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# [ The Butler Who Married His Lordship: Feminine Identity in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* ]

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**[Abstract]** *Darlington Hall epitomises a political arena that corresponds to what John Ruskin describes as the male public sphere. The main actors in this sphere are Lord Darlington and Stevens, who both regard their activities as a form of service to humanity. Nevertheless, if we analyse Stevens's behaviour not only in the light of Freud's theories about idealisation and love as explained in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego and On Narcissism: An Introduction, but also through the cultural and custom sources that deal with the condition of menservants and wives in the Victorian age, it would appear that Stevens's social sex role conforms more to Ruskin's concept of the feminine. Stevens and Darlington would form a virtual couple, where the former has the role of the wife and the latter that of the husband.*

**[Keywords]** *The Remains of the Day; Kazuo Ishiguro; femininity; masculinity; homosexuality; identification; idealisation; narcissistic love; menservants*

## [1] Introduction

There are several perspectives a story can be told from. Readers of Kazuo Ishiguro's Booker Prize-winning novel *The Remains of the Day* (1989) may be fascinated by the story of the journey, both physical and mental, taken by the butler of Darlington Hall, Mr Stevens. Alternatively, one may read the plot as an unfulfilled love story. Indeed, the trip to Cornwall is a pretext to visit Miss Kenton, the former housekeeper of Darlington Hall, now living with her husband. In my paper, however, I intend to focus my attention on the peculiar relationship across different levels of a hierarchical order: in this sense, one may approach *The Remains of the Day* as a narrative of loyalty, that of the butler to his master. Back in the glory days, Lord Darlington, the archetypal English aristocrat, owned Darlington Hall; ostensibly, Stevens's self-abnegation restrained him from accepting Miss Kenton's advances and from taking any rest from his work. Certainly, Stevens's absolute loyalty might be considered as a proof of devotion more complex than that expected from a servant: namely, Stevens's attachment resembles that of a wife to her husband. In order to understand how the relationship between Stevens and Lord Darlington is structured, an analysis of the social dynamics at Darlington Hall is needed.

Two prerogatives dominate life at Darlington Hall: the commitment to the public sphere and the male dominance of it. Lord Darlington believes that an aristocratic sense of honour obliges him to be involved in politics, while Mr Stevens regards his job as a way of "furthering the progress of humanity" (Ishiguro 107, 120). Cynthia Wong highlights this point when she writes: "Both Darlington and Stevens behave in accordance with what they deem to be the proper social ideals of the time. [...] For Darlington, appeasement of German powers might stifle an impending war; for Stevens, good service to Darlington is of utmost importance to ensuring world peace. For both, service to a national cause is the order of the day" (Wong 498). Indeed, Ishiguro himself points out how Stevens endeavours to do something for the common good: "He is driven by this urge to do things perfectly, and not only do things perfectly, but that perfect contribution should be, no matter how small a contribution it is, to improve humanity" (Ishiguro, in Vorda and Herzinger 152). The conduct of politics, moreover, unfolds in accordance with the principle of hierarchy: so long as Lord Darlington hosts the conference and mediates between the participants, he remains in a dominant position; Stevens's task, on the other hand, is that of a subordinate who arranges the guests' stay in such a way as to make them perfectly comfortable and content.

Commitment to the public sphere at Darlington Hall is a purely male activity. Besides Lord Darlington and Stevens, the protagonists of the political events that take place in the manor are men (Ishiguro 78–115, 143–6). Terentowicz-Fotyga explains that "Stevens can be said to have fully interiorized the vision of Darlington Hall as public, masculine space. For him, as for Lord Darlington, the country house does not represent domestic comfort but the centre of power where 'debates are conducted, and crucial decisions arrived at' (115)" (91). The concept of 'domestic comfort' alluded to by Terentowicz-Fotyga is one of intimacy, and is described further in the dichotomy between the public and do-

mestic spheres as affirmed by John Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865): “The man’s power is active, progressive, defensive. [...] his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest. [...] But the woman’s power is [...] for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision” (Ruskin 44). On the one hand, the public world, ruled by men, stands stormy, loveless and violent; on the other, the intimate, sacred and protective sphere, which revolves around hearth and home, is overseen by women.

The concepts of public and private, masculine and feminine, prove to be particularly useful when applied to an analysis of the unfolding relationship between Stevens and Lord Darlington. Nor should such an analysis, carried out with specific reference to the thought of a Victorian author such as Ruskin, seem incongruous: indeed, some critics view the novel’s characters as sharing a Victorian mindset. For example, Susie O’Brien states that *The Remains of the Day* is “a narrative which is thematically constructed around an opposition between what are commonly regarded as Victorian values—formality, repression, and self-effacement, summed up under the general heading of ‘dignity’—and those associated with an idea of ‘America’ that has expanded, literally into a New World—freedom, nature, and individualism” (788). And John Rothfork labels Stevens as “a kind of Victorian samurai” (91). Thus, even though Darlington Hall’s golden age is that of the 1920s and ’30s, the values of its inhabitants are still anchored to the previous century.

If we adopt Ruskin’s division of male and female spheres in order to understand the human relationships at Darlington Hall, one can only regard Lord Darlington and Stevens as representatives of the public male domain. One might also ask, however, who embodies the private female sphere. This might appear to be something of a problem, for, with the exception of Miss Kenton, a feature of *The Remains of the Day* is the absence of pivotal female characters. Apart from the energetic housekeeper, women are simply bit players. They are generally maids and are not even worthy of a name. If they are given a name at all, it is a stereotyped one: the Jewish maids are called Ruth and Sarah, and have no psychological depth (Ishiguro 156). Lisa is a butler’s prototypical nightmare: a housemaid who leaves her job because she has fallen in love with the second footman (Ishiguro 163–7). The cook at Darlington Hall, Mrs Mortimer, becomes almost the perfect caricature when, in assisting Stevens senior, she fills the whole room with the smell of a roast meat (114). Miss Kenton, on the other hand, though a fully rounded character, is also something of a loose cannon: her forceful personality is in marked contrast with the dignified, restrained comportment of the inhabitants of Darlington Hall and appears somewhat out-of-place. The main characters’ female relatives come in for even more off-hand treatment. Stevens never mentions his mother, and his father never speaks of his wife. Lord Darlington replicates the pattern by never mentioning his mother, wife, or mistress, and the reader is left at a loss as to whether he is a bachelor or a widower. Darlington Hall is “a rigidly organized, formalized ‘anti-home’, intrinsically adverse to family life” (Terentowicz-Fotyga 90) and it “resembles a luxurious monastery in one key aspect: none of its inmates has any kind of sex life. From the master down to the housekeeper, all lead celibate lives, strenuously sublimating their libidinal energies in the performance of their duties” (Tamaya 50).

The aim of this essay is to establish who actually embodies the domestic, female sphere at Darlington Hall. My purpose is to demonstrate that Stevens's devotion to his job, and to his lord, is only a superficial expression of his involvement in the public world, and that it is Stevens who, above all, represents the feminine principle at Darlington Hall, serving to create that 'domestic comfort' which Terentowicz-Fotyga claims to be absent in the house and, in doing so, epitomising Ruskin's definition of the ideal wife: "She must be [...] instinctively, infallibly wise – wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service" (Ruskin 45).

At this point, my argument requires a psychological definition of 'sexuality' and 'gender role'. Milite hypothesises that "The four components of human sexuality are biological sex, gender identity (the psychological sense of being male or female), sexual orientation, and social sex role (adherence to cultural norms for feminine and masculine behavior)" (306). Philip Browning Helsel clarifies the concept of social sex role further by calling it 'gender role': "The concept of gender roles refers not strictly to whether one thinks of oneself as male or female, but the way this conviction is played out in the cultural arena, including 'situational constraints' that can maintain behavior that 'seems fitting' to men and women (Rudacille 2005, 56)" (Browning Helsel 700). If one applies these two definitions to Ishiguro's novel, we see that Stevens's gender role presents aspects that are usually considered closer to a feminine stereotype than to a masculine one.

In order to make my argument clear, I shall first analyse Stevens's character under the microscope of Freudian psychoanalysis, after which I shall consider the nature of a butler's task in the nineteenth century, as it is described in contemporary culture and custom sources.

## [2] Psychoanalytic sources

In her book *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities – Freud and Beyond* (1994), Nancy Chodorow argues that "If one parent can be said to 'create' gender in their children or to help in that creation, it is the father" (86). An analysis of Stevens's relationship with his father would seem to be crucial, therefore, if we are to understand how his social sex role develops.

In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), Sigmund Freud points out that "Identification is known to psycho-analysis as the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person. [...] A little boy will exhibit a special interest in his father; he would like to grow like him and be like him, and take his place everywhere. We may say simply that he takes his father as his ideal" (Freud, *Group Psychology* 60). Moreover, "identification endeavours to mould a person's own ego after the fashion of the one that has been taken as a 'model'" (Freud 63). Identification might well describe the feelings

Stevens nurtures for his father, since he attempts to model his life on that of his father: he chooses the same career and he works hard to achieve the dignity which, in his eyes, his father did. When Stevens recounts the most significant episodes in his father's professional life, he claims that "my father not only manifests, but comes close to being the personification itself, of what the Hayes Society terms 'dignity in keeping with his position'" (Ishiguro 43). Stevens's admiration shines through his words: his father is the *personification* of dignity, he is a kind of god of butlers. Stevens's mirroring of his father also extends to the identification of gender: his father's dignity was a model of solemn, committed masculinity.

Stevens's affection for his father is not, however, reciprocated. Stevens senior is a gloomy character, and his coldness is palpable: when Stevens is obliged to tell his father that he will no longer be allowed to wait at table, he looks his son "up and down rather coldly" (Ishiguro 67) and replies "I haven't all morning to listen to you chatter" (68). This may seem to be something of a rebuff not only to his professionalism but to his manliness too. When Stevens senior finally admits being proud of his son (101), it is too late. Never once in his lifetime does he grant his son the least sign of approval. If we assume as valid the Freudian concept of identification as "the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person" (Freud, *Group Psychology* 60), we must conclude that Stevens senior's failure to address a single word of praise to his son means that his son's feelings were never reciprocated, and that, therefore, no emotional tie was ever formed between father and son. Consequently, Stevens feels the need for a substitute father figure who will reciprocate his feelings: namely, Lord Darlington. As Peter W. Shaffer rightly points out, Stevens has two fathers: "his natural father, also a butler, and his class 'father' and master, Lord Darlington" (Shaffer, *Understanding* 64). Shaffer also maintains that Stevens ends up no longer identifying "with his lower-class natural father, who suffers both a literal fall (on Darlington's property) and a figurative one (in vocational status), but with his upper-class 'cultural' father and master, Lord Darlington" (Shaffer, *Reading* 166). Beneath the surface of his pursuit of professional fulfilment, what Stevens really desires is a father figure who will love him. This need is evident when Stevens describes how a butler is to choose a worthy master: "There must surely come a time when he ceases his searching; a time when he must say to himself: 'This employer embodies all that I find noble and admirable. I will hereafter devote myself to serving him.'" (Ishiguro 210-1). Since the master represents '*all that I find noble and admirable*', he is a figure the servant can identify with. More specifically, Stevens's identification with Lord Darlington mirrors Charles Rycroft's definition of projective identification: "Projective identification is the process by which a person imagines himself to be inside some object external to himself. This again is a defence since it creates the illusion of control over the object and enables the subject to deny his powerlessness over it and to gain vicarious satisfaction from its activities" (Rycroft 76). Stevens lives vicariously through Lord Darlington, as "professional prestige lay most significantly in the moral worth of one's employer" (Ishiguro 121). Stevens lives in Lord Darlington's shoes almost literally, since he is "in the possession of a number of splendid suits, kindly passed on to me over the years by Lord Darlington himself" (11);

his identification becomes even more obvious when he relates his life in Moscombe as if he were a gentleman, not a butler, going so far as to almost assume the identity of Lord Darlington (191–203).

Stevens not only identifies with his master, he idealises him, very much in accordance with Freud's definition of idealisation: "By [idealisation] that object, without any alteration in its nature, is aggrandized and exalted in the subject's mind" (Freud, *Narcissism* 94). Indeed, Stevens sees his master as one of those "great gentlemen of our times in whose hands civilization had been entrusted" (Ishiguro 122); he exalts Darlington's moral stature and endorses his greatness. If a butler's professional dignity is attained only insofar as he serves a great gentleman, Stevens may consider himself to be a great butler. It would seem there is nothing that can stand in the way of Stevens's identification-idealisation with his master. Yet, some differences between Stevens's and Darlington's 'greatness' do exist: Darlington is an aristocrat, Stevens is not; Darlington exercises real influence over historical events, while Stevens does not. As already mentioned, Stevens makes a clumsy attempt to overcome the gulf that separates them socially when hosted by the Taylors, but the class difference between them is insuperable: they both strive to make an active contribution to the common good, but Darlington's superiority to the butler in the social pyramid is unquestionable.

Yet it is precisely this social gap that enables Stevens to take his loyalty to Darlington to another level and to earn his lordship's affection. Insofar as Stevens looks upon Darlington as a heightened, gentlemanly version of himself, he is the embodiment of Freud's description of narcissistic love whereby the subject loves "what he himself would like to be" (Freud, *Narcissism* 90). Idealisation and love are connected in Freud's formula, as he says, "what possesses the excellence which the ego lacks for making it an ideal, is loved" (101). And he goes on to add that "The object serves as a substitute for some unattained ego ideal of our own. We love it on account of these perfections which we have striven to reach for our own ego" (Freud, *Group Psychology* 74). Stevens loves Darlington narcissistically: he loves his master's moral stature, his dignity, his social status and the power that enables him to take decisions at the very "hub" of the world and thus exercise influence over the world's destiny (Ishiguro 122).

It is when Stevens speaks of Lord Darlington, moreover, that we glimpse the hidden sentiments of love that lie beneath the surface of his loyalty. For example, he tells us that when his lordship felt distressed, he showed his solicitude by "remain[ing] there ready to relieve his discomfort at the first opportunity" (85). And when Stevens recalls his days at Darlington Hall in the 1920s and '30s, Lord Darlington is the only person he describes physically, showing empathy, compassion and a hint of nostalgia: "His frame, always slender, had become alarmingly thin and somewhat misshapen, his hair prematurely white, his face strained and haggard" (207). Stevens's description of his employer is even more passionate when he declares: "Whatever may be said about his lordship these days – and the great majority of it is, as I say, utter nonsense – I can declare that he was a truly good man at heart, a gentleman through and through, and one I am proud to have given my best years of service to" (64). Indeed, it is through love that Stevens suc-

ceeds in entering into Darlington's affection. In his attempt to obtain paternal recognition, Stevens strove to become his father's peer, his worthy heir and copy. But this strategy failed, since Stevens senior never responded to his son's sentiments. Consequently, to obtain Lord Darlington's esteem, Stevens had to take love to its extreme limits and submit totally to Lord Darlington, body and soul. Freud describes the state of being in love as follows: "The ego becomes more and more unassuming and modest, and the object more and more sublime and precious [...]. [E]verything that the object does and asks for is right and blameless. Conscience has no application to anything that is done for the sake of the object [...] *The object has taken the place of the ego ideal*" (Freud, *Group Psychology* 74–5). It is interesting to note how Freud compares love to hypnosis: "From being in love to hypnosis is evidently only a short step. [...] There is the same humble subjection, the same compliance, the same absence of criticism" (77). There is no doubt that Stevens becomes wholly incapable of safeguarding his own interests or of distancing himself critically from his lord's actions, maintaining as he does that "our professional duty is not to our own foibles and sentiments, but to the wishes of our employer" (Ishiguro157): he neither opposes the Jewish maids' dismissal (154–8), nor does he enquire into Darlington's connections with the Nazis (230–6), and he is clearly quite prepared to sacrifice his own personal happiness in order to satisfy his lord's wishes. Nor has Stevens's blindness gone unnoticed by the critics: in his *Kazuo Ishiguro and Memory* (2014), Yugin Teo notes how, "[Stevens's] admiration and awe for Lord Darlington colours his perception of the work Lord Darlington undertakes during the appeasement of Nazi Germany before the Second World War" (29), while Gurewich observes that Lord Darlington makes Stevens "cross the fine line between the loyalty that is the essence of his professionalism and the blind obedience of 'just following orders'" (78).

Two psychoanalytic interpretations of the idea of submission intrinsic to being in love may further explain Stevens's attitude. Roslyn Wallach Bologh, in her book *Love or Greatness: Max Weber and Masculine Thinking – A Feminist Inquiry* (1990), studies Freud's theories as the product of a patriarchal frame of mind; in particular, she argues that masculinity is based on a renunciation of being loved by a caring father, while femininity, given its passivity, fulfils the need for paternal love. Males forsake this need and sublimate it through work in the public sphere, but there are men who fail to sublimate it and still look for a loving father figure whom they can submit to, thus acquiring the passivity that is considered quintessentially female (Wallach Bologh 2–11). The idea of a society where men submit themselves to other men is corroborated by R.W Connell in her book *Gender and Power* (1987), where she explains that the concept of masculinity is structured in terms of two opposing domains, the 'hegemonic' and the 'submitted' masculinity, the former dominating the latter culturally, psychologically and socially (Connell 183–6). According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity is heterosexual, while homosexuality would be an example of submitted masculinity. It is not difficult to see how Stevens fits into Wallach Bologh's analysis, for failing to obtain his biological father's affection, he loves and submits to a new father figure, giving up his own will, his moral conscience, and his private feelings in order to achieve this figure's love. Following

Connell's division, Stevens clearly belongs to the 'submitted' masculinity category, since he is socially, culturally and psychologically inferior to Lord Darlington.

Bearing in mind Freud's, Wallach Bologh's and Connell's studies, we can now draw a first conclusion. I have stated above that Stevens's love corresponds to Freud's description of narcissistic love: Freud also maintains that homosexuals are a category very prone to develop this kind of bond, because they do not take their mothers, but rather themselves, as models for their love-object (Freud, *Narcissism* 88). Narcissistic love also entails a hypnosis-like docility, which Connell relates to the submitted masculinity associated with a homosexual nature. It is conceivable, therefore, that Stevens's attraction to Darlington betrays not only a need for paternal approval, or awe before a man of power, but a latent homosexual attraction. Moreover, Stevens adopts feminine attitudes in order to obtain Lord Darlington's love, thus changing his social sex role. Returning to Milite's definition of the four components of human sexuality quoted in the introduction, and providing that we accept Bologh's definition of female nature as passive and submissive, one can argue that Stevens's sexual orientation is homosexual, whereas his social sex role, defined as the "adherence to cultural norms for feminine and masculine behavior" (Milite 306), is female.

In order to understand how Stevens gradually assumes a female social sex role, it is of considerable interest to compare culture and custom studies about the butler's job and its social perception with the prototypical wife figure. The studies I have taken into consideration deal solely with the Victorian/Edwardian age, since it is the values and habits of this period that affect the mindset of Darlington Hall's inhabitants.

### [3] Culture and custom sources

The extent to which a butler was expected to be devoted to his master is described by E. S. Turner in *What the Butler Saw - Two Hundred and Fifty Years of the Servant Problem* (1965): "A butler who married was guilty of selfishness as well as vulgarity. [...] [A] married butler spent too much of his master's time on his own affairs [...]. Thus, the very least that a zealous and right-thinking butler owed his master was a vow of celibacy" (159). This being the case, it is clear that Stevens could in no way accept Miss Kenton's advances for fear of failing in his duties to his lordship and losing his job. However, owing a vow of celibacy to one's master actually means being his faithful mate: just like a nun who takes a vow of chastity becomes Christ's spouse, so a butler who renounces love for the opposite sex becomes by implication his master's partner. If we then combine this duty to be a bachelor with the feminisation associated with domestic jobs, the image of the butler as his master's wife emerges all the more clearly. Lucy Delap, in *Knowing Their Place - Domestic Service in Twentieth-Century Britain* (2011), explains how menservants were perceived during the Victorian and Edwardian age: "Male servants had a comic value distinctive from that of female servants, and were characterized as funny because of the feminization of twentieth-century domestic service. There was a pervasive sense that the domestic male was faintly ridiculous [...]. In the early twentieth century, it was

felt that, as *The Spectator* put it in 1914, ‘some very faint aroma of ridicule still clings to... the thought of domestic service, at any rate for men.’ (Delap 160). Delap goes on to develop this picture of male servants: “Their masculinity was compromised by what one Victorian etiquette manual derided as ‘this heaping of gold lace, gaudy colours, blooming plushes on honest John Trot’. Interwar depictions of ‘the house-parlour-man’ were clearly intended to be belittling. Men in service were effeminized and thus laughable” (161). Both the chastity and loyalty described by Turner and the feminisation analysed by Delap seem to merge together in the characterisation of Stevens. In fact, Stevens himself compares the butler to the lord’s wife: “If I may put it this way, sir, it is a little akin to the custom as regards marriages. If a divorced lady were present in the company of her second husband, it is often thought desirable not to allude to the original marriage at all. There is a similar custom as regards our profession, sir” (Ishiguro 131).

Taking together the butlers’ celibacy and feminisation on the one hand, and Stevens’s comparison of butlers and wives on the other, we can describe how the perfect wife was supposed to behave and, consequently, verify to what extent Stevens corresponds to this model. Another text is particularly helpful in this regard: *The Women of England*, by Sarah Stickney Ellis (1839), who describes three specific qualities that the perfect English Lady of the house ought to possess. Above all else, she was expected to discharge her duties with “promptitude in action” and “energy of thoughts” (Stickney Ellis 21), meaning that “the machinery of household comfort” would not allow for any sort of delay or laziness (23). In fact, Stevens does everything he can to make life at Darlington Hall run as smoothly as possible for Lord Darlington and his guests. He does not give himself a moment’s rest, and all his energy is dedicated to the efficient functioning of the machinery of the house. This is particularly evident when he delivers “a military-style ‘pep-talk’” to the staff (Ishiguro 81). Stevens’s tireless activity is aptly conveyed by Ishiguro: “In the course of clearing the dining room, and also in preparing the drawing room for the arrival of the evening’s visitors, I was obliged to walk repeatedly past the smoking-room doors” (227). He is so absorbed by his managerial duties that he feels lost when he finally has to prepare for the motoring trip: “It was an odd feeling and perhaps account for why I delayed my departure so long, wandering around the house many times over, checking one last time that all was in order” (23). His behaviour is that of a Lady of the house who presides over her home, and for whom the only judgement that counts is her own. As Sharon Yang points out in describing the lives of Victorian women, presiding over one’s home went hand-in-hand with self-abnegation (Yang 25–6): the perfect Victorian woman always put her family’s needs before her own, and this is a very evident trait of Stevens’s character. His self-abnegation is nowhere more evident than when he states: “As far as I am concerned, Miss Kenton, my vocation will not be fulfilled until I have done all I can to see his lordship through the great tasks he has set himself. The day his lordship’s work is complete, the day *he* is able to rest on his laurels, content in the knowledge that he has done all anyone could ever reasonably ask of him, only on that day, Miss Kenton, will I be able to call myself, as you put it, a well-contented man” (Ishiguro 182). And it is precisely because of this sense of loyalty that Stevens never left the mansion, concealed his true

thoughts when the Jewish maids were dismissed (156) and, most importantly, repressed his feelings for Miss Kenton (225–26, 229–30).

The third quality Stickney Ellis highlights is “benevolence of feeling” (21), which may be understood as the care the Lady of the house demonstrates when working to ensure that all family members and guests feel at their ease (23–7). Stevens acts in a very similar manner, especially when he seems to intuit what is going on in his employer’s mind. For example, he knows that when Lord Darlington feels embarrassed, uneasy or worried, or when he is obliged to ask the butler to do something uncongenial, he pretends to be reading a book (Ishiguro 63). This ability to gauge Lord Darlington’s feelings emerges elsewhere in the text: “It was invariably *embarrassment* at what he was about to impart which made Lord Darlington adopt such an approach” (63, italics mine), or “Lord Darlington called me into his study, and I could see at once that he was in a state of some *agitation*. [...] ‘Oh Stevens’ he began with a *false air of nonchalance*, but then seemed *at a loss how to continue*” (84–5, italics mine). It seems that Stevens has a special sensitivity when it comes to his dealings with Lord Darlington, a sensitivity wholly lacking in his relationship with Miss Kenton, a woman he never manages to understand.

It is also true that the attention displayed by Stevens towards his master is partly reciprocated: Lord Darlington is far from unfeeling towards his butler, and expresses concern for his welfare on numerous occasions. For instance, during the closing dinner of the conference, with his father on his deathbed and tense political discussions taking place in the mansion, Stevens has the following exchange with his employer:

I felt something touch my elbow and turned to find Lord Darlington.

‘Stevens, are you all right?’

‘Yes, sir. Perfectly.’

‘You look as though you’re crying.’

I laughed and taking out a handkerchief, quickly wiped my face. ‘I’m very sorry, sir. The strains of a hard day.’

‘Yes, it’s been hard work.’ (109–10)

In the formal context of Darlington Hall, Lord Darlington’s touching of Stevens’s elbow reveals the affection he feels for his servant. Even in the middle of a potentially historic event, he finds time to enquire about his butler’s well-being. Furthermore, the last sentence suggests a complicity between Lord Darlington and Stevens, both of whom are working hard.

The very structure of their dialogue intimates the strong bond between them. Stevens repeats phrases like ‘Yes, sir’ or ‘Indeed, sir’ several times, which might appear to be nothing more than the standard way a perfect butler showed respect for his master. Yet such phrases appear only in exchanges between Stevens and Lord Darlington. In those between Mr Farraday and Stevens, on the contrary, the American continues to talk while the butler remains almost silent, though his unspoken thoughts are conveyed to the reader. If Stevens does speak, it is only as an unsuccessful attempt at banter (15–18). No ‘Yes, sir’ or ‘Indeed, sir’ is uttered, and the attempt at communication between the two

only reveals how very different they are from one another. We therefore cannot always take Stevens's use of such language at face value, for, if analysed from a phatic point of view, we see that it signifies Stevens's desire to reassure Lord Darlington that he is listening, and to establish an affectionate contact with his master. And this he is able to do because Lord Darlington pauses from time to time, thus giving Stevens the opportunity to speak. The dialogic exchanges between Lord Darlington and Stevens reveal the nature of the bond that unites them. When Lord Darlington returns from his trip to Germany in 1920, for example, Stevens realises that his master is upset. He asks how his journey has gone, and Lord Darlington confesses to be disturbed by the situation he found in Germany (74). A similar confession is made when, reading a newspaper, Lord Darlington tells Stevens of his contempt for Frenchmen (79). This type of frank dialogue between employer and employee would have been unusual in the period we are discussing, though it might well have occurred between husband and wife: the husband, after a day of public business and politics, would have been happy to return home and relax; the wife, on the other hand, would have listened to her husband dutifully, and attended to his every need. This was the idyllic Victorian marriage, in which the husband held sway while at the same time nurturing affection for his staunchly loyal wife, whose happiness would have been realised in total devotion to her beloved husband. The hierarchy that prevailed in Victorian marriage provides us with more than a simple analogy with the relationship between master and butler. Both wife and butler are, to quote Coventry Patmore, the Angel in the House, and both are expected to be in love with husband and master respectively, in the way Freud describes as being in love: that is, prioritising the loved one's desires first and exalting him/her, while mortifying one's own ego and denying one's own needs.

All the wife-like attitudes recognisable in Stevens correspond to the feminine qualities that Wallach Bologh and Connell attribute to men who submit to other men. They corroborate, therefore, the feminised nature of Stevens's social sex role. Together with Stevens's latent homosexual feelings for Lord Darlington, they aptly describe a butler who is engaged to his master and who cannot respond in any way to Miss Kenton's romantic proposals. And the episode that definitively seals Stevens's bond with Lord Darlington occurs on the night his father dies, an episode that may be described as a wedding in the real sense of the word.

## [4] Conclusions

That dramatic night proved to be, as Stevens himself points out, "a turning point" (114), since he found himself forced to choose between his "biological father" and his "class father" (Shaffer *Understanding* 64). Both were possible models that Stevens could identify with, but he needed something more than a model: what he needed above all was a love-object for his Freudian narcissistic love, someone who would return his affection, since only in that way could his life of service be felt to be worthwhile.

Even if Stevens senior finally managed to voice his feelings for his son on his deathbed (101), Stevens felt unable either to care for him or to close his eyes, because he had

already found a new model, or rather, a love-object, in Darlington. To have given his attention to a dying man then would simply have been a waste of time. Though forsaking his father had been painful, as his tears demonstrate (110), Stevens felt a greater need to show his devotion to Darlington and to seal his love for him. Lord Darlington could not be left in any doubt that Stevens was his infallible right-hand man, his working spouse. As a bride herself would do, he had cast off his father's tutorship in order to marry, and become subject to, his master-husband and pass under his control. As Braunstein and Folbre point out, in patriarchal societies – and Darlington Hall is unquestionably a patriarchy, with its male-dominated hierarchy – a woman's submission to her spouse in marriage was attested to by the formula “to honor and obey” (Braunstein and Folbre 25): what Stevens did that night, by disclaiming the filial bond that tied him to his father, was to give Lord Darlington proof that he honoured and obeyed him. It is interesting to note that Stevens himself describes the incident as “the moment in my career when I truly *came of age* as a butler” (Ishiguro 73, italics mine). The phrase ‘coming of age’ is used to express the attainment of full development and a readiness to assume adult responsibilities. Such a moment is often marked by a rite of passage. From an anthropological point of view, when a boy comes of age, he is ready to enter the adult world of men and to become himself a breadwinner. A girl's coming of age, on the other hand, usually leads her to marriage. For Stevens, that crucial night constituted a rite of passage, a watershed: it marked the moment when he left his father to choose Lord Darlington as his new model and protector, just as a girl of marriageable age would do in choosing a husband. In uttering the phrase ‘coming of age’ Stevens is not only referring to the highest point reached in his profession, but also to a shift in his choice of love-object. On the shift being finally achieved, Stevens was overcome by “a large *sense of triumph*” (115, italics mine): he felt triumphant because he had passed through his rite of passage as a butler, which consisted in binding himself to his lord forever. From then on, Lord Darlington was not just a father figure; he became Stevens's ideal husband in all reality.

Returning to Ruskin's idea of the wisdom of the perfect wife (Ruskin 45), we may ask whether Stevens possessed it. Insofar as it implies self-renunciation, loyalty, and service, I believe such values to be the very foundation of Stevens's view of life. In writing of the peace of the home, moreover, Ruskin issues some stark warnings as to the dangers that might destroy it:

This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in. (44)

Darlington Hall does not conform to such a peaceful pattern of life and cannot be called a home: the international conference represents the “hostile society of the outer world” (44) invading the mansion and sweeping away that private sphere of family

life without which a house is no longer a home. Stevens's identification with a female gender role, and with a wife-like identity in particular, may be seen as an attempt to re-compose a microcosm of affection, an effort to retain some semblance of a private sphere within the public arena that Darlington Hall had become. From this point of view, Stevens's commitment to social affairs is not what Ruskin labels as male, but it corresponds more to what he defines as feminine, since it resembles more the silent, though strong support a Victorian wife was expected to give her husband.

