilling rain the slender paramour
to toy with thy extraordinary lust...* (Ibid., 3)

The latter theme comes to predominate in his third (*XL Poems*, 1925) and all subsequent collections, a fact which is linked by many exegetes (sometimes mistakenly) to Cummings' adherence to the romantic tradition. The third issue concerns the poet's indefatigable interest in people, either as individuals mentioned by name (Abraham Lincoln, Joe Gould, Ford Madox Ford, Paul Rosenfeld, Picasso, Buffalo Bill¹) or unnamed men and women, or as types which are despised by the author and thus become the objects of political or social satire (generals, presidents, merchants, gossipy Cambridge ladies²) – in other words, the part of humanity for which the poet has coined the expression *mostpeople*. These are the major concerns of Cummings'

1 A typical poem from this collection is *Buffalo Bill*, displaying most of the above-mentioned linguistic, stylistic, and technical devices (colloquial and slang expressions, as well as highly arbitrary free verse, with the lines breaking off and forming without any scheme): See appendix 1 on page 134.

2 See appendix 2.on page 134.

poetic spirit, overarched by many other themes such as death or eternal life, which are marginal at first but increasingly important in all subsequent collections: as a rule, these themes are not central to his early poetry but ramifications of the broader thematic framework of love, or life. Clearly, this stage merely lays the foundations of the great themes which are to attain larger dimensions in the poet's mature and later periods. These foundations are complemented with the issue of World War I, which is likewise only outlined at this stage, namely in a short cycle with a French title, *La Guerre* (poems on war themes, both those from the front and those relating to Cummings' experiences in Paris brothels, are often written in a mixture of English and French, presumably in an attempt to approach the idiom of the street, of the common people), which will reappear under the same title in the collection *XL Poems*:

*little ladies more
than dead exactly dance
in my head, precisely
danced where danced la guerre*

*Mimi à
la voix fragile
qui chatouille Des
Italiens ...* (Ibid., 120)

A wide range of elements, sketched themes, aspects, ingredients, and poetic devices may be discerned in the very first collections of Cummings' poetry, while certain characteristics prevailing in the contemporary or subsequent poetics of modernism are lacking. Most notably, these include the tragic vision (revealed e.g. in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*), linguistic ambiguity (Wallace Stevens), structural contradictoriness (Ezra Pound), metaphysical cleverness (W. H. Auden), introduction of mythical fragments (W. B. Yeats), and some other constitutive modernist elements. Nevertheless, as noted by Norman Friedman, one of the leading experts on Cummings and a long-time friend of the poet's family, the absence of the tragic vision from Cummings' work simply means that his vision is of a different kind, but carries no less weight as a basis for lyric poetry for all that (Friedman 1960, 4).³ This emphasis is particularly important because it is Cummings' lack of a tragic vision that has often led to his characterisation as a sentimental and naive poet. As suggested in the first part of this paper, the essence of Cummings' poetic philosophy lies in transcending the physical world, and his explicit lack of interest in the *condition humaine* of his time does not mean that he is insensible to it or too naive to perceive the evils surrounding him. On the contrary – Cummings is deeply aware of the manifold perversions in the modern society, as well as of the individual, lost in this society and seeking for a higher meaning. But in contrast to many other poets, such as Eliot or Pound, who seek a remedy for the so-called *mal-du-siècle* in the anthropology of the human spirit, by leaning on the values of the medieval tradition and on ancient mythology, Cummings understands the current situation as the reflection of a degenerate will, rather than the consequence of an evil inherent in the universe.

3 As a key argument in support of Cummings, the critic adduces the poet's experimentation with linguistic form and structure as a vital rhetorical device for attaining artistic vision.

He sees the final solution in an all-encompassing love, which can only be attained through the renunciation of suffering, preceded by the rejection of one's ego or self.⁴ Cummings' attitude to suffering and evil is characteristically averse and unsympathetic to the individual as a helpless victim of historical or metaphysical circumstances. In this attitude, Cummings is probably more strict and inexorable than in any other: a person who wants to be truly alive must be fearless, for this alone dispels all reservations about love:

...
each dream nascitur, is not made...)
why then to Hell with that: the other; this,
since the thing perhaps is
to eat flowers and not to be afraid. (Ibid., 264)

The complete liberation from fear and the consequent move to a level of existence dominated by pure and absolute love is, according to Cummings, attainable only through the abolition of all desires and needs fuelled by the ego. Admittedly, Cummings' thesis is by no means an original one, showing sympathy not only with Buddhist and Taoist thought but also with the traditional philosophy of American transcendentalism, from Emerson and Thoreau onward. Far from being simple, however, this sympathy contains a formidable measure of contradictoriness. More than any other poet or writer of his era, Cummings is a zealous supporter of individualism, free will and independence, a trait which may partly stem from his religious, Unitarian upbringing. His father, who aroused in Cummings both immense admiration and perpetual competition, even served as a Unitarian minister for a while. He was a peculiar, obstinate man, firmly convinced that he was in the right, as the poet reveals in one of his famous Harvard lectures:

I wot not how to answer your query about my father. He was a New Hampshire man, 6 foot 2, a crack shot & a famous fly-fisherman & a first-rate sailor (his sloop was named The Actress) & a woodsman who could find his way through forests primeval without a compass & a canoeist who'd stillpaddle you up to a deer without ruffling the surface of a pond & an ornithologist & taxidermist & (when he gave up hunting) an expert photographer (the best I've ever seen) & an actor who portrayed Julius Caesar in Sanders Theatre & a painter (both in oils & watercolours) & a better carpenter than any professional & an architect who designed his own houses before building them & (when he liked) a plumber who just for the fun of it installed all his own waterworks & (while at Harvard) a teacher with small use for professors – by whom (Royce, Lanman, Taussig, etc.) we were literally surrounded (but not defeated) – & later (at Doctor Hale's so-called South Congregational really Unitarian

4 The renunciation of one's self is a principle which may be found both in Christianity (cf. Matthew 16.24; Mark 8.34; Luke 9.23) and in Eastern thought, especially in Taoism, which exerted a great influence on Cummings through its most accomplished master, Lao Zi. While the aim of this renunciation in Christianity is to draw nearer to God ("the imitation of Christ"), the philosophy of Taoism teaches that wisdom can only be attained by one who has transcended and forgotten his ego. Another element which is common to the Christian and Taoist-Buddhist thought and congenial to Cummings is the principle of *casting bread* ("Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again", Eccles. 11:1).

church) a preacher who announced, during the last war, that the Gott Mit Uns boys were in error since the only thing which mattered was for man to be on God's side (& one beautiful Sunday in Spring remarked from the pulpit that he couldn't understand why anyone had come to hear him on such a day) & horribly shocked his pewholders by crying "the Kingdom of Heaven is no spiritual roofgarden: it's inside you..." (Cummings 1995, 8)

The above passage, with its undoubtedly exaggerated portrayal of Cummings' father, suggests that the father's figure played an important role in the son's personal and poetic development. As admitted by the author himself in his published letters (Dupee and Stade 1969), the essential problem was that his father was both loving and intrusive, a strange amalgam of emotions which left a crucial stamp on the poet's literary production, imbuing it with perpetual rebelliousness and an emphasis on his own identity. According to Cummings' biographers, it also had far-reaching consequences for his private life. And since Cummings' life, as has already been mentioned, copied the ideal image of the poet–artist which he had constructed in his youth, conflicts at this level were bound to occur. As it turned out, the poet's bard was maturing faster than the poet himself, for even when the projection of Cummings' personality had practically reached the level of complete liberation from worldly ties, he himself continued to lug around the needless clutter of his past, be it his parents' heritage or his two unsuccessful marriages.⁵ According to research into Cummings' biography, it was his unresolved past that produced the main limitations and weaknesses of his art, noted by many critics but inadequately addressed through the ignorance or neglect of the author's personal development and/or decisive biographical facts.⁶ The available information suggests with reasonable certainty that if Cummings ever slipped, it was on the thin line dividing life and art. Although this line is in many respects capable of being erased or even changed into an equation mark, it is also worth reflecting on W. B. Yeats' observation that an artist has to decide whether he will seek perfection in his work or in life. Throughout his life, Cummings appears to have been (sub)consciously burdened with the necessity of this decision, perhaps all the more so because he tried to merge the two. This, however, requires an enormous expenditure of strength and time, and it is precisely to his – sometimes more, sometimes less successful – attempts at transferring his professed artistic postulates to everyday life and vice versa – applying his life experiences and insights to his artistic activity – that certain critics ascribe his inability to compose a truly longer poem, prose piece, or play.⁷

5 The most traumatic period of Cummings' life is framed by the years 1917 and 1932, stretching from his twenty-third to his thirty-eighth year. In 1924 he married Elaine Orr but divorced her in the same year. The offspring of this union, a daughter named Nancy, remained with her mother, who never revealed to her her father's name. It was only in 1948, when Nancy was twenty-nine, that she incidentally learnt of E. E. Cummings being her father. In 1927 the poet married his second wife, Anne Burton, but this relationship also proved unsuccessful after a few years. Between 1928 and 1929 he underwent psychoanalytical treatment, then travelled to Russia (1931), and shortly after his return met his third wife, Marion Morehouse, with whom he spent the rest of his life.

6 Among such vital limitations imposed by "life", N. Friedman emphasises Cummings' crippling attachment to his mother accompanied by an unresolved Oedipal complex; his rebellion against the humanist values fostered by his father, in which he actually believed himself; his late discovery of sexuality and his frequent division of women into whores and Madonnas; and, last but not least, even his rejection of man's role in marriage and community, as well as the resulting identification of his own art with this rejection (Friedman 1996, 171).

