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Literature and Culture

The Perverted Cosmology of Richard Crashaw

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Abstract

The essay discusses the transformation of Pythagorean cosmology in the English poems of Richard Crashaw. It argues that Crashaw's paradoxical musicality is not grounded in an orderly organization of the universe (as was the case in the Pythagorean concept), but in its abundant excessiveness. This theme is developed in relation to various cosmological allusions, the author's christocentrism and his specific use of emblems. The crucial point is the dynamic nature of Crashaw's concept of harmony based on his sophisticated handling of language.

Keywords: Richard Crashaw, English metaphysical poetry, Pythagorean cosmology, mysticism, concepts of harmony

1. Introduction

“In the development of Western philosophy as the Renaissance saw it, the sect of Pythagoreans had played a definite and important role, a role much more important than is generally conceded today,” says S. K. Heninger Jr. in his excellent book on Pythagorean cosmology and Renaissance poetics¹. Indeed, cosmological allusions are omnipresent in Renaissance literature, and their significance surpasses mere contextual reference to an outdated system of beliefs.

In the preface to the first and most important collection of Richard Crashaw's poetry, *Steps to the Temple* (first publ. 1646), the unknown editor explains the author's poetic aspiration to the “Learned Reader” with an allusion to the Pythagorean concept of musical harmony:

The Author's friend, will not usurp much upon thy eye: This is only for those whom the name of our Divine Poet hath not yet seized into admiration. I dare undertake that what *Jamblicus* (*in vita Pythagoræ*) affirmeth of his Master, at his contemplations, these Poems can, viz. They shall lift thee, Reader, some yards above the ground:

and, as in *Pythagoras' School*, every temper was first tuned into a height by several proportions of Music, and spiritualiz'd for one of his weighty lectures; so mayst thou take a poem hence, and tune thy soul by it, into a heavenly pitch; and thus refined and borne up upon the wings of meditation, in these Poems thou mayst talk freely of God, and of that other state. (29)

The editor thus points out one of the most important characteristics of the Pythagorean system, i.e. the doctrine of proportions; proportions – defined by number – accounted for the “musical nature” of the cosmos². However, Pythagorean cosmology primarily addressed the order of the *universe* based on a clear opposition between the centre and the spheres (i.e. rotating around *one* defined centre), and the poetics of correspondences; i.e. microcosm reflecting macrocosm and vice versa, where complexity could always be “reduced” to simplicity as in the famous Pythagorean numerical progressions³. If the Renaissance constantly aspired “toward the condition of music”⁴, it was to a large extent due to the penetrating presence of Pythagorean harmonious thought that transformed this aspiration into a truly spiritual quest: a quest for the final truth about the universe.

The work of Richard Crashaw is a peculiar phenomenon not only within 17th century English poetry, but within the whole of the English literary tradition. There is something deeply non-English about his verse, although the influences of Donne and Herbert are substantial for his poetic development. The strict Classicist Alexander Pope praised his “thoughts”, but found him more a “Versifier” than a poet (Pope 154). Nineteenth-century critics, namely Hazlitt and Swinburne, emphasise his “fervors of fanaticism” and “fantastic devotion” respectively, but also his ingeniousness⁵. In his famous essay, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, Empson alludes to Crashaw’s popular epigram “Blessed be the paps which Thou hast sucked” and points out “a wide variety of sexual perversions which can be included in the notion of sucking a long bloody teat which is also a wound” (221). More positive appreciation came from Yvor Winters in his *Primitivism and Decadence*⁶, and, indeed, from Austin Warren, the author of a famous monograph on Crashaw⁷. Negative evaluation, however, seems to persist even later: e.g. W. Kerrigan’s essay on Donne’s religious poems sees Crashaw’s work as verbose and neurotic⁸.

The transformation of the traditional Pythagorean lore in the poetry of Richard Crashaw is one of the most interesting aspects of his very specific poetic genius. In this essay I want to argue that Crashaw’s predilection for the paradoxical aspects of the Christian faith *perverts* the Pythagorean *universe*. His universe is a contracted one, and it is tuned from within. It is a dialogical cosmos based on an act of faith, decentring oneself and subsequently also our perception of the “macrocosm”. As we saw in the short extract from the Preface, one is asked to “tune” one’s soul “into a heavenly pitch” and experience the music of “that other state”. The fixed Pythagorean *definiteness* yields to *infiniteness* expressed – as we shall see later on – in the overabundance or the supposed “verbose” excessiveness of his language.

The present article discusses the issue in relation to his cosmological allusions, his christocentrism and his use of emblems.

2. “Upwards thou dost weep” – the topsyturvyness of Crashaw’s universe

In the first poem of his *Steps to the Temple*⁹, “The Weeper”, Crashaw introduces his favourite saint, St Mary Magdalene. The conceit of the poem is based on a perverted cosmology: Mary’s tears are “ever-falling stars” falling from the heavens of her “fair Eyes”:

- 2 Heavens thy fair Eyes be ;
 Heavens of ever-falling stars.
 Tis seed-time still with thee; .
 And stars thou sow’st, whose harvest dares
 Promise the Earth; to countershine
 Whatever makes Heaven’s forehead fine.
- 3 But we are deceived all,
 Stars indeed they are too true,
 For they but seem to fall
 As Heaven’s other spangles do:
 It is not for our Earth and us,
 To shine in things so precious.
- 4 Upwards thou dost weep,
 Heaven’s bosom drinks the gentle stream.
 Where th’ milky rivers meet,
 Thine Crawls above and is the Cream.
 Heaven, of such fair floods as this,
 Heaven the crystal Ocean is. (33)

The traditional opposition between heavens and earth (as between “below” and “above”) is turned upside down: “we are deceived all”: in the contracted universe of Mary’s eyes, tears fall “upwards” to heaven (“Upwards thou dost weep”). They create a “Crystal Ocean” from which “a brisk Cherub something sips/ Whose soft influence/ Adds sweetness to his sweetest lips.” This vertically *perverted* cosmology is, nevertheless, harmoniously musical, as we see in the following stanza:

Then to his Music, and his song
 tastes of this breakfast all day long. (34)

The conceit of the poem does not, however, end in a *bon mot*: Crashaw recreates his cosmology very carefully and with a subtle intellectual discipline. Mary’s tears become a “looking glass”, in which they are viewed in ever-new perspectives. The tears are thus compared to “Jewels” (stanza 8), “Balsam” (stanza 12 and 13), or “rivers” (stanza 14). They “melt the year/ Into a weeping motion” and make time “precious” (stanza 16). The tears become a universal symbol of a contracted universe, and the simple theme of weeping seems to exhaust the universe of reality. In stanza 22 Crashaw dramatises the question of their falling:

Whither away so fast?
O whither? for the sluttish Earth
Your sweetness cannot taste
Nor does the dust deserve your Birth.
Whither haste ye then? o say
Why ye trip so fast away? (36)

The answer in the following stanza is surprising: they do “fall down”, yet the object of their falling transforms the nature of the movement itself. They fall – as expected – on Christ’s feet. The imagination of the rest of the poem thus achieves its paradoxical unity:

We go not to seek
The darlings of *Aurora*’s bed,
The Rose’s modest cheek
Nor the Violet’s humble head.
No such thing; we go to meet
A worthier object, *Our Lord*’s feet. (36)

The unity of the “fantastic” conceit is thus achieved in its *perverted geocentricism*: indeed, the presence of Jesus makes the movement upwards and downwards one and the same movement of adoration¹⁰.

The third poem in the first collection, “The Tear”, develops the cosmological reference of the first Magdalene piece¹¹. The sacred nature of Mary’s tears – the object of typically Baroque devotion – problematises the question of the actual substance of her “tear”: is it a *tear* or not? The enigmatic, truly hieroglyphic nature of the object is recalled by a kind of cosmological defining-and-redefining game:

- 1 What bright soft thing is this?
 Sweet *Mary* thy fair Eyes’ expense?
 A moist spark it is,
 A wat’ry Diamond; from whence
The very Term, I think, was found
The water of a *Diamond*.
- 2 O ‘tis not a Tear,
 ‘Tis a star about to drop
 From thine eye its sphere;
 The Sun will stoop and take it up.
Proud will his sister be to wear
This thine eyes’ Jewel in her Ear.
- 3 O ‘tis a tear
 Too true a Tear; for no sad eyne.
 How sad so e’er
 Rain so true a Tear as thine;
Each Drop leaving a place so dear,
Weeps for itself, is its own Tear. (37)

The tear again acquires a variety of meanings: “a pearl” and “a rose” (stanza 4), “a maiden gem” (stanza 5), and “an eye of Heaven” (stanza 8). It is taken up to heaven – mark the same movement as in “The Weeper” – to join the choirs of angels. However, the paradox of the substance does not seem to be solved: the cosmological reference to the outer world is legitimised only as long as it is still the very same eye of Mary Magdalene. The *contracted* and *concentrated* “Heaven of *Mary’s* eye” is the centre from which the outer world can be spotted, and the heavenly aspiration of her sainthood makes her tears objects worthy of devotion. The question of cosmological hierarchy is thus transformed into the question of the infinite centrality of God:

- 7 Thus carried up on high,
 (For to Heaven thou must go)
 Sweetly shalt thou lie,
 And in soft slumbers bathe thy woe;
 Till the singing Orbs awake thee,
 And one of their bright *Chorus* make thee.
- 8 There thyself shalt be
 An eye, but not a weeping one,
 Yet I doubt of thee,
 Whither thou’dst rather there have shone
 An eye of Heaven; or still shine here
 In th’ Heaven of *Mary’s* eye, a *Tear*. (38)

The paradox of the ending is the final tautology: *it is, indeed, a tear*. However, there is a crucial difference to be spotted here: the tear has been transformed; it has been filled with the infinite presence of God. Its centre is nowhere and its circumference everywhere. It has entered the *theocentric* world: its motion is dictated by the omniscient presence of God.