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# [ Obsessive Butcher: Francis Brady's Gift and Exchange in Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* ]

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**[Abstract]** *Patrick McCabe's novel The Butcher Boy (1992) has been critically examined from a very large number of perspectives for over a quarter of a century. Instead of a comprehensive look at the entire Irish novel or an analysis of the compelling language, psychology, or its historical context, this article will narrowly focus on Derrida's look at the ethics of gifts and exchanges and apply his notions to the nature and eventual deterioration of the close relationship between Francis (Francie) Brady and his childhood friend Joe Purcell as a contribution to an understanding about the homicidal behavior of the narrator Francis Brady.*

**[Keywords]** *Irish novel; Patrick McCabe; The Butcher Boy; Irish literature; Jacques Derrida; ethics and religion*

The novel *The Butcher Boy* by Patrick McCabe (1955–) has been interpreted from a variety of approaches for some two and a half decades: it has been critiqued as a neocolonial and post-colonial novel (Smith, Gauthier, and Cotti-Lowell), a novel in which a world of illusion is created by the possibly schizophrenic narrator's special language (Wallace) and as a realistic expression of the collusion between the Catholic Church and the Irish government (Molino). Tom Herron employs Jacques Derrida's metaphor of the coming *episteme* "a period in which the reassuring structures of belief and thought are placed in laborious interrogation" (Herron 168). Herron refers to the traditional de Valerian Irish utopia of the ideal Catholic family, cosy homes, purity and innocence, athletic youth, and sentimental Celtic ballads which are juxtaposed to McCabe's depiction of the drunken, wife-battering Irishman who heads the Brady household. This paper, however, will focus on a different means of interpretation of *The Butcher Boy* by applying the ethical notions of gift-giving and exchange expressed in a three works by the philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) to the novel's protagonist Francis Brady as well as other characters in the novel.

*The Butcher Boy* was awarded the Irish Times-Aer Lingus Prize for Fiction in 1992 and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in Britain. In 1998 it was adapted into a film directed by Neil Jordan who won the Berlin International Film Festival Prize for best director. The screenplay was co-authored by Jordan and McCabe. At the age he wrote this remarkable novel of a traumatized childhood, McCabe, then in his mid-30s, created a frame narrative composed by an adult Francie Brady, probably sharing the same age of McCabe during the composition. Thus the narrative of looking back at childhood appears somewhat autobiographical. Likewise, as a child McCabe had been an avid comic book reader. He experienced some anxieties as a young man which he likely projected onto his lead character Francie Brady (FitzSimon 175–177). McCabe shares with Francis Brady an alcoholic musician father who died while the teenage Patrick was still attending secondary school. The experience of his traumatic homecoming to the border town Clones (in County Monaghan) was the basis of a 2008 award-winning documentary, *Patrick McCabe Comes Home*. These pseudo-autobiographical elements of his fiction are, as McCabe himself asseverates, about "filling in those gaps that haunt you" (Guidera n.p.). The novel has received significant sustained critical attention in the last quarter century. It has been argued that Francie Brady murdered Mrs. Nugent under the influence of a combination of monster movies, comic books and sexual abuse by a priest (Cotti-Lowell and Eldred 54–57). Applying Derrida's theorizations of the gift, however, supports a reconsideration of the novel, explicitly to illuminate the character and behavior of the protagonist Francis Brady in a new way.

Exchanges abound in *The Butcher Boy*, yet they have not been explored. By narrowly focusing on gift/exchange behavior, the paper will show why the protagonist Francis Brady continuously seeks an exchange as defined by Derrida (in contrast to "the gift, the impossible") in his devoted alliance and intense interactions with his closest childhood friend Joe Purcell. I will argue that the eventual loss of this friendship results in Francie's painfully psychotic reaction and his succeeding violent response. Francie reconstructs his harrowing childhood as an adult, and as the narrator unreliably describes

the bleak family environment, he downplays difficulties with his father after his mother Annie Brady commits suicide and offers his responses as an active, though traumatized boy in a form that contains comic as well as deeply disturbing facets.

In *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money* which engages with the anthropology of Marcel Mauss, Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) argues that obligation in an exchange helps reveal the ethics of gift-giving, and later in *The Gift of Death*, Derrida argues for the gift's association to religious passion which motivates one's spiritual searching. Patrick McCabe's obsessively rambling protagonist in *The Butcher Boy*, Francis Brady, alters from a loyal, friendship-above-all young boy into an incredibly violent scatological-oriented vengeful teenager and then back to a calm, Mother Mary-encouraged wounded man who at the end earnestly reflects and longs for a life of harmony rather than of holy redemption. Derrida's ideas of the "gift" in its ethical context will be cited to convey a significant aspect of what Francie Brady is doing with his story. In a religious context, the ethical question is significant. As Crockett points out, "For Derrida, the pure possibility of religion concerns the promise, the possibility of making a promise and being responsible to and for another person. This responsibility is ethical in many respects" (14).

A neighbour of the Brady family, Mrs. Nugent becomes the antagonist and a villainous force in Francie's life by loudly and very publicly rebuking his mentally-disturbed mother, Annie Brady, and in particular Francie's drunken father as the opprobrium of the town, disgracefully calling the Brady family "pigs". Insulting the entire Brady Family comes as a consequence of Francie's behavior as provocateur towards her "nerdy" son Philip as well as the excessive drinking and chronic unemployment of Francis's father Benny Brady. Through her overbearing English manners, Mrs. Nugent endangers all that is dear to the strong-willed Francie: his already dysfunctional family and subsequently his special friendship with Joe Purcell, the latter of which I will focus on since it has not been emphasized by scholars up to now. Mrs. Nugent's haughty manners and short temper leaves her impervious to the issues that her intolerant rebuke causes in Francie's neurotic mind and eventually puts her into mortal danger.

After trading stolen comic books, Joe Purcell offers what may be designated the first "gift" of the narrative which has a profound effect on Francie Brady. A failed attempt at suicide and mental breakdown by Annie Brady results in her commitment to a mental institution. However, Joe insists to Francie that it is really like a garage where a car must go on occasion for a tune-up. That Francie's mother is only going away for a "tune-up" as Joe innocuously puts it, serves as a great consolation for Joe's friend Francie. This may be distinguished from the deep shame father Benny Brady felt. While Joe's analogy of mental illness is no physical gift, Joe endears himself with Francie in a profound way, showing stirring empathy which succeeds in comforting Francie.

This friendship is cemented outside of town and in secret. Francie and Joe regularly escape to the mountains, rivers and woods to play with intrepidity Cowboys and Indians, to fish, shoot bows and arrows, and generally be free of any worldly concerns. Yet adult concerns eventually follow them out to the isolated wild Irish countryside: Francie's mother commits suicide in the river Francie and Joe regularly swim in; afterwards,

Mrs. Nugent sends her low-class relatives out to the same isolated river setting to physically attack Francie. As Kamila Vránková maintains regarding an isolated setting in *Wuthering Heights*, the “paradise-like place turns repeatedly into a trap where not only human life but also human soul can be lost. These contrasting functions of natural background correspond with extremes in the states of mind” (64). While Francie seeks escape and relief from people outside of town, he and those he loves are unknowingly placing themselves in grave danger.

In contrast to Francie's obsessive exchange behavior, he makes an effort to annoy Philip and especially his mother by avidly engaging in a fake exchange:

I was standing in the middle of the footpath. Mrs. Nugent held on to her hat with one hand and took Philip with the other would you let me by please she says.

Oh no I can't do that I said, you have to pay to get past... It was called the Pig Toll Tax. Yes, Mrs. Nugent I said, the pig toll tax it is and every time you want to get past it costs a shilling... (McCabe 11)

Rather awkwardly, Francie succeeds in intimidating Mrs. Nugent even though he does not fully replicate his theft of Philip's comic books. In demanding a pig toll tax from Mrs. Nugent, he attempts negative pay-back for her verbal abuse of his mother. Indeed, Francie derives a sense of satisfaction that he has really embarrassed her: “She got all heated up then oh yes hot and bothered” (12). Nevertheless, Francie's exchanges are complicated by the uncertainty of their reciprocity.

After the dreadful Christmas party hosting Uncle Alo (Aloysius) and a concluding hostile family argument, Francis runs away from his family home to Dublin, away from his depressed mother who had likely felt she had nothing more to live for. No one knows of Francie's whereabouts or what had happened to him. Francie's presence may well have been the only thing that had kept Annie Brady alive in her otherwise thoroughly depressing marital life. McCabe eventually places his protagonist into a position of grave doubt and guilt as a consequence of his mother's subsequent death by suicide. Annie Brady was to receive a gift from Francie who had bought a present for her in Dublin, but by the time he returns home, she had already committed suicide. The gift is described as “like a slice of a tree cut out and a rhyme carved into the wood and decorated all around the edges with green shamrocks. At the bottom was an old woman in a red shawl rocking by the fireside...I read it a good few times. A Mother's love's a blessing no matter where you roam” (41). It was to be a true “gift” for his mother, though paradoxically Francie's first gift of the narrative is never delivered.

However, Derrida shows that just like forgiveness, a gift is impossible: Francie does not “give” at all: he exchanges (for instance comics for friendship or loyalty) but for Derrida there is no gift in any sort of gift exchange. There is always merely an exchange, for the gift is “[n]ot impossible but the impossible. The very figure of the impossible. It announces itself, gives itself to be thought as the impossible.” (Derrida, *Given Time* 7). Francis Brady consequentially follows the notion of loyalty to his mother's memory as well as an abiding loyalty to his friend Joe as a form of an “exchange.” For Derrida

there must be no reciprocity, return, exchange, counter-gift, or debt. If the *gives* me back or *owes* me or has to give me back what I give him or her, there will not have been a gift, whether this restitution is immediate or whether it is programmed by a complex calculation of a long-term deferral or *difference*. (Derrida, *Given Time* 12)

Hence, the gift is tainted by the obligation it transfers to the recipient. A gift must be recognized and reciprocated, thus vitiating the very possibility of a “gift.” Moreover, the circle of economy or bartering cannot be broken. Within this circle of bartering, Derrida included paying oneself back psychologically:

But the one who gives it must not see it or know it either; otherwise he begins, at the threshold, as soon as he intends to give, to pay himself with a symbolic recognition, to praise himself, to approve of himself... to give back to himself symbolically the value of what he thinks he has given or what he is preparing to give... [this self-praise or self-recognition set] in motion the destruction of the gift. (14)

Thus, God's as well as Mother Mary's sacrifice, akin to Derrida's deconstructed sacrifice by Abraham, is sacred and the passion of Catholic faith which is linked to this impossible gift.

For there to be a gift event (we say event and not act), something must come about or happen, in an instant, in an instant that no doubt does not belong to the economy of time, in a time without time (17).

The immediacy described by Derrida forces the obligation immediately, rendering the ontological impossibility of the gift in time. As Hoeller states, the gift's (im)possibility offers a place outside reason and language (134). In light of Jacques Derrida's ethical philosophy of religion, the development of the narrator Francie Brady in *The Butcher Boy* reveals the philosophical possibility that underlies Christian revelation. Francis's religious passion for this utterly warrior-like eternal friendship with Joe becomes a truth corresponding to a military code of honor or religious faith. The image in the film adaptation of multiple appearances by Mother Mary held an enormous attraction for the guilt-ridden Francis as she warmly reassures Francie of his wish fulfilments – among others of Joe's friendship in times of Francie's doubt. In exploring Francie Brady's frequent turns to Mother Mary, Derrida offers a definition of “religious passion” in a philosophical sense:

However little may be known of religion *in the singular*, we do know that it is always a response and responsibility that is prescribed, not chosen freely in an act of pure and absolutely autonomous will. There is no doubt that it implies freedom, will and responsibility, but let us try to think this: will and freedom *without autonomy*. Whether it is a question of sacredness, sacrificiality or of faith, the other makes the law, the law is other: to give ourselves back, and up, to the other. To every other and to be utterly other. (Derrida, “Faith and Knowledge” 34)

After Joe prevents Francie from beating up Philip Nugent in the chicken coop not long after Francie's mother's death, Francie swears not be a belligerent violent attacker

again. To ensure that this valuable friendship continues, Francie lets Philip go and passionately swears his promise to Joe: "I'm sorry Joe I said and I knew that was that. Joe was going to leave me and I'd be left with nobody no ma nothing. Francie, said Joe, you have to swear that's the end of it. I did. I swore on my life that that was the end of it and it would have been too only for Nugent" (McCabe 49). Francie thus offers his promise, an obligation, in exchange for the continuation of his friendship, not aware if this exchange will be acceptable to Joe Purcell.

"But the thing was – Joe didn't leave me" (McCabe 48). To Francie's satisfaction and relief, Joe accepts his promise and the exchange of their friendship carries on for a while further: Francie never attacks Philip again. Thus, Francie's promise is exchanged for the preservation of the "warrior" relationship. Nevertheless, Francie breaks from his obligation and visits the Nugent's pleasant, stately home, and jams his foot inside when Mrs. Nugent wants to shut the door; Francie thereby intimidates and harasses specifically Philip's mother but only when Joe is not present. The subsequent home invasion, where Francie takes it upon himself to act out the pig designation, employing a scatological expression of his status as a pig, results in the psychotic Francie becoming forcibly enrolled by police authorities at an Irish Industrial School, a correctional institution run by the Catholic Church.

After his internment at the Industrial School, Francie's friendship with Joe Purcell moved along on the basis of letter correspondence. Joe advises Francie to follow rules so that he can get out of that institution as fast as possible: "The main thing was for me to get out of this School For Pigs so we could get back into action" (72). Joe also refers to a carnival in town. In his letter, Joe describes a rifle shootout where Philip Nugent successfully shoots in the competition and wins a goldfish which he then "gives" to Joe. The exchange of the goldfish for friendship causes much apprehension for Francie who fears losing his special friendship with Joe. Such an exchange enhances Joe's obligation to Philip and in this manner binds these boys together while Francie remains distantly interned in another town:

I kept thinking about the goldfish. What did Philip Nugent think he was doing? I just couldn't believe it. He was nothing to do with us. I wished I could get the goldfish back off Joe. But what did Joe take it for? Why didn't he say: Sorry Philip you're nothing to do with us. (71)

As narrator, Francie expresses clearly his own chagrin and discomfiture: he feels he is being replaced. While a goldfish seems insignificant, Derrida stresses the nonparticularity of the "gift". The exchange event creates our relations to others, our values and our hopes. At the Industrial School among other abusive experiences, Francie engages in an exchange with the abusive Father Sullivan. Francie role-plays a little girl in a sort of negotiation which to some degree Francie dominates, for he receives Rolos in exchange. When Father Sullivan's sexual abuse is discovered, Francie once again intuits that he is in a position to bargain. In this way, Francie succeeds in getting released from this appalling Industrial School, exchanging his silence for his liberty.

When Francie returns home from his internment, he meets up with Joe and eventually reveals the sexual abuse. Instead of expressing solidarity with his blood-brother, Joe does not believe that such a horrid act could have ever been perpetrated by a man of the cloth and leaves Francie, essentially betraying his solemn promise of eternal blood-brother friendship until death. Joe of course matures and outgrows the childish blood-brother allegiance, but Francie remains as illusionary as a child regarding its ultimate significance: Francie never grows up. On one hand Joe betrays Francie but on the other hand he could never manage to distinguish the mentally unbalanced quipster Francie from the truth-telling Francie. While there is no exchange in this interaction, Francie clearly does not pick up on the fact that Joe has become far less than his most loyal friend at this point. At the very least, compassion on Joe's part would have been expected. McCabe's narrative of exchange is brought to the brink of reason and exposes its aporia when the iconoclastic character Joe Purcell holds steadfast to the authority of the Church by denying any possibility of sexual abuse.

Benny and Annie appear not to have engaged in an exchange from the very beginning of their relationship nor throughout their marriage. When they became engaged in the town of Bundoran after World War II, Benny was an enterprising musician: he had organized a brass band, and he also read books on Irish history. He had charmed Annie with his singing.

And afterwards on the esplanade he held her in his arms and said to her are you prepared to live on potatoes and salt for the rest of your days and what did ma do she tossed back her wavy hair and laughed is that all you can offer a good-looking girl like me Benny Brady? (85)

The question Benny asks Annie certainly sounds like a lover's schmooze, i.e., that 'our love will conquer' the lack of material comfort; Annie humorously suggests that he should offer more to a girl like her. In the desperately unhappy marriage, Benny offers only his drunken obsessions of what he might have become, and expresses immense bitterness and jealousy against his brother Alo who is admired not only by the Brady family but also in the local community.

Francie confidently maintains a life of masculine competition, of fighting, warrior aggressiveness and the taking and giving of injuries, a fantasy warrior life that Joe ultimately grows out of. Francie cannot stop the cycle of exchanges, because stopping is the ultimate disruption of the meaning of his relationships. As Derrida puts it, "It is at once reason and unreason, because it also manifests that madness of the rational *logos* itself, that madness of the economic cycle the calculation of which is constantly reconstituted, logically, rationally (*Given Time* 36–37). Accordingly, Mrs. Nugent responds to Francie's aggression: she sends her toughest family relatives Devlin and Buttsy to physically attack Francie, and they truly do so in Joe's presence:

You're going to be sorry now. You're going to be sorry for what you've done, Brady. Who's going to make me sorry I says. Buttsy got all pale when I said that... Next thing

Buttsy has the hunting knife out it was trembling away in his hand. You've had it now, Brady, said Devlin, we'll gut you like a pig... Devlin kicked me on the bad ankle. You fucking cunt, he says. When he said that I started to cry. (110)

Yet the lachrymose response by Francis is fake and he winks to Joe. Nevertheless, Joe's demeanor changes to anger just as the fight turned brutally in Francie's favor, indicating not only that the significance of their relationship had its limits, but that at this point Joe does not wish to forgive any further belligerent offences by his "blood-brother." Even though he has been attacked first, Francie's vicious response to members of the Nugent family signals the end of Joe's tolerance. He puts it into words when Buttsy asks Joe about their friendship: "I'm not hanging out with him. I *used* to hang around with him" (111). Again, Joe failed Francie when he really needs him, in this particular case as a loyal warrior.

The Derridian notion of the impossible gift in the novel carries forward in the next exchange. After numerous failed attempts to meet with and apologize to Joe after the brutal fight, Francie comes up with a new strategy, using Philip Nugent whom he meets and interrogates:

You gave Joe Purcell your music book, didn't you?

He said what and raised his eyebrows so I said it again. No I didn't he said. Well, I said, I'm afraid you did but all he would say then was I didn't... That's the book you gave him for I seen it in this very case there's an ass and cart on the front of it and mountains. And you gave it to Joe Purcell and now you're saying you didn't. You gave it to him didn't you? All you have to do is tell me Philip that's all I want to know. Then he sputters yes yes yes and snuffles a bit. (116-7)

The "gift" given to Joe Purcell by Philip Nugent, a music book with a donkey and a cart heading up into a green mountain scene on the cover, *Emerald Gems of Ireland*, like all the other gifts, is not so significant. (McCabe uses nearly the same title for a novel published eight years later: *Emerald Germs of Ireland*.) These performances of giving and receiving certainly weighs on Francie's mind. The act of "giving" corresponds to a relationship Philip initiates with Joe which Francie finds utterly contemptible:

I said what did you do that for? He says I just gave it to him Francie... Then it came into my head... There you are Joe said Philip handing him the book. Thank you very much said Joe. And Philip smiling away. I said to Philip: This is all to do with the goldfish isn't it? Then what does he say only: What goldfish? I don't know what you mean Francie.

When I look at him saying that straight into my face, I thought: Please Philip. Don't go like your mother. (117)

Neither Joe nor Philip considers the meaning of the music book and goldfish exchanges as transgressions, and both are quite puzzled when Francie questions them. They cannot get behind the significance of Francie's axiomatic preoccupation with it since they do not perceive the logic of the exchange. Francie, however, acknowledges the significance: with Philip's goldfish and music book, some debt is to be paid back, and Joe has an obligation attached to these offerings.

After his mother's suicide and Francie's Industrial School experience, Francie engages in an aggressive gift exchange obsession. Yet it does not consist in his own "gift-giving," but in Joe Purcell and Philip Nugent's performances of exchange. Joe Purcell betrays Francie one final crucial time after Francie travels the long distance and to find Joe's secondary school. In the evening, just past bedtime, Joe spots Francis in the dormitory and asked, "What do you want?"

I never thought Joe would ask that I never thought he would *have* to ask that but he did didn't he and when I heard him say it that was when I started to feel myself draining away and I couldn't stop it the more I tried the worse it got I could have floated to the ceiling like a fag paper please Joe come with me that was all I wanted to say dumb people have holes in the pit of their stomachs and that's the way I was not the dumbest person in the whole world who had no words left for anything at all. (189–190)

After the numerous failed attempts to meet Joe and present him with "gifts" Francie is prepared to give everything to Joe (134). As Tom Herron points out, "Joe refuses even to recognize Francie when he breaks into his school in the middle of the night" (177). Joe not only ends up completely abandoning Francie this time, but becomes friends with "professor face" Philip Nugent, an utterly nonwarrior-like personality whose family is clearly identified as the Brady family nemesis. Francie can only maintain his relationship with Joe through exchanges, but Joe now realizes that he is caught in an "expensive" cycle, or an exchange Joe no longer feels is worth his trouble; the exchanges in short becomes for Joe more unilateral than mutual in meaningfulness, so Joe ends the exchanges once and for all.

Joe followed this up by talking kindly to Philip Nugent on the way out, accompanying him at the dorm just as Francie is being dragged out of the school by force, signaling the final curtain for their friendship. Francie's dubitation and subsequent growing disdain through to the end of the plot, some unsuccessful attempts to exchange with Joe and the complete termination of his vital boyhood friendship are excruciating and ultimately direct Francis Brady to at first intimidate and eventually to murder Mrs. Nugent.

Francie Brady has supported the maternal presence of his otherwise mentally disturbed and battered mother. He promises to his mother in the opening of the novel that he "wouldn't let her down in a hundred million years" (5). Like Francie's loyalty to Joe, this commitment is conceived as timeless. After his mother commits suicide, Francis does not revolt against his father in his narrative. Rather, he overcompensates for "abandoning" his mother after the hostile Christmas party because of the words he heard from his nemesis: "Mrs Nugent said: I'll tell you one thing our Philip wouldn't do it. No son worth his salt would do what he did, disown his own family... No matter what they did they're still his own flesh and blood!" (McCabe 39). Regarding Francie's own father, there is no finger-pointing, no chaotic atmosphere in the new mythopoetic household that Francie creates in his unreliable narrative of order, proper living and frugal comfort. His father remarkably receives his full attention: Francie cooks, cleans and shops for the household after his father becomes acutely ill (because of chronic alcoholism). Francie

narrates how he maintains stability to keep what little remains of his family. Even after his father dies, Francie does not abandon him. In his fantasy narrative, Francie's father and Francie together expresses their fabricated relationship: "We're going to be a happy family son. I knew we would be in the end. I said we were. I'd make sure we were, I said. It's all up to me now. Me and nobody else" (119).

Unlike the intolerant Mrs. Nugent, Francie indicates in his narrative his forgiveness toward his father, reconciling his hostile drunkenness with Francie's own absence in Dublin after the Christmas party precisely when his mother needed him the most. Thus, Francie overcompensates by becoming extraordinarily close to his father rather than making any trip or entertaining evenings for himself, and likewise thwarting Mrs. Nugent's condemnation. His intention not to let his father down goes so far that Francie remains with him in the house even after Benny had died and had turned into a rotting corpse. After being involuntarily interned at a mental institution, upon his release, he takes up his old job at the abattoir. Francie no longer has a family or friends, and he also lacks the responsibility of maintaining the cycle of exchanges with his friend Joe. As the entire devout town's population anxiously awaits the miraculous appearance of the Virgin Mary, Francie uses the tools of his trade such as his bolt gun. He goes to the Nugent home to shoot and then to monstrously butcher Mrs. Nugent like a pig, after which he is sentenced to prison for the mentally insane. Among his final words to Mrs. Nugent, he accuses her of taking Joe away from him. The Derrida notion of exchange was broken, Francie proclaims, not really by Joe but because of Mrs. Nugent's inexcusable interference. Thus, out of Francie's strange sense of a fair exchange, he murders Mrs. Nugent. Francie can be understood to engage in a kind of solipsistic nihilism in this act of vengeance. His broken exchange obsession, understood by Derrida as akin to religious passion, brings Francie beyond the edge so that Francie transforms into a homicidal psychopath.

Francie's mother's suicide, his father's inability to maintain the family, his drunkenness and subsequent death at home made Francie's friendship with Joe absolutely essential for his psychological balance and social well-being. In the end, this close companionship is all he has left of significance. I have argued that McCabe's postmodern novel suggests a direction left largely unaddressed up to now among scholars asking the most poignant question, namely why Francis Brady murdered Mrs. Nugent. Derrida's ethical writing helps to explain Francie Brady's excessive exchanges (at first sight "gift giving") as an obsession, indeed it is described as akin to religious passion by Derrida. The comic books, an analogy, goldfish, and a music book exchanged with Joe are not so significant in and of themselves, but rather the performances of giving and receiving the exchanged items weigh most of all in his obsessive mind. Through exchanges Francie preserves his very identity as Joe's best friend: the loss of Joe's friendship constitutes the loss of identity itself. Only through the cycle of exchanges with Joe can Francie maintain his sense of self. As Francie learns of the empty "gift" his father had offered to his mother, he realizes that his life was as empty as his mother's. The particular initiation ritual set up by Joe linking the two boys "forever" as blood-brothers through an exchange of blood whereby they had promised to be loyal friends to each other until they died, was no longer valid.

Comprehending this state of affairs put Francie over the edge until he became an enraged murderer. This cause of his ultimate downfall is reiterated at the end of the film adaptation when Our Lady's final remark reminds the adult Francis not to be so obsessed: "So, don't go bothering your head about goldfish anymore, alright?" (Jordan, dir.).

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# [ The Wolf in American Environmental Literature: predator or scapegoat? ]

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**[Abstract]** *The chief focus of this paper is to discuss the presence of the wolf in American environmental literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. This animal has been portrayed many times in literary works by American writers, be it fiction or non-fiction, and it is the subject of numerous opinions, some of which are biased, others objective, but all intriguing and more connected with the human way of life than would at first seem to be the case. The first part of this text presents an insight into the topic through examples from American literary fiction. It studies the depiction and presence of the wolf in American environmental literature of the last two centuries, before discussing a categorization of this animal's portrayal in American literature. The topic of the presence of the wolf in American literature is examined through a comparison of its depictions in both environmental and fictional works.*

**[Keywords]** *wolves; ecocriticism; American environmental literature; mythology; endangered species; wilderness conquest; Barry Lopez; S. K. Robisch; Cormac McCarthy; Jack London*

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## [1] Introduction

I have looked for a wolf different from that ordinarily given us in the course of learning about animals. I have watched captive wolves in Barrow, Alaska; in Saint Louis, and in Nova Scotia. I drove across the Dakotas and Montana and Wyoming, speaking with old men who killed wolves for a living when they were young. In New York I read in libraries like the Pierpont Morgan what men thought of wolves hundreds of years ago. I read in the archives of historical societies of outlaw wolves and Indians. I went out with field biologists in Minnesota and Alaska and spoke with Eskimos. I spoke with people who loved wolves and with people who hated them. I remember sitting in this cabin in Alaska one evening reading over the notes of all these encounters, and recalling Joseph Campbell, who wrote in the conclusion to *Primitive Mythology* that men do not discover their gods, they create them. So do they also, I thought, looking at the notes before me, create their animals. (Lopez 6)

When writing this article about an animal that is so widely present in humanity's culture and history – not only in the United States, but also in all the major cultures across the globe – it seemed fitting to begin with the above-cited excerpt from a book by Barry Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men* (1979), as it aptly sets out the article's theme. The article will explore the roles the wolf plays in both fictional and environmental writings, and it will investigate how people perceive and portray wolves in their everyday lives, stories and myths. I will focus on the representation of this animal by humans, exploring myths, fairy tales, prejudices and exaggerated glorifications of the wolf. The works taken into consideration range from environmental essays and texts by Aldo Leopold, Barry Lopez and Gary Snyder to novels by Jack London or Cormac McCarthy. After surveying literary depictions of the wolf in both fictional and environmental works, the paper categorizes portrayals of the wolf in literature using a typology outlined in the works of Barry Lopez and Sean Kipling Robisch.

The paper will attempt to unravel the many facets of the wolf and its place in American environmental literature in order to seek similarities or differences in the ways of depicting this animal within the American literary tradition.

## [2] The wolf in American fiction

I begin by illustrating the portrayal of the wolf, starting with works of fiction. The first author to mention in this regard is Cormac McCarthy. In McCarthy's novel *The Crossing* (2001), a part of his so-called *Border Trilogy*, the wolf and the decline of this species plays a significant role. In the novel, the decline of the wolf population in New Mexico represents man's desire to take control over the natural world. As wolves are considered predators, man tries to intervene and cull them in order to protect himself and his property. This action has a direct impact on the absence of wolves in the wild. To explain the historical context of the novel, Wallis Remsen Sanborn's article "I Aint Heard One in Years": Wolves as Metaphor in "The Crossing" – taken from *The Cormac McCarthy Journal*

(2003) – is of relevance, as it describes how the rivalry between man and wolf in Europe has been present for a very long time. This theme can be already observed in the pictographs dating from around 13 000 BC in the caves in Dordogne, France. The depiction of a wolf as an evil creature persisted, and this animal was mythologized by people on a large scale (Sanborn 25–26).

In *The Crossing*, however, McCarthy portrays the wolf not only as a part of the landscape, but also as an individual that communicates various messages. It is actually a wolf's howl that launches the story and enables the main character, Billy Parham, to track a pack of seven wolves hunting an antelope. After lengthy eye contact between the pack and Billy, he practically starts to feel an internal struggle over the vanishing-breed myth.

The wolf population was in significant decline in the Southwest at the end of the 1930s, and a she-wolf, which plays an important role in the story, crosses the international border. She does this for the first time, as she has become isolated from her pack and needs to find the other wolves. However, she only finds a dead game carcass, and no trails of the pack, and thus she becomes the only wolf character in the novel, leaving us with no clarification of what happened to the rest.

Billy, having experienced a poetic encounter with the other wolves, tries to imagine the connection between the she-wolf and the pack; many times in the novel he attempts to understand it, with a kind of sorrowful obsession. As Robisch describes these events in his *Wolves and the Wolf Myth in American Literature* (2009): “He closed his eyes and tried to see her. Her and other of her kind, wolves and ghosts of wolves running in the whiteness of that high world as perfect to their use as if their counsel had been sought in the devising of it” (176).

Nevertheless, his father decides to trap the she-wolf and Billy accepts this task, but his mental vision of the wolves and his readiness to help his father kill her stand in a kind of contrast to each other. He tries to catch the she-wolf with the attitude of a hunter, rather than a killer. At this time, Billy does not realize his wish to preserve the wolf, so he feels the pleasure of the hunt, which is to end in a form of obsession over the animal.