7 E.g. Kennedy 1980.

3. Parenthesis

Cummings' personal and poetic contradictoriness may be perceived either as an advantage or as a weakness. On the one hand, it places him convincingly in the modernist context of the aesthetician ambivalence and contradictoriness of artistic practice, which is established through seemingly irreconcilable views. This is confirmed by Cummings' admiration for Yeats' ability to understand opposing views – the collective and individual, the systematic and spontaneous, the rational and instinctive (Dupee and Stade 1969). Yet this type of dualism has its weaknesses as well. The one which calls for a closer examination in Cummings' case relates to his – sometimes disputed – humanist stance, which stems from the poet's division of humankind into *mostpeople* (snobs) and *you and I* (human beings). A categorisation of humanity is by its very definition contrary to the American tradition of "Whitmanian" romanticism and of transcendentalism as established in the philosophy of American literature by Emerson and inherited by E. E. Cummings.⁸ In contrast to Whitman's inclusive, omnipresent love, Cummings' introduction to his 1938 *Collected Poems* argues for an exclusivist view of man:

*Mostpeople fancy a guaranteed birthproof safetysuit of nondestructible selflessness.
If mostpeople were to be born twice they'd improbably call it dying-you and I are
not snobs. We can never be born enough. We are human beings;for whom birth is a
supremely welcome mystery,the mystery of growing;which happens only and whenever
we are faithful to ourselves. You and I wear the dangerous looseness of doom and find it
becoming. Life,for eternal us,is now'and now is much to busy being a little more than
everything to seem anything,catastrophic included...
Never the murdered finalities of wherewhen and yesno,impotent nongames of wrongright
and rightwrong;never to gain or pause,never the soft adventure of undoom,greedy anguishes
and cringing ecstasies of inexistence;never to rest and never to have;only to grow.
Always the beautiful answer who asks a more beautiful question
(Cummings 1972, 461–2)*

Clearly, Cummings at this stage of his personal development is not yet capable of attaining the level of transcendental experience from which the firmly established Whitman speaks to the entire humanity, *urbi et orbi*. Rather than by an experience of immanence, which would involve Cummings' acceptance of the natural laws of existence and, above all, the inclusion and respect of all things existing,⁹ the poet's mature (but not fully matured) work is permeated by a rebellion against differentness, against resignation, against contemporaneity, against lack of spontaneity – that is, against rationality – and against any form of insufficient (artistic) creativity. It is in this rebellious stance where Cummings comes closest to the romantic principle of Wordsworth's "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", although the perceptible ironic undertone is not characteristic of the romanticist world-view:

8 For a Slovene introduction to the poetics of American transcendentalism, see e.g. Mozetič 1999.

9 Cummings' personal attitude has often been characterised by critics as superior and haughty, and, above all, as intolerant and discriminatory. In Slovene poetry, some surprising parallels with the American poet may be found in the "I" of the poetess Svetlana Makarovič. For the time being, we shall apply to both authors' subjects the makeshift label of *clandestine philanthropy*.

*the mind is its own beautiful prisoner.
 Mine looked long at the sticky moon
 opening in dusk her new wings*

then decently hanged himself, one afternoon... (Ibid., 170)

and

*O sweet spontaneous
 earth how often have
 the
 doting*

*fingers of
 prurient philosophers pinched
 and
 poked*

*thee
 , has the naughty thumb
 of science prodded
 thy*

*beauty . how
 often have religions taken
 thee upon their scraggy knees
 squeezing and*

*buffeting thee that thou mightest conceive
 gods*

*(but
 true*

*to the incomparable
 couch of death thy
 rhythmic
 lover*

thou answerest

them only with

spring) (Ibid., 46)

The moment of “truth” has come, and, with it, Cummings’ realisation that he has been led by aestheticism into “a salt marsh” – or, as he puts it in Keatsian terminology, “beauty has shut me from the truth”.

Nevertheless, the poet trapped in his temporary blind alley does evince some struggle to resolve and transcend the state in which he has found himself. Cummings appears to realise that the established concept of absolute individual love as a principle of salvation will have to be redefined and probably extended beyond the *you-I : others* paradigm.¹⁰ If we aim at mystical experience, it is bound to elude our reach as long as we exist in the monad, regardless of whether we fill our emptiness with metaphysical nihilism or with a beloved person. The first step is thus known. The second, for Cummings, would have been to recognise and decide which is the path leading to true transcendence: is it the emergence from the material towards the spiritual (as e.g. in W. Blake), or the complete annihilation of the difference between the material and spiritual? A dichotomy, then, one at least as old as humanity, reaching from antiquity to modernity, where it becomes flesh in the pellucid discourse of W. B. Yeats’ poem “A Dialogue of Self and Soul”:

My Soul. *Such fullness in that quarter overflows
And falls into the basin of the mind
That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,
For intellect no longer knows
Is from the Ought, or Knower from the Known –
That is to say, ascends to Heaven;
Only the dead can be forgiven;
But when I think of that my tongue’s a stone.* (Yeats 1994, 285)

As may be expected, Cummings’ subsequent poetry collections express increasing pain, loss and hollowness, which is largely due to his more profound quest for the path to transcendence. All three collections, *50 Poems* (1940), *One Times One* (1944) and *XAIPE* (1950), display a satirical and/or panegyric turn rather than an ontological or existentialist one. They could be said to represent an intermediate yet productive stage in the poet’s quest for that general humanist attitude which he has tirelessly sought to establish ever since his first collection. *One Times One* in particular contains Cummings’ sharpest and best poems of socio-political satire, poems such as “a salesman is an it that stinks Excuse”; “a politician is an arse upon”; “pity this busy monster, manunkind”, and of course the popular “plato told”:

¹⁰ Kidder (1979), whose analysis includes the Christian elements in Cummings, illustrates the poet’s development from an initial sexuality through romanticism to his final, purely transcendental love poetry – transcendental in the sense of the Christian ethos, or the Christian conception of love as God. (Cf. also 1 Corinthians 13:2.) On the other hand, however (this is not explicitly mentioned by Kidder), Cummings’ work also contains love poems which bear no immediate relation to any kind of transcendence, continuing instead the tradition of medieval courtly poetry. A case in point is the following piece from the collection *is 5* (1926): See appendix 3 on page 134.

plato told

*him:he couldn't
believe it(jesus*

*told him;he
wouldn't believe
it)lao*

*tsze
certainly told
him,and general
(yes*

*mam)
sherman;
and even
(believe it
or*

*not)you
told him:i told
him;we told him
(he didn't believe it,no*

*sir)it took
a nipponized bit of
the old sixth*

*avenue
el;in the top of his head:to tell*

him (Cummings 1972, 553)

Despite the acridity of Cummings' satire at this stage, it is significant that the substance of the poem, although founded on the antithesis between good and evil, no longer draws on the familiar polarisation of the world into the poet and *mostpeople*. Instead, there is a perceptible tendency to a gradual integration with that part of humanity which mostly involves the good and is apparently not as negligible as he had thought in the early period of his development. Indeed, every now and then we are surprised by a poem which, while ridiculing human foibles, nevertheless evinces so much compassion and understanding that it hardly still qualifies as a true satire. The fact that Cummings' world-view is undergoing an actual change is further evidenced by the increasing number of so-called panegyric poems – modern odes and hymns, not entirely devoid of romantic admixtures. What is foregrounded is the praise of nature, children, life as such, and love (both *eros* and *agape*), with the object no longer established according to the principle of positive versus negative, but existing in its own right, deserving full attention because of its immanent characteristics:

*nothing false and possible is love
(who's imagined, therefore limitless)
love's to giving as to keeping's give;
as yes is to if, love is to yes...*

(Ibid., 574)

The most characteristic romantic element in these poems is probably the poet's infinite wonder at everything surrounding him, simply because he sees everything that he perceives with his (wide open) senses as a miracle. If "[t]he Child is father of the Man" (Wordsworth), an intermediary between God and man as well as a gate to the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. Matthew 18:3), the poet is the father of the child or, more accurately, a "divine child" whose archetypal images may be found in most religions and mythologies of the world. In the inner human consciousness, the birth of a divine child symbolises the splendour of truth or the emergence of a spiritually renewed personality, such as is aspired after by mystics.¹¹ Cummings, however, never directly refers to mystical experience, preferring expressions such as "magical", "mysterious", "miraculous" (e.g. "Miracles are to come. With you I leave a remembrance of miracles") etc. A reliable insight into the poet's spiritual and emotional state around 1950 is given in the poem "i thank You God for most this amazing". It was published in the collection *XAIPE* (1950), which cemented Cummings' fame and opened for him many doors which had been hitherto closed:¹²

*i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky;and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes*

*(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday;this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings:and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)*

*how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?*

*(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)*

(Ibid., 663)

11 According to certain esoteric schools, the rebirth of the personality depends on the development of a third state in the human being, that is, on the functioning of the two higher human centres – those of emotion and thought. Cf. e.g. Burton (1995), who builds on G. I. Gurdjieff's tradition of the Fourth Way. Especially appealing seems the possibility of drawing a parallel between the two higher centres and the state symbolised in the Bible by the child (see e.g. 1 Corinthians 13:11), except that the child's love, compassion and wisdom are unconscious. The title of a modern/neoromantic mystic could thus apply to one who has become the father of his inner child.

12 In 1950, Cummings was accepted into the Academy of American Poets. The next year he received the Guggenheim Fellowship grant, and a year later the Charles Eliot Norton Professorship at Harvard for the academic year 1952–53. In 1957 he received two prestigious national awards: the Bollingen Prize for Poetry and the Boston Arts Festival Award.