A similar movement – i.e. both concentric and vertical – can be seen in one of Crashaw’s divine epigrams, “On the Blessed Virgin’s bashfulness”: Mary’s bashfulness is perfectly acceptable as an act of devotion, because she does not need to “look up” to adore the living God. The presence of God in her womb reshapes the hierarchy of the universe: she *looks down*, since the centre is united with the sphere:

That on her lap she casts her humble Eye;
 ‘Tis the sweet pride of her Humility.
 The fair star is well fixt, for where, o where
 Could she have fixt it on a fairer Sphere?
 ‘Tis Heav’n ‘tis Heaven she sees, Heaven’s God there lies
 She can see heaven, and ne’er lift up her eyes:
 This new Guest to her Eyes new Laws hath given,
 ‘Twas once *look up*, ‘tis now *look down* to Heaven. (42)

In Crashaw’s rendering of the famous “Psalm 23”, the problem of decentering the sphere acquires an identical connotation: the sphere of *concentration* is the presence of God inside, which recreates the *universe*:

About my Paths, so shall I find
The fair Center of my mind
Thy Temple, and those lovely walls
Bright ever with a beam that falls
Fresh from the pure glance of thine eye,
Lighting to Eternity. (55)

In "On a Prayer Book Sent to Mrs. M. R.", the "temple of the heart" needs to be constantly guarded against the attacks of the "beguiling" Enemy. The centre-sphere tension is referred to the struggle between God and Satan. Prayer re-enlivens the power of God's presence in the soul of man. However, languishing in prayer causes the decentering of the spiritual self:

But if the noble Bridegroom when he comes
Shall find the wand'ring heart from home,
Leaving her chaste abode,
To gad abroad:

Amongst the gay mates of the god of flies;
To take her pleasures, and to play
And to keep the devil's holy day.
To dance in the Sunshine of some smiling
But beguiling
Sphere of sweet, and sugar'd lies,
Some slippery pair,
Of false perhaps as fair
Flattering but forswearing eyes

Doubtless some other heart
Will get the start,
And stepping in before,
Will take possession of the sacred store
Of hidden sweets, and holy joys,
Words which are not heard with ears,
(These tumultuous shops of noise)
Effectual whispers whose still voice,
The soul itself more feels than hears. (78)

The poem finishes in a paradoxical statement making the commonplace "accommodations" of God problematic. The pleasures of the soul in God's hands go beyond the single "heavens" of old:

Happy soul she shall discover,
What joy, what bliss,
How many heavens at once it is,
To have a God become her lover. (80)

The paradox of joining unity (*universe*) and multiplicity thus has a clear cosmological reference: having God as a lover is an experience beyond the proportion of the old division between microcosm and macrocosm. It is “many heavens at once”, i.e. the goal is thus achieved differently, as in the old Pythagorean cosmology looking for the final reduction into the monad. God’s conceit is not reduced back to its origin, but infinitely multiplied. The “other” language of God requires accommodation in an abundance of ever-new similes¹².

3. The problem of Presence – Crashaw’s christocentrism

One of Crashaw’s most enigmatic poems, “To the Name above Every Name, The Name of Jesus, A Hymn”, is a poem eminently concerned with the problem of language. The name of Jesus cannot be uttered as any other name, since it is no “name” in the everyday sense of the word:

I Sing the *Name* which None can say
But toucht with An interior *Ray*:
The Name of our New *Peace*; our Good:
Our Bliss: and Supernatural Blood:
The Name of All our Lives and Loves.
Hearken, And Help, ye holy Doves!
The high-born Brood of Day; you bright
Candidates of blissful Light,
The *Heirs* Elect of Love; whose Names belong
Unto The everlasting life of Song;
All ye wise *Souls*, who in the wealthy Breast
Of this unbounded *Name* build your warm Nest. (148)

Crashaw follows here a long tradition of avoiding inappropriate usage of God’s name, such as we find in the Old Testament: the sanctity of the name does not allow it to be used in vain¹³. One may also see here a biographical reference to Crashaw’s Puritan father William (1572–1626), and the specifically Puritan iconoclastic drive during this period¹⁴. However, the conceit of the poem stresses primarily the “unbounded” nature of the name of Jesus: the poem constantly strives to refer to it without actually uttering it. The result of this aporia is a chain, or rather a “condensation” of expressions: the poem – in order to stress the unutterability of the name in the order of commonplace reference – emphasises the ontological aspect of its utterance, the aspect of *adoration*.

The act of *adoration* in the poem incorporates the whole of Creation, since the self of the adorator cannot properly respond to the aspiration of the adoration: the multitude of worlds has to unite to rise up in a harmonious act of adoration. Indeed, the act of adoration – as the different etymologies of the original Latin and Greek words show – points in two simultaneous directions. The Greek word *proskynesis* (προσκύνησις) means *submission, recognition of God as the norm*; while the Latin word *ad-oratio* refers to an intimate contact, a kiss or an embrace. Both these aspects are present in the poem: the incapacity to utter the name recognizes the unbounded nature of God’s name, but it also strives to be an act of love.

Crashaw uses powerful images of Christ's presence: the images of *nest*, *bee-hive* and *perfume*. All these words refer to a centre of radiation, a centre which recreates the world *from within*:

Leave All thy native Glories in their Gorgeous Nest,
And give Thyself a while The gracious Guest
Of humble Souls, that seek to find
 The hidden Sweets
 Which man's heart meets
When Thou art Master of the Mind. (151)

The presence of the Name in the poem is thus "postponed", as it is in the theology of the Eucharist. The presence of Christ in traditional Catholic theology is explained as being threefold – *the historical presence*, *the presence in the Eucharist*, and the *presence-in-the-coming*, the so-called "Second Coming of Christ" at the end of the ages. The poem incorporates all the types of Christ's presence in an act of *rotating around the infinity*. Linguistically speaking, the old meaning of naming in the sense of "making present" is here wonderfully retained and avoided at the same time. The "All-adored Name" of Jesus enters the world in a paradox of an un-named substance¹⁵. As I have shown before, the identity of the name and being – so, economy and ontology – has been accomplished in a *sophisticated logic of language*. The multiplicity of reference and the dynamic of expression help to sharpen the sense of the impossible. The prime importance in bridging the abyss acquires the medium of language.

"In the Glorious Epiphany of Our Lord God", another of Crashaw's longer poems about Christ's presence in the world, alludes to the problem of harmony. At the heart of this "Hymn Sung as by the three Kings" – as the subtitle says – is a *christocentric* cosmology:

Cho. To *Thee*, thou *Day* of night! thou east of west!
Lo we at last have found the way.
To thee, the world's great universal east.
The General and indifferent *Day*.
1. All-circling point. All cent'ring sphere.
The world's one, round, Eternal year.
2. Whose full and all-unwrinkled face
Nor sinks nor swells with time or place;
3. But every where and every while
Is One Consistent solid smile;
1. Not vext and tost
2. 'Twixt spring and frost,
3. Nor by alternate shreds of light
Sordidly shifting hands with shades and night.
Cho. O little all! in thy embrace
The world lies warm, and likes his place.
Nor does his full Globe fail to be
Kist on Both his cheeks by *Thee*.
Time is too narrow for thy *Year*
Nor makes the whole *World* thy half-sphere. (160–161)

In this short extract, we can see the basic concept of Crashaw's *christocentric* cosmology: the little babe in the crib is "a little all": a microcosm holding the macrocosm *from within*. At the same time it is an "All-circling point" and an "All cent'ring sphere." The world rotates around Jesus as the eminent centre drawing all deviating spheres to himself. As such it is a harmonious and musical cosmos: the only hindrance protecting us from hearing the overwhelming cosmic harmony is sin:

Cho. Nor was't our deafness, but our sins, that thus
Long made th'Harmonious orbs all mute to us. (161)

The "All-cent'ring sphere" thus transforms our perception of space, since the unbounded nature of Christ's presence, as a presence of the Logos incarnate revealed at the Epiphany, marks its limits as un-limited¹⁶. Since Christ's Incarnation the orbs have been tuned from within and – as in the hymn "To the Name of Jesus" – adoring Jesus is an "unbounded All-embracing Song" (Crashaw 150). This "condensation" of expressions or the abundance of similes pointing towards infinity defines the new order of grace. As A. D. Cousins claims, "Crashaw again and again depicts heavenly beatitude, or anticipatory sensation of it, as a spiritual union with Christ, the ecstasy of that oneness often being suggested through images of incandescence or of musical harmony" (129). As the ecstasy partakes in God's abundance of being (the theological concept of the *superabundantia*), the recreated universe abounds with harmony. Indeed, the muteness of the world of sin shows that the new cosmology of grace within a broken world must be revived: the paradoxical epiphany of an unnamed God unites *deitas* and *materia*.