During this hunting struggle, Don Arnulfo, an old man, tries to emphasize the mystery of this animal: “The wolf is an unknowable thing. What is caught in the trap is no more than teeth and fur. The wolf itself cannot be known” (McCarthy 218). He also talks about how impossible it is to trap the animal: “The wolf is like the copo de nieve...You catch the snowflake but when you look in your hand you don't have it no more. Maybe you see this dechado. But before you can see it. If you want to see it, you have to see it on its own ground. If you catch it you lose it” (180).

The old man points out the spiritual nature of the animal and the irreparable loss of the species, hunted to extinction. All these factors encourage Billy to change his mind for good, in spite of his father and the community, and he decides to save the wolf instead of killing her. His observation of the animal, when he tries to lead the wolf to her kind, is an attempt to see the wolf in its own realm.

As the mutual relationship between civilization (mankind) and the wild (represented by the wolf) has so far been mainly examined from the point of the view of the former,

the writings of Jack London could bring a perspective on the latter. The following paragraphs discuss two of London's texts, *White Fang* (2014) and *The Call of the Wild* (2011), which deal with the theme of wildness in wolves and dogs living on the dividing line between nature and humanity.

The principal theme of *White Fang* (2014) is the difference between life in the wilderness and life in the company of humans. The main protagonist, after whom the book is named, is a wolfdog born in the wild. His life in the pack, where he stands apart due to his mixed heritage, is one of dire struggle: "The Wild still lingered in him and the wolf in him merely slept" (158). The brutal conflict and fight for survival on a daily basis is initially synonymous with *White Fang's* existence and mirrors the true wild life of the wolf pack: "White Fang knew the law well: to oppress the weak and obey the strong" (87). This survival of the fittest, however, is not the sole motive in the life of the pack. Another important aspect is the aim of a wild animal's life:

The aim of life was meat. Life itself was meat. Life lived on life. There were the eaters and the eaten. The law was: EAT OR BE EATEN. He did not formulate the law in clear, set terms and moralize about it. He did not even think the law; he merely lived the law without thinking about it at all. (59)

This simple yet harsh code is presented as the core of the wolf's life. London depicts the life of the pack, and by extension the life of wolves in general, as a rather bloody and drastic world. In this reality, the victors emerge at the expense of the vanquished, the predator to the detriment of the prey. Nevertheless, the notion of evil is expressly denied in these images. London clearly claims that the cruel world of the pack, which may give people an impression of an unfair and pitiless hell for those who cannot fight for themselves, is the ultimate way of nature. The animals themselves simply do what they must to survive, with no ulterior motive and no hatred. Unlike humanity, they are simply incapable of such a stance:

He became quicker of movement than the other dogs, swifter of foot, craftier, deadlier, more lithe, more lean with ironlike muscle and sinew, more enduring, more cruel more ferocious, and more intelligent. He had to become all these things, else he would not have held his own nor survived the hostile environment in which he found himself. (80)

This hard natural life, where the pack looks out for its members and has to deal with difficulties at every turn, is set in opposition to the world of man. The author utilizes a comparison with the life of domesticated animals, as *White Fang* can experience for himself the difference between the two realities: "To have a full stomach, to daze lazily in the sunshine – such things were remuneration in full for his arduous and toils, while his arduous and toils were in themselves self-remunerative. They were expressions of life, and life is always happy when it is expressing itself" (59–60). We see that the wild side of the animal still remains intact. The author, in the persona of his protagonist, ponders on the luxurious and comfortable life with humans. London here expresses the idea that the rewarding moments of peace and leisure are comparable to the feeling the wolf gets from

its struggle and toil, as it is in the wolf's nature to fight on and so he does not view this reality in the same way as man does.

London then further depicts the relationship between man and animals in the following way: "Food and fire, protection and companionship, were some of the things he received from the god. In return he guarded the god's property, defended his body, worked for him, and obeyed him" (91). We see that animals view man in a similar way to that in which people view gods. But London does not present this relationship as one of simple blind obedience; rather, he shows it as a mutually beneficial partnership. In this particular situation, the wolf is no servant to man, but a voluntary helper who receives the protection and warmth of fire at the place where man lives. This relationship is far more similar to that found in a pack hierarchy, where the wolf obeys his alpha for the benefit of the pack and for his own benefit, than the complete obedience and undying loyalty of a dog. This fact indicates that the wildness in the protagonist has never been rooted out, not even by domestication. And his ferocious side, which stirs in times of need, is ultimately what saves the life of one of his owners at the estate where he lives for the rest of his days.

If *White Fang* is the story of a wild animal that grows accustomed to living with man, then London's *The Call of the Wild* essentially depicts this situation in reverse. In the book, we meet a domesticated dog named Buck, a Scotch Shepherd/St. Bernard cross-breed. This dog gradually leaves the society where he was raised; at the very end of the novel, he joins a pack of wolves, and in doing so answers the call of the wild. The major theme of the book is that the dormant wild side is to be found even in an already-domesticated animal, which by extension gives humanity a clear message: when forced to live again in harsh conditions, in the natural world, the wild side instinctively emerges in order to help with survival.

Buck's passage into the wild comes gradually. Initially he experiences the struggle of nature through the relationships in a pack of sledge dogs: "He had been suddenly jerked from the heart of civilization and flung into the heart of things primordial" (London, *Call* 15). Although this situation merely mimicked a real fight for survival, it still represented a shock for a domesticated animal, which quickly understood that in order to survive and thrive, its mindset must change. This change comes instinctively to Buck:

The first theft marked Buck as fit to survive in the hostile Northland environment. It marked his adaptability, his capacity to adjust himself to changing conditions, the lack of which would have meant swift and terrible death. It marked, further, the decay or going to pieces of his moral nature, a vain thing and a handicap in the ruthless struggle for existence. (21)

While *White Fang* understood the brutality of life with stoic acceptance and took these realities to be a normal occurrence, Buck's point of view is somewhat more traumatic and shocking, as he is forced to acclimatize quickly to this new way of life. However, his initial shock is accompanied by an immense sense of wonder and mystery. This instinctive urge – which, much to the dog's surprise, was already in him – calls out to

him. London expresses once again the notion that life in the wild, which man may see as unforgiving, has its own appeal for animals:

Deep in the forest a call was sounding, and as often as he heard this call, mysteriously thrilling and luring, he felt compelled to turn his back upon the fire and the beaten earth around it, and to plunge into the forest, and on and on, he knew not where or why; nor did he wonder where or why, the call sounding imperiously, deep in the forest. (62)

In the end, the dog Buck ends up not only living with a wild pack of wolves in the forest; he also asserts his dominance and claims the position of the alpha male in the pack. In order to do so, the author emphasizes that even an animal that is initially docile in comparison with a feral wolf can return to its roots in such a manner that it asserts its leading position in the harsh society of wolves. By the end, the way in which the dog behaves, thinks and lives is strongly reminiscent of the beginning of *White Fang*'s story:

He must master or be mastered; while to show mercy was a weakness. Mercy did not exist in the primordial life. It was misunderstood for fear, and such misunderstandings made for death. Kill or be killed, eat or be eaten, was the law; and this mandate, down out of the depths of Time, he obeyed. (62)

While Jack London's novels definitely offer a somehow idealized view of these animals and convey their way of life in the form of adventurous episodes, they still offer a profound insight into the mind of wolves and their relationship with man. This is especially so when the reversed stories of the two above-mentioned books and their protagonist animals are taken into account.

### [3] The wolf in American environmental literature

As has been discussed above, the wolf is an intelligent and mysterious animal which some know and recognize for its value to the environment, yet at the same time there is a significant portion of society that would remove it from the land. We have seen portrayals of this in some American literary works of fiction, but what is the portrayal of this animal in American environmental literature? The merit of studying these predators presents ecocriticism with a variety of important topics and forms a significant part of Animal Studies.

To begin, it is necessary to mention one of the principal qualities that the wolf represents in many environmentalist texts, and that is its association with the wilderness, the untamed and uncolonized virgin land, both dangerous and beautiful. As Gary Snyder mentions in his *Practice of the Wild* (1990), wild and good should not be viewed as qualities on two different sides of the fence. Snyder actually encourages the sort of reliance on our "wild side", on our instincts and intuition, on co-existence with the wild and the natural, that is often represented by the wolf in his writings and those of others. He also

emphasizes our ability to choose whether we learn the rules of civilized society or maintain the wild side of ours:

Yet there is such a thing as training. The world moves by complementaries of young and old, foolish and wise, ripe or green, raw or cooked. Animals too learn self-discipline and caution in the face of desire and availability. There is learning and training that goes with the grain of things as well as against it. In early Chinese Daoism “training” did not mean to cultivate the wildness out of oneself, but to do away with arbitrary and delusive conditioning. (Snyder 91–92)

Apart from Snyder’s belief that there is no necessity to erase our “wild side” by education, he also points out that even wild animals themselves are able to exert self-discipline and control their wild impulses if the need arises. This similarity between mankind and the animal kingdom is another reason not to erase the wilderness altogether, but rather to find a mode of co-existence with it.

This point of view is present in Snyder’s work too, as he argues that the preservation of wild predators, wolves included, is of paramount importance: “The deer and all the other animals move through with the exception of Grizzly bear and wolf; they are temporarily not in residence in California. We will someday bring them back” (Snyder 102–103).

Another author who approaches the topic of the wild wolf is Gretel Ehrlich, in her *The Solace of Open Spaces* (1986) Here there is one essay in particular, “Friends, Foes, and Working Animals”, which explores the relationship between man and animals. Sheepdogs in particular are of interest in this essay, as they form a bridge between wolves and man. Ehrlich describes how we have stronger and more sincere relationships with these animals than with any other farm-domesticated animals, which could be attributed to the pack and the companionship we share, much like wolves do (Ehrlich 63–64).

Ehrlich’s lines can be also read with special attention to how people harness the ferocity and wild instincts still lying dormant within dogs, as she writes:

Dogs who work with sheep have to be gentler than cowdogs. Sheep are skittish and have a natural fear of dogs, whereas a mother cow will turn and fight a dog who gets near her calf. If kelpies, border collies, and Australian shepherds cower, they do so from timidity and because they’ve learned to stay low and out of sight of the sheep. With their pointed ears and handsome, wolfish faces, their resemblance to coyotes is eerie. But their instinct to work sheep is only a refinement of the desire to kill; they lick their chops as they approach the herd. (Ehrlich 65)

Among the environmental texts presenting the direct confrontation between wolf and man is *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketched Here and There* (1989) by Aldo Leopold. This collection of essays deals with more than one environmental topic and focuses on the idea of interconnections within the ecosystem. The following lines offer an illustration of these ideas:

In those days we had never heard of passing up a chance to kill a wolf. In a second we were pumping lead into the pack, but with more excitement than accuracy: how to aim

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a steep downhill shot is always confusing. When our rifles were empty, the old wolf was down, and a pup was dragging a leg into impassable slide-rocks. We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes – something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view. (Leopold 130)

This short paragraph, which depicts the author in his life-changing confrontation with a wolf, shows more than just the scene of a killing. While the procedure of the elimination of the wolf at the first site gives an accurate impression of the widespread mentality of people at the time, a far more intimate moment unfolds here as well. The author sees the animal for the first time as more than a mere predator and enemy, the traditional image of the wolf. In the author's words there is a form of admiration and silent awe when faced with the death of a noble animal – not only due to the situation itself, but also due to the fact that the shooter realizes the role of the animal in the ways of the land, as well as his own role.

The mystery that is the wolf is represented by its omnipresent and faraway howling: “Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf” (Leopold 130). This sound and its hidden message can be only understood by few, but it is known to many: “Those unable to decipher the hidden meaning know nevertheless that it is there, for it is felt in all wolf country, and distinguishes that country from all other land. It tingles in the spine of all who hear wolves by night, or who scan their tracks by day (129)”. The presence of the wolf, often represented by the sound of the howl, forms an inseparable part of the land and has great importance, despite man's intention to get rid of this animal for the good of his herds or to encourage an abundance of game, which would at first glance flourish without its chief predator. This is actually the vital information conveyed by the encounter with the wolf in this book – information which changes the author's perspective and urges the reader to ponder this thought in order to understand the mystery of the ecosystem:

I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer. And perhaps with better cause, for while a buck pulled down by wolves can be replaced in two or three years, a range pulled down by too many deer may fail of replacement in as many decades. (132)

The conclusion that Leopold draws from this pivotal episode is that the wolves are but one of many pieces in the delicate system of the natural world. They have their role, as has the deer and as have all the other animals. By completely eliminating even one of these species, man would inevitably threaten this complex system, whose full and complete depth is impossible to fathom.

Leopold also warns that meddling with nature, even with the best of intentions, is in fact merely creating more damage further down the line:

A measure of success in this is all well enough, and perhaps is a requisite to objective thinking, but too much safety seems to yield only danger in the long run. Perhaps this is behind Thoreau's dictum: In wildness is the salvation of the world. Perhaps this is the hidden meaning in the howl of the wolf, long known among mountains, but seldom perceived among men. (133)

Both Aldo Leopold and Henry David Thoreau, to whom Leopold refers in the above-cited lines, claim that wildness is the key and the solution to these problems. And if there is one element of wisdom to be found in and remembered from Leopold's text, it is to hold nature in proper respect, as it is still very much mysterious and unknown (as it was in the past), and as man's hubris would ultimately only backfire on humanity itself should people threaten the ecosystem they inhabit by their colonization of the land.

One author whose work displays certain similarities with Aldo Leopold as far as their life-changing experience with wolves is concerned is Ernest Thompson Seton. Despite being born in England and spending his childhood in Canada, Seton (and especially his work that is examined below) is closely connected to the United States. His book *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898) contains one story that has particular significance for the themes discussed in this paper. This is a story entitled "Lobo the King of Currumpaw", which takes place in New Mexico and explores Seton's experience of living in the Currumpaw Valley.

Much like Leopold, Seton presents his readers with the moment when his view of the wolf drastically changed. The story is about Lobo, the leader of the pack, who is forced to prey upon the herds of local farmers when the pack's wild food disappears. Lobo cunningly evades every attempt at capture:

The second day after the traps arrived, I rode around to inspect, and soon came upon Lobo's trail running from trap to trap. In the dust I could read the whole story of his doings that night. He had trotted along in the darkness, and although the traps were so carefully concealed, he had instantly detected the first one. Stopping the onward march of the pack, he had cautiously scratched around it until he had disclosed the trap, the chain, and the log, then left them wholly exposed to view with the trap still unsprung and passing on he treated over a dozen traps in the same fashion. (Seton 39)

Seton finally succeeds in capturing the wolf by catching his mate, the she-wolf Blanca. After killing Blanca in front of Lobo, the pack-leader becomes careless and follows his late mate's scent to the human settlements where he is captured. At this point, however, Seton cannot bring himself to kill his nemesis. It was actually the first time that the hunter properly examined his quarry, and to his shock, Seton realized that Lobo was not the monstrous entity and devilish fiend described by witnesses or imagined by his enemies. He was a proud animal who was defeated not by the hunters, but by his sorrow and longing for his killed mate. Lobo died himself a few days after being captured, refusing to be fed by his captors, and he forever changed Seton's view of the wolf:

A lion shorn of his strength, an eagle robbed of his freedom, or a dove bereft of his mate, all die, it is said, of a broken heart; and who will aver that this grim bandit could bear the three-fold brunt, heart-whole? This only I know, that when the morning dawned, he

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was lying there still in his position of calm repose, his body unwounded, but his spirit was gone—the old king wolf was dead. (53–54)

This sudden change in perspective is all the more powerful given the fact that Seton had at first been so keen on killing the beast. Unlike Aldo Leopold, he was not an unwise youth shooting blindly at the wolf; he systematically and meticulously worked to achieve the animal's downfall. This was one of the most prominent testimonies in defence of wild nature, which found one of its first defenders in the environmentalist writer Ernest Thompson Seton.

Another environmental writer who should be discussed is the already-mentioned Barry Lopez and his *Of Wolves and Men*. In addition to presenting scientific insights into wolves, Lopez explores the mythology and depictions of these animals in various stories, myths and legends which have been retold numerous times down the generations in the cultures of the Old and New Worlds. Lopez categorizes the literary treatment of the wolf into several distinct approaches, some of which will be explored in the following paragraphs, beginning with the early medieval perception of the animal. Lopez argues that the wolf as it is perceived in our literary, oral and cultural traditions is a creation of people's imagination and has very different characteristics from those of the true animal – and most importantly, it should be viewed as two different entities and not one:

Each of these visions flows, historically, from man's never-ending struggle to come to grips with the nature of the universe. That struggle has produced at different times in history different places for the wolf to fit; and at the same moment in history different ideas of the wolf's place in the universe have existed side by side, even in the same culture. So, in the wolf we have not so much an animal that we have always known as one that we have consistently imagined. To the human imagination the wolf has proved at various times the appropriate symbol for greed or savagery, the exactly proper guise for the Devil, or fitting as a patron of warrior clans. (204)

Here the question arises: why would the wolf become a symbol of such evil human traits, synonymous with warmongering and all things evil? One of the explanations Lopez presents involves simply tracing this phenomenon further and further back through the history of mankind. The author mentions the Greek mythological tradition and its possible influence on the medieval mind in association with the god Apollo:

At the southern end of the Acropolis in Athens stand the ruins of the Lyceum. Philologists argue about the origin of the name but it seems probable that the building was once used as a place of worship for Apollo, the Wolf Slayer. Apollo was a patron of shepherds, and Pausanias, a second-century Greek author, writes that it was Apollo who directed shepherds to put out meat laced with bark poison to kill wolves. In later years the Lyceum became a gymnasium, then a hall where Aristotle, among others, taught. At the time he was lecturing, Aristotle was writing a text on animals, and in the section on wolves he included the story of Apollo's birth on the Island of Delos. Apollo's mother, Leto, disguised as a wolf and accompanied by a pack of wolves, had made the trip

from the land of the Hyperboreans to Delos to escape detection by the jealous Hera, wife of Zeus, who was Apollo's father. (Lopez 271–272)

A further intriguing fact about Apollo's role in the Greek pantheon is related to the various interpretations of the god's name; as Lopez says, Apollo was not always mentioned and presented as the wolf slayer. Despite being known mainly as the sun god, the tradition of Apollo in Greek culture and mythology has varied greatly throughout the ages. Lopez argues that one of the possible confusions has arisen from the similarity between the Greek words for "wolf" and "light", or from the legends of the gods' births, or perhaps the place of the sun god's origin, in Lycea. Nevertheless, Lopez ultimately emphasizes the importance of historical accounts, as the contradictory depictions of Apollo as both the wolf god and the wolf slayer were taken from the worshippers themselves. As Lopez explains, the original totemic tribes that occupied the Peloponnese held strong ties to wolves, and worshipped them in a similar fashion to the old Germanic tribes of Northern and Central Europe or the Native American tribes who also held the spiritual wolf in high esteem. The duality arrived with the invasion of Hellenistic people, who conquered the area and introduced their own culture, forcing the totemic tradition to step aside. The wolf, however, still retained its importance in the culture of these invaders; it is seen as an image of threat and danger to the herd, and since Hellenistic culture was based around the production of sheep and agriculture, the warrior-based imagery of the wolf god Apollo was twisted to suit the needs of the newly arrived population (Lopez 272).

It would seem that the struggle inherent in the dualism of the wolf as represented by the god Apollo was decisively won by the wolf slayer and the protector of the herds, as the medieval portrayal of the wolf is mostly negative; it was viewed as the enemy by farmers and shepherds, but another factor mentioned by Lopez is its role in the representation of the devil, greatly emphasized in numerous religious writings. It seems only logical that if the son of God is the lamb, his natural adversary would be the natural predator to the sheep. Lopez supports this argument with a great number of examples (including Dante's *Divine Comedy*); here we can clearly see the negative point of view that was omnipresent in the common medieval European's mind:

In the first canto of Dante's *Inferno* in the *Commedia* the wolf appears in one of the oldest and most durable associations in its history, as a symbol of greed and fraud. In the eighth circle of Hell, Dante finds those condemned for "the sins of the wolf": seducers and hypocrites, magicians, thieves, and liars. (205)

The European view of the wolf can be even more aptly described by Claudia D. Johnson in her *Understanding the Call of the Wild* (2000): "So-called science and imperfect observation as well as folklore perpetuated the view of the wolf as an aggressive and fearless devourer of sheep, cows, defenceless men, women, and, especially, children and a grave robber who craved the flesh of dead humans. In Europe, this resulted in the wholesale slaughter of wolves" (Johnson 15). Another important aspect that benefited the medieval Christian Church in its use of the wolf as a symbol of evil is the fact that the wolf had been

a rather popular figure in many old pagan religions which had been vehemently opposed by Christianity in the past. One of the oldest pagan mythologies that worshipped the wolf in spite of herding large numbers of cattle was that of the Egyptians. Their jackal-headed god of mummification and the dead, Anubis, was one of the most revered Egyptian deities, and remains well-known even today.

However, if there are cultures that both worshipped and respected the imagery of the wolf and were viewed as fierce enemies of the Christian faith prior to the Middle Ages, one would definitely think of the Norse people:

The wolf that shows up in Apollonian legend is one that is familiar to us. The wolf of the Norsemen is something quite different. In that mythology we encounter some elements already familiar: the wolf in association with light, with war, with witches, and with Loki, the trickster. But the wolves of Teutonic mythology are overpowering in these roles. (Lopez 273)

Lopez's discussion of the wolf in Norse myth does not end here; the animal was held in such high esteem that it was depicted in association with the chief figure in Old Norse mythology, the All-father Odin himself:

Nordic wolves were the companions of the Norns, the Teutonic fates. The Finns called them Rutu's hounds, dogs of the death spirit. The ruler of all the gods, Odin, kept two wolves always at his side, Geri and Freki. They accompanied him in battle together with his two ravens, and tore the corpses of the dead. Thus Wolfram, from Wolf-hraben, "wolf-raven", was a great warrior's name, and to see a wolf and a raven on the way to battle augured victory. Rudolf, from Ruhm-wolf, was another warrior name, meaning "victorious wolf". And Wolfgang meant "wolf going before", a hero whose coming was announced by the appearance of wolves. (Lopez 273–274)

But probably the most famous and discussed lupine entity that Lopez places high importance on is the son of Loki, the apocalyptic wolf Fenrir. His story, as is the case with all the stories mentioned above, could easily form the subject of a stand-alone analysis, but one aspect of this myth that Lopez emphasizes is the taming of the wild inside the beast. He argues that the wolf that had been destined to devour Odin, the leader of the gods, was driven to its present state by the gods themselves, who – in their fear of his great and untamed power – sought to bind and control it and thus created its hatred and aggression. To Lopez, the allusion to how the people of Europe, America and the entire civilized world hunted wolves and reduced wolf populations is more than clear. These stark contrasts between the European population's attitude towards the wolf in the Middle Ages and in the times of Old Norse culture can also be viewed in comparison to the already-mentioned situation in America. The wolf population in North America was also revered by the Native Americans and respected for the animals' many qualities, until the colonists arrived and led to the current decline in populations and a radical shift in the portrayal of wolves. Lopez also argues that there is a connection between the downfall of

wolves in both real and literary terms, as the tradition that worshipped the wolves ceased to exist with the Native American and Viking cultures themselves.

Concluding his historical account of generations of humans' relationship with wolves, both in positive and negative terms, Lopez argues that there is more to the current situation regarding this relationship in America. In two of this pivotal chapters of his book, entitled "An American Pogrom" and "The Clamor of Justification", the text explores more reasons for the systematic elimination of the wolf that occurred throughout the history of America. The first of these reasons is the simple necessity for survival. Lopez elaborates on how the expanding colonies and newly-founded settlements saw the killings as justifiable and necessary actions, whether in the name of survival (initially) or in view of economic factors (later down the road of American history). Lopez also emphasizes that society as a whole was responsible for these systematic killings; in his opinion, it was not only hunters who were to blame. As he explains, wolf-hunting gradually developed into a business in America, and as demand bred supply, both the pelts and the safety created by the absence of the predators were much desired by farmers and other members of the population. Lopez explains that society justified these acts as part of its Manifest Destiny, and saw these actions as a manifestation of the greater good, as they led to the colonists' inevitable domination of the land. This taming of the country and the wolf continued on two levels simultaneously: first consciously, for profit and to safeguard property, and then instinctually, as man asserted his dominance over nature and animals. Lopez also criticizes the layman's approach to these hunts in the following sentences:

Wolves are predators. When men come into a land to "tame" it, they replace wild game with domestic animals. The wolves prey on these creatures, the men kill them in turn, and reduce the wolf population generally, as a preventive measure to secure their economic investment. The two just can't live side by side. A step removed from this, perhaps, in terms of its justification, is the action of Fish and Game departments that kill wolves to sustain or increase the yield of big game animals so human hunters can kill them. This kind of "predator control" has historically accommodated economic and political interests ahead of ecological interests. And it has acted occasionally from a basis of bar stool and barbershop biology, not wildlife science. (Lopez 138-139)

Lopez also studies the economic side of these events, noting a number of occasions when such deeds were done not for profit, but for entirely different reasons. The regular trappers and bounty hunters killed the animals solely for profit, either from selling the pelts, or from the bounties offered by the local authorities. Less frequent, but still quite common reasons for hunting were scientific studies conducted in order to learn more about the animals, their behaviour and more. Wolves were sometimes shot and then dissected, or caught and experimented upon in order to improve future "predator control expeditions". It was not rare to hunt for wolf pups, as they were seen in the same light as the mature specimens.

Lopez also gives far more detailed descriptions of such actions, as his intention is to shock the reader by revealing the true nature of these hunts to the fullest extent. He claims that out of the two reasons for the hunts (conscious and instinctual), the latter had a tendency to predominate the longer these wolf killings dragged on:

Indeed, this is the way we commonly treat all predators—bobcats, bears, and mountain lions included. But the wolf is fundamentally different because the history of killing wolves shows far less restraint and far more perversity. A lot of people didn't just kill wolves; they tortured them. They set wolves on fire and tore their jaws out and cut their Achilles tendons and turned dogs loose on them. They poisoned them with strychnine, arsenic, and cyanide, on such a scale that millions of other animals—raccoons, black-footed ferrets, red foxes, ravens, red-tailed hawks, eagles, ground squirrels, wolverines—were killed incidentally in the process. (139-140)

But these animals were not the only ones that sustained collateral damage. The perpetrators of the hunts themselves were sometimes caught in the crossfire of their own actions. Lopez mentions cases when the hunters accidentally poisoned their own pets or water supplies, or other times when they burned down scores of houses as a result of their attempts to burn out sections of the forests inhabited by wolves. Lopez goes as far as to call this state of mind “wolf fever”; he claims that it reached its peak in the United States between 1865 and 1885. During that period, farmers and cattlemen eradicated wolves with almost pathological zealotry. There were claims that every hunt during which even the slightest signs of wolves' presence were found should immediately become wolf hunts. Later on, many people dragged still-living wolves behind their airplanes and snowmobiles in order to prolong their suffering, and they sometimes kept these cadavers as a display of masculinity that was not so different from tribal warrior trophies. Another case involved shooting tied-up wolves with a shotgun just for sport, long after their capture, and it was not until the 1970s that Minnesota added the wolf to its list of endangered species. Needless to say, the majority of the population ignored these regulations, and there are even documented accounts of timber wolves being choked to death in snares as a form of protest against this news. These stories could be recounted at much greater length, as there is an ample supply of them both in history and in Lopez's text.

These drastic measures would be shocking enough in a few pathological cases, but they were far from isolated; according to Lopez, these practices are still very much alive among a majority of the population. So naturally, here the question arises: what led people to possess such a savage dedication to killing wolves, even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that American society not only turned a blind eye to such practices, but openly expressed its approval? In Lopez's opinion, it all comes back to the already-mentioned wild side, our inner instincts, which are ignored by civilization, so people once again seek to take control of the reins in the wild way:

This is not predator control, and it goes beyond the casual cruelty sociologists say manifests itself among people under stress, or where there is no perception of responsibility. It is the violent expression of a terrible assumption: that men have the right to

kill other creatures not for what they do but for what we fear they may do. I almost wrote “or for no reason”, but there are always reasons. Killing wolves has to do with fear based on superstitions. It has to do with “duty”. It has to do with proving manhood (abstractly, perhaps, this is nothing more than wanting either to possess or to destroy the animal’s soul). And sometimes, I think, because the killing is so righteously pursued and yet so entirely without conscience, killing wolves has to do with murder. (140)

Lopez also mentions the scientific terminology related to the psychological side of this topic, with special focus on the term theriophobia – the fear of the beast. In a way, this phobia is unlike any other, because its focus varies depending on what precisely its victims fear. In the case of theriophobia, we have an irrational fear of wild creatures such as wolves, which stir our deepest and most violent instincts as a form of defence mechanism. However, since the fear itself is irrational and in many cases is based on no real threat, the wrath unleashed by people upon presumed predators and enemies is in no way justifiable. And as Lopez states, it is precisely this wild phenomenon that carries part of the blame for the most horrendous atrocities in human conflicts. Simply put, the rapes, murders and the pillaging that take place in wartime can often be rooted in the same soil as the needless torture and hunting of wolves. The unfortunate prime target of theriophobia in America, the wolf, then became, in the opinion of Barry Lopez, the ultimate scapegoat which needed to be annihilated. However, do we truly become more noble, higher, dignified, “civilized” in this way? Many of these wolf-hunters became quite the opposite; they became more feral, and wilder in the process. To Barry Lopez, who seeks to enlighten his readers and society as a whole on this matter, it seems rather absurd that there should be any attempt to vanquish the evil of the beast by committing bestial acts, while the simplest of facts is ignored – namely that the real wolf and the wolf we have created are two different entities.

## [4] The dichotomy of the wolf

Another writer who shares some viewpoints with Barry Lopez, but also differs from him on some topics and so brings a fresh perspective to this investigation – is S.K. Robisch, the author of *Wolves and the Wolf Myth in American Literature* (2009). This work is a thorough investigation of wolves in mythology and reality in America; it also focuses on the work of many other writers. Robisch takes a more neutral position than Lopez, and expresses a more varied range of opinions. One of the most intriguing parts of the work is a chapter from the so-called “Wolf Book” section of the text – “The Real, the Corporeal, and the Ghost Wolf”. As the name suggests, Robisch, much like Lopez in his *Of Wolves and Men* (1979), differentiates between different types of wolves in the world. But while Lopez focuses on the real wolf and the imaginary one, Robisch offers more variety in the categorization.

Starting with the simplest concept to grasp, we have the “Real Wolf”. In the words of Robisch:

The Real Wolf. There is, indeed, such a being as a wild wolf. He is not a social construct. She is not a figment of the human imagination. Neither are they mere progenitors of the dog, nor is their collective life reducible to a selective and solipsistic riffing about whether or not wilderness, wildness, animals, or authors exist. The idolization of idealism over materialism had done them no good, idealism being no more defensible a position than materialism; in situations of ecological reference versus anthropocentric reference, materialism is almost always the more practicable philosophical mode. (34)

Robisch claims that although wolves have lived along the human population throughout the whole history of mankind, these animals were never of human design, as some may subconsciously believe. That is to say, we still do not know all there is to be known about these animals, yet we write about them as if we did. This reality stands in direct opposition to the common anthropocentric mentality present not only in man's everyday life, but especially in writings about wolves. Robisch emphasizes the incredible levels of individuality present in wolves; they are not only individuals within their respective packs, but they are also a species with a great variety of subspecies (as has been discussed in the first part of this paper). According to Robisch, the only logical outcome is that the wolf is an animal that cannot ever be fully captured in its true form by writing. Indeed, the written representation of wolves differs depending on the field and style of the text, ranging from fiction to scientific writings based in biology or ecology. In the author's words, "Real wolves are not texts; they are the corrective entities to the texts attempting to depict them" (34).