4. Beyond the *self*

But while the publication of *XAIPE* improved Cummings' standing with the institutions, the essential question of his poetic credo remained open: the question of the right way leading to transcendence, and the related dichotomy between spirit and matter.

In principle, this dichotomy may be resolved in two ways, either by translating reality into pure imagination, as practised by the most "philosophical" modernist, Wallace Stevens,¹³ or by equating that which exists in reality with that which should transcend this existence – in other words, by equating the matter with the spirit, a feature of most Eastern religions. While Stevens seeks a higher sense of reality by establishing a moral and aesthetic order, finally discovering it in what he calls *supreme fiction*, Cummings focuses on a moment in eternity, finding in it what is poetically described by Auden as "our mortal world enough". The realisation that the true nature of things is revealed through the act of complete focalisation has, of course, long been familiar and proper to many esoteric schools as well as to Eastern wisdom. But although the two share a common goal – the so-called *eternal now* – their methods of approaching this goal are fundamentally different. According to the doctrine of the then influential esoteric school under the spiritual guidance of P. D. Ouspensky and G. Gurdjieff, the only path leading from the world of illusions to a realisation of the truth about oneself and the world, and thus to an insight into the objective reality, is that of *divided attention*. In principle, this means being attentive to two or more things at the same time, attentive to one's own environment and to oneself within it, as opposed to the principle of identification, where all attention is focused on one single thing to the extent of excluding everything else (Ouspensky 1949). Cummings, thoroughly familiar with the poetry and philosophy of the Chinese poet Lao Zi, undoubtedly also knew the teaching of the Chan School, "which leads to a vision of the true, Buddha nature of man lying deep inside the individual. This insight is the state of immediately experiencing unity with the universe, which transcends all differences between subject and object, observer and observed, *samsara* and *nirvana*." (Lavrač 1999, 50) Burdened with a number of complexes, from Oedipal problems and the sense of a continual threat to his own identity to a purely artistic complex, Cummings made a decision uncommon in his time but quite expected in ours: he opted for the Eastern path of unity (*via unitiva*) rather than the Western path of purification (*via purgativa*). The two paths, however, are linked by a common denominator, the human struggle to overcome the three main obstacles on the way to illumination: pride, attachment, and anger.¹⁴ Now these three had been, as the present portrayal of the poet as a human being and as an artist has sought to show, Cummings' main problems since the beginning of his life and writing career. To these three "cardinal sins" might be added a fourth, characteristic of the belief of the orthodox Christian, whose fundamental moral and ethical responsibility is based on constantly trying to decide between *right* and *wrong*. On the path of unity, however, such an attitude simply cannot bear fruit: Taoist wisdom, with which Cummings was evidently familiar, puts it this way:

13 The paradigmatic relationship between the real and imaginary constitutes the basic substance of Wallace Stevens' poetics. Starting from the philosophical premises of G. Santayana, whose work was known also to Cummings, as is evident from his published letters (Dupee and Stade 1969, 262), both Stevens and (at least partly) Cummings see the need for poetry in its role of a saviour who might replace the outdated religious myths. Church liturgy should thus be replaced with art, and religious faith with fictional faith.

14 On the relationship between Eastern and Western theosophical thought, we recommend the exhaustive study by Naranjo (1973).

The man in whom Tao
Acts without impediment
... is not always looking
For right and wrong
Always deciding "Yes" or "No." (Friedman 1996, 77)

When Cummings succeeded in shaking off all four – let us call them Western Christian – burdens for the first time, four years before his death, he wrote a poem which appeared in the last collection published during his lifetime, *95 Poems* (1958):

now air is air and thing is thing: no bliss

*of heavenly earth beguiles our spirits, whose
miraculously disenchanted eyes*

live the magnificent honesty of space.

*Mountains are mountains now; skies now are skies –
and such a sharpening freedom lifts our blood
as if whole supreme this complete doubtless*

universe we'd (and we alone had) made

*– yes; or as if our souls, awakened from
summer's green trance, would not adventure soon
a deeper magic: that white sleep wherein
all human curiosity we'll spend
(gladly, as lovers must) immortal and*

the courage to receive time's mightiest dream (Cummings 1972, 675)

This poem (in experimental sonnet form) expresses, graphically and persuasively, the words of a Chan master explaining the essence of *satori* (illumination) through the parable of a mountain:

Before one has immersed oneself in the Chan, a mountain is for them a mountain, and a river is a river; once one has perceived the truth of the Chan with the master's aid, the mountain is for them no longer a mountain, nor the river a river; but when one has truly attained one's peace of mind, the mountain again becomes a mountain, and the river again a river. (Lavrač 1999, 175)

In other words, the essential shift may occur only at the point where knowledge breaks into experience. This becomes possible only when one consciously apprehends and experiences the world in a single moment, obliterating all boundaries between matter and spirit. Even more exciting may be the dynamics of perception and the picture of reality emerging from the above

poem. The latter is formed by the interaction between two ideas: that what we see is a part of us, and that we are a part of what we see. This fact may ultimately lead us to a recognition emphasised already by transcendentalists with Whitman in the vanguard, and likewise attained by Cummings: what exists outside us in no respect differs from that existing inside us, that is, there is no difference between the so-called World-soul and our true nature. Such a recognition, however, by definition excludes all such polarisation and categorisation as we have traced especially through Cummings' personal and artistic development.

5. Conclusion

Cummings' development seems to have run in two different directions simultaneously. Like his modernist colleagues, he was trying to save art on the one hand and himself on the other, except that he attempted to attain through transcendence that unity of human existence which had been professed already by the metaphysical poets, especially by John Donne. This was his first divergence from modernism. His other divergence was a consequence of his relatively conservative mentality, which led him to toy with the tradition of romanticism. Particularly in his initial and middle periods, marked by the extreme intensity of his life experience, his poetry grew out of that experience, transforming it into a universal idiom recognisable to all readers. In his mature and final periods, however, the influence changed: the poet's reflection of the outside world turned inwards, towards itself, thus becoming a copy of itself. A new view emerged, directing the focus towards itself and discovering the universals there, in the particulars. This discovery took Cummings approximately a lifetime.

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Appendix 1

Buffalo Bill's

defunct

who used to

ride watersmooth-silver

stallion

and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat

Jesus

he was a handsome man

and what i want to know is

how do you like your blueeyed boy

Mister Death

(Cummings 1972, 60)

Appendix 2

the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls

are unbeautiful and have comfortable minds

(also, with the church's protestant blessings

daughters, unscented shapeless spirited)

they believe in Christ and Longfellow, both dead,

are invariably interested in so many things

at the present writing one still finds

delighted fingers for the is it Poles?

Perhaps. While permanent faces coyly bandy

Scandal of Mrs. N and Professor D

.... the Cambridge ladies do not care, above

Cambridge if sometimes in its box of

sky lavender and cornerless, the

moon rattles like a fragment of angry candy

(Ibid., 70)

Appendix 3

after all white horses are in bed

will you walking beside me, my very lady,

if scarcely the somewhat city

wiggles in considerable twilight

touch (now) with a suddenly unsaid

gesture lightly my eyes?

And send life out of me and the night

absolutely into me.... a wise

and puerile moving of your arm will

do suddenly that

will do

more than heroes beautifully in shrill

armour colliding on huge blue horses,

and the poets looked at them, and made verses,

through the sharp light cryingly as the knights flew.

III.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE TEACHING**

Slavica Čepon

Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Economics University of Ljubljana

Mihaela Zavašnik

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

General English Attrition and Its Significance for Business English Teaching/Learning of Prospective Economists

Summary

This article summarizes some of the findings of a large-scale study of the foreign language needs of economics students (Čepon 2007). It focuses on the rationale behind the lengthy period of disuse of general English (GE) during economics students' first year of undergraduate study. The article presents evidence for processes of GE attrition that slowly set in and are deemed to be particularly detrimental to economics. It is also important to determine exactly which language needs are essential for the future professional development of the economics graduates. It is hoped that this will spur foreign language policy renewal.

Key words: business English, needs analysis, language attrition, language teaching, economics

Obraba splošne angleščine in njen pomen za učenje/poučevanje poslovne angleščine pri bodočih ekonomistih

Povzetek

Pričujoči članek povzema določene ugotovitve iz večje raziskave, za potrebe katere smo opravili več vrst analiz potreb in tako pridobili podatke o jezikovnih potrebah študentov ekonomije. V prispevku navajamo rezultate iz raziskave o začetkih procesov pozabljanja tujega jezika pri študentih ekonomije, zato je poudarjena resnost slabega vpliva eno-/večletnega obdobja nerabe angleščine v 1. letniku, ko na fakulteti ni organiziranih predavanj iz tujega jezika. Članek se zaključuje s priporočilom o uvedbi pouka tujega jezika že v 1. letnik, saj bi s tem omogočili prepotrebno stalnost v učenju tujega jezika.

Ključne besede: poslovna angleščina, analiza potreb, obraba jezika, poučevanje jezika, ekonomija

General English Attrition and Its Significance for Business English Teaching/Learning of Prospective Economists

1. Introduction

The impetus for carrying out this study arose from the one of the author's experience teaching English as a foreign language. The Faculty of Economics at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (FELU) has no organized foreign language instruction for first-year economics students, which means that business English (BE) students spend a year not using general English (GE) before BE instruction starts in the second year. This paper deals with this issue primarily within BE teaching/learning. It first briefly examines the study of English as a foreign language in the Slovenian environment from the viewpoint of language attrition. It then focuses on possible consequences of GE attrition for the BE students at FELU – that is, prospective economists. A major part of this paper focuses on a study conducted that included several types of analyses of BE students' linguistic needs. Its findings yielded useful information for all participants in the BE program and the potential improvement of that program.