This seems to offer a solution to the problem of the *logic of language*: Crashavian illogical language of paradox aspires to the ontological status, to the status of *materia*. Just like a Baroque statue aspires to a state of movement, Crashaw seems to "tune" his language to aspire to a status of an animated being, i.e. a living *materia*. The apparent failure of such an undertaking, however, shows its triumph: language, indeed, *represents this aspiration*. "The presence of language" after all is primarily the presence of this struggle, this longing for the ineffable, and this *paradox at work*. The abundance of meaning is thus fully efficient.

4. Images and music – the measure of abundance

Crashaw's sense of harmony and music is also eminently bound up with his use of emblems (i.e. an image with a subsequent moral). The emblem allowed the creation of a more complex symbolic structure, which could expand on the original meaning in many different layers.

Crashaw uses two "typical" emblems: in "To the Noblest and best of Ladies, the Countess of Denbigh"¹⁷ and in "Saint Mary Magdalene or The Weeper". Features of emblematic technique are, however, detectable elsewhere: e.g. in "The Flaming Heart or To the Name of Jesus". All of these poems are commentaries on images, trying to recreate their "speaking" quality, as in the Horatian maxim *ut pictura poesis*. Nevertheless, what Crashaw writes is not just an explanatory commentary on the "true" meaning of the emblem, but a stream of metaphors as if regenerated from the mysterious source of the object's reference.

Thus the “Tears series” concentrates fully on the “Diamond” of the tear; but it also produces a multitude of quite dissimilar images. It is interesting to note that the second edition of “The Weeper”, called “Saint Mary Magdalene or The Weeper”, incorporated the two earlier poems into one. Even though the order of stanzas is shuffled, there is only a minimal change in the overall meaning of the piece. The unity of the picture and the text seems to be granted by the *unity of the centre*.

If we now focus on the emblem itself – showing weeping Mary with a winged bleeding heart in a circle of light – we read the following inscription:

*Lo where a Wounded Heart with Bleeding Eyes conspire.
Is she a Flaming Fountain, or a Weeping fire! (196)*

The commentary does not explain the picture, as classical Renaissance commentaries did, nor is it just a witticism: it is a *stream of paradoxes*. Indeed, the second sentence unexpectedly climaxes in an exclamation mark, although it is clearly a question. What the emblem does is augment the mystery, the unspeakable. The stream of paradoxes seems to be the mystery at work, the liberating power of language to aspire to new meanings and, most importantly, to the unspeakable. The emblem retains its power as a picture, i.e. as an expression *sui generis*, which can hardly be reduced to a language commentary. On the other hand, the commentary shatters the certainty of the static medium of the picture: the vision of a static depiction transforms into the motion of language and vice versa in infinite circulation.

This, indeed, applies to the other “visual” emblem in “To the Noblest and Best of Ladies, the Countess of Denbigh (Persuading her to Resolution in Religion and to render herself without further delay into the Communion with the Catholic Church)”: the image of a locked heart is accompanied by the following inscription:

*‘Tis not the work of force but skill
To find the way into man’s will.
‘Tis love alone can hearts unlock.
Who knows the Word, he needs not knock. (145)*

The image responds to the inscription and vice versa: indeed, the mass of the object presented and the abstract idea expressed in verse create a sense of tension. The simile is thus based on the resistance of the material and the liberating force of the “word” unlocking the locked heart without the need to come to terms with the *materia* of the object. The focus of attention in the poem is matters of religion, or – more precisely – the resistance of the heart to the grace of God mediated through the Catholic Church. The emblem stays in the background of the poem as the indissoluble image of the difficulty. The meaning is thus the tension created between the two; and this tension is not to be broken. This tension abounds in metaphors and – in fact – creates the poem as such. The emblem – being a similar structure to the conceit, as we have seen – becomes the centre of the poem’s focus.

Traditional Renaissance emblems aimed at reconciling the picture and the textual commentary¹⁸; Crashaw’s emblems, however, tend to show the abundant capacity to restructure our perception of the object. Since the “tear” enters ever-new contexts (whose identity

is granted only in the identity of its focus, or – to follow our previous examination – the “presence” of its reference), it simultaneously activates many different layers of the subject matter. The logic of emblem is here fully compatible with the *logic of language*: it is the dynamism of expression, the overabundance of language reaching for the untouchable mysterious centre. The conceited style thus draws our attention towards the very process of language as exhibited in the eloquence of the author.

The question of harmony in Crashaw is therefore a question of the measure of abundance. In fact, music in Crashaw appears exactly in this *logic of abundance*: it springs out of the infinity of the object, inasmuch as it fulfils the same role as the pictorial commentary to a particular emblem. This is, indeed, the case of the hymn “To the Name of Jesus”: the emblematic and unutterable quality of Christ’s name is *sung*. Since the name cannot be pronounced, unless one is “toucht with an interior *Ray*”, the implication is clear: the music springs out of the *christocentric* heart. Thus the quality of its “music” is a quality of abundance of its “unbounded” centre:

Awake, *My* glory. *Soul*, (if such thou be,
And That fair *Word* at all refer to Thee)
Awake and sing
And be All Wing;
Bring hither thy whole *Self*, and let me see
What of thy Parent *Heav’n* speaks in thee. (148)

The *convocatio* of Creation a few lines later has a similar role: the unbounded Name of Jesus is to be *sung* by the whole of Creation. This produces an abundant sensation of harmony:

Wake *Lute* and *Harp*
And every sweet-lipp’t Thing;
That talks with a tuneful string,
Start into life, And leap with me
Into a hasty Fit-tun’d Harmony.
Nor must you think it much
T’obey my bolder touch;
I have Authority in Love’s name to take you
And to the work of Love this morning wake you;
Wake; In the Name
Of Him who never sleeps, All Things that Are,
Or, what’s the same,
Are Musical;
Answer my Call
And come along;
Help me to meditate mine Immortal Song. (149)

“All Things that Are,/ Or, what’s the same,/ Are Musical”, i.e. *its proportionate status is to be measured by its unproportion* (i.e. abundance and excessiveness), since the quality of its music is an act of praise. The abundance of being, the pure “proportion” of its created information, abounds with music.

In “Psalm 137”, an interesting rendering of the Hebrew text in English, Crashaw uses musical imagery for a powerful simile of gloom:

Sing? play? to whom (ah) shall we sing or play,
If not *Jerusalem* to thee?
Ah thee *Jerusalem*! ah sooner may
This hand forget the mastery
Of Music’s dainty touch, then I
The Music of thy memory. (56)

The association of music and abundance is clear here as well: it is both the emphasis on the performative quality of music (i.e. its capacity for creating emotions), and its emphasis on the abundance of emotions. The “Music of thy memory”, indeed, is the *iubilatio*, the abundance of emotions which cannot be fully interpreted in the medium of words.

Thus it reenlivenes the old maxim of St Augustine from his *Ennerationes in Psalmos*: “*Jubilum sonus quidam est significans cor parturire quod dicere not potest.*” The emotions of the weeping Israel “on the proud banks of great Euphrates’ flood” abound in music.

In *Psalms* 23 the association of centre and music is made explicit *expressis verbis*: the contended soul of the “psalmist” singing of the shepherding hand of God in the beginning is juxtaposed with a clear presence of God in his heart:

At the whisper of thy Word
Crown’d abundance spreads my Board:
While I feast, my foes do feed
Their rank malice not their need,
So that with the selfsame bread
They are starv’d, and I am fed.
How my head in ointment swims!
How my cup o’erlooks her Brims!
So, even so still may I move
By the Line of thy dear Love;
Still may thy sweet mercy spread
A shady Arm above my head,
About my Paths, so shall I find
The fair Center of my mind
Thy Temple, and those lovely walls
Bright ever with a beam that falls
Fresh from the pure glance of thine eye,
Lighting to Eternity. (Crashaw 55)

Harmony becomes the quality of the centre, the measure of the presence of God the unbounded. Therefore the sense of “proportion” becomes the measure of language.