Robisch also claims that despite the best intentions of their authors, many ecocritical writings cause even more damage. Robisch mentions the danger of idealization, which can be mitigated by adopting more materialistic and realistic stances, as such stances have far better chances of initial acceptance by society, which will ultimately lead to the desired understanding of the topic.

The introductory text on the Real Wolf continues in the same manner until it reaches the crucial concept of the World-Wolf:

The World-Wolf. This is the form that embodies all the various representations of wolves in literature. I am borrowing the name from the myth of Fenris in the Icelandic story of the end of the world and the dawn of a new humanity, as well as from the concept of the anima mundi. The World-Wolf is therefore not the real or earthly wolf, but the "wolf" of a word of our invention, a symbolic figure shaped according to our own desires – for prowess, material, nurture, conquest, or identity, our placement in the cosmos. Here is idealist component in relation to the materialist component. This World-Wolf may be configured as the Nietzschean überwolf, the Emersonian transcendental Over-Wolf, or the platonic form of Wolf- including their potential misuses. (Robisch 35)

Robisch goes to great lengths to properly define the correct terminology and discusses various aspects of the entity of the World-Wolf. He divides this term into the Corporeal Wolf and the Ghost Wolf (with both Malevolent and Benevolent facets) and discusses the so-called Lines, which delineate boundaries for these terms depending on the context.

The Corporeal Wolf, according to Robisch, is the real wolf that literature attempts to depict as it is. As Robisch is convinced of the impossibility of such a feat, we are left with a term that is more or less synonymous with many “real” wolves as ecocritical writers (including Lopez for instance) portray them. Robisch points out that there should be no acceptance of blind idealism, as the very nature of humans – and by extension, their writings – is that they are victims of time and change. What used to be set and well-established knowledge may be frowned upon a hundred years later – whether by scientific opinion or by society as a whole. And while this self-corrective approach does inevitably bear fruit in the form of more accurate and reliable information, the author remains adamant in his belief that no information is absolute, but rather scalar – enabling people to account for future surprises and new discoveries.

The second facet of the World-Wolf is somewhat more complex than the first; from the beginning, Robisch warns of its dual nature. To comprehend this dualistic character of the Ghost Wolf concept, we first must understand what the concept refers to. This key entity, which is very similar to Lopez’s imaginary wolf, is the sum of all the man-created depictions and portrayals of the animal, both positive and negative. This brief extract will provide more clarification and understanding of this duality:

The Ghost Wolf. I use the term ghost as an indicator of two historical phenomena. First is the overwhelming presence in human culture of myth and its totemic, ethereal, unconscious, and symbolic images, including the undeniable presence of imaginary animals in our mythologies; the second is the effort in both Europe and America to eradicate the wolf from the face of the earth, leaving its revenant shade in its former regions. I could call this “the imaginary wolf”, but “ghost” offers a more appropriate frisson, given what’s happened to wolves in America and in its literature. A better synonym might be “the shadow wolf”, one that will have especial application in the more Jungian moments of this study. (Robisch 37–38)

Robisch then describes the two identities of this ghost, both positive and negative, and labels them the Benevolent Ghost and the Malevolent Ghost respectively. While the negative imagery has done unspeakable harm to the reality of these animals and is arguably one of the chief reasons for their slaughter, the positive propaganda does them no more good than its negative counterpart.

The chapter then once again deals with a topic that has already been discussed, i.e. how the colonists imported their grudge against wolves from the Old World. In doing so, they even influenced scientific opinions, so that wolf pogroms were carried out with the blessing of the state; as has already been mentioned, this was done via the governmental wildlife “management” policies that aimed to protect the ecological balance. However, ironically, it was precisely this wildlife management policy that brought wolves (and in some cases also other animals) to the point of extinction.

As far as the Benevolent Ghost is concerned, Robisch compares this creation to that of the noble-savage or ecotopian idealism – which is as far from reality as the previous example was. The main target of his criticism in this case is not the beatification of the

noble traits in the animals, of their intelligence, social behaviour, wisdom and importance to the land, but rather people's blindness and ignorance towards the danger, the ferocity, the territoriality and even the rare and isolated cases of unprovoked aggression from wolves (there can be deranged individuals in the wolf world, just as there are in ours), which are all still real as well.

Finally, Robisch discusses his concept of the "Lines". Highlighting once again the scalar nature of the world, he notes that this notion of scalar "Lines" stems from the fact that all the wolves we encounter in literature, in the news and in legends, in nature and in our own imagination, should be perceived with the utmost care; readers should keep in mind that absolutes are rare and nothing is black or white, that there are boundaries, the "Lines" to be noted and respected.

## [5] Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to discuss the portrayal of the wolf in literature. The paper has addressed various views and tendencies in American literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. As the paper reveals, a considerable change in people's perceptions of this animal has occurred during these two centuries. From highly negative and hateful standpoints, the public gradually discovered the mysterious side of the wolf. Both environmentalist writers and fiction writers began to portray the wolf not as an antagonist, but as a representative of wild, untamed nature – a phenomenon which is becoming so rare in the present day. However, this evolution also involves ideologies which are overly romanticized and misinformed, and which may ultimately cause harm.

The paper presents a considerable amount of information about the wolf in American literature, yet it only begins to unravel the underlying reality. For this reason, the wolf – both in fiction and in real life – should be approached with critical distance in order to understand it as much as possible without harming it or oneself. The tendencies in American environmental literature that has approached this topic are varied, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries they have encompassed a plethora of writers with various perspectives, ranging from philosophical, novelistic, essayistic and descriptive to defensive to the point of being biased. All have their own merits when examining the topic, leading this paper to the conclusion that the wolf in America is both a predator and scapegoat – and yet still so much more.

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# [ Translating Cultures in Museums: When not Only Words, but People, are Translated ]

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**[Abstract]** *Museums possess, represent and interpret others' culture, raising important questions on ownership and the authority of their conduct. The act of translating cultures is one of the prime modes through which history is rewritten and knowledge is constructed: through a selected representation of a given culture – its translation, indeed – museums give their version of the past, commemorating what is chosen to be commemorated. Museums construct and propose spaces of meanings in which other cultures and their stories are intelligible to visitors. However, it is time to capsize the interpretative perspective, and let the narrated become the narrator.*

**[Keywords]** *translation; culture; ethnographic museums; commemorative museums; slavery; rewriting history*

The relationship between *word* and *world* is among the most intricate subjects in cultural studies, where *word* encompasses all forms of textualized expression and *world* encompasses all forms of organization of life. This conceptual development generates the metaphor of culture as translation, which evokes the connection between culture and language. Language is perhaps the first element which is used to identify a given culture – but language itself, instead of being a mere part of a culture, is also a vehicle which reflects some cultural specificities. Culture and language, therefore, are two independent but closely linked systems.

Members of a particular culture are constantly influenced by their mental representations: this influence is expressed mostly through language, used as communication between members of the same or different socio-cultural groups. Language, moreover, is part of the prime knowledge acquired by any individual in her very first stage of life, and it is the prime means which ensures that this knowledge passes on from generation to generation. Hence derives the intimate connection between language and culture, which becomes stronger on the level of semantics, where the vocabulary of a given language reflects the culture of its speakers (Appadurai 51). Language, however, is also the means by which other cultures are understood: when a text is translated, it is reproduced in another language. The task of the translator is to keep the meaning ‘equivalent’. Equivalence is the major dilemma of the translator: the new text – the Target Text – should be equivalent not only to the source – the Source Text – but it should have an equivalent function in the Target Culture as well. Cultural knowledge, thus, has been recognized as indispensable for translation.

According to the postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, not only is translation a movement from source to target, but it is also located in a “third space” between the two, where the negotiation of conflicts arising from cultural difference occurs (5). The image of movement remains inevitably embedded in the concept of translation: etymologically, the word translation means “carried from one place to another” (Miller 207) – something translated is transported across the borders between one language and another, or between one country and another, or between one culture and another. For this reason, it may be affirmed that what is translated is displaced, transported, even if it is a text read in its original language but by someone who belongs to a different culture; the translation then becomes a flow of interpretation. The idea of movement, however, is not the exclusive domain of translation: according to the American anthropologist James Clifford, culture too can be rethought in terms of movement. Clifford suggests interpreting culture and its science anthropology in terms of travel – thus questioning the classical rooted nature of culture, and opening up a completely new perspective of analysis. Not only do people move from one language to another, from one culture to another, but cultures themselves are traversed “by tourists, by oil pipelines, by Western commodities, by radio and television signals” (Clifford, *Traveling Cultures* 101).

Undoubtedly, especially in the context of post-colonialism and globalization, culture is coming to be understood as a continuous translational process. The notion of culture is shifting towards a new dynamic concept, “a practice of negotiating cultural dif-

ferences” (Bachman-Medick 37), for which cultural anthropology should embrace a new translational approach: firstly, the new cultural anthropology should accept the current trends of globalization, migration and the networking of consumption; secondly, translation should be approached as a form of familiar life practice which becomes effective especially in the contexts of migration; thirdly, the new cultural anthropology should abandon its old dichotomy of *us* and *them*, and embrace the understanding of multiple, hybrid forms of cultural configurations and interconnections.

By taking up these three translational tasks, the new cultural anthropology advocates an innovative understanding of translation: the traditional hermeneutic claim can be replaced by a pragmatic attention to cultural networks. At the basis of this new approach to translation, there should be our awareness that these continuous, translational cultural flows pertain not only to goods, images and slogans, but also to people and identities. As Salman Rushdie has poetically asserted, “having been born across the world, we are translated men” (18–19).

Since anthropology is a science of cultural comparison, it works with terms and concepts such as kinship, power, social conflict, religion, hierarchy, and so on. The risk of describing indigenous conceptions within a Western-oriented system is always present. The critique raised by the Saudi-American anthropologist Asad against the viability of translating cultures through ethnography lies precisely in the existence of evident power relations between the parts involved. Although the aim of the ethnographer is to discover the indigenous point of view, Asad points out how the ethnographer nevertheless assumes an implicit authority to choose what has to be said and what does not. Consequently – and dangerously –, the translation of the other culture resulting from the perspective of a Western ivory tower takes up a powerful position in the practical world. Asad, however, does not blame ethnography for being the prime or unique evil in the delicate process of translating cultures: of course, there also exist other important forms of Western influence and domination – economic, military, intellectual. In fact, critical attention has to be addressed to the longstanding phenomenon of the cultural universalization of the Western world. The West, in the collective imagination, represents the modern, and the modern West has established itself as “a culture of Cultures” (Ingold 214). But if Western culture is a culture of cultures, then it is not on a par with the other cultures. In fact, an enormous conceptual discrepancy divides them: whereas the other cultures, multiple and historically unique, differ from one another in their traditions, Western culture does not bear any different tradition: it entails, by contrast, a condition that is completely opposed to the notion of the traditional – the condition of modernity.

It is beyond doubt, in fact, that the modern West represents for many the culmination of the development of intellectual faculties; and this certainty of intellectual supremacy has long led to the standardization of the world according to the Western canons of rationality, objectivity, and logic: in the past, Westerners justified the manipulation and abuse of millions of enslaved Africans with the formula ‘civilization versus primitiveness’; today, satellite dishes crop up from villages of huts, pursuing the mission ‘modernity versus tradition’. For centuries, African and African-descended populations

had to endure the indignity of being narrated, represented and displayed by Westerners; Westerners spoke on their behalf innumerable times, depriving them of voice, thoughts, identity and history (Trouillot 1995). If the idea of Africa as a distinct place and race is an invention of European cartography and expansionism, then a Western-centric construction of African people as ‘subordinate’ is a perserverance of colonial racism (Bassil 2005). Today, movements promoting identity recognition for social and ethnic minorities are blossoming from North America (Black Lives Matter), to Brazil (*Movimento Negro Unificado*), to Portugal (*Djass*, Association of Afro-descendants). Through these movements, communities and minorities that were historically marginalized and silenced are now fighting to regain what Djamila Ribeiro calls *lugar de fala* (place of speech): such minorities are calling for a deeper analysis of identity construction, questioning and rewriting their history. In Africa, activists in various countries – such as Uganda and Nigeria – are calling on their governments to remove colonialists’ names from streets. This is a phenomenon encompassing not only ethnic minorities, but minority categories in general: people with disabilities, women, LGBT+, and so forth – all those people who have suffered prejudice are now fighting to speak for themselves, as the protagonists of their own struggle and movement. It is a broad and international – yet still weak – process of de-silencing unheard voices and “decolonisation of the mind” (Hira 57).

The aforementioned questions of exclusion and inclusion, meaning, knowledge, truth and history are important areas in which post-museums are deeply involved. As it participates in the practice of translating cultures, cultural politics – implying the possibility of action and agency – is inevitably enmeshed in the dynamics of power. Museums represent an important battleground in which these dynamics occur – any visitor to any exhibit might question who has the power to name, to make visible, to represent the past and common sense, to “create official versions” and, by consequence, to legitimize meanings and values (Hooper-Greenhill 19). Museums definitively have the possibility to represent and rewrite history, which are central and delicate issues in cultural politics. Being museums, a prime symbol through which a society represents itself, they surely play a crucial role in cultural wars. Their collections and exhibitions have the power to crystallize not only cultures, but also history, science, identities – world-views. Any object displayed in a museum is surrounded by an aura of authenticity and credibility, so thick that it carries with it the tangibility of the absolute truth. Hence the notion of museums as “sites of persuasion” (Clifford, “Museums” 438): inside them, memory and meaning are created, social representations are constructed and public knowledge is produced.

Intriguingly, not only can museums *rewrite* history, but they also use controversial *instruments* to do it. It is well – and sadly – known, for instance, that a hugely large proportion of objects displayed in Western ethnographic collections arrived there in the wake of what were once known as colonialist adventures. Many of these objects that are preserved in museums are no longer visible in their countries of origin. Furthermore, many of them are sacred objects of some communities, for whom their public display would be deeply offensive. These are only some of the controversial problems related to the debate on ownership, authority and ethics – a considerable cultural war. As museums have the

possibility to possess, (re)present and interpret others' material culture, their attitudes and conduct will always raise important questions on ownership and authority. Museum ethics, in fact, is one of the crucial debates of our time, to the extent that it has become a distinct field in Museum Studies. Since the cultural identity of a given community is often expressed and preserved in their objects and artefacts, it can be easily understood why the former Director of the Manchester Museum Tristram Besterman defined ethics as an expression of social responsibility, which regulates the relationships of the museum "not with things, but with people" (431).

Translating cultures represents one of the prime modes through which history is rewritten and knowledge is constructed. Simply said, through a selected representation of a given culture – its translation, indeed –, museums give their version of the past, or they commemorate something, or they substantiate national pride. Like ethnographies, museums construct and propose spaces of meanings in which other cultures are intelligible to visitors. But how is translation embedded in museums' practices and collections? First of all, if museums are considered in terms of translation, the museums' representation of cultures should be viewed as 'written' by the institution and then 'read' by (interpretive) visitors. Of course, such an analysis rejects the idea that objects are neutral and silent things – they do speak, and they speak more than one language. Everything about the collection has to be read – the ways objects are collected, why and how, and why only those particular objects are displayed. In her *Museum Studies*, Bettina Messias Carbonell identifies four tropes on which the rhetoric of museums relies: *metaphor* – i.e. objects stand for something other than themselves; *metonymy* – i.e. one single object is used to evoke a complex reality; *synecdoche* – i.e. one single object stands as a part for the larger whole; and *irony* – i.e. objects contradict themselves in the exhibition. Analogously, the textual approach adopted by the cultural theorist Mieke Bal involves reading and analyzing the object exposed like a text for its narrative structures and strategies: one might, for instance, consider the narrative strategies and voices implicit in the labels, the lights and the sounds of a given exhibition. Similarly, the sociologist Roger Silverstone has applied the idea of narrative to museums: he too invokes the concept of poetics, but referring to "the particularities of the museum as medium: with its role as story-teller, as myth maker, as imitator of reality" (143).

Understanding museums in terms of texts and narratives has the advantage of shaking down the aura of power associated with particular aspects and/or figures of museums that were once privileged and untouched – their buildings, staff, curators. All these components remain undoubtedly crucial; reading a museum through a textual approach suggests that they are all called into question. The visitor is therefore considered as a crucial participant in the process of meaning-making; in line with Barthes and Foucault, who rejected the idea that the author controls the meaning of a text – a text is the product and the producer of its own social, cultural and historical discourses.

Museums, however, have not always promoted and encouraged the idea that visitors can contribute to the construction of multiple meanings: from the Renaissance to the late eighteenth century, museums' representational modes did not offer enough space

for reading and reflection. The Renaissance ‘cabinets of curiosities’ gave way to the memory space of the Enlightenment period. In the eighteenth century, museums were places that aimed at educating people, where art and historical civilization gained a chronology and a nation-state aspect. Thus, museums as colonial institutions – as suggested by Benedict Anderson – were able to create logos and symbols of national identity, turning living history into a series of dead artefacts. If nations were – or still are – emotional and cultural phenomena, museums have inevitably contributed to the creation of imagined political communities where people with shared origins and mutual interests could recognize themselves within the borders of that limited territory (Anderson).

In the nineteenth and twentieth century, the emergence of the discipline of anthropology contributed to the development of ethnological museums, which needed academic ethnographic expertise to select, comment on and interpret the findings of anthropologists and ethnographers. At the same time, museums reflected the colonial venture, claiming the otherness but also the intelligibility – and in many cases the inferiority – of the colonized lands. The Pitt Rivers Museum is an infamous example of a nineteenth-century ethnographic collection: with its evolutionary timeline from ‘primitive’ to ‘modern’ – i.e. from ‘savage’ to ‘civilized’ – it confirmed the racist claims of the time, legitimizing the colonial mission and offering a very specific political stance to the domestic audience.

However, the evolutionary arrangement was not the one that came to dominate Western museums: in the late nineteenth-century, geographical arrangement schemes developed as well, helping to create entities like Africa by means of their labelling strategies. Historical arrangements, by contrast, seemed to be disregarded, fostering a de-historicizing tendency which was strongly visible in the museums’ labels and text panels: the ethnographic museums of the time usually used an unspecified past tense, excluding any sense of chronology and giving dates only within a century or even several centuries. Source texts’ authors or translators were never named, and in most cases, artefacts’ authors were defined as a tribe or even a location. In these ways, “smooth, unified entities” were created to underpin the ideology of racial domination (Sturge, 435). Displays of the time also included the diorama, i.e. a three-dimensional wax representation of animals – and, in the case of anthropological dioramas, people. It is not hard to imagine how, in anthropological dioramas, human beings were brought into a sort of zoological framework, which resulted in the creation of a sense of impersonality. Furthermore, by focusing on physical attributes and neglecting the thoughts, languages and actions of the real people they represented, museums implemented the objectification of the bodies on show, who – or which? – became specimens deprived of voice and individuality.

Another important aspect deserving attention is the way objects were displayed in ethnographic collections of the past. The objects and artefacts of a collection in fact represent the encounter between the creator and the collector. The fact that artefacts’ authors were often omitted helped to conceal the colonial secret of how they came to be owned. The objects displayed in museums represented, and still represent, pieces of evidence attesting to the source culture. Their validity depends on their authenticity, which,

in turn – and in terms of translation –, refers both to the genuineness of the source text and to the faithfulness of their translation, i.e. the curatorial representation. According to an ethnographic reading of the time, objects made by colonized people were supposed to be read in terms of their capacity to represent a way of life, and not as pieces of art sufficient to themselves. This crucial distinction between art and ethnography has been extensively discussed by Clifford. In his *The Predicament of Culture*, Clifford noted how, since the twentieth century, the collection of non-Western objects has been divided into two major categories: (scientific) cultural artefacts and (aesthetic) works of art. According to the Western collecting tendencies of the time, civilized art objects were produced by individuals, whereas primitive folkloristic (or ethnographic) objects were produced by a community. Thus, while art manages to speak for itself, ethnography needs to be explained – or translated. In this view, ethnographic objects were not unique, like art objects, but simply representative. Hence their need to be translated by means of labels and the experiences of the “translator of invisible truth” – the anthropologist (Clifford, *Predicament* 150).

Carol Duncan investigated the ways in which museums select and present their works of art, and how they communicate and affirm national ideas, values and social identities through them. The social anthropologist Wyatt MacGaffey further analyzed the way in which African art was translated in the European art-ethnography system. According to MacGaffey, in nineteenth-century museums the primitiveness of African art was used to construct the civilized identity of Europe. The representation of the colonies, their people and their objects as timeless, static and silent was a strategy to foster the self-representation of the colonizing society as historical, dynamic and active. MacGaffey thus proposed a notion of untranslatability – in his view, ethnographic museums of the time did not translate anything, “if by translation we mean to express in our own terms the significance of the objects to those who produced and used them” (249–50).

If modernist ethnographic museums have traditionally served to generate and foster colonialist identities, today’s post-museums are largely rethinking the translation strategies used in collections. One of the new approaches in ethnographic collections is the actualization of the thick description proposed by Geertz. A thick description – evocative of Appiah’s thick translation – refers to the elements which constitute the museum’s verbal discourse – labelling, panels, booklets, catalogues and multimedia material. Labels, for instance, can “multiply voices” (Sturge 436). The labels of the gallery *African Worlds* at the Horniman Museum in London, for instance, include a commentary that can be read as a kind of translation of the artefact and even of the originating culture. The commentary includes a short text by one of the users or makers of the object, both personal and ethnographic – e.g. citing proverbs and describing uses – first in the relevant African language and then in English translation. The speaker – the translator, indeed – is named and visible in a photograph as well; even the compiler of the label is named. This strategy of quotation used by the Horniman Museum tends to disrupt the classical power balance of ethnographic museums: the multilingual text seems to reject Western categorizations and to give voice to the objects represented. This strategy perfectly embodies the

great interpretative shift which has occurred in post-museums: whereas the nineteenth-century viewers thought about themselves as outside or above what was represented and what they were looking at, nowadays the viewers and their perceptions are seriously taken into account – not only are they invited to express their own perceptions, feelings and opinions on the way cultures are translated, but they are also asked to participate, in order to construct new meanings, in order to rewrite a fair history.

The practice of rewriting history is in fact a delicate issue which comes inevitably into being whenever a museum display is installed. Post-museums have to cope not only with a demanding audience, different cultures, and ethical responsibility, but also – and all too often – with a guilty past. A great number of commemorative museums, in fact, do exist because human rights violations occurred. Commemorative museums – such as slavery museums – are at the core of this new challenge. Since their emergence, museums have always been the symbol par excellence of conservation and preservation: as already mentioned, from the Renaissance period until a few decades ago, museums have acted mainly as repositories – art, culture and (natural) history were kept on their shelves, strengthening national pride or fostering the exoticism of remote places. The collection and exposition of material culture – items that enclose in their fixity the certainty of a past but also the pledge of immutability for the future – inevitably evoke in visitors the sensation of walking along a timeline: past, present and future converge, disciplined – or manipulated – by the complicated human act of memory.

The connection between collective memory and museums becomes stronger in the field of the memory of war. War memory has generally helped the creation of a nation's self-image. This nation's – or group's – memory is formed through a process which reflects the power structures within these groups, and which can be reflected in the imagery of memorials. A memorial, in fact, has the power to shape and consolidate collective memory. The 1980s – the decade in which the new museology emerged – witnessed a boom in the construction of war memorials throughout Europe and North America. In the same period, renewed controversies emerged over a number of aspects of the Second World War, including calls for apologies for the Japanese treatment of prisoners-of-war, and for the American use of nuclear weapons; Holocaust memorials and museums were constructed too, thus forging collective memories around national identities based on ideas of hegemony, technological supremacy, or victimhood. Since war is increasingly associated with imperialism, nationalism, patriotism – i.e. morally ambiguous concepts, which are very often correlated to the issues of racism, poverty and inequality – the creation of collective memory in museums remains a controversial subject, which continues to challenge present-day commemorative museums' curators.

In post-museums, memory takes on a new significance, and increasing attention is addressed to the individual, who is less viewed as a representative of a social group than understood as having her own precious, unique, distinctive perception of history: collective memory is constructed through autobiographical memories. In present-day commemorative museums, a new conceptual approach is reflected in the display of individual experiences and memories: history is narrated through an individual's recollections

of flights and expulsions, pictures portraying the human body, autobiographical documents, and videos reconstructed to testify to personal experiences. All these new practices form the basis of present-day exhibitions, and they are important means for stimulating multiple interpretations, instead of a single imperative account of the past.

Nevertheless, personal and multiple interpretations of the past are not intended to create fragmented, individualized worlds: on the contrary, present-day innovative exhibitions do confront individual accounts, but with the purpose of creating a common ground. Historical and commemorative exhibitions in fact exist to restore a shared memory, a collective cultural identity. Memory is thus intertwined with another important concept, heritage. If until the French Revolution the term heritage was associated with a material property or possession that could be received by succession, and subsequently referred to immovable property and historical monuments, today what is called heritage includes not only artefacts, but also environments, traditions and activities, acquiring a more democratic spirit. Hence heritage as a sort of more inclusive mode of understanding and utilizing the past, which includes roots, identity, and the individual sense of belonging. Having a heritage is intrinsic to having an identity: the heritage affirms the right to exist in the present, and also the right to continue in the future. Heritage, moreover, plays a fundamental role in establishing and communicating a sense of cultural identity: museums can become places where heritage is manifested, creating opportunities for people to recall and reflect on a shared past – heritage, then, is a form of collective memory.

As memory-keepers, and as validated institutions, museums mediate the past, present and future. Giving material form to authorized versions of the past, these versions are in turn institutionalized as public memory. Moreover, every museum's presentation is always subjectively shaped, validating certain forms of cultural expression and affirming particular interpretations of the past. This process of memory production involves choices about what is remembered, but also what is forgotten. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century museums were implicated in the construction of identities and nation-building practices. Such practices have not necessarily been discarded in present-day museums.

But what are the subjects of most national histories? Sadly, the answer is: wars, conflicts, invasions of foreign lands, and plunder. What in the past was seen as a country's achievement and a sign of national triumph, today may be seen as a reason for regret. Let us consider colonialism: once the sign of national pride and domination, today it is a problematic and shameful heritage, with which national agendas have to come to terms. During the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, many nations have started to unearth the past, exhuming a past that is recognized to be meaningful in the present, even if contested for its shameful content. Plaques, information boards, monuments and – of course – museums are populating more and more cities, bearing witness to an unsettling past, and many minority cultural groups once ignored or discriminated against are now raising their voices to ensure that their identity is publicly and officially recognized.

In 1994, UNESCO launched the Slave Route Project, a huge international programme encouraging schools, archives and cultural institutions to promote research and

the production of educational resources aimed at breaking the wall of silence which surrounded the biggest deportation in history: the transatlantic slave trade. In 1999, the District Six Museum in South Africa and eight other museums (from Asia to Europe, North and South America) founded the *International Coalition of Sites of Conscience*. In 2001, the French politician Christiane Taubira was the driving force of the *Taubira Law*, unanimously passed by the French parliament in May: it was the world's first law to declare the slave trade and the slavery crimes against humanity. This law also included an official commitment to enhance the importance of the history of slavery and of the transatlantic slave trade in French schools as well as in academic research. In 2007, Britain celebrated the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, beginning a challenging and continuous commitment to raise awareness of the history of the slave trade, its effects, and the existence of contemporary forms of slavery. The bicentenary was also an opportunity for the British to tackle inequality for people of African and Caribbean heritage in the UK, as well as to understand the difficulties faced by the African continent today. Throughout 2007, a great number of initiatives and activities were organized in various Commonwealth states, while a revised secondary curriculum was introduced in British schools for all children aged 11 to 14, which now covers the development of the slave trade, slavery in America, colonial rule in Africa, colonization and the links between slavery, the British empire and the industrial revolution.

These were only some of the crucial provisions adopted in the last twenty-five years by national and international law in order to preserve and share unsettling memories – simultaneously, throughout the world, present-day commemorative museums started to exhume a blemished past, in order to make people understand its legacies in the present, and to prepare themselves for the future: from Africa (Robben Island Museum), to Asia (Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum), to the Americas (plantation house museums, People's Museum of Craft and Technology in Jamaica, Museu Digital da Memória Afro-Brasileira), to Europe (Nantes History Museum, Bordeaux's Museum of Aquitaine, the International Slavery Museum of Liverpool). Every culture has its own way to remember or forget the past: some cultures refuse to crystallize their identities in the role of the victims, some cultures refuse to admit they prospered from others' blood; some cultures unearth their shameful past slowly and quietly, as if to prevent too much dust from being raised, and others are facing up to a memory-monopoly or creating new and free spaces for sharing and commemoration. Sadly, many of the world's sites of memories are still spotted with inaccuracy, trivialization and fear: in this way they are perpetuating the hegemony of the dominant groups and reinforcing the silences in history.

Some other sites of memories are emerging only today, and only because they are being strongly claimed by minority voices: this is the case of Portugal, a country whose vessels carried around 5.8 million Africans into slavery for over four centuries. In 2017, campaigners from Djass, the above-mentioned Association of Afrodescendants, together with black activists and intellectuals, pointed to the urgent need for a *Slavery Memorial*. The monument, which should be inaugurated in the first trimester of 2021, will be the first Slavery Memorial in Portugal, and it will be erected in one of the most emblematic

squares of Lisbon – right where the slave market existed. The long and heated debate which followed the Djass proposal to honour the enslaved ancestors with a memorial epitomizes the controversial spirit of a nation that has always strongly glorified its explorers and navigators and now seems ready to confront its colonial past and face up to its multiracial present.

A new emerging field of research is developing between memory studies and museum studies: authors like Silke Arnold-de Simine have investigated the role of museums during the so-called memory-boom and have explored the influence of memory discourse in museum cultures. When entering places of commemoration, visitors are asked to identify themselves with other people's suffering. However, it is hard to define to what extent a guilty past can be remembered collectively, both by those who consider themselves the descendants of victims and those who are labelled as descendants of perpetrators: monuments are erected all over the world, but there must be a difference in meaning and perception between a slavery museum in England and a slavery commemorative sculpture in Zanzibar. It is not only about culture, or identity, or languages and styles: it is about a process of elaborating conflicting historical experiences. The participation of a given visitor in the rite of commemoration does not mean that that visitor has the same meaning-experience as others, or as the curator or the artist intended. Ways of remembering and commemorating are influenced by the different significance every culture gives to history or to memory itself; these differently attributed meanings affect not only what is remembered, but also how this process is carried out. Obviously, what makes a difference in the way of remembering is not only cultural specificity, but also differences in access to sources or the availability of technologies and instruments.

After having visited the International Slavery Museum of Liverpool – hereafter ISM – important questions emerged: what is the perspective of enslaved Africans' descendants towards the ISM, the most award-winning slavery museum in the world? Can people of the African Diaspora recognize their own history and cultures in the way they are displayed by a European institution – or did the ISM translate them within an exclusively Western conceptual system? To investigate these questions, I tried to acquire an alternative *reading* of the ISM: a substantial number of students (90) from three different universities in Angola experienced the Museum in a virtual tour, and provided their response through free debate and the support of a handout.