The literature provides much more information on language acquisition and learning than attrition. Nonetheless, it seems that, in recent years, the research focus has shifted from *'successful language learner'* to *'successful language maintainer'*, or to studying effective recall of the language learned. In some countries there are even second-language maintenance programs (Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999).

Experts refer to the processes of forgetting a language in various ways. The term used in this article is *'language attrition'*. The literature offers various terms for gradual language attrition processes, however, these often refer to the same or similar phenomena. The most common terms used for language regression processes that could affect the understanding of language attrition include language regression, language loss, language shift, language death, language obsolescence (Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999), language decay (Dressler 1982) and language transformation (Dressler 1988).

The most frequently cited definition of the language attrition phenomenon is that it is *'loss of any language or its part by an individual or language communities'* (Freed in Weltens 1989, 1). The factors and situations affecting language attrition are very diverse, which is why the literature draws attention to the fact that a good knowledge of all the factors is very important. These factors can be psychological (e.g. intelligence, general recall features), social and psychological (e.g. an individual's motivation and orientations), or linguistic (e.g. the relationship or distance between two linguistic systems) (see Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999).

The fact that the findings in specific areas of language attrition research contradict findings from other areas is not particularly surprising because research areas can be quite diverse. Moreover, all these obvious contradictions depend on the fact that experts do not yet have a reliable way

to measure language attrition; this is why various types of studies and measuring instruments are used. So far, the focus of language attrition research has been on syntax and vocabulary loss. However, there are still no satisfactory instruments for observing processes of forgetting phonological, pragmatic, and discourse language skills (Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999).

Currently, the main language attrition research focuses on four areas. The first area relates to the possible existence of a learning method that hinders later language attrition (the method effect) and, with regard to attrition, the importance of individual maturity level, level of achieved foreign or second language literacy, real emphasis on individual language skills, and intensity of the foreign or second language programme.

The issue of prior knowledge and its influence on later attrition processes is closely connected with seeking the best learning method. With regard to attrition, researchers are still in doubt. Some believe that at all language knowledge levels, from lowest to highest, individuals are equally subject to language attrition (Weltens et al. 1989, Bahrlick 1984). In contrast, others conclude that individuals with a high level of foreign language knowledge are much less subject to language attrition (Bahrlick 1984, Godsall-Myers in Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999). Some studies of individual maturity level and the level of achieved foreign language literacy demonstrate smaller language attrition in individuals that are more literate or have developed better reading and writing skills (Olshtain in Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999).

The second language attrition research area relates to the different effect of language attrition on language skills (the skills effect). With regard to language skills' susceptibility to attrition, language attrition studies consistently confirm a smaller degree of forgetting of receptive language skills in comparison to productive ones (Spolsky 1998, Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999), and the comprehensible theory that recall is more subject to attrition than is recognition (Weltens 1989), or that productive language skills are more subject to attrition than receptive ones.

The retrieval failure theory of language loss emphasizes that forgotten information is never lost forever, but is merely temporarily inaccessible because individuals cannot find the right key to access it (Loftus & Loftus in Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999, 11). The critical element is the processing time because one of the early signs of decreased retrieval ability is the increase in time needed for retrieving the right information in a foreign or second language (Olshtain in Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999, 11) or the use of various techniques of circumlocution, hesitation and repair behaviours, and progressive retrieval when the individual initially remembers or retrieves the wrong form, before retrieving the correct one after a certain amount of time.

Language attrition experts have dedicated attention also to the issue of the intensity of the foreign language program: individuals learning foreign languages in more intensive courses should acquire language faster than those in less intensive programs with the same number of hours. Attrition researchers have thus inferred that higher or lower program intensity encourages stronger and weaker language acquisition, which is consequently reflected in various processes of language attrition (Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999).

The third language attrition research area relates to the onset of the second language forgetting curve (the typical forgetting curve effect) and the method of combating language loss. The findings in this area correspond completely with Ebbinghaus's findings (in Marentič-Požarnik 2000, 14). Ebbinghaus proved the existence of a forgetting curve, according to which forgetting occurs quickly and always within two years after the study process, whereas later attrition recedes more gradually. Bahrick (1984) emphasized that memorizing is stronger with a higher level of acquired knowledge or material that individuals have learned well or learned for a longer period of time.

Other studies do not confirm immediate attrition after the study process, but show that forgetting occurs somewhat later – in adults this then proves to be the initial phase of the normal forgetting curve (Weltens et al. in Weltens & Cohen 1989, 130). In other words, according to these studies, a few years after the study process, during the period known as the initial plateau, the material learned should seem safe from the forgetting processes, though only in adult individuals with a relatively high level of acquired foreign or second language knowledge is this the case. Ecke (2004) emphasizes the fact that students who did not start learning a foreign language for a long time forgot more structures than students that started learning a foreign language sooner.

The fourth language attrition research area relates to the possible existence of a typical attrition order (the typical attrition order effect) with regard to which the regression theory (or hypothesis) is used as a theoretical background. The regression theory is the most widely used theory for describing the nature of language attrition at the level of interlinguistic skills (Bahrick 1984, Weltens 1989, Yoshida et al. in Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999) and the level of morphology, syntax, and vocabulary. It is derived from Jakobson's claim (in Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999, 9) that attrition is a mirror image of language acquisition. In other words, we quickly forget the language structures we learned last, and remember the ones that were learned first (Ecke 2004).

This regression statement proves to be correct in the case of receptive language skills, which individuals acquire first but forget last (Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999, 9). However, at the level of morphology, syntax, and vocabulary, the regression hypothesis is much more difficult to study and prove. It seems that some authors have succeeded in doing this because they conclude that the basic syntactic patterns that were learned first were remembered the longest (Kuhberg in Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999, 9), or they describe examples of attrition of the language that the speakers learned last before being no longer present in a foreign language environment (Cohen in Weltens 1989, 6).

2. The study

2.1. Problem definition

As a target language in the Slovenian-speaking environment, English is not naturally present to the extent that would justify studying English in Slovenian schools. In Slovenia it is spoken rarely, or only on special occasions, and most frequently with non-native English speakers. The lack of natural English contact outside the classroom and in social environments in Slovenia thus

presupposes self-initiated improvement of English outside the formal educational environment, while also generating considerable differences in prior knowledge between foreign language students. For students at the FELU, this situation is even more difficult. Since they do not have the opportunity to attend foreign language instruction in the very first year some students may, if they fail classes in the first year, spend a year or even more not using and thus learning the language uninterruptedly. Here the fact is important that, during the transition from secondary school to the university system, students do not simply continue learning GE but encounter BE, which differs from GE in terms of linguistic competence (e.g. vocabulary range), discourse competence (e.g. discourse features of various categories of BE letters) and intercultural competence (e.g. relationship dimensions significant for BE). In addition, taking into account the survey results, BE teachers feel that the GE knowledge of an average second-year English student – that is, after one or more years of almost complete non-use of English – is lower than the formal grades obtained on various secondary-school leaving exams the previous year.

In the second, third, and fourth years, the students at the FELU attend BE classes which are heterogeneous with regard to prior English knowledge and composed of students from various study tracks grouped alphabetically. Also, Faculty management formally does not demand evaluation of prior GE knowledge before the start of BE instruction in the second year, and BE teachers therefore do not perform such tests.

An extensive study was conducted in order to obtain deeper insight into the events in foreign language study during this special transition period, when several years of studying GE changes into studying BE and when secondary-school students become university students. This transition period is marked by at least one year lack of formal foreign language instruction, which causes problems to students (and BE teachers) as in the second year of their study the foreign language instruction focuses on BE language contexts which can differ substantially from that of GE in terms of language activities. Many findings from the study indicate that foreign language non-use, all the factors mentioned above, and especially the unstimulating language environment in the first year, can cause a lack of real internal and external motivation for learning a foreign language among the students. Indirectly, this contributes to language attrition processes.

2.2. Methodology

The study was divided into a quantitative and qualitative part. For the quantitative research, data were collected from October 2004 to January 2005, and for the qualitative research data were collected from the beginning of November until mid-December 2005. In the study, it was decided to use five sources and three methods in the expanded method of triangulation by sources and methods. The quantitative research thus included:

- a) second- and third-year students from FELU in the 2004/05 academic year (111 respondents);
- b) Faculty graduates (54 graduates from the FELU's business school and economics program in 1999 and 2000);
- c) Faculty's BE teachers (8 respondents); and
- d) other subject matter teachers/professors (16 participants).

The data was obtained by using questionnaires, checklists, numerical evaluation scales, and a grammar test.

The qualitative research was based on the following three sources:

- a) Faculty's BE teachers (8 respondents);
- b) Faculty graduates (12 respondents); and
- c) first-year students (18 respondents), and

the following three methods:

- a) individual interviews;
- b) group in-depth interviews, and
- c) a journal on English use.

The study combined various instruments. The data were processed using the SPSS 11.0 statistical package. Software for calculating frequencies, a χ^2 test and a bivariate analysis were used. The main quantitative research areas included the determination of prior knowledge quality and the method of using GE during studies at the Faculty with an emphasis on one or more years of English non-use in the first year. In addition, the study addressed processes of general English attrition and the areas subject to this, self-initiated language (non-)study and dedication, and reading English professional literature, newspapers, and magazines. Furthermore, the study analyzed students' feelings about their own knowledge and the current method of BE instruction at the FELU. Opinions about the applicability and usefulness of the Faculty's BE teaching activities were also obtained from all of the other study participants.

The qualitative research focused on English (non-)use in the first year at the FELU – that is, during the time when there is no organized foreign language instruction. More precisely, the study addressed students' evaluation of their own English knowledge, their talent, their English language skills, their expectations regarding BE study, their awareness and feelings about the process of forgetting English, and (non-)study of GE during the one-year hiatus in foreign language learning in the first year.