The vision of the centre thus abounds in new and new joinings, since its harmony is dynamic in the original sense of the word: indeed, the Greek word *αρμοניה* is derived from the verb *αρμοζειν*, which originally had nothing to do with music or even cosmology. Its meaning was simply “fitting together” or “joining”, and it was used as a term in carpentry: “Both the Greeks and Indians have a carpenter god; the Christian God is a mason, but his

son was a carpenter... The fact that wood is the primary life-stuff, 'of which all things are made', shows it no historical accident but a mythical necessity that the God be referred to as carpenter..." (Shipley 145). Crashaw joins words with images to create an ever-new sensation of harmony. Harmony is thus not passively "translated" from the fixed order of the cosmos as in the Pythagorean scheme; it is created and recreated in verbose images of the world's abundance.

5. Conclusion

One is tempted to say that what Crashaw achieved is the unity of the Pythagorean and Heraclitean concepts of harmony: the sense of proportion (the Pythagorean part) is eminently bound with a sense of tension of two opposite centres, with the Heraclitean *paradox*. To make this paradox work, there needs to be a language holding the opposites in constant check. And the measure is: to keep the check. The surprising abundance of language, which characterises the metaphysics, stems out of this prime condition: the concept of harmony must be a living one, and thus constantly in a state of paradox. Crashaw, arguably, presents the most radical example of this approach within the metaphysical school.

The sensation of music – originally the quality of the ordered cosmos in the Pythagorean concept – becomes a function of this excessiveness, of this unproportion related to the mysterious "unbounded" centre, which can be neither fully conceptualized, nor fixed to a specific location in the universe. It is thus fully *recreated*: in the "new life" given by faith¹⁹, but also in terms of the poet's "unelected vocation". The conflicts over new cosmological concepts of Copernicus and Kepler – so painfully reflected in Donne's "Anatomy of the World" – reopened the scope of this vocation. Harmony is not just "received" and "translated" by a sensitive poet as in the old Pythagorean concept of correspondences; harmony is a dynamic quality created, or rather recreated, by the poet himself in an infinitely complex world.

Moreover, if the centre is everywhere (as in an infinite circle), the circumference is nowhere. This is still a logical statement, although no reference can be found. The logical relation between a simple circle and an infinite one is retained; however, we find ourselves beyond any measurable proportion. The criticised "fantastic devotion" may, therefore, be a fairly plausible solution of an implausible problem.

Notes

¹ Heninger, S.K., Jr.: *Touches Of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (The Huntington Library: San Marino, 1974).

² See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (985b23-986a3)

"... the so-called Pythagoreans, who were the first to take up mathematics, not only advanced this study, but also having been brought up in it they thought its principles were the principles of all things. Since of these principles numbers are by nature the first, and in numbers they seemed to see many resemblances to the things that exist and come into being – more than in fire and earth and water (such and such a modification of numbers being justice, another being soul and reason, another being opportunity – and similarly almost all other things being numerically expressible);

since, again, they saw that the modifications and the ratios of the musical scales were expressible in numbers; – since then, all other things seemed in their whole nature to be modelled on numbers, and numbers seemed to be the first things in the whole of nature, they supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things and the whole heaven to be musical scale and a number.”

³ The core of the Pythagorean teaching is based on the idea of progression from the monad. The numeral one – the monad (marking the beginning or the unity) dominates the scheme, which then progresses in two lines in the shape of the Greek letter lambda λ (see below). The left side shows the progression of even numbers, the right side the progression of odd numbers.

	1	
	2	3
	4	9
8		27

The numerical progression marks the process of unfolding the universe from its source. The first even number, 2, refers to a basic two-dimensional extension – i.e. a straight line, 4 to the four points of a square; the next extension, i.e. 8, defines the cube. The progression of the odd numbers starts with 3, the first real odd number, which enables an inner progression itself (i.e. has a beginning, a middle (or a mean) and an end). As for the progression of the even numbers, number 9 signifies a square, and 27 a cube.

⁴ I am referring here to W. Pater’s discussion of music in his classic book, *The Renaissance*: “All art constantly aspires to the state of music” (Pater 111).

⁵ “Crashaw was a writer... whose imagination was rendered inflammable by the fervors of fanaticism, and having been converted from Protestantism to Popery (a weakness to which the “seething brains” of the poets of this period were prone) by some visionary appearance of the Virgin Mary, poured out his devout raptures and zealous enthusiasm in a torrent of poetical hyperboles. The celebrated Latin Epigram on the miracle of our Saviour, “The water blushed into wine,” is in his usual *hectic* manner. His translation of the contest between the Musician and the Nightingale is the best specimen of his powers” (Hazzlit 53).

“Theophile in France and Crashaw in England had many merits and faults in common. Crashaw is a Christianized Theophile, steeped in Catholic sentiment and deformed by fantastic devotion; he is a far smaller figure, a much weaker and perverser man; but in fancy and melody, in grace and charm of exquisite words and notes, he may rank next him and near him. He is far more ingenious and elaborate; if elaboration and ingenuity be qualities commendable in a poet. His studies are more fleshless and formless...” (Swinburne 21–22).

⁶ Winters, Yvor. *Primitivism and Decadence: a study of American experimental poetry* (New York: Haskell House, 1969).

⁷ Warren, Austin. *Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1957).

⁸ „...the tactless exercises in accommodated devotion we find in Crashaw, daring with no sense of danger, creating neither mystery nor wit, but leaving as aghast at the combination of great verbal power, unquestioned faith, neurosis, and stupidity” (Kerrigan 47).

⁹ In this essay I am using the GROVE edition of Crashaw’s verse (i.e. the 1646 text of *Steps to the Temple* and *The Delights of the Muses*; the 1652 text of *Carmen Deo Nostro*; the 1653 text of a letter from Mr. Crashaw to the Countess of Denbigh; and the poems from manuscript) based on L.C. Martin’s edition of Crashaw’s poems *Crashaw’s Poetical Works* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1927). The 1646 edition of *Steps to the Temple* and *The Delights of the Muses* (and their second edition in 1648) are the only edition published during Crashaw’s own lifetime, and as the editors point out “more carefully printed and freer from obvious errors” (Crashaw 22). On textual

problems regarding the variorum readings in the different editions I refer to the above-mentioned classic edition of Prof. L.C. Martin.

¹⁰ We are going to re-introduce the topic in relation to Crashaw's christocentricism.

¹¹ In *Carmen Deo Nostro* (first publ. 1652 in Paris), this poem is joined with the "The Tear" and given a new title, "Saint Mary Magdalene or The Weeper". See our discussion in section 4 of this essay.

¹² See Kerrigan's discussion of this topic (Kerrigan 37f.).

¹³ "The Torah speaks of a requirement to take oaths in God's Name (Deut. 6:13) – but prohibits using the Name in vain (Ex. 20:7, Deut. 5:11). It also calls upon its adherents to destroy pagan idols and not to treat God likewise (Deut. 12:4). These laws thus lead us to enhance the Name through its use, which means to use it properly and respectfully, and, in contrast, to avoid anything that disgraces or defaces it (since it would be impossible to destroy God literally). But frequent use of the Name increases the likelihood of its being used inappropriately, and these passages thus place us between two competing forces, one that prescribes sanctifying the Name through its use and another that proscribes its desecration through its abuse. Moving in any direction off the relatively narrow path toward fulfilment of each commandment is likely to lead to violation. These concerns deal, in essence, with treatment of the Name as written and as pronounced" (Levy 1).

¹⁴ Further on this see Spraggon, Julie. *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003).

¹⁵ R. V. Young points out that "the hymn invokes not the signified behind the signifier but the signifier itself, the NAME of Jesus" (Young 163). In that sense the Eucharistic presence of Christ surpasses the critique posed by Derrida's notion of the *differance*. "Jesus is the name of the Logos incarnate, the material presence of the Deity" (Young 165). This remark – as I attempt to show – has a prime importance in understanding the genius of Crashaw's poetry.

¹⁶ Young remarks that "Mysticism's definitive characteristic is not ecstatic passion, but rather the apprehension through grace of God's timeless presence" (Young 67).

¹⁷ The full title continues as follows: "Persuading her to resolution in Religion and to render herself without further delay into the Communion of the Catholic Church".

¹⁸ Here I follow the discussion of emblem books in Hollander (47–50).

¹⁹ "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor 5,17).

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The Gothic as a Cosmopolitan Literary Form: The Case of C. R. Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*

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Abstract

Between the end of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth century, several Irish, English and Scottish writers – such as Maria Edgeworth, Sydney Owenson, Susan Ferrier, Sydney Morgan, John Galt and Charles Robert Maturin – focused their novels on the nationalistic/cosmopolitan dichotomy. Tellingly, in my view, this dialectics is not simply thematic, but concerns the formal organization of the text, the way a given novel is constructed. Thus, in those years, in the process of definition of a national identity and, consequently, a national literature, certain kinds of writing – variegated, encyclopaedic, non-linear – began to be stigmatized as dangerous projections of antagonist axiologies, not conforming to those parameters of homogeneity, order and rationality regarded as epitomizing the nation state and its symbolic forms. My essay discusses in particular the formal aspects connected to the way in which nationalism and cosmopolitanism intersect and yet are opposed in Charles Robert Maturin's masterpiece, Melmoth the Wanderer.