The initial intention of the survey was to involve students from the universities in Luanda, who may have also visited the *Museu da Escravatura*, i.e. the Angolan national slavery museum. However, there were considerable difficulties at the outset in engaging with Angolan universities: after months spent in attempts to persuade a number of institutions – about ten – four agreed to participate: the Universities of Benguela Katyavala Bwila and Jean Piaget – respectively public and private –, the public University of Saurimo Lueji A. Nkonde, and the private University of Huambo Sol Nascente. There were many difficulties encountered in carrying out the fieldwork – the research topic, of course, was in itself delicate and controversial. For this or other reasons, unfortunately one of the four meetings failed to transpire: on the appointed date, nobody attended

the session at the University of Sol Nascente. Nevertheless, these difficulties gave a new dimension to the study revealing some important social, cultural and political issues of present-day Angola.

The target groups for the fieldwork were Angolan students from the faculties of sociology and history – unfortunately, it was not possible to recruit students from the faculties of anthropology and languages. The meetings, however, were open to anyone. The participants virtually visited the ISM through a selection of pictures, videos and texts from the Liverpool exhibition, assembled in a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation tried to recreate the original atmosphere of the museum, and, exactly like the museum, it was divided into sections: each section was numbered, and each slide of the section, in turn, was identified with a letter. All the students participating in the meeting had a handout in which they were asked to write their age and course of study, while their name and surname were optional. The handouts gave a code for each slide, so that during the presentation, the students could tick and comment on the slides which affected them most. At the end of the handout an extra blank space was left for them to write down anything they wanted – a free comment, a poem, a drawing.

Considering the historical and emotional aspects involved, the three meetings were conducted in the shared national tongue – Portuguese – so that the participants could use their language to express their feelings and impressions freely on such a delicate subject. From the results of the survey, it can be evinced that the ISM received considerable appreciation and approval – only four students considered the ISM to be too ‘European’ in its modes and narrations or not representative enough for their culture. At the same time, however, in the responses of the participants the evident and shared *desire*, and *necessity*, to *rewrite* their own history could be read: putting together the preferences of all the students of the three universities, one cannot overlook the fact that 47% of the participants marked with an X the slide reporting the panel with Patrice Lumumba’s quote: “Africa will write its own history, and it will be, to the north and to the south of the Sahara, a history of glory and dignity”. As a matter of fact, although most of the students seemed to be generally pleased that the history of enslaved Africans was exhibited in a Museum, at the same time they felt deprived of a past and heritage that was brought to the West and that belongs to the West, since the latter controls its sources: “It’s with pleasure that we Africans will rewrite our own history, but to do it it’s necessary to facilitate the access to the sources, and most of them are in Europe. Thank you.” (anonymous, 30 years, University of Benguela *Katyavala Bwila*).

Through this fieldwork, conducted in three Universities of Benguela and Saurimo, the Western visitors to the International Slavery Museum of Liverpool have been silenced, while the voices of an exclusively African audience have been finally listened to and contemplated (Ficarra 135). This sort of capsizing of interpretative perspective offered an alternative reading of the award-winning slavery museum in this British port city. Such an inversion of the meaning-making process appeared to be especially fitting, above all in the light of the museum’s policy itself, whereby the Liverpool institution aims to be a vehicle of social change and a political campaigner in the field of human rights

(Benjamin 32). Furthermore, social and political aspects seeped into the research, and it was extremely significant that ten people entirely copied the statement of Ken Saro-Wiwa quoted on a panel of the ISM “to take away the resources of the people and refuse to give them anything in return is to subject them to slavery” on their handouts without daring to comment on it freely in front of the Governor’s spokesman: it was sad evidence that, as one of the students wrote down, “we are still slaves, only in a different way”. They are possibly still enslaved by their politics, or by the ashes of the civil war, or even by the slavery of their ancestors. The unwelcome and absolutely inappropriate presence of political personalities in the meeting; the consequent silence in the classrooms during the free debate; the praise for the ISM and the resignation of the students who took for granted the paucity of their National Slavery Museum; the expressed desire to have the Liverpool Museum in Luanda and the unexpressed bravery in asking why their National Slavery Museum is not equipped like the Liverpool one – all these signals suggested a sort of enslavement of the minds lingering in the classrooms. Present-day Angola perfectly embodies the enduring effects of five centuries of slavery oppression: the endemic political corruption; the unfair distribution of wealth; the natural resources devoured by multinational corporations; the population manipulated by the dominant political party and by Western channels of entertainment aimed merely at distracting people from its controversial and problematic reality.

In remembering a guilty, mortifying past, present-day museums’ social mission is not merely the individualization of the perpetrators, nor the commemoration of the victims, nor the creation of self-reflective visitors: present-day museums have to generate a new “historical awareness, that might form the basis for a movement towards social justice” (Wallace 65). A study conducted in 2017 within the NAAU project (National Awareness, Attitudes, and Usage Study) revealed that museums, besides being considered highly credible sources of information, are also trusted as official and unquestionable entities: in the USA, museums are more credible than daily newspapers, NGOs and federal agencies (Dilenschneider). People interviewed in the same study also claimed that museums should suggest or recommend certain behaviours or ways for the general public to support their causes and missions – thus confirming the increasing importance of post-museums as forums for community engagement.

The past needs to be discovered, and discussed, as do its relations to present-day inequalities and oppressions; meaningful connections between human rights violations of the past and economic and social inequalities of today have to be considered: on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020, in his message for the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade – which has been celebrated annually since 2007 – the UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for the dismantling of racist structures and the reforming of racist institutions. Guterres recalled how the transatlantic slave trade seeded deep inequalities within societies and how the descendants of enslaved people are nowadays experiencing enduring acts of intolerance, prejudice and discrimination and facing social and economic inequality. The theme for this year’s International Day of Remembrance was in fact “Confronting Slavery’s Legacy

of Racism Together”, i.e. an urgent call to reflect on connections between past and present – post-museums, as places of encounter par excellence, have to be ready to take up the call.

More voices have to be heard – voices from the ground, marginal voices, voices who speak uncommon languages – and much more reflection has to be stimulated. An encouragement to the expression of multiple minor voices can be the digital translation of the ISM itself: if the ISM were virtually visitable from all over the world and translated into different languages, minor voices would be recognized, and would finally find a place to read, to be read, and to react by offering their perspective, so far unheard. The above-mentioned case study itself implied a translation: the plain English used in the panels of the ISM exhibition was translated into Portuguese, a European language shared nationally, but not ethnically. An essential choice, yet one which almost embodies the perpetuation of a colonial action. Only by including the unheard voices may the tragedy of slavery finally be translated: for example, reading the history of slavery told in the language of the oppressed instead in that of the oppressors, or recalling the atrocious facts through songs and drumbeats instead of through motionless display cases. This action of reversing the historical narrative has been successfully taken by the Digital Museum of African and Afro-Brazilian Memory, a digital museum aiming at preserving and disseminating the knowledge and memory of African art and culture and the heritage of the Global South in general (Sansone 261). The Digital Museum presents itself as a democratizing place, where constructions of identity are constantly produced, marginalized groups are given voice and recognized, and local, national and international connections are created. In view of its technological nature, it is a free museum, accessible, dynamic and interactive.

If language, instead of being a mere part of a culture, is also a vehicle which reflects the culture itself, then the act of translation can wait, and be replaced by the act of restitution.

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**[ linguistics  
and translation  
studies ]**



# [ Intermediate EFL Students' Self-Assessment of Phonetically Difficult Words in English ]

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**[Abstract]** *This article presents a study that investigates a series of words in English that university students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the intermediate level of EFL proficiency (henceforth – participants) find difficult to pronounce. The present study aims at soliciting the participants' individual lists of phonetically difficult words and comments upon why these words are challenging to pronounce. The results of the quantitative analysis indicate that phonetically difficult words are associated with the segmental elements that are absent in the phonological inventory of the Norwegian language, the participants' first language. These findings are presented and discussed in the article.*

**[Keywords]** *English as a Foreign Language (EFL); intermediate level of EFL proficiency; phonetically difficult words (PDWs)*

## [1] Introduction

This article presents and discusses a study that aims at establishing a set of English words that university students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) whose first language (L1) is Norwegian consider difficult to pronounce in their oral discourse. The focus of the study is on phonetically difficult words (henceforth – PDWs) that pose challenges to a group of university EFL students (henceforth – participants) on the intermediate level of proficiency, i.e. B1/B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2011). From a theoretical perspective, the present study is embedded in Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2011) approach to the subjective evaluation of PDWs by EFL students. The approach proposed by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) involves attention to how intermediate EFL students self-assess their difficulties with English suprasegmentals, inclusive of PDWs.

Informed by Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2011) methodology, the present study aims at identifying PDWs in the participants' oral discourse by means of soliciting their self-assessment of PDWs in English. Self-assessment is a well-researched topic in applied linguistics and EFL studies (Kissling & O'Donnell, 2015; Muñoz & Álvarez, 2007; O'Brien, 2019; Sánchez et al., 2019; Sardegna & McGregor, 2013; Strachan, Kennedy, & Trofimovich, 2019; Uchida & Sugimoto, 2019). In general, the term self-assessment is defined as “a judgment of own level of performance” (Raaijmakers et al., 2019: 21). In applied linguistics, self-assessment is regarded as learners' ability to provide evaluation of their own current performance and juxtapose it with their desired performance (Kissling & O'Donnell, 2015). In relation to PDWs, self-assessment in the present study is regarded as EFL learners' ability i) to evaluate whether or not their pronunciation of certain English words deviates from the expected standard pronunciation and results in errors in pronunciation, and ii) to identify the causes of the deviation. Such an approach to self-assessment regarding PDWs is in line with the prior literature which argues that self-assessment is involved in EFL learners' language awareness, beliefs, and attitudes associated with the language learning process (Sardegna, Lee, & Kusey, 2018, p. 84).

Whilst there is a substantial body of previous research on self-assessment in applied linguistics, little is known about self-assessment in relation to pronunciation practices in EFL (Nugteren et al., 2018; Sardegna, Lee, & Kusey, 2018). The study presented and discussed in this article seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge concerning EFL learners' self-assessment of PDWs as a part of their pronunciation behaviour and practices. This article is structured as follows. First, previous research associated with PDWs in EFL studies will be outlined (sub-section 1.1). Second, EFL teaching and learning in Norway will be presented (sub-section 1.2). Thereafter, the present study will be introduced and discussed (section 2). Finally, the article will be concluded with a summary of the major findings and their linguo-didactic implications (section 3).

## [1.1] Previous research associated with PDWs in EFL studies

Previous research associated with PDWs in EFL studies is represented by seminal publications by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011; 2012; 2013), Nowacka (2018), and Sobkowiak (2004; 2000). Given that the present study is based upon research methodology proposed by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), it seems pertinent to focus the meta-analysis of prior research on her approach to PDWs in EFL learners' oral discourse. One of the principal arguments made by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) involves a contention that PDWs are “highly detrimental to successful communication in that they significantly decrease the speaker's comprehensibility and intelligibility” (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2011, p. 286). Another argument that is present in Szpyra-Kozłowska's research (2011) is based upon the assumption that PDWs are associated with phonological misrepresentations and interference factors.

Following these assumptions, Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) conducted an experimental study with Polish L1 intermediate EFL learners, who were requested to provide a list of PDWs and comment on them (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2011, p. 286). The results of Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2011) investigation indicate that PDWs are associated with the following variables: i) spelling-based forms (e.g. *tough*, *enough*); ii) phonetic false friends (e.g. English *pan* vs. Polish *pan*); iii) word stress (e.g. *'guitar* vs. *guit'ar*, *'hotel*, vs. *hot'el*); iv) difficult consonant clusters (e.g. *three*, *throw*); v) longer words (e.g. *picturesque*, *quotation*); vi) liquids (e.g. *murderers*, *portray*); vii) alternating forms (e.g. *society* vs. *social*); and viii) high front vowels (e.g. *preceding*, *repeating*). Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) interprets these findings as highlighting a need to focus on the pronunciation of words rather than individual English sounds in EFL teaching and learning.

In another study, Szpyra-Kozłowska (2012) assumes that PDWs are caused by their incorrect phonological storage in the learners' phonetic memory. In order to empirically investigate this assumption, she instructed a group of advanced EFL learners to read and record a set of sentences with 80 PDWs. The experimental aim is to identify sources of PDWs in order to establish their hierarchy, and to juxtapose the participants' subjective evaluation of PDWs with the use of PDWs in the learners' actual speech production. The results of the analysis indicate that false friends, e.g. *gigantic* and *Disney*, are particularly difficult for Polish L1 advanced EFL learners to pronounce. In terms of difficulty, false friends are followed by spelling (e.g. *hideous*, *thoroughly*) and alternating forms (e.g. *courteous*, *advantageous*). Notably, consonant clusters (e.g. *throws*), liquids (e.g. *regularly*) and long words (e.g. *congratulatory*) do not appear to cause significant problems to advanced EFL learners. Concurrently with these data, Szpyra-Kozłowska (2012) examines the subjective evaluation of the factors that contribute to the degree of difficulty in PDWs. These factors are i) length (e.g. *unintelligibility*), ii) low frequency of occurrence (e.g. *satisfactorily*), iii) the presence of *th + s* clusters (e.g. *sixths*), and iv) spelling (e.g. *thoroughly*).

Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2012) contention that PDWs appear to be detrimental to communication is further investigated in an experimental study that examined English L1 speakers' judgements concerning suprasegmental and segmental inaccuracies (Szpyra-

-Kozłowska, 2013). The aim of that study was to elucidate how PDWs in oral discourse in English by adult Polish L1 EFL speakers are evaluated by English L1 interlocutors as far as comprehensibility and intelligibility are concerned. The results of the evaluation analysis indicate that English L1 speakers consider PDWs in Polish EFL speakers' speech to be barely intelligible, hindering communication, and irritating (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2013).

It should be noted that Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2013) approach towards PDWs in EFL is concomitant with the research agenda formulated by Sobkowiak (2004; 2000; 1996). In particular, Sobkowiak (2004; 2000; 1996) analyses PDWs through the lens of measuring the lexico-phonetic difficulty of English lexical items. Sobkowiak (2004) compiles a phonetic difficulty index that involves such measures as i) salient grapho-phonemic difficulties that Polish L1 EFL learners encounter whilst reading in English; ii) the most common phonemic L1-interference problems; and iii) interference pronunciation errors. Sobkowiak's (2004) phonetic difficulty index is currently programmed as a computer algorithm. According to Sobkowiak (2004), it can be used for querying electronic dictionaries, as well as for semi-automatic pronunciation exercises in EFL settings.

Whereas Sobkowiak's (2004) approach towards PDWs appears to focus on lexico-phonetic difficulties, Nowacka (2018) addresses the issue of PDWs within the context of the relationship between local and global errors in spelling on the one hand and EFL pronunciation instruction on the other hand. Nowacka (2018) argues that PDWs that are caused by English spelling are not L1-specific, but universal. In order to verify this assumption, Nowacka (2018) tested university students of English who hail from different L1 backgrounds, such as Kazakh, Malay, Polish, Turkish, Tajik, and Ukrainian. They were instructed to read and record a number of PDWs taken from a prior study conducted by Sobkowiak (1996). In a separate session, the students were requested to listen to the PDWs and choose the correct spelling from the list provided. Nowacka (2018) reports several patterns that appear to cause problems with PDWs to the majority of students regardless of their L1. They are represented by the mispronunciation of suffixes (e.g. *-ous*, *-age*, and *-ate*) and mute consonant letters (e.g. *comb*) (Nowacka, 2018, p. 463).

It is evident from the meta-analysis of the prior literature that there is a wealth of research associated with PDWs in EFL learners' oral discourse. However, little is currently known about PDWs that cause problems to Norwegian L1 intermediate EFL learners (Rugesæter, 2014). The study described in this article seeks to generate new knowledge concerning PDWs in Norwegian L1 EFL learners' oral discourse in English. However, prior to proceeding to the study, it seems relevant to outline the context of EFL teaching and learning in Norway.

## [1.2] EFL teaching and learning in Norway

In Norway, there is a growing tendency to regard English as a second language rather than a foreign language (Busby, 2018, p. 3). Being able to communicate in English is seen as a vital skill in Norway, since "Norwegians need English both to work and live in Norway, to communicate with native and non-native speakers around the world, and to

participate in higher education” (Rindal, 2014, p. 9). As far as the teaching and learning of English in Norway is concerned, it is a compulsory subject for all students from Year 1 onwards. English is introduced early in primary school starting from the age of six, “so that all children will have studied the language for at least 6 years when leaving lower secondary school” (Olsen, 1999, p. 192). By the time 16-year-old Norwegian EFL learners start upper secondary school, “they have on average reached an upper-intermediate proficiency level (CEFR B1/B2)” (Bøhn, 2018).

EFL learners at Norwegian upper secondary schools are usually referred to as proficient users of English (Busby, 2018; Rindal, 2014). Arguably, their ease of learning English is facilitated by Norwegian, their L1 (Busby, 2018; Rindal, 2014; Olsen, 1999), since both English and Norwegian are Germanic languages that share similarities in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, especially as far the presence of diphthongs in both languages is concerned (Johansson, 2002). Another variable that aids the learning of English is related to extensive daily exposure to the English language via various media, especially television, the internet, and English-mediated social networks (Busby, 2018, p. 3).

The teaching and learning of English in Norway is based upon standards that involve several competence aims (Udir, 2019). These aims address i) language and language learning; ii) communication; iii) culture, society, and literature (Udir, 2019). In terms of the basic skills, EFL learners are expected to be able i) to express themselves in writing and orally; ii) to read in English; iii) to calculate in English; and iv) to use digital tools in English. Whereas the development of oral skills is prioritised, the teaching and learning of English pronunciation does not seem to play a central role in the development of communicative competences of a Norwegian L1 EFL learner (Drew, Oostdam, & Han van Toorenburg, 2007). It can be summarised that on the one hand there is a seemingly epiphenomenal status of English pronunciation in Norwegian EFL contexts, yet on the other hand this is concurrent with the typological closeness of the phonological systems of English and Norwegian, which “makes it rare for the problems to be so severe that communication breaks down” (Rugesæter, 2012, p. 121). This observation begs the question whether or not Norwegian L1 EFL learners on the intermediate B1/B2 levels of proficiency (Council of Europe, 2011) would have PDWs in their oral discourse in English. In the following section of the article, an empirical study will be presented that aims to elucidate how Norwegian L1 intermediate EFL learners self-assess their possible PDWs and provide reflections on their causes.

## [2] The present study

As mentioned above, it has been observed in the literature that Norwegian L1 EFL learners are proficient in English due to a host of variables, e.g. the typological proximity between English and Norwegian, out-of-classroom exposure to the English language, and the prestigious status of English in Norway (Busby, 2018; Rindal, 2014). Concurrently with this observation, however, the current literature in EFL studies reports a notable lack of focus on the explicit teaching of English pronunciation in Norwegian EFL contexts

(Rugesæter, 2012). Taking these observations into account, the following research question has been formulated:

RQ: Would Norwegian L1 intermediate EFL learners experience PDWs in their oral discourse in English?

In order to investigate this research question, this study seeks to follow the methodological premises formulated by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), who employs a self-assessment approach towards PDWs in oral discourse by intermediate EFL learners. Two hypotheses are formulated in the present study. Hypothesis 1 is based upon a study by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), who argues that PDWs may be a universal phenomenon and may eventuate regardless of EFL learners' L1. Furthermore, Hypothesis 1 factors in those studies (Rugesæter, 2014) which indicate that pronunciation does not play a substantial role in EFL teaching and learning in Norway – which, consequently, might lead to errors associated with the mispronunciation of segmentals and suprasegmentals by Norwegian L1 intermediate EFL learners. Following Hypothesis 1, it was hypothesised in this study that there would be a range of PDWs that the participants consider problematic to pronounce in their oral discourse in English.

In contrast to Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2 involves the contention that Norwegian L1 EFL learners generally manifest a substantial level of EFL proficiency due to a host of variables (Rindal, 2014). Following this contention, it was theorised in Hypothesis 2 that the participants would not identify PDWs in their oral discourse in English due to the lack of problems associated with English pronunciation. Based upon these two hypotheses and the research question, the following specific research aims are formulated:

- [i] to establish the frequency of self-assessed PDWs in the participants' oral discourse in English;
- [ii] to identify the self-reported causes of PDWs in the participants' oral discourse in English.

It should perhaps be reiterated that the present study focuses upon the participants' self-assessment of the PDWs which they think they find difficult to pronounce rather than the objective assessment of the words that they pronounce with difficulty.

## [2.1] Participants

The study involves 18 participants (10 females, 8 males, mean age = 22, standard deviation = 7.7). All participants are first-year university students who are enrolled in the English programme at a regional university in Norway. The participants' L1 is Norwegian, and English is a foreign language to all of them. There are neither bilinguals nor English L1 speakers among the participants.

The participants are estimated to be on the intermediate B1/B2 level of proficiency in English according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2011). As far as the participants' English proficiency level is concerned, the following should be explained. In Norway, there

are no university entrance exams in English, and prospective students are admitted to university programmes based upon the grades from their school-leaving exams. Norwegian secondary school leavers are expected to pass their school-leaving exam in English on the B1/B2 levels of proficiency.

The participants were requested to sign a Consent form that allows the author of the present article to process, analyse and publish the participants' written data for scientific purposes. To ensure confidentiality, the participants' real names are coded. The following coding scheme is used here: P (as in participant) followed by a number (thus P1, P2, P3... P18).

## [2.2] Methods and procedure

The methodological premises in the present study are based upon research methodology described in Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011). In accordance with that methodology, the participants were requested to reflect in writing upon those English words that they find difficult to pronounce in their oral communication in English. The participants were asked to write down those words (PDWs) and indicate what they consider to be a possible cause and/or causes of the difficulty associated with PDWs (see Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2011).

As far as the procedure in the present study is concerned, the participants were given two weeks to write their reflections upon PDWs and the accompanying comments concerning the cause and/or causes of the PDWs. Given that reflective practices associated with PDWs require a high level of self-awareness, a sufficient command of English, as well as knowledge of English phonetics, the procedure was embedded in the mid-course part of a course in English phonetics after the participants had studied the phonological system of English, peculiarities of articulation in English, and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). In order to facilitate the compilation of the list of PDWs, the participants were advised by me to monitor their own speech output in English (inclusive of classroom discussions, answers to questions, and reading aloud) during their seminars in English phonetics, functional grammar of English, English literature, and English and American civilisation. In addition, it was suggested that the participants should monitor their spontaneous speech in English and oral out-of-classroom discourse in English. The participants were instructed to write down instances of PDWs in the aforementioned situations associated with the oral use of the English language in the form of the list and to comment upon the PDWs in terms of what they perceive as the cause(s) of the PDWs. Once the written reflections were ready, the participants were asked to send them electronically to me.

## [2.3] Corpus

The corpus of the participants' PDWs comprises 107 tokens exclusive of the participants' comments and reflections upon the causes of PDWs. The analysis of the corpus using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, 2011) yielded the descriptive statistics of PDWs per group of participants, which are summarised in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of the Corpus of PDWs

N	Statistical Measure	Statistical Values
1	Total N	107
2	Mean	5.8
3	Standard deviation	3.8
4	Minimum	2
5	Maximum	15

## [2.4] Results and discussion

In relation to the research question in the present study, it is evident from the results of the data analysis that all participants report the presence of PDWs in their oral discourse in English. As seen in Table 1, PDWs range from 2 to 15 per individual participant (mean PDWs = 5.8). These findings are in contrast to Hypothesis 2, which is based upon the assumption that the participants would not report PDWs in their oral discourse due to the absence of such PDWs. Hence, hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Judging from the data, Hypothesis 1 is supported by the present findings. In particular, it is assumed in Hypothesis 1 that there would be a range of PDWs that the participants consider problematic to pronounce in their oral discourse in English. The analysis of the corpus in SPSS has yielded the frequency of the PDWs per group of participants. The frequency of occurrence of PDWs in the corpus is shown in Table 2, commencing with the most frequent PDWs (N = 4) and concluding with those PDWs that occur once in the corpus (N = 1). In each frequency band, the PDWs are presented in alphabetical order.

**Table 2.** Frequency of PDWs in the Corpus

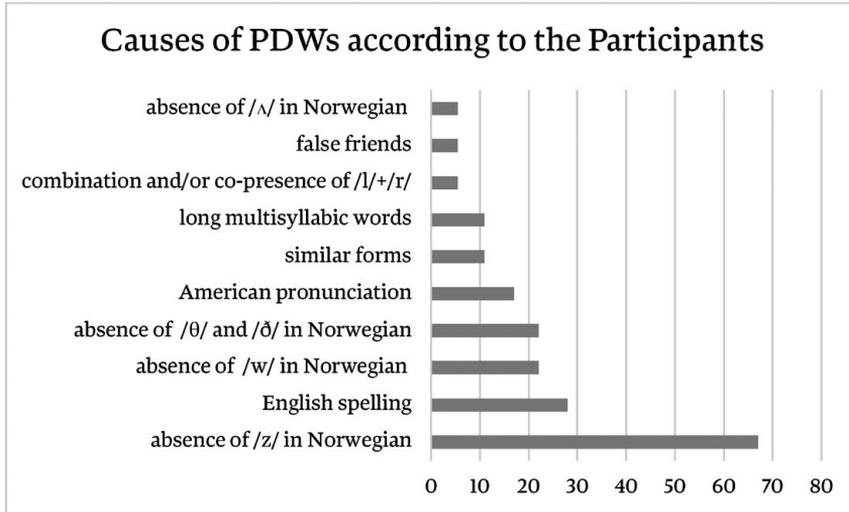
N	N of occurrence	PDWs
1	N = 4	<i>Three</i>
2	N = 3	<i>Stairs</i>
3	N = 2	<i>Colonel, eyes, lettuce, queue, this, thinking, very, was, words</i>
4	N = 1	<i>Accountable, Americans, as, bemused, benches, birthday, blood, bowl, boys, buzz, calligraphy, certificate, choir, clothes, comfortable, compartmentalisation, contains, confederate, country, courteous, crunched, dispensation, doors, earthquake, ears, easel, eaves, fire extinguisher, foreign, generation, gins, glistened, graves, hands, his, Italians, knowledge, literature, mountains, names, nickers, nose, obliterated, particularly, pins, please, preface, radar, rarely, regularly, representatives, ridges, seventies, shoes, sloth, southern, squirrel, steak, strange, surface, there, they, that, thin, throat, through, thus, torture, turkey, valuable, vegetables, vest, war, water, went, west, wife, will, zero, zip, zoo</i>

The analysis of the participants' comments and their reflections upon the causes of difficulties associated with their respective PDWs in oral discourse in English yielded several reasons for the occurrence of PDWs. These reasons are summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Participants' Comments upon the Causes of PDWs in Their Oral Discourse

N	Comments concerning the causes of PDWs	Examples	Percentage of participants who made the comment
1	The absence of the English consonant sound [z] in Norwegian	[æs] instead of [æz] in <i>as</i>	67%
2	English spelling	[blud] instead of [blʌd] in <i>blood</i>	28%
3	The absence of the inter-dental consonant sounds [θ] and [ð] in Norwegian	[bɜ:sdeɪ] instead of [bɜ:θdeɪ] in <i>birthday</i>	22%
4	The absence of the bilabial English [w] sound in Norwegian resulting in the substitution of [w] for [v] and vice versa	[west] instead of [vest] in <i>vest</i>	22%
5	American English pronunciation of the PDW whereas the participants prefer and speak British English	[ˈlɪtrətʃər] instead of [ˈlɪtrətʃə] in <i>literature</i>	17%
6	Diphthongs instead of monophthongs due to similar forms	[ˈnəʊledʒ] instead of [ˈnɒlɪdʒ] in <i>knowledge</i>	11%
7	Long words	[ˈfaɪər ɪˈstɪŋɪʃər] instead of [ˈfaɪər ɪkˈstɪŋwɪʃə] in <i>fire extinguisher</i>	11%
8	The combination and/or co-presence of consonant sounds [l]+[r]	[ˈreʒulɪ] instead of [ˈreʒjuləlɪ] in <i>regularly</i>	5.5%
9	Similarly written words in Norwegian and English (false friends)	[ˈtɔ:tʃə] instead of [ˈtɔ:tʃə] in <i>torture</i>	5.5%
10	The absence of the English short vowel sound [ʌ] in Norwegian	[ˈkɒntri] instead of [ˈkʌntri] in <i>country</i>	5.5%

As seen in Table 3, the causes that are listed by the participants with regard to the occurrence of PDWs in their oral discourse in English seem to be unequally distributed. Whereas the majority of participants tend to see the major cause of PDWs as the absence of the consonant [z] in their L1, Norwegian, there are also less frequent reasons that are thought to account for the occurrence of PDWs (see Figure 1 below). In Figure 1, the causes of PDWs are plotted in the form of the percentages of participants who explicitly refer to the causes of PDWs in their comments and reflections.

**Figure 1.** Causes of PDWs according to the Participants

Further in this sub-section of the article, attention will be focused upon a discussion of the causes to which the participants attribute the PDWs in their oral discourse in English, starting with the most frequent causes of PDWs and concluding with the relatively minor ones.

#### [2.4.1] The absence of the English consonant sound [z] in Norwegian as a cause of PDWs

It is evident from Table 3 and Figure 1 that 67% of all participants refer to the absence of the consonant sound [z] in their L1, Norwegian, as one of the main causes of PDWs in their oral discourse in English. The participants' most frequent PDWs that contain the consonant sound [z] are as follows: *stairs* (N = 3), *eyes* (N = 2), and *was* (N = 2). Additionally, there are less frequent PDWs with [z] that occur once in the corpus, for instance *as*, *Americans*, *bemused*, *benches*, *boys*, *buzz*, *contains*, *doors*, *ears*, *easel*, *eaves*, *gins*, *graves*, *hands*, *his*, *Italians*, *mountains*, *names*, *nickers*, *nose*, *pins*, *please*, *representatives*, *ridges*, *seventies*, *shoes*, *words*, *zero*, *zip*, and *zoo*. In contrast to these findings, the participants in Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) do not seem to self-assess the English consonant sound [z] as a significant cause of pronunciation difficulties in their speech in English. This can be explained by the presence of the minimal pair [s] – [z] in the Polish language, the participants' L1 (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2011). In the present study, however, the PDWs that eventuate due to the lack of [z] in the participants' L1 constitute 36% of the entire corpus of PWDs in the corpus.

To reiterate, 67% of participants deem the absence of the consonant sound [z] in their L1 to be a major source of PDWs. Moreover, the participants provide a substantial number of examples of PDWs with [z]. In this regard, it seems pertinent to exemplify this finding by the following quote, e.g. "The word 'seventies' I pronounce as ['sevəntɪs]

and not [‘sevəntɪz]. It is also a very common mistake made by most Norwegians” (Participant P 13). It should be noted that the quote represents typical comments made by the participants concerning PDWs with the English consonant sound [z]. Usually, the participants explain the causes of PDWs with [z] by referring to the absence of this consonant in the phonological system of Norwegian.