Given the extensive analyses and the number of findings, the outcomes of the study will be presented in a narrative form in the next chapter.

3. Findings

The findings of the study were obtained by conducting several types of analyses of student needs at the Faculty. The results of the target situation analysis and the analysis of anticipated professional English needs indicate that, in Slovenia, future English (non-)use for professional needs greatly depends on the students' future professions and jobs. Due to the great span of professional situations and various jobs available to future economists, carrying out these analyses was highly demanding because it was not possible to determine the final goal of studying business English, the target performance repertoire, and the underlying competence. In other words, what is meant here is the indefinability of the selection of anticipated

language skills and knowledge (of the most frequent language structures, functions, specialized vocabulary, and typical discourses).

For a long time, experts (e.g. Littlewood 1984) have emphasized three basic conditions for learning language: individuals' language skills, the true inner motivation for learning languages, and sufficient opportunities to use the language. Unfortunately, students at the FELU do not meet two of these conditions because, in addition to generally lacking true motivation, they also lack sufficient opportunities to use English in Slovenia. Taking into account the results of the current situation analysis and the analysis of prior GE knowledge, the majority of students do not learn the language through their own desire to learn a foreign language; they believe that BE instruction is useful only because of potential indirect benefits for their future profession. Furthermore, the outcomes demonstrate that all the respondents believe that there are many opportunities to use foreign languages as a prerequisite for good language knowledge; in contrast, language non-use was indicated as an obstacle in obtaining good foreign language knowledge. Nonetheless, the majority of students mistakenly believe that a hiatus in studying English in the first year is a welcome help, relief, and a well-thought-out gesture on the part of Faculty management, which should provide them more time to study other business subjects.

The results of the present situation analysis, analysis of prior GE knowledge, and deficiency/lack analysis indicate differences in prior GE knowledge among the students, i.e. possibly an insufficient number of hours of foreign language instruction in Slovenian elementary and secondary schools (depending on the student's home region). This may cause problems to students and teachers of BE when BE instruction in the second year begins.

However, as expected, none of the analyses indicated serious language knowledge problems, probably due to students' relatively high level of foreign language knowledge. According to the findings, the majority of students are at the level of language independence (i.e. B2 level according to Common European Framework) (2001) prior to second-year BE instruction – that is, as individuals they can communicate authentically, spontaneously and fluently in English, while being able to argue effectively, defend, and discuss their opinions, and even showing the ability to correct errors.

In addition, many findings of deficiency/lacks research indicate limited opportunities for English communication and development of spoken English skills in the natural Slovenian environment, in elementary and secondary school, and the first year of study at the FELU. All these facts presuppose that students improve their foreign language knowledge on their own initiative; however, this is made impossible due to economics students' lack of motivation to learn a foreign language. The deficiency/lacks analysis confirmed that students do not review their GE knowledge and do not use available opportunities to maintain and improve their English when there is no BE instruction. In the one-year (or multi-year) period of English non-use in the first year, fewer than half of the students decided to independently review GE and English grammar; the majority (54.9%) did not. In addition, they generally do not learn new words, do not read English study literature, newspapers, and magazines, do not use

dictionaries (see also Vrbinc 2005), and do not attend foreign language courses. The outcomes also indicate that more talented students, and those who are employed, forget the language less because they tend to use English at work, and the fact that some students mistakenly confuse the process of forgetting the foreign language with the process of forgetting the study material learnt in their mother-tongue.

The findings of the deficiency/lacks research confirm that the first-year students are aware of the fact that they start losing their spoken and written communication skills, which causes uncertainty and dissatisfaction with their own foreign language knowledge. Taking into account the findings of language attrition theory (Weltens et al. 1989), the subjective feeling of uncertainty and the lack of self-confidence connected with foreign language skills reported by the students is the most important indicator of the onset of the language attrition process. Students perceive their own written English communication as the most demanding and problematic aspect. They also find that they have problems recalling certain English words and that they consciously speak so called '*simplified and simplified English*', as well as tend not to bother with certain '*more difficult*' English grammar (e.g. past perfect, future continuous and future perfect, sequence of tenses in reported speech, if-clauses and 'I wish' and 'If only' structures). The students believe these problems make them use less demanding vocabulary and simpler language structures from previous, earlier periods of learning English. The theoretical background for these statements is the regression theory, which draws attention to the fact that acquired language skills disappear in the opposite order to those in which they were learned.

Furthermore, the failure to distinguish between productive and receptive language skills is emphasized as a problematic phenomenon found among Faculty students. This causes the students to equate relatively good reading and listening language skills with comprehensive English knowledge. Language attrition studies consistently confirm a lower degree of forgetting receptive language skills as compared to productive skills (Spolsky 1998, Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999). The regression statement proves to be correct in the case of the receptive language skills that individuals learn first and forget last (Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige 1999).

According to the survey, students mistakenly believe their productive skills remain as good as their receptive skills if they merely maintain contact with English by keeping up with the media, watching films, and using the Internet. Also, the findings of the study reveal that students do not read English professional literature, newspapers, and magazines. Strangely enough, the reason for that is not their insufficient reading skills, which for the majority of students are relatively well developed, but rather the students' unwillingness to read in English as well as the fact that, with the exception of one subject, the obligatory study literature in the fall semester of the first year (the 2004/05 and 2006/07 academic years) did not include English professional literature either in the business school program or economics program.

The findings regarding students' subjective needs and wants demonstrate that they expect BE to be useful and to learn a great deal of business vocabulary for the needs of their future profession or job. Only certain students' expectations were evaluated as plausible; for example, a desire to

improve their grammar knowledge, to obtain practical BE knowledge, to practice participating in meetings and business negotiations, and to maintain English business correspondence.

The findings of the learning situation analysis and, within this, the analysis of students' study patterns and strategies, indicate an inability to independently eliminate the essential and interesting parts of information, and to focus on details in language learning, which presupposes a great deal of support from BE teachers. The students perceive the study material as a whole and process information from the top; they remember the total experience better than the details and find it easier to study in situations in which ideas and concepts occur. Because they remember more things if they are active, they need a concrete language learning experience, interaction with individuals, and contact in English with the outer world. To students, language learning represents establishing new contacts (role playing, dialogues) and as active an approach to language learning as possible (short presentations, group presentations, etc.) with clearly structured and useful tasks and a great deal of pictorial material. Organizational skills and systematicity are of key importance, as are clear ideas, overviews and visions on paper, using sketches and structural diagrams, learning through doing, and a gradual linear method of presenting study material due to remembering information in steps. In addition, gestures, slow speaking, and an encouraging class environment are very important. Reviewing all the study material in advance and before individual BE classes, forming possible questions and answers, and using internal dialogue while studying result in faster BE learning.

4. Discussion and conclusion

BE teaching/learning is extremely important for the future professional life of students at the FELU because, as the findings of this study have demonstrated, in the Slovenian environment students will undoubtedly use BE for the needs of their profession and job. However, the outcomes did not demonstrate to what extent this is true.

This study has clearly demonstrated the onset of language attrition processes among students at the Faculty. These processes can especially be perceived in students' subjective feelings about incipient loss of spoken and written language skills, and forgetting English grammar, and in their reports about having problems recalling '*more demanding*' English words, as well as their admission of consequently returning to their '*elementary-school*' levels of language knowledge. These findings lead to the conclusion that one of the reasons for the deficiencies and lacks mentioned above is the disappearance of the main factor of successful BE learning – that is, a logical structure of prior GE knowledge. In the authors' opinion, this is a result of a long period of English non-use, which renders the students' acquisition of new BE knowledge more difficult on the basis of the prior GE knowledge already obtained.

At first glance it seems that dividing students according to their study tracks – and not according to the alphabet, which is the current case – would contribute to a more stimulating class atmosphere because language study seems more plausible in groups with equal, similar, or related interests (Black 1995). However, the authors feel that forming groups of students based on

their study tracks is not necessary. Focusing on typical discourse in BE teaching/learning would be somewhat premature, because prospective economists must normally learn the method of foreign language communication that is typical of the profession they will engage in – regardless of the content of BE classes during their studies. The Faculty selection of BE instruction activities thus cannot be used for a specific purpose or with reference to students' future profession, but must focus on foreign language learning. This study has shown that target English language use for future professional students' needs is practically indefinable. In the authors' opinion, this is why the Faculty's BE teachers must focus on all of the deficiencies and lacks in the students' knowledge to the same extent. They should be addressed without any set priority, since they are all equally likely to cause problems for students in the future.

Among other things, this means that BE teachers avoid especially strong emphases on individual language skills to the detriment of others (e.g. on spoken skills). According to the Faculty's graduates that participated in this study, combinations of two or three language skills are the most frequent in everyday practice; for example, writing-reading, or speaking-listening. The vast majority of graduates still remember well how they felt they were forgetting English during their first-year studies and believe that language attrition processes were one of the main factors that impeded fast and easy learning of BE.

It can be concluded that, in the first year, when students are left to their own self-initiated language study, they neglect the development of their foreign language productive skills. The findings demonstrate that the majority of students do not consider changing their non-existent or inactive method of studying general or BE and, even if they do, this only involves minor changes because they are generally satisfied with a superficial approach to maintaining their knowledge. To most of the students, their acquired English language knowledge seems adequate for their needs, i.e. passing the exams and browsing the Internet. Also, they only take the receptive language skills of reading and listening into account.