Keywords: Maturin, Melmoth, Wanderer, Gothic novel, historical novel, national tale, cosmopolitanism, national literature

An earlier version of the present essay has already been presented at the International Conference “Le figure del cosmopolitismo nelle letterature europee (1700–1830)”, organized by the Associazione Sigismondo Malatesta and held in Rome on 28–29 January 2011.

Introducing the Gothic novel, its origins, and the changes it underwent between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Terry Castle, in her essay on the subject in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, affirms that Jane Austen, Mary Shelley and the Brontë sisters brought the Gothic horror, long confined into a remote and foreign time and space, back home within the boundaries of the kingdom (704-706). The sense of menace that characterizes the genre, she argues, thus invaded everyday life, in search of literary metaphors capable, at the same time, of representing and concealing it. This is undoubtedly true. We should, however, add at least one other name, that of Charles Robert Maturin, the author of a number of sermons, short poems and theatrical pieces, as well as several novels, including the controversial *Melmoth the Wanderer*, conventionally regarded as the text that concludes the first phase of the Gothic novel.

A significant part of Maturin's work certainly reflects the European debate on cosmopolitanism of the time. Two of his most popular novels, *The Milesian Chief* (1812) and *Women; or Pour et Contre* (1818), for example, are influenced by Mme De Staël's *Corinne* (1807), in that they place at their centre female character exhibiting the distinctive traits of the cosmopolitan heroine. The two female protagonists display a free spirit, curiosity, the ability to adapt to and feel at ease in different situations and places, and, accordingly, a propensity for travel. Their roles, however, are not the same. In *The Milesian Chief*, from which Walter Scott declaredly drew inspiration for *Waverly* (1814), the young Armida appears as a perturbing force, the ultimate cause of many of the tensions and conflicts that will contribute to steer the course of events in a tragic direction.¹ This confirms the impossibility of harmonizing contiguous, but not convergent, historical, cultural and "sentimental" traditions, namely, continental cosmopolitanism; Irish nationalism, pervaded with a romantically revolutionary energy; and the levelling force, intolerant of diversity, of the central power represented by the victorious English army.

In *Women*, on the other hand, set in Dublin in 1814 and written in the turmoil of post-Napoleonic Europe, the cosmopolitan heroine, Zaira, though doomed to failure, acts as a catalyst to a dynamic and educated ideal of society, as an alternative to the traditional localistic model.

This dialectics between the idea of nation and cosmopolitan values informs the subject matter and characterization of many other novels written between the end of the 18th century and the first two decades of the 19th. Notable examples include Maria Edgeworth's "national tales", and the works of Sydney Owenson, Susan Ferrier, Sydney Morgan, John Galt, and others.² But what is possibly more striking is that in some cases this dialectics is also transposed to the formal level. Thus, in the long process of definition of a national literature, from a certain moment onward certain kinds of writing – variegated, encyclopaedic, non-linear – began to be stigmatized as dangerous projections of antagonist axiologies not conforming to those parameters of homogeneity, order and rationality, regarded as epitomizing the nation-state and the symbolic forms delegated to represent it.

In the present essay, I would like to look further into these aspects in the light of an analysis of Charles Robert Maturin's masterpiece, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820).³

The Wanderer as a demonic pilgrim: here is one of those literary metaphors of menace I was referring to above, which can be ranked with others, possibly more common and better known, such as the monster or the vampire. *Melmoth* tells the story of an Irish gentleman born in the 1600s who, being versed in magic and wishing to venture out in the open

ocean of knowledge, makes a pact with the devil. What damns him, as he himself confesses, is the angelic sin of intellectual presumption. Melmoth gives up his soul to appease his thirst for knowledge of the forbidden in the course of a life extended by supernatural means to one hundred and fifty years. A citizen of the world, which for him is a space without boundaries, distances, or secrets, Melmoth – once he gains consciousness of the fate he has doomed himself to – tries to retrace his steps by seeking somebody willing to take over the pact and thus give him back his liberty and the hope for eternal salvation. However, in his endless ramblings he cannot find anybody willing to accept the conditions of the pact, although he seeks out and tries to tempt individuals whom human misadventures have cast into the pit of desperation.

The recurring apparition of the Wanderer is the only slim *trait d'union* in a text that speaks little about him and much about other things. In fact, *Melmoth* is not written as a single unified story, or even organized around a main narrative core; on the contrary, it plays on the juxtaposition of a multiplicity of stories with no real centre or hierarchy. Here we are beyond the structural organization of the eighteenth-century novel, which did often feature interpolated stories, but woven into the fabric of a solid and well-organized plot, or kept together by a structural, semantic or formal unifying element – even in such borderline cases as Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, to which *Melmoth* has often been compared. We are also beyond the Chinese-box structure of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where the relationship between the different “first person” narrations appears motivated and binding. In fact, the impression of fragmentation resulting from this episodic and digressive narration is the most striking aspect of Maturin's text and, significantly, one that was immediately attacked by contemporary critics. John Wilson Croker, for example, in his review of the novel in the *Quarterly Review*, after emphasizing its lack of verisimilitude and its attacks on decency and religion, dwells at length on the “clumsy confusion” with which the stories follow one another, linked with extemporaneous and unconvincing narrative pretexts, in the absence of a structure produced by “a nice workmanship”. A chaotic text, Croker argues, whose disorder “disgraces the artist, and puzzles the observer” (304).

A more interesting comment can be found in the July 1821 issue of the *Edinburgh Review*. In this review – anonymous, but probably by Hazlitt (Carver 392-93) – the peculiar formal organization of *Melmoth* is interpreted in a broader perspective. The reviewer highlights the dichotomy between local and continental models, between cosmopolitanism and the idea of nation, going so far as to define Maturin's novel as antipatriotic, antinational, and Jacobin – according to the equation established by Edmund Burke some time before –⁴ a result, the reviewer argues, of the author's provincial origins and his openness to a variety of foreign influences. The work's fragmentation thus becomes a *figure* of a threatening and destabilizing peripheral cosmopolitanism.⁵

Let us now look at the text itself and try to lay bare the literary mechanisms that produce this feeling. *Melmoth the Wanderer* spins out, intertwines and overlaps at least four plot levels, intersected in turn by a number of secondary threads.

The novel opens on the young John Melmoth, who leaves Dublin in 1816 and travels to County Wicklow, to the country estate of a dying uncle whose universal heir he has been designated. There John is made privy to the existence of a “strange family story” regarding an ancestor, also named John, who was born in the 1600s but is still alive. The secret is concealed in a document which the uncle's will requires his nephew to read, and in a

picture labelled “J. Melmoth 1646”, which, again according to the instructions of the will, is to be removed from the wall where it hangs and burned. Young John Melmoth’s quest as he attempts to unravel the mystery of the character portrayed in the picture forms the first narrative plane. It provides a sort of general framework for the subsequent narrative level, consisting of three independent tales that make up the bulk of the novel: the tale of Stanton, which transports us to Spain in the second half of the seventeenth century, then to England during the Restoration, and then to Ireland; the tale of the Spaniard Monçada, set in Madrid in the early nineteenth century, and thus contemporaneous with the time of the general narration; and, finally, old Melmoth’s short conclusive dream. To the subsequent level, which we could define as that of the “tale within a tale”, can be ascribed the story of Donna Ines de Cardoza, related by Stanton in his “memoirs”; and “The Tale of Indians”, whose protagonist is the young Immalee, a solitary queen of an island in the Indian Ocean who by a strange fate ends up in Spain – in Madrid, where she is adopted by the Aliaga family under the name of Isidora. Her story, chronologically coeval with that of Stanton, is entrusted to a parchment scroll which Monçada consults in the shelter of the Jew Adonia, who is also privy to the mystery concerning the elder Melmoth. Finally, there is a fourth level constituted by tales inserted in or generated within “The Tale of Indians”; that is, within the third narrative level. These include “The Tale of Guzman’s Family”, told to Aliaga by a stranger whose rash curiosity will cost him his life; and the “Lover’s Tale”, centred on the destinies of the Mortimer family, also told to Aliaga, but this time by Melmoth the Wanderer himself.⁶

To lend authenticity to his story, Maturin uses the literary device of the found manuscript: more precisely, several manuscripts kept in dark rooms, telling stories of segregation in cramped, oppressive places. *All* these documents are in a fragmentary state. They lack words, sentences, or whole pages, which results in breaks and logical and temporal leaps, signalled by asterisks. These gaps and ellipses in the narrative *continuum* occur both at the general level of text structure and at the lower level of the sources that one after the other trigger the narration.⁷ There is a further aspect that is worth highlighting: *Melmoth* is an “open work” with an uncertain ending, which leaves two of its stories unconcluded, namely, that of the Spaniard Monçada, who is far from having narrated all the vicissitudes that led to his shipwreck on the coasts of Ireland; and that of the Wanderer himself, whose death can only be surmised, given that his body was not found. Only a single trace is left of him: his handkerchief caught on the rocks, which he had around his neck on the night when his earthly life seemed about to come to an end and his eternal damnation to begin. The novel concludes, significantly, with Monçada and the young John Melmoth, who, terrified, go back into the house and into the living room, by definition a space for conversation and narration.