#### [2.4.2] English spelling as a cause of PDWs

Another frequent cause of PDWs is ascribed by 28% of all participants to the English spelling system. The PDWs whose sources of difficulty are attributed to spelling are *colonel* (N = 2), *lettuce* (N = 2), *queue* (N = 2), and a number of PDWs that occur once, e.g. *blood*, *bowl*, *choir*, *calligraphy*, *courteous*, *glistened*, and *steak*. These findings are in accordance with the results reported by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), who established that the participants in her study referred to spelling-based forms as one of the major sources of PDWs. Similarly to the participants in Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), the participants in the present investigation observed that mute letters pose difficulties to their understanding of how to pronounce words that contain them. For instance, one of the participants indicated that the PDW *queue* is challenging to pronounce, because “I try pronouncing all the letters at once but in this word -eue gets pronounced with a [u]” (Participant 7).

#### [2.4.3] The absence of the bilabial English [w] sound in Norwegian as a cause of PDWs

The absence of the bilabial consonant sound [w] in the participants' L1 appears to result in those PDWs that are characterised by the substitution of [w] for [v] and vice versa. According to the participants, these PDWs are *squirrel*, *very*, *vest*, *war*, *water*, *went*, *west*, *wife*, and *will*. Typically, 22% of those participants who mention this cause of PDWs refer to confusion on their part as far as the pronunciation of the word-initial [w] is concerned in e.g. *water* and *went*, where [w] is substituted by [v]. Concurrently with this phenomenon, the participants indicate that they experience difficulties with PDWs that contain the word-initial [v], as in *very* and *vest*. In those PDWs the participants tend to substitute [w] for [v], as illustrated by the comments made by Participant P 6, e.g. “I am, like many other Norwegians, used to the two letters making the same sound, the ‘w’ sound comes more natural than its ‘v’ counterpart”.

Another case is represented by the PDW *squirrel*, whose difficulty rests with the three-consonant cluster [skw]. In this regard, participant P 17 indicates that “the [skw] sound combination is highly unusual”. It is evident from the participants' comments that the absence of the bilabial sound [w] in the Norwegian language contributes to participants' inability to differentiate between the contrast [w] – [v], which, in turn, results in PDWs that contain the word-initial bilabial sound [w].

#### [2.4.4] The absence of the inter-dental consonant sounds [θ] and [ð] in Norwegian as a cause of PDWs

The results of the data analysis reveal that 22% of all participants regard the absence of the interdental consonants [θ] and [ð] in Norwegian as a cause of PDWs in their speech in English. In particular, they illustrate this cause by the PDWs *three* (N = 4), *this* (N = 2), *thinking* (N = 2), as well as some PDWs that occur once in the corpus, e.g. *birthday*, *clothes*, *sloth*, *that*, *there*, *they*, *thin*, *throat*, *through* and *thus*. These findings lend support to Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), who notes similar problems experienced by Polish L1 EFL learners on the intermediate level of proficiency. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the inter-dental consonants [θ] and [ð] are often referred to in the literature as a potential source of pronunciation difficulties encountered by EFL learners whose L1 does not contain interdentals (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Mueller, 2019). The latter observation is illustrated by the comments made by Participant P 8, who indicates that “My common mistake is to replace the sounds [θ] and [ð] with [t] and [d]”. Whereas the participant notices a certain amelioration of her pronunciation difficulties that are associated with the interdental consonants, she admits that the PDWs containing interdentals seem to persist in her oral discourse in English. Notably, it is observed in the present data that the majority of PDWs with interdentals contain the English interdental consonants [θ] and [ð] in the word-initial position (for instance *that*, *there*, *they*, *thinking*, *thin*, *this*, *three*, and *thus*), whilst other positions in PDWs seem to be epiphenomenal (e.g. *birthday*, *clothes*, and *sloth*).

#### [2.4.5] PDWs associated with American pronunciation of the words in the participant's otherwise British English as a cause of PDWs

It is seen in Table 3 that 17% of all participants indicate that there are PDWs in their oral discourse which are accounted for by the insertion of American English (AmE) pronunciation into their British English (BrE). In other words, whereas the participants prefer BrE and typically use this variety of English in their communication, they report that there are several PDWs which they find difficult to pronounce in BrE and so they consistently pronounce them in AmE. These PDWs are *words* (N = 2), *literature* (N = 1), *southern* (N = 1). To illustrate this finding, let us consider the following explanation written by Participant P 3, who indicates that “While my preferred variety of the English language is British, the tendency to pronounce the letter [r] much like in the American variety is a problem”. Presumably, the participant experiences an intrusion of AmE which is subjectively perceived as a problem that compromises oral communication in BrE. These findings differ from those of Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), where this phenomenon is not reported. To reiterate, the sources of pronunciation difficulties that are self-assessed by the participants in the study by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) comprise spelling-based forms, false friends, word stress, difficult consonant clusters, longer words, liquids, alternating forms, and high front vowels. There is no reference in Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) to varieties of the English language as a potential cause of PDWs.

A possible explanation of the findings in the present study could be provided by several variables, such as the high level of EFL skills exhibited by Norwegian EFL learners (Busby, 2018). Arguably, the participants are aware of the differences between AmE and BrE due to their substantial out-of-classroom exposure to these varieties via travel, mass media, computer games, English-medium social websites, etc. Given that the participants and EFL learners in Norway in general are exposed to authentic AmE and BrE input on a daily basis, they are presumably aware of the differences between these two major varieties and are eager to use one variety consistently. Consequently, when the participants encounter a word in AmE in their otherwise BrE, they treat this word as a PDW. Another variable consists in the approach to EFL teaching and learning in Norway, which is characterised by EFL learners' freedom to choose their preferred variety of English and, concurrently, by the EFL teachers' liberty to conduct lessons in their preferred Inner Circle variety of English (Rindal, 2014). Arguably, the freedom to choose one's variety of English, typically an Inner Circle variety such as AmE or BrE, feeds into EFL learners' awareness of the differences among the varieties and maps onto their choice of variety. It is inferred from the participants' comments that they try to use their preferred varieties of English, e.g. BrE, consistently, hence any deviation from the consistent use is regarded by the participants as a PDW. Another possible explanation of these PDWs could involve two aspects that exert their influence simultaneously on the participants, namely the influence of AmE on aural perception as well as the interference of the spelling, i.e. visual perception.

#### **[2.4.6] Diphthongs instead of monophthongs due to similarities in form as a cause of PDWs**

The analysis of the participants' comments and reflections upon PDWs indicates that 11% of them seem to associate the causes of PDWs with the morphological similarities between a PDW and a cognate word. The participants argue that some PDWs seem to resemble morphologically similar words that are pronounced differently, for instance *accountable*, *certificate*, *comfortable*, *knowledge*, *confederate*, *preface*, *surface*, *turkey*, *valuable* and *vegetables*. Typically, the participants comment upon the aforementioned PDWs as problematic to pronounce due to their resemblance to a cognate. For instance, Participant P2 refers to the PDW *preface* by commenting that "I used to pronounce it [pri:feɪs], and I believe this comes from word separation and composite word rules in Norwegian interfering with my understanding of the English pronunciation" (Participant P 2). These findings are in line with those of Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), who observes an analogous phenomenon in her corpus of PDWs. Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) notes that alternating forms due to similarities in morphology cause substantial problems to Polish L1 intermediate EFL learners. Judging from these findings, it is possible to assume that similarities in the form of the words, and particularly word morphology, could be a source of pronunciation difficulties irrespective of the EFL learners' L1s. Obviously, more empirical studies are needed to verify this assumption.

### [2.4.7] Long words as a cause of PDWs

As reported by 11% of participants, long words appear to cause problems with the pronunciation of PDWs such as *compartmentalisation*, *dispensation*, *earthquake*, *fire extinguisher*, *obliterated*, and *strangeness*. Whilst the participants subjectively perceive the aforementioned PDWs as long, there are disyllabic words among them, such as *earthquake* and *strangeness*. Specifically, the participants regard the disyllabic PDWs *earthquake* and *strangeness* as long words and point to the length of the word as a cause of the pronunciation difficulties. These findings are in agreement with those of Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), who uses the term “longer words” in this context. In the present study, the participants’ view of long words as a source of pronunciation difficulty could be accounted for by the relatively low frequency of the aforementioned words. Several participants indicated that they rarely use polysyllabic words and tend to use monosyllabic and/or disyllabic words. Presumably, the participants’ predominant use of monosyllabic words in their oral communication in English is concomitant with the difficulties that they experience with the so-called “longer words” in the sense posited by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011). Obviously, it is beyond the scope of the present paper to expand upon this assumption, since more participants and more studies would be needed in order to do so.

### [2.4.8] Less frequent causes of PDWs: the co-presence of [l] + [r], false friends, and the absence of the short vowel sound [ʌ] in Norwegian

The cause of PDWs that is associated with the combination and co-presence of [l] + [r] is reported by one participant (5.5% of all participants) in the PDWs *particularly*, *rarely*, and *regularly*. These PDWs are not frequent in the corpus (N = 1). Concerning the co-presence of [l] + [r] in a PDW, one of the participants indicates that such PDWs as *regularly*, *particularly* and *rarely* are associated with difficulties, since “I have always known that I struggle with these types of words as pronouncing them always demanded quite the effort and concentration from my side” (Participant P 11). This finding supports the study conducted by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), who suggests that liquids are perceived as a problem by intermediate EFL learners. In contrast to Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011), however, the co-presence of the liquids [l] + [r] in this study is not substantial. It might be associated with the individual characteristics of the participant.

Arguably, an individual participant’s characteristics might be involved in those PDWs whose cause is listed by another participant (5.5% of the whole group) as the absence of the short vowel sound [ʌ] in Norwegian. According to the participant, the absence of [ʌ] makes it difficult for him to pronounce the PDWs *country* (N = 1) and *crunched* (N = 1). The participant notes that instead of the English short vowel [ʌ] in these PDWs he employs the Norwegian vowel sound [ø].

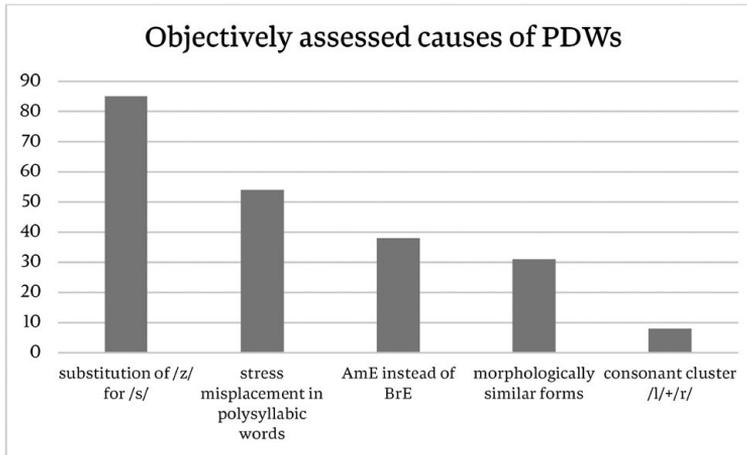
Among other less frequent causes of PDWs, one participant (5.5% of the whole group) points to false friends in the PDWs *generation* (N = 1), *radar* (N = 1) and *torture* (N = 1). The participant argues that the similarities in spelling between those English

words and their Norwegian equivalents exacerbate her pronunciation of those PDWs. Whereas false friends (e.g. *generation*, *radar*, and *torture*) are mentioned by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) as a significant variable, the present findings are suggestive of the epiphenomenal role of false friends in the PDWs in this corpus.

## [2.5] The post-hoc procedure

Whereas the necessity of conducting a post-hoc analysis is mentioned by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2011) as an avenue to explore in further studies, there is no explicit post-hoc procedure in her 2011 investigation. The present study, however, seeks to follow Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2011) desideratum concerning an objective assessment of PDWs by conducting a post-hoc procedure. The post-hoc examination of the participants' PDWs in this study involved the following steps. Following the participants' submission of their lists of PDWs and the accompanying comments and reflections, the participants were requested by me to read aloud and record the complete list of PDWs, which consists of all items mentioned by the participants in their individual lists of PDWs (see Table 2). However, the participants were presented only with the types and not the tokens of the PDWs. Additionally, the participants were not provided with the frequencies of the PDWs. Instead, they were given the list of PDWs from Table 2 (in alphabetical order without the frequency of occurrence) to be read and recorded at home at any time convenient for them. The participants were asked to send the audio files with the read-alouds of PDWs to me. In total, 13 out of 18 participants provided the audio files. The participants' read-alouds were assessed by the author of the article and another linguist who serves on the university EFL examination board.

The objective assessment of the participants' read-alouds yielded the following findings. The major cause of PDWs was identified as the mispronunciation of the English consonant sound [z] by 85% of those participants who submitted the audio files with the read-alouds. Another substantial cause of PDWs is associated with incorrect stress placement in polysyllabic PDWs by 54% of the participants. In addition to the aforementioned causes of difficulties, the objective assessment revealed that 38% of the participants employed AmE pronunciation in several PDWs, whereas they normally used BrE, and 31% of the participants mispronounced PDWs due to morphologically similar forms. Finally, a minor cause of PDWs involves the consonant cluster [l]+[r], which posed difficulties to 8% of the participants. These findings are illustrated by Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2.** Objectively Assessed Causes of PDWs in the Post-Hoc Procedure

It is seen in Figure 2 that the major causes of PDWs (which account for more than 50% of all cases of PDWs) appear to be attributed to the English consonant sound [z] (85%) and the word stress misplacement in polysyllabic PDWs (54%). Let us discuss these cases in more detail. Those PDWs that are associated with the English consonant sound [z] seem to be caused by the participants' mispronunciation of [z] in the word-initial, word-final, and mid-word positions, as seen in Table 4 below.

**Table 4.** The PDWs that are Caused by the Mispronunciation of [z]

N	PDWs with [z] and morpho-syntactic characteristics	PDWs
1	-s in plural nouns	<i>Americans, benches, boys, buzz, doors, ears, eyes, eaves, gins, graves, hands, his, Italians, mountains, names, nickers, pins, representatives, ridges, seventies, shoes, stairs, words</i>
2	-s in the 3 person singular verbs	<i>Contains</i>
3	-s/-s- in the stem of the word	<i>As, bemused, easel, his, nose, please, was, zero, zip, zoo</i>

It follows from Table 4 that the participants experienced difficulties with the pronunciation of [z] irrespective of its position in the word, for instance in the word-initial (*zoo*), word-final (*his*) and intervocalic positions (*easel*). It should be remembered that 67% of all participants self-assess the absence of the consonant sound [z] in the Norwegian language as a cause of pronunciation difficulties in English. The objective assessment, however, indicates that 85% of those participants who provided read-alouds typically substitute [s] for [z], which results in difficulties with the comprehension of English words. It could be argued that the participants' self-assessment of the difficulties posed by the English consonant sound [z] is further supported by the objective assessment outlined

in the present post-hoc procedure. Furthermore, both the subjective and objective forms of assessment indicate that the presence of the English voiced fricative [z] is associated with a persistent pronunciation difficulty on the part of the participants. Specifically, the English fricative [z] was self-assessed by the participants as problematic in the middle of the semester. By the end of the autumn semester, when the participants had sent in their read-alouds, the pronunciation of [z] by the participants continued to exhibit a tendency to be associated with problems.

In this regard, it should be mentioned that following the post-hoc procedure, the author of this article and the participants engaged in a classroom discussion during one of the seminars in English phonetics; the topic of the discussion was the participants' problems with the English [z] sound. During the discussion, the participants indicated that the position of the [z] sound in the PDWs did not influence their ability to discriminate between the [z] – [s] contrast in oral communication in English. Moreover, the participants reported that they experienced general challenges with aural discrimination between the English consonant sounds [s] and [z]. Presumably, these findings provide indirect support to the study conducted by Kuzumoto (2012), who suggests that the ability to hear the differences between minimal pairs in a foreign language is related to the ability to pronounce the minimal pair correctly.

Judging from the findings of the post-hoc procedure, another substantial cause of the participants' PDWs seems to be related to the misplacement of stress in polysyllabic words, as illustrated by Table 5.

**Table 5.** Stress in Polysyllabic Words as a Cause of PDWs

<b>N</b>	<b>Syllabic Structure of PDWs</b>	<b>PDWs</b>
1	Seven-syllable word	Compartmentalisation
2	Five-syllable word	Obliterated
3	Four-syllable word	Calligraphy, dispensation

As seen in Table 5, the objective assessment reveals that the participants experience problems with the word stress in those PDWs that are comprised of four and more syllables. The misplacement of the word stress in these PDWs is associated with the placement of the stress on the first syllable. Notably, this pattern could be considered to follow a typical stress placement in the Norwegian language (Rugesæter, 2014). The participants' tendency to stress the first syllable in a polysyllabic word (see Table 5 above) appears to result in unnecessary consonant omissions in the second and (especially) in the third syllables of polysyllabic PDWs. It could be argued that in terms of the stress misplacement in polysyllabic PDWs, negative transfer from Norwegian (the participants' L1) compromises the aural comprehension of those PDWs by the raters in the post-hoc procedure. These findings are in line with a number of recent studies that report a detrimental effect of stress misplacement as far as the intermediate EFL students' oral output is concerned (Cámara-Arenas, 2018; Jaiprasong & Pongpairroj, 2020; Nowacka,

2019). Notably, in their subjective self-assessment of PDWs, the participants do not refer to word stress as a source of pronunciation difficulties. Instead, they operate within the construal of the so-called “long word” and assign the cause of the difficulty to the word length in a polysyllabic word.

As far as the less common causes of PDWs are concerned, for instance the inconsistencies of usage associated with AmE in the participants' BrE, the following should be noted. The American pronunciation of a number of lexical items by the participants who usually prefer and speak BrE is one of the inconclusive (and perhaps impressionistic) aspects of the analysis of PDWs. To illustrate this point, let us consider the PDW *words*, which is pronounced as AmE [wɜ:rdz] by several participants who would normally use BrE in their oral communication in English. The two raters in the post-hoc procedure, who are the author of the present article and a university lecturer in phonetics, indicate that it is unexpected to encounter the participants' pronunciation of *words* as [wɜ:rdz] in AmE in a flow of speech that is produced in BrE. However, at the same time, the raters agree that from the vantage point of the intermediate level of EFL proficiency, the insertion of AmE pronunciation in the learners' BrE speech output would not be classified as a significant pronunciation error. Presumably, such an inconsistency might be perceived as an oddity by English L1 speakers; however, at the same time it is likely not to be associated with pronunciation errors by EFL professionals. This observation suggests the need for a separate study that would involve English L1 speakers' perceptions and ratings of lexical items produced by Norwegian L1 EFL learners.

A less frequent source of PDWs in the post-hoc procedure is related to the mispronunciation of the PDW *confederate* due to a morphologically similar form by 31% of those participants who submitted their read-alouds. Those participants who experience problems with this PDW mispronounce it as [kən'fedəreit] instead of [kən'fedərət], i.e. they appear to substitute the diphthong [eɪ] for the neutral vowel schwa [ə]. Presumably this substitution eventuates from the participants' perception of *confederate* as a word whose constituent parts morphologically resemble the noun *rate* and/or the verb *to rate*, both of which are pronounced as [reit]. If this assumption is true, it might provide support to the prior study conducted by Nowacka (2018, p. 463), who indicates that the mispronunciation of suffixes, such as *-ate*, is related to the EFL learners' misinterpretation of the constituent parts of the PDWs. Another possible explanation concerning the mispronunciation of *confederate* by 31% of the participants in the post-hoc procedure could be related to the combination of the morphological resemblance of the suffix *-ate* in *confederate* in conjunction with the possible visual input associated with the spelling of the words *a rate/to rate*.

As is evident from Figure 2, the least frequent source of PDWs is the presence of the consonant cluster [l] and [r]. It occurs in the read-aloud submitted by one participant (8%) out of 13. The objective assessment by the raters in the post-hoc procedure is indicative of the pattern of the participant's mispronunciation of the PDWs *particularly* and *regularly*, which are mispronounced as [pə'tɪkjəi] instead of [pə'tɪkjələli], and ['regjʊəi] instead of ['regjələli]. Whilst liquids are generally considered by EFL learners

to be challenging to pronounce (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2011), the present data are suggestive of the individual speech characteristics of one particular participant rather than indicating a group feature of Norwegian L1 EFL learners on the intermediate level of proficiency.

Summarising the results of the post-hoc procedure, it is possible to observe that the 13 participants who submitted the read-alouds do not experience problems with the short English vowel [ʌ], interdental, [w] – [v] contrast, spelling, and false friends. These findings could be explained by the following two variables. First, not all participants submitted the read-alouds in the post-hoc procedure. Consequently, the decrease in the number and types of errors associated with the PDWs could be accounted for by the less representative number of participants. Second, the participants submitted their read-alouds closer to the end of the semester, approximately one month after the main experimental procedure. During the time between the experiment and the post-hoc procedure, they gained substantial teaching and learning exposure to the peculiarities of English pronunciation as part of the course in English phonetics. Presumably, practice effects that the participants experienced during the course in English phonetics facilitated their awareness of the problematic areas of English pronunciation, subsequently resulting in fewer pronunciation errors and fewer PDWs.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the post-hoc procedure is as follows. It appears that the participants' self-assessment of the causes of PDWs is partially in accordance with the objective assessment in the post-hoc procedure. In particular, the following causes of PDWs are found both in self-assessment and objective assessment: i) the substitution of [s] for [z], ii) the use of AmE instead of BrE, iii) morphologically similar forms, and iv) the consonant cluster [l]+[r]. Based upon these findings, it seems feasible to suggest that self-assessment as a judgment of the participants' performance in the sense posited by Raaijmakers et al. (2019) is a useful technique for providing self-evaluation of participants' current performance, as argued by Kissling and O'Donnell (2015). At the same time, however, it seems reasonable to agree with Strachan, Kennedy, and Trofimovich (2019), who indicate that EFL learners' self-assessment of their own speech problems might be inflated and not completely reliable. For instance, the results of the subjective self-assessment point to the minimal pair [w] – [v] as a source of PDWs, whereas according to the objective assessment this appears not to be the case. Similarly, whereas the participants ascribe the cause of PDWs to the "long words" (i.e. polysyllabic words), the actual cause of certain PDWs is found by the post-hoc analysis to be associated with stress placement. Hence, a cautious approach is needed that combines self-assessment data with an objective analysis of the causes of PDWs.

### **[3] Conclusions and linguo-didactic implications**

The study presented and discussed in this article aimed at identifying a range of PDWs in oral discourse in English by a group of participants who were requested to provide self-

-assessment of PDWs and comments associated with the causes of those PDWs. The results of the data analysis reveal that the participants tend to attribute the causes of PDWs in their oral discourse in English to the absence of certain English sounds in Norwegian, their L1. In particular, the participants refer to the absence of the English consonant sounds [z], [θ], [ð] and [w] in the Norwegian language as one of the main sources of pronunciation difficulties in their speech in English. Other substantial sources of PDWs in the participants' oral discourse in English are associated with the system of English spelling, as well as the occasional use of American pronunciation in the participants' oral output in English (which is normally produced by them in the British variety of the English language).

With regard to linguo-didactic implications, the following could be concluded. First, there appears to be a need to compile a list of PDWs that are reflective of Norwegian L1 intermediate EFL learners' difficulties with English pronunciation. Second, EFL teachers should be made aware of a set of PDWs that might be problematic for intermediate EFL learners to pronounce. Third, in EFL teaching and learning in Norwegian contexts, special attention should be given to the segmentals that are absent in the learners' L1, Norwegian. Specifically, attention should be awarded to the teaching and learning of the English fricative [z], which presents a substantial and recurring difficulty to Norwegian L1 EFL learners. Fourth, special emphasis should be placed upon the teaching and learning of stress patterns in English. Moreover, contrastive points between word stress in English and Norwegian should be consistently taught in courses of English phonetics offered to Norwegian L1 intermediate EFL learners. Lastly, Norwegian L1 EFL learners should be reminded to use only one variety of the English language instead of mixing the varieties of English in their oral output. In addition to the above-mentioned linguo-didactic suggestions, further studies should be conducted in order to provide a deeper insight into PDWs that pose problems to intermediate EFL learners whose L1 is Norwegian.

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# [Finding your Footing: stance and voice in student-teacher asynchronous interaction]

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**[Abstract]** *This paper attempts to contribute to the debate on the interpretation of meaning-making and identity construction as intertextual phenomena. Adopting the perspective of discourse analysis, relevant extracts from a questionnaire on attitudes to accents are examined by applying the theories of framing (Bateson, 1972; Goffman, 1974; Tannen and Wallat, 1987) and positioning (Davies and Harré, 1990), also exploring the concept of the stance triangle (Du Bois, 2007). The study argues that the dynamics of a hierarchical interaction are more reliably revealed when focusing on authentic discursive presentations of self rather than adhering to ritualised interactional patterns.*

**[Keywords]** *language attitudes; framing; positioning; stance; interactional patterns; asynchronous interaction*

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## [1] Introduction

As Czech university students partake in a distinctly hierarchical language culture (see also *standard language culture* in Milroy, 2007; or Labov, 1970), it is practically impossible to escape the language code of power asymmetry, as well as the dichotomy of face saving/threatening acts and their practical implications in the academic social space. To illustrate, the symbolic value of honorifics used in academia can easily transcend mere symbolism and become instrumental in power assertion. This paper aims to explore a limited sample of data drawn from an academic questionnaire in order to gain insights into the nature of the participation and power distribution that this specific genre invites. What is also scrutinised is the use of frames and footing (Goffman, 1987) that this discourse type induces. Finally, the status of mediated quasi-interaction (Thompson, 1995) is considered within the notion of participation frameworks.

To briefly introduce the data, a micro-corpus was extracted from the responses of our students, pre-service EFL teachers, to a questionnaire that was part of a project aiming at developing innovative approaches to teacher preparation. The main body of the questionnaire was divided into three sections and introduced to our students in an online format. There was space following each section in which the respondent could leave comments on the preceding questions or anything else they considered noteworthy.

The principal advantage that the less censored responses in the comments sections arguably represent is greater response authenticity in terms of authorship and autonomy. The potential contrast between the discourse of the questionnaire and the comments section lies, in my view, primarily in the degree of autonomy accorded to the respondent. As the amount of control the author of the questionnaire has over the answers is relatively high and some of the questions themselves are highly limiting due to their multiple-choice format, the respondents might be providing answers that are not fully or genuinely expressive of what their real thoughts and attitudes are.

Obviously, the perception of authority is a diachronic nexus of specific ideas and beliefs, and an oversimplification of this kind needs to be acknowledged as such. However, as a theoretical concept, *authority reverence*, or less ostentatious *social deference*, can serve as a constant to which the analysed interactional patterns can be related throughout this text.

It can only be hypothesised whether the obtained data would yield different results had they been amassed in a less hierarchical language culture. What can be stated with much greater certainty, however, is that the majority of the respondents displayed what could be called a polite emancipation (see Fairclough, 1989), respecting authority with confidence or revoking it.

## [2] Theoretical Framework

In relation to the interactional context mentioned above, my main research interest in this paper concerns the question of how the homonymy of behaviours (Tannen and Wallat, 1987) becomes manifest in the analysed discourse, the focus being conflicting frames.

These are linguistically marked by pertinent metamessages and register/frame shifting on the part of the respondents. Therefore, the studied micro-corpus comprises data that reflect the respondents' voluntary involvement in an unscripted interaction within the ritualised context of an academic questionnaire. Specifically, the respondents' retrospective glosses and metamessages following each of the three parts of the questionnaire are scrutinised. These comments often represent a certain balancing act in terms of revoking (in this context literally using voice to shift the interactional frame) the unfavourable hierarchy of the teacher-student interaction (see Fairclough, 1989) and asserting a more symmetrical type of communicative dynamics. Therefore, it should be emphasised that the data drawn from the questionnaire itself and from the comments sections are significantly different. This difference obtains between the relatively ritualised interaction taking place in the questionnaire and the authentic spontaneous discursive representation of the comments. Additionally, the intertextual dimension of my data is determined mainly by frames and positions that are principally different from the default setting of synchronous/non-anonymous teacher-student interaction that represents the habitual communicative context. Consequently, both textual and social conventions are negotiated and contested.

As to the research domains explored here, I mainly draw on methods of discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton, 2003), and, specifically, of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), while acknowledging the influence of Foucault's view on ideological discourses (Foucault, 1972/2010). Additionally, I make use of the concept of *positioning* (Davies and Harré, 1990) introduced within social psychology, also exploring the notion of *the stance triangle* (Du Bois, 2007). The stance triangle represents three different aspects of the stance act, which can be defined as a public act of an individual engaging in dialogic communication. The stance is achieved by means of "simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 163). More peripherally, to anchor my theoretical point of departure in a broader socio-cultural context, I apply the theory of frames, particularly referring to social anthropology (Bateson, 1972) and sociology (Goffman, 1974). Spanning the approaches of anthropology, sociology, and social psychology, Tannen and Wallat (1987) propose an interactional model of shifting frames that significantly informs my own analytical view.

In his collection of essays *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, as part of an essay entitled "*Theory of Play and Fantasy*", Bateson develops the concept of frames, saying that a psychological frame can be defined as a delimitation of a class or set of messages or meaningful actions (1972, p. 186). It follows that frames are involved in the evaluation of the messages they encapsulate, or they assist us in understanding these messages by reminding us that they are "mutually relevant and the messages outside the frame may be ignored" (Bateson, 1972, p. 188). Elsewhere, Bateson describes interactions of non-human mammals from the perspective of the evolution of play, giving this example: "The playful nip denotes the bite, but it does not denote what would be denoted by the bite." (1972, p. 180).

Goffman (1983) proposes a similar understanding of frames by focusing on schemata of interpretation and the moments in (verbal and non-verbal) interaction that bring different frames to the fore – which, in consequence, induces changes to the interpretative schema. As framing is inseparable from discourse roles and how they are linguistically indexed, for the sake of illustration it is useful to mention that the indexical choices made by a speaker categorise their audience. This categorisation is conducted by assigning roles or *positioning* (Davies and Harré, 1990) the other participants. In the same vein, “audiences construct speakers” (Johnstone, 2018, p. 153).

One potential perspective on how speakers orient to the roles of themselves and others is represented by *footing* (Goffman, 1983). Footing is “the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance” (1983, p. 128). The most famous example of footing and its shift is provided by Goffman when describing the so-called Nixon sally. The situation included President Nixon and Helen Thomas in one of many press meetings in the Oval Office of the White House. Ms Thomas, a long-term White House correspondent, reportedly appeared wearing a pants outfit, to which Nixon reacted by asking how her husband liked that and requesting a pirouette so that everybody could have a better look. Goffman (1983) calls this abrupt change of interpretative schema (from a press conference to small talk) a change of footing. Here, Nixon clearly realigns his footing by choosing to align with the reporter’s gender rather than her profession. Linguistically, the Nixon change of footing is signalled by a certain level of code switching (Blom and Gumperz, 1972), which is also accompanied non-verbally by the President rising from his desk (Goffman, 1983).