A little (foreign language) knowledge is a dangerous thing in the harsh business reality of our globalising world. According to a study of 2000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and 30 multinationals from 29 European countries (CILT 2006), it is possible to assess the impact of foreign language knowledge on the effectiveness and the profitability of modern businesses – 11% of SMEs from the study lost what had been assumed to be concluded business deals due to the lack of employees' foreign language knowledge. Considering the fact that not all SMEs from the study were willing to reveal the true value of the lost business deals, the study researchers' estimated that the more accurate figure for 37 SMEs could be between 8 and 13.5 million Euros, in other words, about 945,000 European export SMEs in the whole EU region are likely to have lost their business due to inefficient or non-existent employee foreign language skills, which on average amounts to 325,000 Euros per business in three years' time.

Since the majority of experts in foreign language study still believe that active teaching by a foreign language teacher encourages processes of foreign language learning it can be concluded that first-year BE instruction would have a positive effect on students' foreign language knowledge. In

other words, at the beginning of studies at the FELU, when students are still susceptible enough and motivated for everything new due to adjusting to their study program, would internally motivate students to learn a foreign language and primarily prevent them from forgetting the language they have already learned.

Greater contact, and as early contact as possible, of students with (business) English would possibly improve their foreign language knowledge because, with an additional 60 to 90 foreign language hours in the first year, their knowledge would come close to the standards recommended for Slavic foreign language students (see Čebroň 1998). Better foreign language knowledge could, in turn, result also in fewer business dealings lost on competitive global markets for the economics students' prospective employers.

It seems reasonable to dedicate potential first-year English instruction to an easy transition from general to BE, expanding BE vocabulary, and practicing all (not just spoken) skills in addition to occasional reviews of specific areas of grammar, but only as needed and, most importantly, in smaller groups. By prompting an individual approach, such small groups would allow BE teachers to work more easily with students who have weaker or incorrect external motivation for BE learning.

One of the major deficiencies of the change proposed is that it is impossible to expect that, at the beginning of their studies, students will bring any business experience or carrier content knowledge into the BE instruction process. In the first year, students are pre-experience learners or, in other words, are not yet developed experts, but are in the midst of obtaining professional and theoretical knowledge. They lack empirical knowledge because their business knowledge is not yet practical and personalized, but theoretical, incomplete, and obtained merely from books.

In the case of introducing first-year classes, the Faculty's BE teachers would thus have to bear not only all of the burden of teaching pre-experience learners without any professional knowledge, but also the burden of teaching foreign language learners among whom (following this study's findings) it is already possible to perceive the beginnings of language attrition or the attrition of real content that is the prerequisite for BE teaching/learning.

In addition, the Faculty management and the Faculty subject matter teachers/professors should also contribute their share to facilitating the transition from GE to BE teaching/learning after the hiatus of one or more years – the latter with demands for regular reading of English professional literature, and a wider and more binding selection of obligatory study literature in English, and the management by introducing formal evaluation of students' prior GE knowledge, and organizing first-year classes in foreign languages, which would provide vital continuity in foreign language learning.

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IV.

TRANSLATION STUDIES

Natalija Vid

University of Maribor

Faculty of Arts, Department of English and American Studies

Use of Domesticated and Foreignized Methods in the Soviet School of Translation

Summary

The article focuses on prevailing translation methods used in the Soviet translation school. The main aim of the research is to analyze translation strategies, principles and methods used by Soviet translators who were forced to work in a cultural vacuum under strong ideological influence. The absolute priority of domesticated translation in the Soviet translation school is compared with strongly criticized foreignized translation. The primary use of the domesticated method of translation depended not on the personal tastes of the translators or current tendencies but on an artificial ideologically influenced cultural environment which was almost completely isolated from foreign cultures. The whole translation process in the Soviet Union differed greatly from that in democratic societies. It was inevitably influenced by an institution of censorship and strict centralization. In spite of all, there were intense efforts made by translators to preserve and even expand the horizons of the readers, to maintain a minimal cultural level, and to circumvent censorship.

Key words: Soviet Union, domesticated translation, foreignized translation, ideology, censorship

Podomačitev (*domestication*) in potujitev (*foreignization*) v sovjetski prevajalski šoli

Povzetek

Članek analizira prevladujoče prevajalske metode, strategije in načine, značilne za sovjetsko prevajalstvo. Glavni cilj razprave je ugotoviti in pojasniti vrste prevladujočih prevajalskih metod v obdobju Sovjetske zveze ter vzroke za njihovo rabo pri sovjetskih prevajalcih, ki so ustvarjali v kulturnem vakuumu komunistične ideologije. Avtorica pojasni, zakaj je prevladovala izključno metoda podomačitve prevodov (*domestication*), medtem ko je bila metoda potujitve (*foreignization*) strogo kritizirana in se je pojavljala samo v izjemnih primerih. Metoda podomačitve ni bila osebna izbira prevajalcev ali prevladujočih smernic v prevajanju, temveč so jo narekemale posebnosti umetno vzdrževanega ideološkega okolja, skoraj popolnoma izoliranega od tujih kultur. Prevajalski proces v Sovjetski zvezi se je bistveno razlikoval od prevajalskega procesa v demokratičnih državah, saj je nanj vseskozi vplival sistem cenzure in stroge centralizacije. Kljub temu so si sovjetski prevajalci prizadevali, da bi obšli cenzuro in s tem vsaj nekoliko razširili kulturni horizont svojih bralcev.

Ključne besede: Sovjetska zveza, podomačitev prevodov, tujitev prevodov, ideologija, cenzura

Use of Domesticated and Foreignized Methods in the Soviet School of Translation

1. Introduction

In the history of translation theory and practice, the pendant of translation focus has swung between two extremes: domesticated¹ (emphasis on the language and culture of the target text) and foreignized² (emphasis on the language and culture of the source text) translations. Both approaches were first conceived and published in 1813 by Friedrich Schleiermacher, (1768–1834), the German theologian, in his *On diverse translation methods*.

Venuti (1995, 20) argues that Anglo-American translation theory has been dominated since the seventeenth century mainly by the domesticated method, which intends the translated text to conform to the norms of target-language usage. In other words, the domesticated method means that the text should be transferred from source to target language in such way as if it had been originally written in the target language. The translator should erase every shred of foreignness and create a fluent, idiomatic text. The typical characteristics of this type of translation are “fluency”, “naturalness”, “transparency” and “readability”. According to Nida (1964, 167–70), domestication also permits adjustments to “special literary forms”, “semantically exocentric expressions” or “intraorganismic meanings”. Naturalness as a key requirement in this type of translation should be raised to such a degree that it “bear[s] no obvious trace of foreign origin”. If the source text contains linguistic and cultural elements alien to the target language and culture, they are likely to be avoided in the translation.

In contrast, a foreignized translation strategy is more oriented towards the source language and the source text. This type of translation strategies resists contemporary cultural, stylistic and idiomatic norms in order to convey the full aesthetic impact of the foreign poetic experience. As Venuti declares (1995, 20), it “sends the target reader abroad” instead of familiarizing the text in order to facilitate the comprehension. Using this method, the translator is expected to preserve the foreign identity of the source text, which means keeping linguistic and cultural differences in the translation. Thus, foreignized translation gives readers more information but tends to increase the difficulty of understanding.

The classification into domesticated and foreignized translation enables us to distinguish between the different levels of impression made on the target reader by the text (Beliaeva-Standen 2002, 199). Domesticated translation is more natural and easy for understanding because it is read as an original text. Foreignized translation presents foreign language and culture and for that reason requires certain details to be rationalized and clarified. In this case, the reader has to discover

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- 1 One of the most famous theoretic of natural, domesticated translation is Eugene Nida, an American specialist in Bible translations. Nida is considered to be a follower of Martin Luther, who translated the Bible into the common German language and declared the priority of content above form.
 - 2 Domesticated translation is also described as the target language (TL) or “reader-to-author” approach and foreignized as source language (SL) or “author-to-reader”.

the meaning behind uncommon textual structure and this makes the process of comprehension longer and more complicated.

2. The Soviet school of translations: “iron” censorship

In order to understand the position of the Soviet translation school, it is essential to consider some important background. Only a few months after the October Revolution, the first demands were made that literature should be put in the service of communist ideology. The government took over printing presses, replaced writers’ and musicians’ associations with state-controlled unions, and shut down theaters and art studios.

New ideological propaganda dictated harsh restraints on literary production, aiming to purge Soviet society of all expressions regarded as destructive to the new order. Henceforth, literature and the arts lost some of their public identification with civil society and gained a formal place in the official culture of the Soviet era. An attempt was made for a brief time to totally change the cultural orientation of the nation. All this was very evident in the field of translations because ideology also exerted pressures on literary translations. As a result, any literary text translated in the Soviet Union underwent a series of transformations or distortions depending on ideological demands. Translations of foreign materials had to pass official censorship at the Foreign Literature Committee³ and were not permitted either in small local libraries or even in private book collections. There were one or two notable exceptions, such as the Library of Foreign Languages in Moscow, where an unusually broad range of foreign literature was available to everyone – everyone, of course, who had found a way to learn a foreign language well enough.

The justification of censors who worked with foreign publications was to protect the minds of the Soviet people from the harmful influence and infection of the West and to offer the public well-selected information concerning foreign cultures. In 1922, the central censorship office was established, known as *Glavlit* for short, which had absolute authority to censor the performing arts and all publications. The strict authority of *Glavlit* covered not only the USSR but also all Soviet occupied countries. Censorship in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics remains the longest lasting and most comprehensive censorship in the 20th century.

An institution of censorship and centralization inevitably influenced the whole translation process in the Soviet Union. Principles and methods of Soviet translators were much more unified than in democratic societies. All participants in the translation process (translators, censors, publishers) existed as one united group which had strongly determined aims. The Soviet publishing world was closed, centralized and bureaucratically controlled. On the other hand, we find intense efforts made by translators to preserve and even expand the horizons of the readers, to maintain a minimal cultural level, and circumvent censorship.