There is thus no unity of action in *Melmoth*, nor any unity of time or space. On a chronological level, the novel covers two periods, the second half of the seventeenth century and the early nineteenth century, but with no sequential continuity. The frequent intersections force us to move back and forth from one page to another to reconstruct the linear progression of the plot. Both character and reader thus seem to share the same destiny: Just as the young Melmoth strives to put back together the disseminated and dispersed pieces of the story of his ancestor from 1646 to 1816, so must the reader strive to restore order to a novel that is constantly bewildering him or her with its postponements, digressions, and

temporal and spatial dislocations. In its use of space, *Melmoth* is at once mobile and static, fluid and dense. On the one hand, it expands across a vast geographical range, moving from Ireland to Spain, Germany, England and India – the habitual geography of the Gothic novel, we could say, with the addition, in this case, of some incursions in London and its surroundings and, especially, the opening up to a rarefied, Edenic and literary Orient. On the other hand, except for the many pages devoted to Immalee's island, this geography is neither narrated nor described. The narrative covers thousands of kilometres in a few lines, to almost immediately shut itself up in closed rooms, within clearly delimited confines such as those of a castle, a convent, a country house, or, more often, the damp and mouldy walls of dungeons and crypts. In its alternation between open and closed spaces, the novel decidedly gravitates towards the latter, sometimes reaching extremes of oppressive claustrophobia, as in the memorable pages recounting Stanton's days in a lunatic asylum. The world in a room.

The novel's diversity extends even to the typographic form of the text, which incorporates a true encyclopaedia of languages and books, a library in 16mo of infinite quotations (here I use the term in a broad sense), some graphically set off as such, others modified or hidden. This complex play on intertextuality is amplified by the frequent intervention of the narrator in the role of an editor. The literary references appearing in Maturin's novel range from the Bible to Latin and Greek authors, from Homer to Virgil, from Pliny the Younger to Suetonius, from Zeno to Seneca, and from Cicero to Pindar and Juvenal; and, especially, Shakespeare, whose corpus of works, is almost entirely quoted (particularly the tragedies and histories). Then there are some other English classics, so to form an embryonic national canon: Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, Milton, Dryden, the Restoration Theatre, Fielding, Sterne, Gray, Pope, Boswell, Southerne, Garrick, and the Gothic authors. Finally, there is some European continental literature: Dante, Metastasio, Cervantes, Perrault, and Diderot.

Actually, the "quotes" are sometimes true rewritings. The "convent" pages of Monçada's biography, for example, are modelled so closely on Diderot's *Religieuse* that they border on plagiarism. One of the better known episodes in Lewis' *The Monk*, the murder of the Abbess, whose body is mangled and torn to pieces by the people of Madrid, provides the inspiration for the riotous crowd who attacks the representatives of the Inquisition in the imminence of a capital execution, also in Madrid. And the dialogue between Isidora leaning out from her balcony and Melmoth reproduces even too explicitly – and perverts – the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. The description of the Jew Adonia's shelter is also worth mentioning, as it translates certain well-known pictures into words. I am referring in particular to Vermeer's *Astronomer*, certain *Wunderkammer* images, and some of Bosch's visions. The world in a page.

This discursive multiplicity is also manifested in the mixture of genres. The first of these is, obviously, the Gothic tale itself. The settings of Stanton's tale are Gothic, as are, in particular, those of Monçada's story, where we find the classic "dark" repertory of caves, dungeons, tortured bodies, merciless monks, mysterious deaths, and the interrogatories of the Inquisition, all in a virulently anti-Catholic key. But Gothic clichés abound throughout the novel, which does not skimp on hermits, skeletons, weddings celebrated by demons, crumbling deconsecrated churches, stormy nights, shipwrecks, persecuted maidens, or the putrefying bodies of newborn babies.

A significant place is also accorded to another genre, the historical tale, in its most conservative version known as “King and Church”. This is the model for the tale of the Mortimer family, which contains itself a number of references to authors and books worthy of fame, another abbreviated canon of English literature, necessarily restricted to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century settings.

Maturin’s unusual and pleasant descriptions of evenings at the theatre in London in the early years of the Restoration, conversely, have the cadence and tone of a *London Gazette* article: the colourful characters crowding the hall, jealousy behind the scenes, clandestine love affairs, and nighttime encounters in the park, where some fashionable dame leads the actor Kynaston, celebrated for his extraordinary and ambiguous beauty, still wearing his female stage clothes.

Finally, there is the exotic Oriental narrative, the story of Immalee, the only inhabitant of an Edenic island reminiscent in many ways of Rasselas’s happy kingdom. The girl’s primordial state of grace is shattered by her encounter with the Wanderer, which stirs in her a desire, arising from curiosity for what is different. But, once again, a thirst for knowledge and novelty is doomed to disillusionment, to the discovery that difference is illusory: in the end all is reduced to one and the same miserable identity. The hope for full contentment is hence projected into a fideistic Beyond.

Melmoth the Wanderer is thus a hybrid novel on the plane of language and on that of genre. This hybridity is also reflected in its choice of characters, at least as regards two of its protagonists, who can certainly be qualified as cosmopolitan, or rather, citizens of the world. One is Immalee/Isidora, divided as she is between East and West, animism and Catholicism, naturalness and culture; the other, obviously, Melmoth the Wanderer himself, a kaleidoscopic figure, a summa of a series of founding archetypes of the Western cultural and literary tradition. Melmoth displays aspects of Prometheus and Cain (he explicitly states that he carries the mark of the outcast); but also of Marlowe and Goethe’s Faust, the Wandering Jew, Milton’s Satan, Don Juan – the worldly libertine and great converser –, the evil genies of Oriental tales, Vathek, and the list could go on (Kennedy 41).

This multiform and incoherent text, as I mentioned above, was disparagingly branded as “antinational” for its extemporaneous character, for certain features regarded as “foreign”. At first consideration this judgment appears surprising. First of all because Gothic is, in many ways, the genre of Britishness. Secondly, because Melmoth is actually a summa of the negative characteristics associated with cosmopolitanism in satirical pamphlets as well as elsewhere.⁸ Melmoth is an individual locked in himself, in his anxiety to succeed, indifferent to all feeling for or bond with his neighbour or homeland; a man who does not recognize either law or morality and acts exclusively for his own “utility”. His figure acquires further negative connotations from being perceived and presented as a menace, a diabolical emanation. Melmoth is a demonic pilgrim and, as such, a reverse image of the Christian pilgrim hypostatized in the connoisseur of the Enlightenment. Maturin brings this menace closer, away from its habitual remote settings into Great Britain itself, threatening to destabilize an order which, by contrast, we must imagine as based on those very principles which Melmoth denies and disdains.

However, these “conservative” traits, nationalist “by difference”, were not appreciated, being outweighed by the perceived menace. A menace that did not lie, however, in immoral words or violent images, however abundant these may be in the book; or in the

“internationality” of the characters. The anonymous reviewer of the work in the *Edinburgh Review* states the question in explicit terms. Writers like Maturin, he argues, by indulging in rhetorical and formal excess, rouse the passions rather than exercising judgment. Such writers, mostly Irish, with their “uncontrolled exuberance” (355), are representative of a literature reflecting “a nation in one of the earliest stages of civilization and refinement” (355). What drives them is an insatiable “thirst for novelty” (354), the same that possesses Melmoth; a thirst that sets back the clock of civilization and history, conceived, in line with Edmund Burke’s thought, as the fruit of a linear process of constant progress and improvement in *unbroken continuity* with the past.⁹ By not embracing a specific genre, but combining several, and by not employing an “unstudied and familiar” style (356), but drawing on a variety of styles and mixing them, authors like Maturin, with their “unlinear” writing, pose a serious threat. Thus, the formal organization, as well as subject matter, of works such as *Melmoth the Wanderer* can turn them into true “tumor[s] of words” (354), capable of infecting and corrupting, so that, “By degrees, the whole literature of a country becomes changed and deteriorated” (355).

The reviewer thus sees the novel as a negative and potentially destructive model. So what is the implicit counterpart to the fragmentary and reticular nature of *Melmoth the Wanderer*? Probably, the novels of other contemporary authors, such as Jane Austen or Walter Scott. Austen and Scott’s novels, as Moretti maintains (Moretti, “Romanzo” 14 ff), trace a convergent and complementary geography, with the singular coincidence that Scott’s stories end, geographically, just where Austen’s begin. Austen’s novels are set in the central part of England; Scott’s in a space far removed from the centre, close to the border. In Scott’s novels movement in space reflects a movement in time, from a modern centre to an archaic border, highlighting the variety of manners and customs, and the different degrees of development and civilization coexisting in a state: the “contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous” (*die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*), to quote Bloch’s celebrated formulation (104). Scott’s aim is to harmonize heterogeneity, in order to obliterate any internal division, in favour of a single boundary line delimiting the Nation from the outside. This process also requires, I would suggest, a single and well-ordered literary space.