Moreover, my main reason to employ the concept of positioning (Davies and Harré, 1990) stems from the problems inherent in the use of the concept of role in developing a psychology of selfhood. The concept of positioning helps focus attention on dynamic aspects of interactional encounters, in contrast to the way in which the traditional use of the concept of role serves to highlight static, formal, and ritualistic aspects. As both notions are expedient for my analysis, I employ them as two analytical perspectives on audience design (Bell, 1984).

In designing my current research, I continue a line of enquiry commenced by previous research conducted by my colleague Kristýna Červinková Poesová and myself on the role of accent in shaping pre-service teachers’ attitudes and identity. Our first paper (Lancová and Červinková Poesová, 2019) focuses on self-report perspectives on accentedness in Czech pre-service EFL teachers. Our second research topic (Červinková Poesová and Lancová, 2020) shifts its focus to the role that accents play in the process of forming non-native teacher identities in the same group of informants – specifically, what role pre-service teachers ascribe to accent in their perception of social authority, satisfaction, intelligibility, and teachers’ expertise.

As I expound below, the main research questions discussed below concern the following points:

- RQ1: How do the participants signal that they are (re)claiming their right to frame interaction, and does this yield potential changes in alignment with their interlocutor?
- RQ2: What are their response strategies and potential changes to the topic discussed?
- RQ3: Is there any occurrence of conflicting frames? If so, what is the purpose and nature of these changes of footing?

## [3] Data and Method

The original body of data was amassed via a questionnaire that was devised for the purposes of research forming part of a Charles University project aimed at developing innovative approaches to teacher preparation and training. A micro-corpus of data was extracted from the questionnaire responses, solely for the purposes of this study. There are both qualitative and quantitative differences between the main body of data and the derived micro-corpus, and these differences are described below.

### [3.1] Data collection

Broadly speaking, the original research explores the language attitudes of our students, pre-service teachers at the Faculty of Education, Charles University, and aims to search for ways of putting the newly gained knowledge to use in our teaching and curriculum improvement, particularly in enhancing interdisciplinary cooperation. The questionnaire consists of three parts: Introduction, Accent and me, and Accent and teachers. The 44 questions inquire firstly about personal background including age, gender, nationality, and a brief SLA (Second language acquisition) autobiography. Secondly, the respondents' attitudes to their own accents and accents in general are observed. Lastly, the role that accent(s) play in ELT is explored, including how pre-service teachers might approach the phenomenon of accent variation in their prospective careers.

After piloting, the final version was administered online from November to December 2018 in the form of a Google Form survey, which uses freeware from the Google company. The response rate was approximately 50%, reaching a total 256 participants.

As concerns the micro-corpus of data amassed for the purposes of this study, it consists of responses in three optional comments sections that appeared as a follow-up to each of the three main question sections. Unlike the comments, all the questions were obligatory in order for the respondent to complete the questionnaire. The sole instructions appearing at the top of the comments section were formulated as follows: "This is a space for any comments you wish to add to section 1(2,3) of the questionnaire."

Logically, the type of responses obtained from the comments sections differs to a certain extent from the main body of data; however, these differences will be dealt with specifically in the Results section below. Broadly speaking, the main difference in the status of the comments section is its being a framework within a framework, i.e. a distinctive

subsection of a questionnaire. Moreover, it clearly invites much less planned and scripted participant discourse.

Regarding the qualitative distinction from the full data set, one of the most illustrative examples of an unplanned speech event in this particular participant framework is offered by respondent no. 187 (henceforth Rxy), who reacts by writing the following: *I am not consciously aware of having a specific accent, although rationally I realise it must be so*. More importantly, however, a cinematic GIF image is attached depicting an African American female speaker in conversation, who claims that she does not have an accent while styling an overly confident comical facial expression. The unplanned character is clearly cued by the use of a second order pragmatic principle, i.e. the irony expressed by the GIF image.

Quantitatively, the parameters of the micro-corpus can be described with considerably more comparative ease. The comparison is presented in the following section.

### [3.2] Respondents

The total number of respondents was 256, while in the micro-corpus it was only 49; the latter group thus represents roughly 20% of the total. It can be expected that this group consists of students who wanted to contribute beyond the standard scope of the questionnaire. All respondents were attending one of the four study programmes offered by the Department of English Language and Literature at the time when the questionnaire was administered. The most numerous group (n=161, 63%) consisted of students of the three-year Bachelor's programme, out of which nearly half were first-year students, who constituted almost a third of the total number (27%). Interestingly, the involvement of first-year students drops considerably when the micro-corpus is concerned, to a mere 18%. Contrastively, as regards academic experience, 33% of the micro-corpus respondents are Master's programme participants, while in total this group constitutes only 16%. This tendency is not mirrored by a change in the average participant age, which is merely 6 months higher.

Concerning language proficiency (as defined by CEFR), the micro-corpus displays the greatest difference in the self-reported B2 level. While the majority of micro-corpus respondents still rate their English competency at level C1 or C2 (65%), the B2 level participation decreases to 14% from the original 33% in the main corpus of data, leaving space for a wider distribution of the self-reported levels at the margins of the scale, i.e. the ones below level B2 and of native/native-like status.

Quite predictably, the full research sample was dominated by females (77%); however, there is a certain downward shift in the ratio in favour of male participants in the micro-corpus to 69% of female participation.

### [3.3] Data description and method of analysis

In this paper, the focus is on the qualitative analysis of the comments occurring after each of the three main sections of a language attitudes questionnaire. The status of the

comments differs considerably from the rest of the questionnaire, as they are not obligatory, unlike all the questions. It should, however, be pointed out that the questionnaire format did not make it possible for respondents to revisit their posted answers or to choose the order of the questions, which might be a significant factor in the respondents' motivation to give additional comments.

Primarily, the obtained data capture potentially emotive responses to the communicative situation instigated by the invitation to give comments on the preceding questionnaire section. Secondly, they demonstrate a factual informative value, as they reflect individual needs to elaborate on information already provided or to express personal assessments of the questionnaire's quality.

Regarding the format of the comments, they generally do not exceed the length of a short paragraph, and they mostly occur in the form of complete sentences. However, as will be discussed below, most respondents employed graphic conventions that are not standard for written discourse in English, such as emoticons or subject deletion.

As to the method of analysis, firstly the data were categorised alongside the relevant three questionnaire sections, which represents not only a formal division but also a content-based classification. The main topical areas are roughly pre-determined by the focus of each section, namely SLA personal history in section 1, attitudes to personal accents in section 2 and attitudes to accents in ELT in section 3.

Secondly, all responses within these three categories were divided into two general types based on the overall nature of the information provided – specifically, personal and impersonal assertions. To illustrate, the personal type of assertion is expressed by R25 in their comment on section 2: “I work at the airport and I meet many people from various countries who speak English. I always recognize their nationality because of their accent.” In contrast, the impersonal type of assertion can be exemplified by R114 in their comment on section 3: “It is important to accept all accents around us, on the other hand, teacher should be good pattern of accent.” This data division enables the observation of a fundamental distributional pattern that delineates a certain structure of expectation concerning the occurring frames and their potential shifts, or changes of footing. Thus, thirdly, the types of frames occurring across the aforementioned categories were identified.

Logically, qualitative data of this type require a multi-level analysis, as the different frameworks that are involved overlap, yet their scope differs in breadth. In accordance with Johnstone (2018), I apply a macro- and microscopic view of discourse participants and their interactional behaviour. The macro scale encompasses the concepts of power, solidarity, and social and discursive roles, while the micro scale comprises the concepts of stance, style (Johnstone, 2018, p. 156), and voice (Johnstone, 2020).

Consequently, the macroscopic approach determined two main types of participant frameworks, namely consensual and conflicting. From the microscopic perspective, the consensual frames are categorised as evaluative and elaborating, the former providing assessment of the questionnaire and the latter adding specific information. Furthermore, the conflicting frames are classified into pragmatic and discursal, the former concerning dialogic context and the latter concerning sequential context. The notion of conflict

is understood not as explicit discord, but as any shift in the ritualised student – teacher alignment, which involves the process of specific stance-taking (see Du Bois, 2007). This stance is represented primarily by re-positioning the student self and aligning with the teacher/expert role by means of critically evaluating the object of the questionnaire. Additionally, this perspective is supplemented by elements of topic and response analysis (Shuy, 2003, Chapter 22, p. 439).

## [4] Results

As mentioned above, the initial data categorisation divided the obtained responses by topic into three groups. The total number of micro-corpus respondents was 49, and they provided 68 comments. Except for four respondents (8% of the micro-corpus total) who reacted in all three comments sections, all the other respondents typically placed comments in only one section. This outcome might be understood as reflecting the fact that the involvement was perceived as purely voluntary, which was the primary intention behind devising this part of the questionnaire. Interestingly, the highest return rate occurred in section 3 (n=33, 49% of the total number of the micro-corpus responses), followed by section 2 (n=20, 29% of total). Predictably, section 1, inquiring mainly about personal data, did not elicit a particularly high rate of response (n=15, 22%). Nevertheless, as this division was imposed by the questionnaire format and does not display any discernible regularity of occurrence, the first outline of the results focuses on the distinction between personal and impersonal assertions.

Predictably, clearer distributional patterns occur when the respondents' free choice of linguistic devices is accounted for. In section 1, the ratio of personal assertions is the highest (n=9, 60% of all section 1 comments). Section 2 features a slightly lower number (n=11, 55%), and section 3 presents the lowest rate (n=17, 52%). Relating the last level of categorisation, i.e. types of frames, to the content and form of the assertions in the different sections, a moderate tendency can be observed for the personal assertions to represent predominantly consensual frames. Contrarily, the impersonal assertions, or a combination of both personal and impersonal assertions in one comment, display a greater tendency to represent conflicting frames. In section 1, there is no conflicting frame present within the personal assertions and the overall ratio of the occurring conflicting frames features in 20% of the comments only. Section 2 witnesses a rise in the ratio of conflicting frames (40%), while 27% of the personal assertions contain such frames. In section 3 the growth continues to rise to 52% of conflicting frame comments overall, with 35% of the personal assertions displaying conflicting frames.

Considering the most complex level of analysis, the consensual and conflicting frames occur in a relatively balanced distribution, with 53% of the comments containing consensual frames, 43% containing conflicting frames, and 4% of the comments displaying a combination of both. To illustrate, an example of a consensual frame can be represented by R187 in section 2: "My perception is that while I can try to imitate, I don't really succeed against any discerning listener so I am critical rather than optimistic." Contrari-

ly, the R253 commenting on section 3 expresses a conflicting frame in this clear criticism of the questionnaire: “Do not have possibility for NEUTRAL questions – this is the wrong evaluation method.” As to the last group of comments that combine both types of frames, I have selected R218 in section 2, who chooses to elaborate on two of their previous responses referring to them explicitly: “Q16 – A FREAKING GOOD IDEA!!! I HAVE TO TRY! Q28 – but I like accents of: Ewan McGregor, Alan Rickman, Donald Trump, and Benedict Cumberbatch a lot.” Quite symbolically, these three examples display a certain correlation between the type of frame and assertion: the consensual comment is personal, the conflicting comment is impersonal, while the combined type displays firstly an impersonal formulation followed by personal ones.

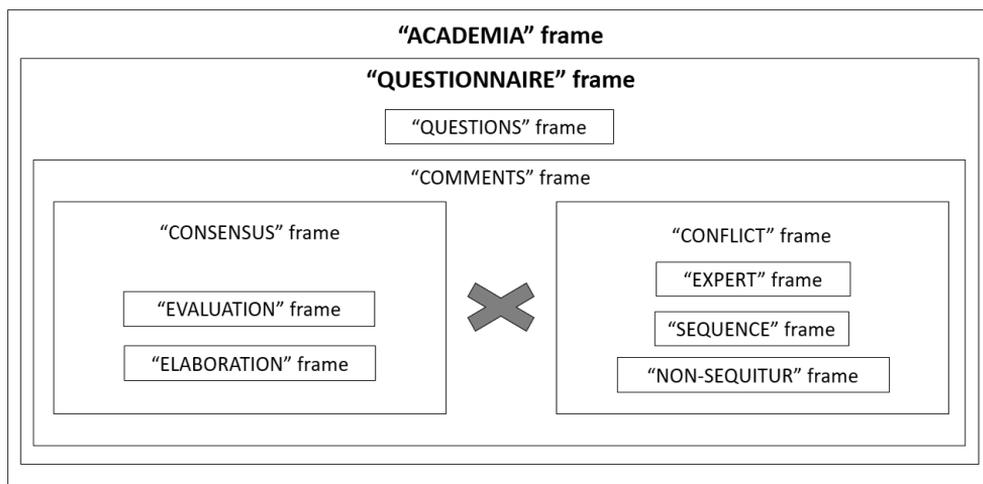
To shift focus to the qualitative aspects of the obtained data, a finer distinction should be drawn within the two major types of frames. It is useful to subcategorise the consensual framework into evaluative and elaborative frames. The evaluative frames are distinguished by what Du Bois (2007) describes as their evaluative target or object of stance. Generally speaking, evaluation can be seen as “the process whereby a stancetaker orients to an object of stance and characterises it as having some specific quality or value” (Du Bois, 2007, p. 143). In the given context, the evaluative target can be represented by the complete questionnaire, its sections or the individual questions. The second evaluative subcategory comprises elaboration, which takes the form of adding information on a specific topic or question in the preceding section of the questionnaire.

Furthermore, the conflicting framework can be divided into the pragmatic and discursive type of frames. The former concerns primarily the dialogic context obtaining between the teacher’s instructions and the student’s reaction. Here the interpretative focus is on the politeness strategies and face-threatening or face-saving acts, e.g. R167: “Unnecessary repeated questions, could be shorter, why do we have to write yes/no and then specify in another question?”. The latter considers primarily the interpretation in sequential context of what textually precedes the given comment, e.g. R7: “Do not agree with the new term ‘Englishes’ there’s just one model of English, always has been, BBC English, and this is just all nonsense to me”. Thus, the interaction unfolds between the instructions/the teacher and the response/the student, but also between a particular part of the questionnaire and the expressed attitude or emotion it instigates.

The schematisation of frames uncovered a need for a more specific labelling within the conflicting frames. This seems logical, as they offer the greatest interactional and linguistic variation in the context of the given data. Namely, the conflict at pragmatic level is best represented by the expert frame, while at discursive level the non-sequitur frame is added as a counterweight to the sequential one. What is understood by a non-sequitur frame is a type of response that has no clear relation to the questionnaire itself and is only very distantly topically related to the subject matter. To exemplify the added non-sequitur category, I have selected a comment on section 3 by R56: “In Czech Republic, lots of Eng. users use the so called ‘Manager English’, unluckily this ‘accent’ contains mistakes such as mispronunciation of the word occur and event and often pays no attention to word as well as sentence stress”.

In Figure 1 below, the structure of continuing (Academia and Questionnaire), embedded (Questions and Comments) and conflicting (Consensus and Conflict) frames is schematised for greater clarity. The Academia and Questionnaire frame are continuing, as the interaction analysed in this text is made possible only thanks to our (i.e. the teachers' and students') collective participation in university education and the questionnaire. Both the continuing frames determine the default footing of the participant framework, which is a priori hierarchical. Thus, the nature of the comments frames is judged as consensual or conflicting within this default setting. The individual entries in the Questions and Comments are logically embedded in the encompassing Questionnaire frame. Moreover, within the Comments frame, the Consensus and Conflict frames are marked as clashing by the highlighted x sign.

**Figure 1**  
Participant Framework Schematisation



## [5] Research Implications

In his discussion of response strategies in the legal context, Shuy (2003) mentions, *inter alia*, the strategy of keeping silent. From this perspective, my data occur on a notional scale which shows that 80% of respondents chose to stay silent altogether in the comments sections. The opposite end of the scale is represented by four respondents (2% of the questionnaire total) who reacted to all the communicative tasks, i.e. all the questions and all the comments sections. Within the last group of respondents, the answers can be graded from minimal single entries using merely the negative particle to full paragraphs. Obviously, these quantitative proportions reflect the fact that the micro-corpus respondents are a minority of all the responding students. The current qualitative results might have or might not have been replicated in the sample as a whole if all the respondents had opted to react in the comments section. However, the voluntary decision to stay silent

is a highly valuable and a relatively eloquent choice that might be interpreted as reflecting a neutral attitude to the communicative tasks posed by the questionnaire. It can also be understood as an imaginary vote for the status quo in the hypothetical hierarchical framework of academia.

Concerning the qualitative aspects of the data, the response and topic analysis (Shuy, 2003) has shown that the main purpose of responding was the desire to specify a concrete answer to a previous question, offer additional explanation, or, contrarily, claim the respondent's right to frame their own interactional contribution, most commonly asserting an opinion. Furthermore, the main response strategies are elaborating and specifying, qualifying agreement or justifying disagreement, and changing the subject.

Having outlined the interactional *why* and *how*, the *who* should also be specified. Statistically, the most significant group of respondents that can be seen as homogeneous based on the criterion of their academic experience are the first-year students, who constitute almost a third of the total number (27%) responding to our original research request. It is thus useful to observe any potential changes in their degree of involvement between the major questionnaire data and the micro-corpus. Interestingly, the involvement of freshman students drops considerably when the micro-corpus is concerned (from 27% to 18%). What is significant about this narrowed-down group of first-year respondents is a discernible tendency to use conflicting frames. The decrease in participation in this group might be caused by personal awareness of a relatively low level of academic experience, which might be inauspicious for the less controlled type of interactional involvement that the comments section provides. Contrarily, the impetus to participate might be informed by the need to express criticism or assert identity that counters the hierarchical expectations. This is also supported by response analysis, as is illustrated by R94, a first-year student, in reaction to section 1: "Is reading a book actually an exposure to English accent?". This comment pertains to question number 10 enquiring about the types of exposure to English accents in a multiple-choice format including the option books/magazines/online texts.

Additionally, concerning language proficiency (as defined in the CEFR), the micro-corpus displays a comparatively low B2 level participation with regard to the full data set. This is related to the overall lower number of first-year students that opted to voice their stance in the comments sections and the considerably higher participation of self-reported native or native-like speakers. This outcome could indicate positive correlation of the attained language competence and sufficient self-confidence and sense of entitlement in terms of voicing an opinion. In summary, those students who feel their knowledge of English is proficient seem to be more ready and motivated to offer a personal opinion.

As to the interactional *what*, the micro-corpus should not be judged solely within the normative framework of written language, as the comments are written in terms of the digital medium but are rather spoken in character. This claim is supported by the occurrence of specific linguistic cues (Milroy and Milroy, 2000, pp. 116-117) that signal the textually expressed stance-taking or the potential changes of footing. These cues

are categorised into consensual (e.g. active voice) and conflicting (e.g. subject deletion), and they are exemplified below. Furthermore, as most of the responses react to a preceding section of the questionnaire, there is a clear reliance on the “immediate context to express propositions”, which is typical of “relatively unplanned discourse” (Ochs, 1979, p. 62) as opposed to planned discourse. Equally, this predominant tendency of the data indicates its overall spoken nature.

From the perspective of relatively unplanned spoken discourse, the analysed responses can be classified as primarily *listener-oriented* as opposed to *message-oriented* (Brown, 1982), or *interactional* rather than *transactional* (Brown and Yule, 1983). Therefore, the linguistic cues differ mainly according to their occurrence in either consensual or conflicting participant frameworks. The consensual linguistic cues are predominantly personal structures, active voice, and endophoric (anaphoric) reference.

To exemplify, the following comments are categorised as consensual, with their linguistic cues marked in bold and the relevant questionnaire items preceding them in italics and square brackets. All the following extracts relate to section 2 of the questionnaire, where mostly open-ended (Q25) or yes/no (Q11) questions are used.

[Q25. *Out of the most common non-native accents (e.g. Spanish, French, German, Russian, Chinese), do you find any very difficult to understand? Please specify:*] Indian English does not sound pleasant to me (R224, section 2)

[Q11. *Do you have an accent when speaking English?*] I think that my accent is strong but not exactly Czech. It is more of a mix of all kinds of accents that I have been exposed to and tried to (partly subconsciously) imitate. (R48, section 2)

[Q25. *Out of the most common non-native accents (e.g. Spanish, French, German, Russian, Chinese), do you find any very difficult to understand? Please specify:/Q26. If so, which non-native accent(s) do you find more difficult to understand than others? Please specify:*] Q25 and Q26 seem to have the same meaning to me. (R35, section 2)

In contrast, the conflicting cues are mostly represented by impersonal structures, subject deletion, exophoric reference and a specific contextual use of graphic conventions – such as inverted commas for distancing, non-standard use of punctuation, and non-capitalisation. Both types of framework make use of emoticons and parentheticals.

For illustration, the following are examples of the conflicting participant framework, with their linguistic cues marked in bold and the relevant questionnaire items preceding them in italics and square brackets. All the following extracts relate to section 3 of the questionnaire, where the answer format is a Likert scale ranging from ‘agree strongly’ to ‘disagree strongly’.

[Q39. *English teachers should expose students to a variety of non-native accents in lessons./Q43. I am acquainted with the term English as a Lingua Franca.*] Do not agree with the new term “Englishes” there’s just one model of English, always has been, BBC English, and this is just all nonsense to me. (R7, section 3)

[Q44. *If one’s speech is understandable, some mother tongue pronunciation features are acceptable.*] If one’s speech is understandable, some mother tongue pronunciation features

are acceptable: yes, but not in university lessons (R92, section 3) “live and let live” (R120, section 3)

While example R7 and R92 represent the pragmatic level of a conflicting frame of the ‘expert’ type, example R120 illustrates the non-sequitur type at the discursal level (see Fig. 1 above). In the case of the latter, the relevant questionnaire item is missing, as it is not clear to which part of the questionnaire exactly (or if at all) the response is related.

Considering the research questions, the data seem to indicate that positively oriented or neutral messages within the consensual framework dominantly use personal structures, while negatively oriented messages within the conflicting framework are more commonly formulated using impersonal structures.

Example R94 above can be seen as representative of a typical strategy of distancing while expressing negative or conflicting content. This response pertaining to the conflicting framework (R94 in reaction to section 1: “Is reading a book actually an exposure to English accent?”) provides an illustrative answer to RQ1 on how participants signal that they are claiming their right to frame interaction and whether this act changes their alignment with the interlocutor. The question is clearly a criticism expressed in interrogative form, and after a closer analysis it is evident that its secondary discourse function, and its communicative purpose, is a negative assertion reprimanding the questionnaire’s authors for their inconsistency, i.e. reading a book is not an exposure to English accent. Thus, the hierarchical default roles and the typically attributed participant communicative strategies are reversed.

Specifically, regarding example RQ1, it should be mentioned that frame shifts and changes of alignment are performed either explicitly or implicitly. The former can be illustrated by R187: “My perception is that [...]”, while the latter can be exemplified by R92: “If one’s speech is understandable, some mother tongue pronunciation aspects are acceptable [...]”. Predictably, the degree of explicitness correlates with the above-mentioned employment of personal and impersonal structures. As can be observed in examples R187 and R92, explicit signalling tends to use personal structures and occurs in a consensual framework. Conversely, implicit signalling tends to be impersonal and expresses conflicting frames.

As to the nature of the changes of footing in conflicting frames, regarding RQ3, the observed comments tend to represent a positive face assertion (Brown and Levinson, 1987), particularly in the form of granting advice or expressing an expert opinion on the topic at hand. In the context of mutual face vulnerability which is established initially by a speech act that primarily threatens the addressee’s negative face (i.e. the teacher asks the student to fill in a questionnaire, which impacts the ensuing interaction by creating asymmetrical power distribution), such use of politeness strategies is indicative of the amount of the perceived threat to the hearer’s face. The more substantial the perceived threat, the more likely it is that the speaker will respond using negative rather than positive politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In the analysed data, the most common positive politeness strategies representing expert identity are the following

(emphasis mine): asserting knowledge (R87: “pron. mistakes can be occurring across the whole system”), giving reasons (R94: “hard to compare when there is no reference point”), or using in-group identity markers (R224: “I wish to equip my students”). In contrast, the most common negative politeness strategies are being direct/openly critical (R88: “the question [you are posing in the questionnaire] is unclear”), using questions (R94: “is reading [a book] an exposure to accent?”), and impersonalising/using passive structures (R114: “it is important to accept all accents”). The aforementioned examples document a tendency to employ terminology adequate to the formal academic register which thus bears witness to the respondent’s expertise.

Arguably, the purpose of these communicative strategies is to establish a certain balancing act in terms of revoking the unfavourable hierarchy of the teacher-student interaction and asserting a more symmetrical type of communicative dynamics. In other words, such a strategy could demonstrate that the footing of the interrogating teacher is shifted to a position on a par with the interrogated student. Therefore, it would be beneficial to analyse these communicative strategies in line with the theory of *politeness* and *face* (Goffman, 1967; Leech, 1983; Brown and Levinson, 1987). This particular analytical perspective, however, is beyond the scope of the current study. Moreover, the micro-corpus data presented above are of highly limited scope. Our primary intention in designing the original questionnaire was to map which accent-related discussion topics, personal concerns and language attitudes seem to display the highest degree of salience for our students and to elaborate on these in subsequent research. Thus, our focus will from now on turn to the attitudinal correlates of teacher and expert identity in the relevant sections of the data set in the form of in-depth interviews.

## [6] Conclusion

One of the most salient features the data discussed above bring to the fore are the emergent expert identities as observed in a group of pre-service EFL teachers. In his recent study on the shifting forms of expertise in TV documentaries, Chovanec (2016) introduces a descriptive scale that positions the TV presenter as a semi-expert between “the lay audience, the experts, and the omniscient voiceover that adds yet another level of expertise to the entire participation framework of the programme” (Chovanec, 2016, p. 18). It is conceivable to draw a parallel between the documentary framework and the questionnaire framework. If we suppose that the central role of interest is taken by the *semi-expert* represented by the respondent, a pre-service teacher, the *lay audience* can be their current or future students, the authors of the questionnaire (their university teachers) being positioned as the *experts*, and, at one remove, the formulations of the questionnaire can represent the *omniscient voiceover*. What makes this parallel particularly interesting is the fact that any potential criticism appearing in the respondents’ comments is aimed at the omniscient voiceover rather than the expert.

In relation to these identities, two closing remarks should be made: how this expert style engendered by mediated quasi-interaction differs from ‘normal’, face-to-face

interaction and how the respondents qualify their expertise. Regarding the first question, in face-to-face/synchronous interaction the respondents would have been likely to avoid expert stylisation altogether, as the shroud of anonymity would have been absent. The nature of quasi-interaction, i.e. the lack of confrontation and immediate feedback, is arguably inductive of potentially conflicting responses and framing without experiencing the impact of power distribution asymmetry or any kind of retribution from the figure of power. Regarding the second question, the respondents seem to qualify their expertise based on their membership of the academic community, particularly on the fact that they have successfully completed academic courses related to foreign language proficiency, EFL methodology and phonetics and phonology. This fact, however, puts them in a paradoxical situation in which what qualifies their expertise can equally contest it. Seen from the ritualised hierarchical standpoint, their academic community membership provides them with expert identity that is limited to the status of a student, which typically differs in quality and recognition from the status of a teacher. Thus, it is all the more notable and valuable that some respondents opted not to avoid assertiveness, which is rather typical of submissive interactional participation, and instead to employ conflicting frames voicing their expertise.

Returning to the research premise that the dynamics of a hierarchical interaction are more reliably revealed in authentic discursive presentations of self (here the comments section responses) rather than in adherence to ritualised interactional patterns (here the questionnaire responses), what are the outcomes of the intertextual identity negotiation I have been attempting to observe in the micro-corpus presented in this paper?

In the context of the analysed data, there are two mutually implied dichotomies: the student vs. teacher identity and the consensual vs. conflicting frames. The teacher identity and conflicting frames are analytically less predictable, and, therefore, interpretatively weightier. The consensual frames primarily reflect student identity and the acceptance of ritualised hierarchical interactions. The conflicting frames tend to reflect (pre-service) teacher identity and the defiance of the ritualised interactional patterns, bringing authenticity to the fore. From the CDA perspective, the employment of the consensual strategy can be attributed to the *enactment/legitimation of power relations*, while the use of the conflicting strategy can be attributed to their *denial/mitigation* (van Dijk, 1993, p. 205).

In my approach I have adopted Johnstone's view on the role of individual voice in stance-taking and linguistic variation. She claims that approaching variation "from the individual outward rather than from the social inward means thinking about how individuals create unique voices by selecting and combining the linguistic resources available to them" (2000, p. 417). On one hand, some of the resources may be "relatively codified, shared and consistent", while other resources might be "highly idiosyncratic, identified with particular situations or people" (Johnstone, 2000, p. 417). What Johnstone calls "paying attention to linguistic individuals" (2000, p. 416) has been the overarching intention behind the current research.

Furthermore, *the relationality principle* viewing the notion of speaker identity as relationally constructed through the process of *authorisation* and *illegitimation* (Bucholtz and

Hall, 2005) holds interpretative relevance for my study. Taking inspiration from the interactional principles of identity negotiation (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005), the dichotomy of the intersubjective relations that the authors call *authorisation* and *illegitimation* (p. 603) is particularly prominent with regard to my data. This dichotomy refers to the structural and institutional aspects of identity formation. Authorisation represents “affirmation or imposition of an identity through structures of institutionalized power and ideology”, whereas illegitimation relates to “the ways in which identities are dismissed, censored, or simply ignored by these same structures” (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005, p. 603). Thus, some of the observational outcomes of the full data set could be seen as examples of authorisation, while the outcomes of the micro-corpus could be seen as examples of autonomous illegitimation in the sense of dismissing the default student-teacher identities.

In line with these findings, I envision conducting follow-up research exploring to what extent the respondents’ perception of themselves as EFL students and EFL teachers is convergent or divergent. The current data suggest that among other highly relevant aspects, such as native-like second language acquisition, expert identity comes to the fore in the publicly relevant content of the face of a pre-service EFL teacher.

Based on the presented data, a certain shift from norm-dependence to norm-defiance can be observed. It is possible that when the confines of individual questionnaire items are disrupted and voluntary space in the form of a comments section is thus constituted, the frequency of norm-defiant reactions is increased. The respondents’ motivation to engage in divergence can be elucidated by the optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991; Leonardelli, Pickett and Brewer, 2010). Brewer (1991) proposes the existence of two competing human needs, the simultaneous need for inclusion and differentiation. The fact that the respondents are presented with a change of footing from within the continuous frame of questionnaire participation and are invited to offer a personal opinion might be activating their need for different in-group inclusion. The default footing (see the Questionnaire frame, Fig. 1) frames the respondents as students, while the comments section (see the Comments frame, Fig. 1) frames them as potential teacher experts. Therefore, it is conceivable in some cases that the need for student in-group inclusion is saturated by participation in the questionnaire and the need for expert in-group inclusion is activated by the comments section. We witness a tendency for the *collective self* to be suppressed and the *individual self* to become motivationally primary (Leonardelli, Pickett and Brewer, 2010) in the dynamic process of negotiating nascent teacher expert identity.

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**[ book  
reviews ]**



**Alison Baverstock, Richard Bradford, and Madelena Gonzales, eds.**  
**[*Contemporary Publishing and the Culture of Books*]**  
**London: Taylor and Francis.**  
**First Edition, 2020**

Oh, books! The more, the merrier! Welcome to the world of book connoisseurs and everything related to publishing. However, let's not be mistaken – no matter how romantic the relationship might be, it is business first, after all. You read books, you write books, you listen to books, you buy books, you sell books, you love books, you may detest (some) books, and participate in so many more activities related to the field. Do you consider yourself an insider in the business, or just a fan? Either way, this book has something in store for each of us.