This paper focuses on translation strategies used by Soviet translators who were forced to work under strong ideological influence and on the relationships between different methods existed in the Soviet translation school.

3 Committee for the purchase and distribution of foreign literature in the Soviet Union.

3. The “Black list” - dangerous and safe literature

The following list of Western authors which were among the first to be allowed for translation during the Stalinist period and had been republished during the whole period of the Soviet State characterizes the main direction of foreign literature policy.

English literature was represented mainly by classics written by Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens, Henry Fielding, John Galsworthy, William Shakespeare, Jonathan Swift, and William Makepeace Thackeray. Among newer authors only James Aldridge could be found. There were just a few “safe” classics among American writers, including James Fennimore Cooper, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe. Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair were also allowed because of their criticism of the capitalist system. Among French authors considered to be “appropriate” may be found Honoré de Balzac, Gustav Flaubert, Victor Hugo, Guy de Maupassant, Prosper Mérimée, Romain Rolland, Stendhal, and André Still. The works of Voltaire and Diderot were also allowed because of their anti-religious nature. During the Stalinist period German literature was practically unpublished, except for Heinrich Heine. Spanish literature was represented for a long time only by Cervantes. Obviously, the horizon of the reader was not allowed to rise beyond the nineteenth century. Isolation from the real twentieth century literary process was hermetic.

According to Ermolaev (1997), some authors were put on the black list very quickly and almost never appeared in the official literature:

- almost all Czech and Slovak literature
- Russian dissidents and émigrés: Andrei Belyi, Mikhail Bulgakov, Nikolai Gumilev (executed in 1921), Viacheslav Ivanov, Vladislav Khodasevich, Nikolai Kliuev, Vladimir Nabokov and Evgenii Zamiatin; from later authors three winners of Nobel prize in literature: Ivan Bunin (emigrated in 1917, received the Nobel prize in 1933), Aleksander Solzhenitsyn (deported from the Soviet Union in 1974, received the Nobel prize in 1970) and Joseph Brodsky (expelled from the Soviet Union in 1972, received the Nobel prize in 1987);
- Western authors of anti-Communist books, including Aldous Huxley, André Gide, André Breton, Arthur Koestler and George Orwell, André Malraux, John Dos Passos and Ignazio Silone;
- Catholics: Georges Bernanos, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, Paul Claudel and Oscar Milosz, or mystics: Gustav Meyrink;
- writers who were affiliated with the movement of the extreme right, regardless of the degree or nature of their involvement: Hans Carossa, Louis Céline, Ernst Junger, Giovanni Papini as well as Gottfried Benn, and Ezra Pound.
- so-called “pornographic” writers, such as D. H. Lawrence, Georges Bataille, and Henry Miller.

Modernists who had the reputation of “reactionaries” or nihilists were sometimes published with special comments. To this group belong Beckett, Borges, Broch, Eliot, Joyce, Kafka, Musil, Proust, Italo Svevo, Virginia Woolf, and the representatives of the French “new novel”, Michel Butor and Alain Robbe-Grillet.

For instance, George Orwell's most famous novel *Animal Farm* was published after long debates in the Soviet Committee for foreign literature only in 1989 but appeared without indication of the number of copies and the name of the translator with the following preface:

[...] the novels *Animal Farm* and *1984* have brought fame to George Orwell. These books are a satire on Soviet society. This is why it is not accidental that *1984* has been turned into an instrument of anti-Soviet propaganda by bourgeois statesmen, economists, philosophers and journalists. The book has been widely publicized in the West and bourgeois authors often refer to, or cite from *1984* when writing about the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. (1989, 10)

In official literature the name of George Orwell⁴ was never mentioned until the fall of the Soviet Union. The only short reference appeared in the *Concise Literary Encyclopaedia*: "Bourgeois critics praise Orwell for the anti-communist and modernist trends in his works".

As for non-fiction, and especially the humanities and social sciences, hardly anything of importance was translated. Many foreign books and journals were confined to closed repositories called *spetskhran* – often called the Gulag for books – and accessible only to those inside the Academy of Sciences system or even more restricted party circles.

4. Translation methods

Soviet translators primarily used the domesticated method⁵ which prevailed after a short struggle with the "formal" method, advocated by the Russian formalist school⁶. A domesticated translation ideal had been resorted to as a means of protecting and developing the national language and identity and representing a certain picture of foreign culture which was important for ideological purposes.

The orientation on domesticated translations had a number of reasons dependant on the special status of foreign literature in the Soviet Union. First, the ultimate problem of Soviet translators became the low background knowledge of "mass" readers for whom they had to translate. Literary culture in Russia before the revolution was extremely highly developed. The most talented and famous Russian authors translated foreign writers. After the revolution, the Communists saw themselves creating not just a new society, but a new kind of society, one in which the masses would participate in every aspect. One of the prevailing ideological purposes of literature in the Soviet Union was to popularize literature and to make it comprehensible for the less educated levels of society. It was proclaimed at the first Congress of Writers in 1934 that literary work in the Land of Soviets had become the affair of all the toilers, "matter of mass consumption". Maxim

4 Because of his sharp satire on Soviet society, Orwell's books became widely popular among intellectual dissident circles. There appeared numerous Samizdat copies of *Animal Farm* and *1984* in Russian translation. In 1978 all copies were confiscated by the KGB.

5 The Soviet translation school used terms "vol'nost" (domesticating) and "bukvalizem" (foreignizing) to describe the prevailing methods in translation.

6 This school of theory was popular in Russia from approximately 1915 to 1930. Russian formalists were interested more in the text itself and in the literary aspects of the text than in its actual meaning.

Gorky defined the place and the significance of Soviet literature, explaining which ideological and stylistic peculiarities distinguished it from the literature of the bourgeoisie. The literary work should bear some peculiar signs of progressiveness, such as the themes of labor, struggle for justice, protest against bourgeois society, pity for suffering, depiction of poor people, and social and class struggle⁷. One of the main aims of a new literary program became to make native and foreign literature acceptable for every single reader. Such engagement was supposed to raise the cultural level of the masses. Considering these new obligations, foreignized strategies focused not simply on “understanding” but on widening of comprehension borders became completely incoherent.

Secondly, Soviet translators wanted to protect and develop their native language, to preserve the magnificent and powerful Russian of the nineteenth century. Their desire was easily understood. From the very beginning, the Soviet period was characterized by linguistic instability and change which included the abolition of concepts and words from “old social structures”. As a result, the activization of new linguistic forms and word-formations permeated all spheres of social, cultural and political life (Roesen and Lunde 2006, 10).

The linguistic situation in the Soviet Union was characterized by the fact that to describe new levels of life a new vocabulary had to be invented. The first Soviet decade of Russia was turbulent, and rapid changes in the political and cultural life were accompanied by dramatic shifts in language culture. At that time Russia experienced a strong influx of ideologically charged words. Bolshevik revolutionaries endeavored to replace traditional language structures with a cacophony of new words, phrases, and communicative contexts intended to define and help legitimize the new Soviet order (Gorham 2003, 67).

The vocabulary of the Russian language changed, in the sense that it had been replenished with a considerable number of new words, expressions, abbreviations, derivatives, even personal names⁸. A number of words and expressions changed their meaning and acquired a new signification. A number of obsolete words dropped out of the vocabulary.

The proponents of Socialist Realism accused *avant-garde*⁹ artists of valuing style more than content. Hence, the battle over linguistics loomed as part of the class struggle for the direction of culture. Was Soviet linguistics to be bourgeois formalism, or proletarian realism? By 1934, that question had become, literally, a matter of life and death.

The task to protect and preserve literary Russian language gained a special importance in the situation of actually replacing the Russian language with some new “proletarian” language.

7 Even books for children published in the Soviet Union described mainly the difficult life of Russian children before the revolution, their role in the civil war, and the activities of the new political children's organizations.

8 The most popular names for girls in the middle of the 1950s were *Stalina* and *Oktiabrina*.

9 In the early 1920s, the time of Lenin and Trotsky, writers and artists were granted creative freedom, provided they observed the rule of not engaging in overt political dissent. Thus the visionary *avant-garde* aesthetic movement, formed in 1915 by Russian artists having embraced the ideals of the European Modernist Movement, survived until 1932.

Foreignized translation was strongly criticized by Soviet theorists, who proclaimed it to be “slavery copying” which destroyed the target language and could not transform the meaning (Levickaia and Fiterman 1963, 12). However, foreignized elements were not completely avoided in translations. A further significant aim of the Soviet translation school was proclaimed to be the enlightening of “mass” readers for educational purposes. Foreignized translation could give the reader more information than a domesticated one. For that reason, literary translations made in the Soviet Union were equipped with numerous comments, prefaces, footnotes, explanations, etc. Again, this care about the reader’s education was colored entirely by ideology.

On the proposal of Lunacharskii (a member of the Bolshevik government, responsible for literature and culture), each literary work written by a foreign author and published in the Soviet Union had to contain a special preface. The main task of these prefaces was to reveal the “correct” meaning of the work to Soviet readers who were completely unfamiliar with the real political and cultural situation in foreign countries. Thus, in the preface to Dickens’ novel *Oliver Twist* it was written that Oliver was a symbol of capitalist England, which overflowed with poverty, corruption and criminals, and that a frightening number of English children lived in such conditions. Such “explanations” should be considered as a part of ideological pressure.

Comments and footnotes were also intended to “enlighten” Soviet readers. Comments were aimed to explain purely ideological features. Thus, in the comment to Robert Burns’ poem “My heart’s in the Highlands” which described the beauty of the Scottish landscape, it was mentioned that in the eighteenth century many protestors against the English government hid in the hills. Such comment insinuated that this poem was devoted to the Scottish rebels.