The world reflected in *Melmoth* is different: to use a seventeenth-century image, it is traced with a broken compass. With his syncopated writing, proceeding by fragments and imposing different reading levels, Maturin creates an opaque and disquieting text; a text contradicting the fundamental assumption of the sentimental, historical, urban, and, I would add, Victorian novel, according to which the world is an epistemologically stable and, hence, knowable system, which can be measured, reproduced and deciphered. In Maturin’s novel, the unified space of the nation-state is pulverized into a physical and narrative multiplicity, a multiplicity also of languages and styles. Polyphony, or rather, cacophony: a disorienting din. An encyclopaedia turned into Babel. The unitary, linear, teleological novel, the symbolic form of the nation-state, is something very different from Maturin’s novel,¹⁰ which is heterogeneous, permeable and incomplete; in short, positively *cosmopolitan*.

Melmoth the Wanderer is composite and all inclusive. With its encyclopaedia – or Babel – of genres and languages it is truly a novel of the whole world, and not just of its educated, enlightened and advanced part. It is a singular mélange of words placing itself

and its “hero” outside the boundaries of what is encoded and prescribed. It represents not order, but anxiety and indecipherability.¹¹ This is why, possibly even beyond the intentions of Maturin himself, *Melmoth* was a novel of an ideologically dangerous “type”, to be relegated to the margins, to side paths, at least until a new menace appeared at the horizon, in search of new blood.

Notes

¹ The main characters’ dramatic fate is narrated against the background of an almost contemporary historical event: the 1798 uprising in Ireland, inspired by Theobald Wolfe Tone’s Society of United Irishmen and put down bloodily.

² Cf. Trumpener (“National Character” 687–90). Her essay is important for the light it sheds on the common characteristics of and differences between the so-called “national tale”, both Irish and Scottish, and the historical novel.

³ Many stimulating insights on the different facets of “cosmopolitanism” in Maturin’s works, and specifically in *Melmoth the Wanderer*, can be found in Wohlgemut’s study *Romantic Cosmopolitanism*, particularly in the chapter “Cosmopolitan Figures and Cosmopolitan Literary Forms” (119–142).

⁴ Burke first postulated a relationship between the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment, universalism, and the French Revolution – and, hence, Jacobinism – in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), and reaffirmed and elaborated on this relationship especially in his later essays *Thoughts on French Affairs* (1791), *Observations on the Conduct of the Minority* (1793) – where he stigmatizes the threat posed by English “Jacobins” –, and *Letters on a Regicidal Peace* (1795–7). In his perspective, cosmopolitanism, the inspiration of some fundamental “revolutionary” ideas, is a destructive force, incompatible with national principles and bonds, and with the very idea of nation and state; significantly, he called post-revolutionary France not a “state” but a “faction”.

⁵ Katie Trumpener, again, in another essay, at the conclusion of a broad discussion of connections between the various socio-cultural and literary components of Great Britain, confirms that “cosmopolitan provincialism” is a distinctive and characterizing trait “of modern Scotland and Ireland”. Hence, she argues, it is hardly surprising that, from the 1700s and until the 1900s, “in both cultures the tradition of the national, and sometimes nationalist, novel takes on decidedly cosmopolitan forms” (“Cosmopolitismo periferico” 228; my translation). This is an aspect deserving further investigation, especially as regards the subject of literary figures of cosmopolitanism.

⁶ Interestingly, the novel also alternates between different narrative voices. While the narration is prevalently conducted in the third person, both Stanton and Monçada’s “biographies” are in the first person.

⁷ The device is especially to the fore here, but was already known to readers of sentimental novels of the 1760s and 1770s; examples can be found in Sterne’s novels, and especially in Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling* (1771).

⁸ These characteristics are almost all already found, for example, in *Le cosmopolite, ou le citoyen du monde* (1750), by Louis-Charles Fougeret de Montbron. In the absence of the limits set by the norms and values that uphold national communities, the cosmopolitan’s world becomes an undifferentiated international space which he or she roams at will to satisfy merely individual interests and impulses.

⁹ “We wished [...] and do now wish, to derive all we possess as an inheritance from our forefathers. Upon that body and stock of inheritance we have taken care not to inoculate any cyon alien to the nature of the original plant. All the reformations we have hitherto made, have proceeded upon the principle of reference to antiquity; and I hope, nay I am persuaded, that all those which possibly may be made hereafter, will be carefully formed upon analogical precedent, authority, and example” (Burke 31).

¹⁰ *Melmoth the Wanderer* shows some of the distinctive traits of what Moretti defines as “world-works” of modern epic, although it does not match these works in stature and complexity, as *Melmoth* remains a *genre* novel, however lofty and manifold. I find especially significant the following observation by Moretti, which elaborates on the antithesis made famous by Bakhtin between the monologism of epic and the polyphony of the novel: “In sum, centripetal epic and centrifugal novel: until the 1700s a persuasive contrast, but after that things change [...] the nineteenth-century novel, for example, with its dialectics between province and capital, which places narrative at the centre of the nation-state, acts in the opposite way to a centrifugal force. And the same is true for conversation in novels, or the impersonal voice of the narrator: instead of fueling polyphony, they reduce it drastically, giving rise to a ‘verbal-ideological’ world that becomes more compact and homogeneous at every new generation. [...] in sum, the polyphonic form of the modern West is not the novel, but rather epic itself, which becomes specialized in the heterogeneous space of the world-system, and must hence learn to put on stage its myriad of different voices” (Moretti, *Opere mondo* 53; my translation).

¹¹ In the climate of instability that followed the collapse of the Napoleonic empire in 1815, one witnesses a vigorous revival and re-actualization of apocalyptic themes, both in painting and in literature; we thus have, on the one hand, views of London, Berlin or Paris pictured as immense expanses of ruins immersed in a ghastly emptiness; on the other, many literary texts (poems, novels and dramas) centred on the end of the human race and civilization, from Byron’s *Darkness* (1816) to Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man* (1826) (Steiner 19 ff.; Sterrenburg 325–327).

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A Parable of Humanity – Character and Landscape Construction in Jim Crace's *Signals of Distress*

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Abstract

Jim Crace is a remarkable contemporary British novelist in the realistic tradition, who deliberately avoids postmodernist experimentation or playfulness. The power of his writing rests in the combination of distinctive main characters and the sense of constructing unique fictional topographies. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that his novel Signals of Distress (1994) can be read as both a counterpart and a sequel to its more famous predecessor, Arcadia (1992), as it also explores, through the form of the satirical parable, the position of an individual in the process of a community's transition due to larger historical, social and economic circumstances.

Keywords: character, landscape, community, transition, parable, social satire

The power of Jim Crace's writing stems from his extraordinary imagination, which enables his predominantly straightforward narrative style and plain language to convey meanings that by far transcend the novels' seemingly uncomplicated plots. He purposefully avoids any self-conscious experimentation or playful postmodernist strategies, espousing instead the tradition of realistic storytelling, perhaps with the small exception of *Being Dead* (1999), in which death "is elevated to the principle of a metaphysics" (Gašiorek 42) as accounts of the life story of a middle-aged married couple take turns with detailed and precise descriptions of their brutal murder and the subsequent decomposition of their corpses. However, what distinguishes Crace from post-war realistic and naturalistic fiction is the fact that his novels are set in distinct imaginary places and landscapes that allow their author a thorough exploration of numerous other possible worlds, both physical and mental, geographically specific as well as metaphorical. These are inhabited by protagonists

whose positive character traits and troubled fates invite understanding and sympathy but who are also treated by the author with a more or less apparent irony that makes any profound identification with them almost impossible. It is through the interconnection and coexistence of settings and characters that Crace touches on his favourite themes: “a crisis of faith and meaning, the elusive quality of love, an interrogation of the essentials of identity within a broader social context, a consideration of the crisis of modernity in terms of its mercantile/capitalist instincts, and an awareness of the human narrative impulse” (Tew 24).

Despite the above tendency towards diverse landscape construction, it is possible to trace several idiosyncrasies of Crace’s fictional world that constitute a certain continuity from one work to another, especially in his novels written during the 1990s. The imaginary milieus he creates always appear familiar, yet simultaneously distant and unrecognisable to the reader, be it the unnamed city in *Arcadia* (1992), the Judean desert in *Quarantine* (1997), or the sandy Baritone Bay coast in *Being Dead*. This combination of the mundane, the “immediacy of the everyday” (Tew 30), and the enchantingly other results in what Adam Begley identifies as “Craceland”, claiming that Crace is “brilliant at exploiting the tension between the highly specific and the generic, between an historical moment and timelessness, between an imaginary topography and the invented landscape’s familiar features, which feel as real as your backyard”, all of which mean that in his novels “nearly everything is equivocal” (Begley). The characters of these worlds are caught in some greater social, economic, or spiritual processes that in effect significantly transform the customary paradigms of their everyday existence, making them part of “communities in transition” caused by change that “comes suddenly, irrevocably, and the human response to it is captured with wonderfully uncluttered intensity” (Begley). The wonder of Crace’s novels rests in the immense variety of these transformations, from the transition between the modern, urban, mercantile social patterns and their dehumanised, postmodern hyper-consumer simulacra in *Arcadia*, to the very birth of Christianity through the enigmatic miracle-making Galilean who dies after his forty days of fasting only to rise and be seen in the end by those who have just begun their quest for hope and liberation in *Quarantine*.