Recent months have been a tremendous challenge for the publishing industry due to the global pandemic situation. The industry has been tested by some abrupt changes (i.e. shifting more on-line, sales moving into e-shops, various platforms offering access to libraries).

This book reaches bookshelves in a very timely manner. It is divided into 15 chapters, accompanying an introduction, and an index. The chapters are written by various authors. The content is contextually rooted in the British publishing market, literary scene, and academia. Therefore, it probably has more informative value for readers outside the English-speaking country/ies.

The essays read very smoothly; the tone is quite popular and highly approach-

able (yet highly informative) rather than strictly academic. The target audience could be rather broad. Certainly, the book is more targeted at readers outside the industry, since it is written in an explanatory, methodical tone. The business insider is already familiar with the nuts and bolts; however, the motivated student and/or graduate, or the aspiring writer/author, might gather a lot of informative and inspiring information.

Each essay covers a particular angle and/or segment within the industry. The reader learns about the structure and workings of a publishing house, publishing rights (the time line, the reasons for choosing a title/an author, and the marketing/sales impacts for the publishing house), illustrated by specific examples of specific authors, explaining rights to different outlets (i.e. audiobooks, e-books).

The essays present organizational structure, types of publishing houses, issues connected with self-publishing, and the figure of the modern literary agent. The compilation does not concentrate merely on publishing itself; it also covers much broader issues related to literature. It examines the historical roots of literary traditions, the culture of readership (predominantly in the UK), and how different sales strategies can be used to reach readers. It also presents a typology of consumers, discusses the relevance of book clubs, and explains how they are related to sales strategies.

Other essays respond to the very current topic of food writing and travel writing (with its very rich literary tradition in the UK). The reader also learns about the different marketing strategies behind hardcovers, paperbacks, e-books and audiobooks (the choice of cover, budgeting,

time line, and different target audiences). The book also introduces the topic of creative writing courses and pragmatic aspects of publishing.

The only part of the book related to a different linguistic territory (French-speaking countries) describes French children’s literature and discusses autism with reference to carefully chosen, supportive and stimulating literature.

As mentioned, all the essays presented in the book are highly informative for a person who possesses an interest in literature beyond reading for pleasure and might have an ambition to become an insider in the book business.

The presented topics and issues are applicable to the global market; however, there are also specific features that are rooted in the English-speaking world. Thanks to the English language, this market benefits from a strong ability to penetrate numerous countries and regions, and it benefits from the fact that English is used as a lingua franca in the world of business; the benefit of the English language is literally the ability to speak to the masses. In that light, translating a book into a local language requires several steps (different time lines, different planning/scheduling, taking into consideration the quality of a translation) within the publishing process. Also, in that context, there is a cultural (even political) question concerning which authors should represent a national literature outside its territory, and should be a part of the national canon with the ambition of being presented outside of their own country of origin. This question might be relevant for smaller linguistic groups; however, it is not so salient in the case of texts in the English language.

The book brings to the table highly informative, current topics, especially in the light of changing dynamics of publishing, and it reflects on the need to go to meet the readers and address their changing reading/literary needs and wants.

**Veronika Zavřelová**

University of New York in Prague

**Ema Jelínková and Rachael Sanders, eds. [*The Literary Art of Ali Smith: “All we are is Eyes.” The Transatlantic Studies in British and North American Culture, vol. 31.*] Frankfurt am Mein: Peter Lang, 2019.**

This volume comprises papers from an international team of researchers exploring the multifaceted work of the contemporary Scottish writer, playwright, academic and journalist Ali Smith – who has become known especially for her short stories and novels addressing complex political and cultural issues, including feminism, philosophy or national identities.

The popularity and critical awareness of Smith’s fiction are documented by multiple essays and one collective monograph edited by Monica Germanà and Emily Horton: *Ali Smith: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (Bloomsbury 2013), which predominantly explores the aspects of space, the uncanny, and queer identities. Since the publication of this 2013 monograph, Smith has authored several acclaimed works, including the novel *How to be Both* (2014), the novel quartet *Autumn* (2016),

*Winter* (2017), *Spring* (2019) and *Summer* (2020), and the short-story collection *Public Library and Other Stories* (2015). While this prize-winning author has received growing attention from both critics and readers, Jelínková and Sanders prove that there is more to Ali Smith than gender identities and/or nationality concerns, and that her works address complex current social and political topics. While aspects such as Scottishness, gender or sexual preference are naturally considered in the volume, as they form an inseparable part of Smith's writing, the contributors focus predominantly on philosophical and mythological aspects, and above all on the “deeply human” (9) and universal impact of Smith's storytelling, as Ema Jelínková points out in her Introduction.

In her contribution “Time, Knowledge and Metafiction in Ali Smith's *Autumn*” Attila Dósa examines temporality and Smith's departure from mimetic narrative within the context of philosophies of time. Dósa simultaneously employs various critical approaches, focusing his detailed analysis on two episodes from the novel. This paper, though offering a fresh perspective on the connection of time and knowledge, assumes a rather expert audience, not only acquainted with narrative traditions, mythologies and philosophies of time, but also, and most importantly, with the novel *Autumn* itself – which remains unintroduced.

Héloïse Lecomte discusses the modern mythical dimension of Smith's series of lectures *Artful*, focusing on Orphic myths from a feminist perspective. At the same time, however, she foregrounds the universalist concept of mourning, alienation, and the modern desire for stories

that matter. The influence of Greek philosophy is also a major concern of Milena Kalkanin's paper “Pythagorean Tradition and Its Modern Echoes in Ali Smith's ‘Common’,” which discusses the importance of commonality, liberation from postmodern fragmentation, and dissociation in the context of Pythagorean philosophy. This philosophical approach receives significant space; the first six pages provide a purely theoretical background of Pythagorism and its variations, while only the second half of the paper applies the philosophical concepts to Smith's short story.

In contrast to the philosophical and mythological analyses, Ema Jelínková, besides providing an Introduction to the volume, centres her paper “‘Small Lives, Easily Lost in Foreign Droughts’: A. L. Kennedy's and Ali Smith's Short Stories of Human Interest” on the position of Ali Smith in the context of Scottish literature, especially in comparison with another Scottish writer, academic and stand-up comedian, Allison Louise Kennedy (who prefers to go by her initials so that her gender is not known before her work is). Drawing on her previous research of Scottish literature written by women, Jelínková foregrounds the universal human aspect of female Scottish voices, their emphasis on the common, everyday stories that are often silenced or unheard due to their seeming simplicity and domesticity. Starting with a brief historical context and an outline of the issues and forms of Scottish (women's) writing, Jelínková depicts the struggle of Scottish women writers to free themselves from various labels, mainly “woman writer”, “national writer”, or even “lesbian writer”; their plight is thus very close to that of American or British authors, as is

documented in the essays of and interviews with Elizabeth Bishop or Jeanette Winterson. While acknowledging Smith's and Kennedy's narrative experiments, what Jelínková foregrounds is their constant concern with commonality and “relevance to the world as we, readers, know it” (38).

Jess Orr offers a fresh perspective on visual media and spectators in “New Ways of Seeing and the Role of the Critical Spectator in Ali Smith's *The Accidental*,” while Maria del Pino Montesdeoca Cubas discusses cyclical time, ethics and intertextuality in her paper “‘Look into My Eyes’: (In)Visibility in Ali Smith's *Autumn*, *Winter*, and *Spring*.” Cubas focuses on the ethical role of a writer and the genre that Smith understands as a reflection of contemporary events. As these seasonal novels were written during Brexit, immigration, the mass media and political manipulation play a major role in the narratives, as well as the role of the writer and his/her moral responsibility and active engagement in current affairs. The role of the author and narrative perspectives are addressed in Milada Franková's essay “Omniscient Narrative Revisited by Ali Smith and Kate Atkinson.” Outlining the development of omniscient narrative and its decline in the 20th century, Franková argues that this concept has begun to reappear, at least to a certain degree, undermining the “need for strict distinctions between omniscience or a lack of it” (88). Such a “partially omniscient voice” is then examined in Ali Smith's *Winter* and Kate Atkinson's *Life After Life*.

Multiple points of view and their effect on the narrative, especially in connection with performance and artistic techniques, are further discussed in Ro-

chelle Simmons's paper “‘I Want to Go to Collage’: On Ali Smith and John Berger.” Simmons focuses on Smith's employment of Berger's transformative visions, representing current social issues and the use of non-verbal means of communication, and social feminist criticism, examining the influence of visual arts (specifically painting) on Smith's narrative style. Rachael Sumner analyses the narrative effect of collage or “bricolage” in “The Art of Memory in *Autumn* by Ali Smith.” Yet unlike Simmons, Sumner focuses chiefly on the creation of identities and the function of memory in the novel *Autumn*, analysing memory in connection with “continual creation of self and world through narrative” (131). Olga Roebuck adopts a female-oriented approach, discussing the representation of contemporary women in her essay “Authenticating Women: Ali Smith and Denise Mina.” Focusing on the complex negotiations between feminism, nationalism, and resistance to labelling, Roebuck, similarly to Jelínková, foregrounds the authors' concern with authenticity.

This volume offers original insights into the short stories and novels of Ali Smith, focusing predominantly on her *Seasonal Quartet*. The papers contained in it adopt various approaches, ranging from philosophical to genre- and form-oriented, feminist, political, or mythological; while some papers are more text-oriented, others foreground theoretical discussions. Overall, the presented papers reflect the complexity of Ali Smith's writing and – despite their disparate perspectives – explore topical concerns, be it narrative structures, the moral responsibility of artists, the rise of nationalisms, cultural and literary labelling, or post-Brexit society.

As the volume perhaps addresses rather those readers who are already acquainted with Smith's work (as most of the essays do not introduce the plot and/or focus specifically on the details or parts of the stories or novels that are crucial for their theoretical perspective), the analysed texts often seem to be rather backgrounded. Nevertheless, the editors have selected representative examples of diverse approaches to Ali Smith's literary output and highlighted the topicality and complexity of her work.

Michaela Weiss  
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**Kamila Vránková**  
**[*Metamorphoses of***  
***the Sublime: From***  
***Ballads and Gothic***  
***Novels to Contemporary***  
***Anglo-American***  
***Children's Literature*] České**  
**Budějovice: Pedagogická**  
**fakulta Jihočeské univerzity,**  
**2019**

This monograph is concerned with the sublime and with shifts in the understanding of the sublime over time as reflected in literature. It is a response to an increase of interest in the topic in the Anglo-American environment. The author's aim is to contribute to the discussion surrounding the sublime, and to show the possibilities for incorporating the sublime into literary analysis, as demonstrated across several chapters.

The monograph is based on research by a range of contemporary Czech scholars. It consists of ten chapters, but it could be thematically divided into three parts. The first part, and also the first chapter, provides a theoretical background for the topic. This chapter outlines the history of the concept from Longinus to the present day, touching on modern theories of the sublime, but it also concerns itself with possible definitions of the term as well as with the features of the sublime.

The second part deals with the literary analysis itself. It begins with a closer look at various metamorphoses of the revenant/demon lover/Lenore motif as present in European ballads, and explores the threshold between life and death as a place of experience and the possible rebirth of the self.

The next chapters analyse features of the sublime as manifested in *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, several works by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* compared with Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

While the last part of the book remains focused on literary interpretation, the last four chapters shift their attention entirely to children's literature. The seventh chapter is concerned with changing attitudes towards the presence of the sublime and the fantastic in literature for young readers over the course of time. The following two chapters provide a closer introduction to (respectively) the motifs of time travel and other worlds existing alongside our own. Finally, the last chapter analyses the works of three contemporary authors – J. K. Rowling, Chris Priestley and Lemony Snicket, and explores the ways in

which the sublime is manifested in their texts intended for young readers.

Although Vránková did not set out to provide an exhaustive study of the sublime, the monograph succeeds as both an introduction to the topic and a contribution to the discussion of the sublime. The text also advocates literary analysis that takes the sublime into account – it must be said that those chapters tend to assume more than a surface level of familiarity with the content of the texts discussed. Overall, the monograph is an insightful contribution to the debate surrounding the topic, in particular the chapters focusing on the presence of the sublime in literature for children and young readers.

**Anna Mertová**

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**Tomáš Kačer [*Dvouseťletá pustina: Dějiny starší americké dramatiky*] Praha: Karolinum, 2019**

Tomáš Kačer se ve své publikaci ujal role průvodce dvouseťletou pustinou amerického dramatu. Jako pustinu či období postupného a velmi pomalého zrození dramatu označuje více než dvě století před prvním veřejným čtením divadelní hry Eugena O'Neilla *Východním směrem do Cardiffu* (*Bound East for Cardiff*), které se konalo v létě roku 1916 a které je mnohými označováno za přelomové. Zatímco americkým divadelním hrám napsaným a uváděným v posledních více než sto letech je věnována notná míra pozornosti, a to i u nás, hry z období před O'Neillem jsou často opomíjeny především z důvodu nevalné

umělecké kvality. Tomáš Kačer svou volbu věnovat se právě tomuto období vysvětluje v úvodu knihy. Uvádí, že zmapování této pustiny v českém jazyce dosud publikováno nebylo a že přes zjevnou nezralost dané tvorby se jedná o materiál hodnotný, který je neoddělitelnou součástí amerického kulturního dědictví, má formativní vliv na uměleckou tvorbu v následujících staletích, ve své době byl často velmi populární a navíc, jak autor trefně poznamenal, i v takové pustině „čas od času vytryskne životodárný pramen“ (10).

*Dvouseťletá pustina* není pouhým překladem dostupné anglicky psané odborné literatury. Jedná se o citlivě sepsané dějiny dramatu s ohledem na českého čtenáře, kterému by některé historické souvislosti a širší kontext mohly být neznámé. V několika případech se navíc vykreslení kulturní a společenské situace i pozice, kterou divadlo zastávalo, opírá o paralely s českým prostředím. V antologické části knihy najdou čtenáři zdařilé české překlady delších úryvků vybraných divadelních her, které jsou u nás známé jen málo nebo vůbec a které by jinak zůstaly českému publiku nedostupné.

Již počátek putování pustinou je spleť. Není totiž snadné určit „den počítí“, tedy okamžik, kterým americké drama začíná. Tomáš Kačer je nicméně svým čtenářům dobrým průvodcem a hned v první kapitole přináší polemiku nad obsahem zažitého termínu „americký“, jehož výklad není ve skutečnosti vůbec jednoduchý a komplikuje tak odpověď na otázku, kterou hru můžeme označit jako první americkou. Následující kapitola popisuje období, kdy mělo drama pravděpodobně největší vliv na dějinné události, neboť v době Americké revoluce a války za nezá-

vislost se ideologická část boje odehrávala nejen na jevištích, ale především v tištěných politických dialogických pamfletech a fraškách zesměšňujících protistranu, které k propagandě svého zájmu využívaly všechny zúčastněné strany. Po skončení války, kdy bylo cílem her posílení národního cítění, vznikla první americká hra *Protiklad* (*The Contrast*, 1787) Royalla Tylera. Zde se poprvé objevila typicky americká postava Yankeeho, který používá americký akcent. V následujících letech se v divadle objevily další výsostně americké postavy jako „vznešený indián, drsný kovboj či muzikální černošský otrok“ (89). Kromě formování pocitu národní hrdosti má ale divadlo ještě další cíl a tím je zábava. Komericializace divadla a upřednostnění zábavy před uměním, které jsou pro americké divadlo charakteristické i v dalších obdobích, má své kořeny právě zde a projevilo se především ve formě. Bezkonkurenčně nejpopulárnější byly estrádní pásma a společenské komedie či komedie mravů. V první polovině 19. století se k nim přidaly také frašky, burleska, varieté, odlehčené muzikály a především melodrama, jehož prvky do většiny dramatických žánrů pronikaly již v první polovině, ale jeviště víceméně ovládlo především v druhé polovině 19. století. Jeho pozvolný nástup je jedním z ukazatelů postupného odpoutání se od britského vlivu a tradice, stejně jako postupné zavádění ryze amerických témat, jakými jsou například změny ve společnosti, nová společenská vrstva *no-veaux riches*, indiánská tematika a šíření civilizace na západ. Prvním dominantním melodramatickým žánrem bylo pohádkové melodrama populární ve 20. a 30. letech, ve 40. letech se do popředí dostaly abstinenci a o dekádu později i abolicionistické

melodramata. Nejhranější byly v této době různé adaptace *Chaloučky strýčka Toma* (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1852) Harriet Beecher Stoweové, které se hrály nepřetržitě až do roku 1930 a je možné je vidět na jevišti i dnes. Zajímavostí je, že se v jižanských státech v té době uváděly buď parodie anebo proškrtané verze, které vyznívaly naopak ve prospěch otroctví. Divadlo bylo tedy podobně jako ve válce za nezávislost propagandistické, i když v průběhu občanské války již nemělo tak významný vliv. Představily se další nové formy, které odrážely rozvoj divadla především jako formy zábavy a jeho komercializaci, např. vaudeville, různá zábavná pásma, kabaret, hudební komponované večery, střelecké a akrobatické show, minstrel a později také western. Na konci 19. století se pomalu začaly na scéně objevovat realistické prvky, změna je to ale postupná podobně jako dříve u melodramatu a zpočátku se omezila především na kulisy, kostýmy či jazykové prostředky. Hlavním důvodem byl nezájem publika, které se chodilo do divadel bavit a realistické hry evropských i domácích autorů odmítalo jako příliš pesimistické a naturalistické, a také společnost *Syndicate*, která vlastnila v tu dobu většinu divadel a byla zaměřena výhradně na ziskovost. Realistické a později modernistické hry se tedy v té době objevovaly především na scénách nekomerčních divadel, byly realizovány ochotnickými spolky a přistěhovalci, zcela mimo hlavní proud.

*Dvousetletá pustina* je hodnotná a velmi čtivá publikace. Je důkladně a precizně zpracována, přehledně strukturována a zcela splňuje cíl ediční řady *Dramatica*, která, jak uvedeno na obálce, čtenářům představuje „významné oblasti teorie a dějin divadla, dramatickou tvorbu a scénické

umění v širších kulturních a společenských souvislostech“. Je organizována chronologicky, zároveň ale v rámci jednotlivých kapitol i tematicky. Kapitoly začínají stručným představením dobového kontextu a končí přehledným shrnutím, jsou mezi sebou provázány, ale zároveň jsou vystaveny tak, aby mohly být použity i individuálně, a to například i jako studijní materiál. Za zmínku také jistě stojí bibliografické medailonky nejvýznamnějších autorů. Samozřejmě není možné, s ohledem na rozsah knihy, pokrýt celé více než dvouseleté období detailně, Tomáš Kačer

ale citlivě vybral nejdůležitější díla nejvýznamnějších autorů a informace k daným společensko-politickým obdobím i literárním směrům demonstroval na četných ukázkách z nich. Kromě toho publikace přináší vhled do fungování a organizace divadel, způsob jejich financování, představuje vybrané herce i vkus společenských vrstev v jednotlivých etapách.

**Michala Rusňáková**  
University of Jan Evangelista  
Purkyně, Ústí nad Labem

**[ news,  
announcements ]**



## [Bolestná ztráta]



Dr. Stella Nangonová, pro všechny kolem ovšem paní Stella nebo Stellinka, byla v mnohém neobyčejná: nenápadná a křehká konstitucí, zároveň však velmi pevná a silná osobnost, citlivá a empatická, ale vždy samostatná a nezávislá, racionálně systematická a přesná, současně otevřená umění, žena s velkou představivostí a výtvarným nadáním. Byla nesmírně šťastná mezi studenty, ráda pracovala na katedře v týmu a léta týmovou práci iniciovala a vedla, byla v kontaktu s dlouhou řadou kolegů, přátel i známých, ale těšilo ji být i o samotě – při práci, s literaturou, hudbou. Až do ledna letošního roku docházela denně na katedru a zdálo se, že pracovat soustředěně sama v kanceláři, vnímat ruch kolem, společně poobědvat s kolegyněmi a občas si s někým chvíli popovídat, bylo to, co měla nejradši.

Stella se narodila 31. srpna 1938 ve Frenštátě pod Radhoštěm. V rozhovoru, který vyšel k jejím 80. narozeninám v univerzitním magazínu, vypráví: „Do Ostravy jsem se dostala z brněnské univerzity na umístěnkou. Končila jsem studium v roce 1966 a nemohli jsme si vybrat, ‚soudruzi‘ chtěli mít všechno pod kontrolou. V Brně jsem studovala angličtinu jako hlavní obor a češtinu jako vedlejší obor, a při studiu mě čeština zajímala víc, na anglistice jsme kromě profesora Firbase neměli moc dobré učitele. Několik let jsem v Ostravě učila na jazykové škole, dokud nás jedenáct nevyhodili po ‚bratrské pomoci‘ řízené Sovětským svazem v roce 1968. Mě umístili na gymnázium v Ostravě-Vítkovicích, ale se studenty jsem jela jenom na bramborovou brigádu, potom mi kolegyně Marie Šalková nabídla místo na tehdejší katedře cizích jazyků a tam jsem jako nejmladší učila kdeco,

včetně literatury a nějakého lingvistického předmětu.“ Po krátkém období na přelomu 60. a 70. let, kdy se na tehdejší ostravské pedagogické fakultě rozvíjelo před normalizací odborné studium Anglického jazyka a literatury, Stella vyučovala téměř dvě desetiletí výhradně studenty jiných oborů, pro které svědomitě a s velkým nasazením vedla hodiny lektorské angličtiny.

Každá hodina, každý student pro ni byli důležití – v době izolace od anglicky mluvícího světa, v době bez internetu, kdy zahraniční literatura a média byly až na naprosté výjimky nedostupné, Stella s pílí a důsledností sobě vlastní připravovala objemné zásobníky jazykových cvičení všeho druhu, ke každé lekci, pro každý gramatický jev. Stačilo jen zmínit, co by si člověk potřeboval procvičit, a Stellinka otevřela skříňku plnou zásob. A v této neúnavné podpůrné práci pokračovala po celou svou dráhu: když v roce 1992 vznikla již na filozofické fakultě katedra anglistiky, Stella připravovala zevrubné opory k prvním britským učebnicím praktického jazyka, učební materiály k britským reáliím, k dějinám Velké Británie, k předmětům kulturních studií, které vyučovala – k britskému výtvarnému umění a architektuře. Britské umění bylo její velkou láskou – cestovala za ním, studovala si je, vyučovala ho jak pro studenty anglistiky, tak třeba i v univerzitě třetího věku, a vedla na vybraná témata i diplomové práce. K uznáním Stelliny odbornosti patří, že obhajob těchto prací se jako oponent účastnil doc. Petr Holý, znalec výtvarného umění, zakladatel oddělení dějin umění na Ostravské univerzitě.

Nejrozsáhlejším a nejpoblárnějším učebním materiálem, který Stellu provázel po velkou část života a proslavil její jméno u několika generací zájemců o studium angličtiny daleko za hranicemi Ostravské univerzity, je čtyřdílná učebnice Angličtiny pro jazykové školy, znalci přezdívaná „Prokopovi“, nebo rovnou „The Prokop family“ (někteří si vzpomenou na barvy jednotlivých dílů: modrá, zelená, fialová a hnědá). První vydání vzniklo v 80. letech ze spolupráce Stelly s prof. Jaroslavem Peprníkem z katedry anglistiky Palackého univerzity v Olomouci, nové vydání v 90. letech už Stella připravila sama – a jednalo se o vydání inovované, podstatnou měrou přepracované, s novými nahrávkami a klíčem. Neocenitelnou oporou rodilého mluvčího byl tenkrát Stelle kolega z ostravské katedry dr. Chris Hopkinson a vytrvalou přepisovatelkou a technickou pomocí dlouholetá sekretářka katedry Petra Valošková.

Ve své odpovědi na zprávu o Stellinčině odchodu prof. Peprník vzpomíná: „Vždycky jsem obdivoval její životní elán a pracovitost, a to jsem ani například nevěděl, že byla trvalou tajemnicí katedry, jiný člověk by druhým opakovaně připomínal, jak nesnadnou a nevděčnou práci dělá. Učebnice jazykovka by nebyla bez Stelly a její vynalézavé a trpělivé práce na cvičeních, neznám nikoho, kdo by stejně vytrvale a úspěšně pracoval na tak dlouhém projektu, jako byly čtyři díly té učebnice.“

A když se hranice konečně otevřely a českým univerzitám se dostalo navíc v začátcích štědré podpory Britské rady, vybuďovala Stella na katedře rozsáhlou příruční knihovnu, kterou bohatě doplňovala i novými zahraničními tituly, jež pořizovala ze svých vlastních prostředků. Peníze pro Stellu byly skutečně vždy jen prostředkem, nikoli cílem či motivací – když se nabízela s pomocí na čemkoli potřebném, vždycky dodávala „o peníze vůbec nejde, vždyť víš, že já peníze nepotřebuju“. Nebylo lehké Stellu přesvědčit, aby si nechala

za práci navíc zaplatit – každý překlad, korekturu i soukromé hodiny vždy hodnotila jen jako maličkost pro přátele a kolegy. Bylo potřeba buď kapitulovat, nebo připravit drobnou lest, jako se podařilo jedné kolegyni, která nakonec přesvědčila Stelly, aby převzala odměnu za sérii hodin angličtiny pro její dceru tím, že třeba může obnos darovat Výboru dobré vůle Olgy Havlové. A Stella tak obratem učinila.

Péče o studenty, dokonalá příprava na výuku šitá na míru jejich potřebám, byla u Stelly vždy na prvním místě. Ve výše zmíněném rozhovoru k 80. narozeninám na otázku k úkolům učitelské profese odpověděla Stella stručně a o to důrazněji: „Učitel by měl mít zájem o studenty a ochotu věnovat jim čas, pracovat s nimi a pro ně. Protože jsme učitelé, měli bychom stejnou pozornost jako vědecké práci věnovat také výuce.“ A studenti napříč generacemi to vždycky brzy rozpoznali a oceňovali. Stellinka byla váženou, milovanou a velmi žádanou vyučující, studenti anglistiky neváhali vystupovat s peticemi za to, aby právě jejich skupině Stellinka jako vyučující zůstala: jednu takovou petici podepisoval v 70. letech ještě jako student Stanislav Kolář, následně celoživotní kolega z katedry, v letech devadesátých si studenti žádali v praktických cvičeních Stelly namísto lákavých roditelých mluvčích. Pro Stelly to bylo velké ocenění a radost, často si jistě ani neuvědomovali, jak důležité poděkování to pro ni bylo a jak obtížně se naopak vyrovnávala s nezájmem některých studentů o obor a ještě daleko více s nepoctivostí pracovní i osobní. Není náhodou, že na zprávu o Stellinčině odchodu na Facebooku katedry anglistiky reagovalo spontánně v řádu hodin, soustrastně a s láskyplnými vzpomínkami, vedle kolegů především více než 450 současných a bývalých studentů.

Stellin tolerantní a přívětivý přístup k lidem neznamenal, že by si nevšimla rozdílů a nedokázala rozlišovat. Jako dlouholetá tajemnice katedry, která mnohdy hrála neformálně i roli její vedoucí, měla přesný přehled; vždy věděla, s čím se může na koho spolehnout, pro koho se ten či onen úkol nejlépe hodí, aby přinesl všem zúčastněným pohodu i užitek. A vydatnou hromádku toho, co se nikomu nehodilo, vzala na sebe a nikdy to sobeměně nevystavovala na odiv, mnozí mimo katedru i na katedře tak ani nevěděli, co všechno zvládne.

Nerada k sobě poutala pozornost a to ani při příležitosti svých kulatých výročí. K oslavě významných 70. a 80. narozenin se Stelly podařilo nenápadně přesvědčit jen tím, že se její jubileum spojilo s dalšími – v roce 2008 tak na katedře oslavila spolu s dalšími dvěma kolegyněmi v součtu 140. narozeniny a o deset let později jubilujících ještě přibýlo a petice oslavenkyň včetně Stelly připravila sezení k narozeninám dvou set padesátým.

Je třeba říct, že Stella nebyla jen člověk práce a už vůbec nebyla sobecky uzavřená jen ve svých odborných zájmech a pracovních úkolech. Její život byl daleko pestřejší: milovala pohyb a přírodu, ráda chodila na hory i na dlouhé procházky jen tak v okolí, účastnila se tradičních výletů katedry, cestovala do své milované Británie i jinam (ráda vyprávěla například o své lodní dovolené na Island, provázené bohužel i strastiplnou mořskou nemocí), scházela se s širokým okruhem přátel. Milovala literaturu – romány žánru fantasy, světovou klasiku a speciálně čínské autory, také literaturu faktu věnovanou politickým událostem a historii; před rokem 1989, v době, kdy u nás oficiálně vyjít nemohl, přeložila

pro své přátele Tolkienova *Pána prstenu* – „Uchvátil mě, přímo fascinoval samotný příběh a hrdinové Tolkienova románu. Ráda na to období vzpomínám“, poznamenala k tomu v rozhovoru. Až do posledních dní svého života četla. Měla vždy rozečtené dvě knihy – jednu ke snídani a další pro klidné chvíle během dne. Ještě v telefonátu po návratu z léčebny v květnu kolegyni chválila veškerou tamní péči s jedinou kritickou připomínkou – k místní knihovně: „Co ti mám povídat, to se nedalo číst, ale nějakou klasiku jsem tam našla.“ Poslouchala vážnou hudbu a při své lásce k výtvarnému umění v mládí také sama malovala.

Dlouhá léta bydlela společně se svou maminkou, které poskytovala všechnu potřebnou péči, v závěru mamčin života velmi intenzivní. To se ale její blízcí dozvídali jen občas z poznámek a letmých zmínek, nikdy nikoho nezatěžovala svými starostmi, nikdy nechtěla stěžováním vyvolávat soucit či si říkat o pomoc.

Někdy před patnácti lety poznamenala s úsměvem, že při výstupu na Solárku, kam vzala na výlet tehdejší lektorku Britské rady, nemohla popadnout dech – „tak jsem pochopila, že výšlapy pro mě skončily“, a to bylo všechno na dané téma; o několik let později se musela podrobit srdeční operaci, která naštěstí proběhla velmi úspěšně a vrátila Stelle na nějaký čas sílu. Stále byla mezi námi, s laskavým úsměvem kudy chodila, s knížkami pod paží na cestě do výuky, u svého pracovního stolu nad textem, s šálkem dobrého černého čaje a kouskem pečiva – ta nejbřitštější osoba, jakou jsem kdy potkal, jak jednou zmínil jeden z lektorů/rodilých mluvčích. Žena, se kterou bylo až do posledních chvil radost pobýt, protože nikdy neztratila zájem o druhé a o svět. Tak nám zůstává v paměti.

Paní Stella je přece nesmrtelná, psalo ke smutné zprávě na Facebooku katedry nedůvěřivě hned několik kolegů a bývalých studentů, nejmýlněji za všechny kolega Michael Elavsky: „Legend and icon“.

Renáta Tomášková





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