In the comment to Dickens’ novel *The Pickwick Papers* it was written that the courts in England were intended only to serve the prevailing social classes and skillfully used a complete absence of laws in England. The same comment contained more than one full page explanation of the corrupt court system in England which protected only the interests of capitalists.

As for footnotes, they usually contained useful information, such as historical facts, events, dates and cultural traditions. Soviet readers could not help feeling a certain interest and probably nostalgia for the unknown world of foreign culture. This traditional interest was intensified in the Soviet period because foreign cultures remained almost inaccessible. Traveling abroad was very restricted and the behavior of Soviet citizens while in foreign countries was controlled.¹⁰ Any publications from abroad were forbidden for private persons. Each attempt to bring in foreign literature was suppressed by the customs.

For Soviet readers, who were forced to live more than seventy years behind the iron curtain, literary translations represented the only “window” into the foreign world. They wanted to explore the foreign world, to understand exotic elements, national coloration, characters and atmosphere, but this desire was only partly satisfied.

¹⁰ Soviet citizens abroad were forbidden to meet or to talk to foreigners in private. A special KGB agent was always present at conversations, meetings or social occasions. It was forbidden to bring any foreign publications, including newspapers, journals or books to the Soviet Union.

Thus, the high standards of translations and ideological connotations demanded were combined with almost complete absence of information. Rait-Kovaleva (1965, 203–5), a famous Soviet translator, wrote that literary characters did not exist in a vacuum. The historical time and the place influenced the choice of means of translation. Therefore, the translator had to know at least something about foreign cultures. In the Soviet Union translators did not have an opportunity to access the necessary sources of information about foreign cultures and had to consider ideological demands. In the process of constant ideological adaptations characteristic of hermetic Soviet culture, a special virtual reality of foreign countries was shaped which remained unchanged for many years. Belov (1989, 177), a well-known Soviet critic and translator, wrote that he had translated American literature for more than twenty years but sometimes he thought that America did not exist at all, that it was just a myth. As a result of this paradoxical situation, despite the information contained in footnotes, Soviet readers were provided with adapted images of other countries which in most cases were far from reality.

5. Conclusion

It is true that in Soviet Russia, an unusually high number of gifted translators faced harsh censorship. Official ideological predilections bracketed out whole areas of literature; even in fiction, everything that did not fit the official canon was banned or severely limited. Another problem was that while there were certainly many talented and even well-trained translators, they could not study abroad and had very limited access to informational sources required for successful translations. Many of the skills and habits needed were inaccessible to them.

The choice of domesticated method did not depend on personal tastes or current tendencies but primarily on the specific ideological environment in which Soviet translators had to work. Thus, the main consequence of the prevailing domesticated method of translation is that works of Soviet translators can be appreciated primarily for their literary qualities rather than their faithfulness to the original.

Henceforth, the main slogan of Soviet translators, “Good translation in good Russian,” meant that in this case, Soviet translations became almost the only source of pure literary language for Russian readers. Soviet translators resisted the unification and simplicity of language sated with artificial, awkward linguistic formations flourishing in Soviet literature and preserved the literary Russian language for the next generations.

They also enabled Soviet readers to have at least momentary look at distant cultures. Despite ideological adaptations, translations were almost the only source of information about foreign lands. Even considering the fact that literary translations were strongly influenced by leading ideology, the privilege of reading translated literature opened a completely different perspective for those who had access to such periodicals as *Foreign Literature*. The meaning of such magazines was enormous.

However, the fact is that during the Soviet period, when the high prestige of literature was almost the only source of spiritual freedom, significantly successful translations appeared. Many of them are still republished in modern Russia because, unfortunately, irrespective of an absolute literary freedom, the overwhelming majority of translations in Russia today are of execrable quality.

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V.

Tomaž Onič

Conference Report

Artist and Citizen: 50 Years of Performing Pinter

From April 12 to 14, the University of Leeds, UK, hosted a conference to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first performance of a play by Harold Pinter. The central event of this three-day celebration was the ceremony during which Pinter was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Leeds for a lifetime's contribution to the arts.

Pinter (b. 1930) started his artistic career with poetry writing in the early 1950s and continued as a playwright later in the same decade. His first full-length play, *The Birthday Party* (1957), which is today one of Pinter's most frequently staged pieces, received mostly unfavourable reviews and closed after one week. But soon the predictions of Harold Hobson, who was one of the few critics defending Pinter from the beginning, came true: *The Caretaker* published in 1960 was an instant success. Followed by *The Dwarfs* (1960), *The Collection* (1961), *The Lover* (1962), *The Homecoming* (1964), *Old Times* (1970), *Betrayal* (1978) and others, it secured Pinter a firm place among the most important contemporary dramatists on the British theatrical scene. Today, the core of his literary heritage is represented by a total of twenty-nine plays – including the most recent ones *Ashes to Ashes* (1996) and *Celebration* (1999) – a number of shorter pieces for the stage, several screenplays and poetry.

Apart from being a playwright, a screenplay writer and a poet, Pinter has also been active as a director and an actor, often in his own plays. His most recent appearance on stage was in the role of Krapp in the production of Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* that took place in The Royal Court Theatre in October 2006. The then 76-year-old Pinter said he enjoyed the role – the more so because he had never been in a Beckett play before.

During his career, Pinter was awarded many literary and non-literary prizes for his literary achievements, most of them – including the most prestigious ones – in the last decade. Among the prominent awards are the Order of the British Empire, CBE (1966); the Shakespeare Prize, Hamburg (1970); the European Prize for Literature, Vienna (1973); The David Cohen British Literature Prize (1995); the Sunday Times Award for Literary Excellence (1997); the Companion of Honour for services to Literature, (2002); the Wilfred Owen Poetry Prize (2005); the Nobel Prize for Literature (2005); the European Theatre Prize (2006); and the Legion d'Honneur (2007). He has also been awarded honorary degrees from several British as well as foreign universities, the most recent being the one from the University of Leeds.

The conference was a pleasant combination of academic and artistic contributions. In addition to several academic papers by scholars from more than 10 countries, the participants saw three

staged performances of Pinter's plays. For the first night, the organizer scheduled *Monologue*. Pinter's schoolmate and lifelong friend Henry Woolf kindly accepted the invitation to perform this piece written for him by Pinter in 1972. The dramatic power of the play merged beautifully with the real life situation in which one of the two men involved in the birth of this play was on stage and the other in the audience. The second day of the conference closed with an original theatrical work entitled *Being Harold Pinter*, brought to life by the Belarus Free Theatre. This group of young artists, who started their underground activity in 2005 as a means of resistance against President Lukashenko's political regime, gave a performance that combined several violent scenes from Pinter's plays that deal with the issues of human rights violation and political pressure on individuals. The performance was in Belarusian, but this did not affect its clear message projected through visual and other non-verbal means. The group and the piece were introduced by Pinter's fellow playwright Tom Stoppard, who had previously cooperated with the group and also helped the actors in acquiring travel documents. After the conclusion of panels on day three, we saw *The Room*. Again, it was Henry Woolf who in 1957 commissioned this first play by Pinter, thus possibly setting him on the playwriting track. As in the first production almost 50 years ago, which took place in a converted squash court at Bristol University, Woolf appeared in the role of Mr Kidd. *The Room* was an excellent event to close the conference.

Other artistic events included a poetry reading which took place during the honorary degree awarding ceremony; there were also showings of documentaries connected to Pinter, his works and his political beliefs in one way or another. A rich moment came with the opportunity to hear *Voices*, Pinter's most recent work with a strong musical component contributed by James Clarke.

Apart from Mark Taylor-Batty, conference organiser and associate editor of *The Pinter Review*, several distinguished Pinter scholars were present at the conference. Steven H. Gale, the founding president of the Harold Pinter Society and founding co-editor of *The Pinter Review*, gave a talk on highlights of Pinter's career intertwined with his personal life. Susan Hollis Merritt, bibliographical editor of *The Pinter Review*, took us back to her early encounters with Pinter's work and shared her impressions about her first meeting with the playwright himself. She also provided interesting details about studying the contents of boxes related to Pinter's literary heritage in the British Museum. Both plenary speakers, undoubtedly among the leading authorities in the field of Pinter studies, have studied Pinter's life and work for decades and have published numerous articles and monographs on the topic. There were two more guest speakers: Charles Grimes and Donald Freed. The latter was also invited to participate in the roundtable entitled *Working with Harold Pinter* together with James Clarke, Katie Read, Ian Rickson and Henry Woolf. A pleasant discussion on participants' experiences with what the title suggested was chaired by Pinter's biographer Michael Billington. It should also be mentioned that shortly before the conference, the revised edition of Billington's 1996 book *The Life and Work of Harold Pinter*, now entitled *Harold Pinter*, had just appeared in print and was available to conference participants – with the author's signature, of course.

The award ceremony was brief. In a short opening, a University spokesman mentioned Pinter's connection to Yorkshire cricket and his visit to a match in Leeds during World War II. Mark

Taylor-Batty and students from the host university read some of Pinter's recent war poems. The high point of the event was conducted by the University Chancellor Lord Melvyn Bragg, who awarded the degree. After a short photo session, Pinter accompanied by his wife, the historic biographer Lady Antonia Fraser, left the Workshop Theatre.

Artist and Citizen: 50 Years of Performing Pinter was a memorable event, and after the conference dinner, which closed the social activities, it could be felt that all the participants left Leeds with pleasant sensations and impressions. Further details about the conference and some photographs are available at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/theatre/pinter/index.html>.

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