Although these processes occur within wider communities, Crace always concentrates on individuals and the ways in which they experience their development and its consequences. As these people are exposed to changes far beyond their control, they are forced to cope with often conflicting demands in order to survive or preserve the community. The tension between adapting to such changes and preserving one’s beliefs, values and personal integrity is inevitably accompanied by anxieties and fatal losses for these individuals. Moreover, it suddenly places them outside the social group, making them fully responsible for the further course of their life. That is why Crace’s protagonists tend to be loners and outsiders living on the edge of their community, partly out of necessity, partly due to circumstances, but partly also because they somehow differ from the other members. “These protagonists all suffer in a sense an ontological and epistemological displacement from the world: they are in the world, but do not live according to its rules; they think they understand the world, but they are using the wrong interpretative parameters” (Lane 27). It is precisely the combination of a rich imaginative landscape and the individual’s irreversible fate and profound moral dilemma that invites readings and interpretations that reach beyond the scope of the actual story. The aim of this article is to demonstrate how

Crace renders these idiosyncrasies in his second novel of the decade, *Signals of Distress* (1994), and how it can be read, in terms of ideas, narration and character construction, not only as a sequel to its immediate predecessor, *Arcadia*, but also as a unique component of its author's fictional universe.

Of Words and Deeds: Aymer Smith

The cast of characters Crace creates to inhabit the world of *Signals of Distress* is rich and miscellaneous in order to embody the different aspects of humanity the story needs to confront, from grave seriousness to obscure eccentricity. "Generally the characters represent traditional (recognisably Shakespearean) archetypes: a radical male virginal puritan, an unsympathetic ambitious brother, two young lovers brought together by fate, a Rabelaisian female innkeeper, and a grasping merchant" (Tew 95). However, stereotypical as they might appear, the characters are brought to life and made vivid and plausible through the various situations in which they find themselves and their encounters with one another. What connects most of these characters is their feeling of or need for dislocation, either willing and voluntary or not. As Crace notes, "most of the main players are out of place. They're either waiting to be dislocated entirely – they're going to the New World as emigrants – or they are dislocated because they are washed up on the shores of this place where their culture, and their attitudes and their responses don't really gel" (quoted in Tew 97). It is this feeling of displacement and unbelonging that brings together individuals who under normal circumstances are unlikely to ever meet, and which thus forms the backbone of the novel's captivating plot.

Aymer Smith, the protagonist of the novel, represents in many respects a reverse counterpart to Victor from *Arcadia*, as the only thing that connects them is their isolation due to their lack of basic social competences. However, even their isolation differs in nature and cause: while Victor likes being left alone and spends most of his time fortified in his "Big Vic" tower overlooking the city, Aymer wishes to be a respectable member of society and so he keeps striving to socialise with everyone he encounters, yet these attempts might be described as desperate or even disastrous since other people at best regard him as ridiculously odd, at worst as arrogant. Compared to the cold, calculating, self-centered and businesslike Victor, Aymer is a humanist character with a sincere persuasion that his destiny is to make the world a better place for those less fortunate than himself. Unlike Victor, who as a child was forced to live in the city and eventually became a multimillionaire entrepreneur but who is still at heart a country boy with a dream of leaving a mark on the city by building a pastoral oasis in its very bustling centre, Aymer is a prototypical city person with urban habits and manners who foolishly believes that he will be able to impress the rural community of Wherrytown and even find himself a wife there.

Aymer Smith is one of Crace's most vivid and tragicomic characters, an illustration that high-quality ingredients do not automatically make a tasty meal, and that the best intentions do not always achieve good results. Despite all his admirable character traits – he is kind, helpful, charitable, generous, altruistic, well-mannered, educated and well-read – he rarely makes the desired impression on those he would like to befriend. Because of his lack of empathy, his naivety, inexperience and ultimate inability to communicate, to the ordinary villagers from Wherrytown he appears detached, conceited, pompous, self-important

and annoyingly verbose. They are especially put off by his rousing speeches in which he contemplates and preaches on countless more or less serious issues, be it slavery, botany or sea storms, and which he mistakes for evidence of his eloquence. "He liked to think of himself as a plain man, plainly spoken. He didn't care for adjectives, or anything that was too ornamented. He liked the force of facts and objects, and he endeavoured to make his conversation instructional" (25). Aymer is both a ludicrous and miserable character, one to be mocked, pitied and liked at the same time, and Crace repeatedly treats him with a mixture of irony and sympathy. On the one hand, he presents his "hero" as aware of his limitations yet still eager to please and make a good companion: "[Aymer] knew he would never have a reputation for vivacity, and that he was more comfortable with documents than company, but still he'd meant to be amusing and relaxed" (17). On the other hand, he ironically comments on almost all Aymer's attempts to win respect and sympathy from the local people, the sailors or fellow lodgers. When he is explaining to George why the only inn in the village should still have a distinguished name, Crace interrupts his lecturing monologue by calling it a "Comedy of Wisdoms" (15); the description of his failure to make a decent impression on the innkeeper and the parlourman is concluded by the sentence that "George the parlourman had seemed to find his conversation comic, except when [Aymer] attempted jokes" (17); and when he desperately seeks the Norrises' company, which he much enjoys, Crace readily compares him to the dog Whip chasing sea animals on the seashore: "So while the dog played in the surf or made life difficult for crabs and sanderlings, Aymer joined the Norrises and made life difficult for them" (196-7). Aymer seems to be doomed to inhabit a social void outside any conceivable community, where he will forever experience an inexplicable clash between his theoretical mastery of the principles of humanism and the mockery, bullying and ostracising he is exposed to in reality.

The character Aymer is most comparable with is the eccentric preacher Phipps, the spiritual leader of the local congregation. Although Aymer's attitude of Radical Sceptic Amender differs much from the religious view of the preacher, their personalities are remarkably similar. Both the men are proud of being unorthodox, educated, well-spoken, ambitious to be taken as a moral authority, with a strong tendency to patronise people and tell them how they should behave while simultaneously being unable to put most of their ideas into practice and remaining thus on the theoretical level of abstract ideas. Like Aymer, Phipps is a "man who loved debate, who took his pleasures from a book – for Mr Phipps was Aymer's twin in many ways. Both were prisoners of priggishness, and dogma, and vocabulary. Both had Latin. Both were smitten by Katie Norris. They were two peas, except they disagreed on everything they had in common" (159). Despite their being potential intellectual allies, Aymer and Phipps can hardly stand each other precisely because they recognise in each other what they really are like, a mirror image too unbearably dissimilar to how they wish themselves to be seen. As the story proceeds, by letting the reader know their dreams Crace discloses that the two men's detachment, verbosity and obstinate argumentation is a mere protective mechanism they employ in order to conceal their unhappiness from being lonely. After his zealous sermon aimed at the Sabbath-breakers, Phipps is haunted by his fierce words, lacking any kindness and Christian charity, and drowns his self-pity in secretly kept brandy, dreaming up "better times in Wherrytown" (205), when he spends pleasant evenings in the friendly company of Aymer Smith and the Norrises. Similarly, when the *Belle of Wilmington* eventually departs for America, the once

again desolate Aymer daydreams about Miggy and Katie being happy in their new homes, welcoming him warmly as a guest and showing him much gratitude for what he has done for them, while in reality the first finds him disagreeable and the latter views him as a difficult yet vulnerable child. He even tries to dream Otto's bright future, trying to "find a happy ending for the African as well" (252). What the two men fail to see, however, is the actual reason for their social isolation.

The inability to imagine or understand that other people need not necessarily share his view of the world in effect makes Aymer a desperate solipsist whose declared altruism and helpfulness easily transform into a self-centered obsession to prove his acts valid and beneficial. With his mission a failure and his reputation tainted, Aymer finds himself the only person in the village of no use during the catching and loading of the pilchards, realising that "even greeting enemies was better than the desolation of being the only person on the beach without a job" (139). However, even though everything suggests that it would be wiser for him to leave Wherrytown as soon as he can, Aymer decides to stay in order to show the locals and the sailors how mistaken they have been in judging him a show-off and nuisance. "He had to put the world to rights. *His* world, that is. He wanted to be liked. He wanted to regain his dignity before he left" (157). His problem is that he persistently strives to project his idealised world onto the real one around him, ignoring that these two lack almost any overlapping areas, and that the rules and values of the first are incomprehensible or even unacceptable for those inhabiting the latter. Therefore, although he wants to believe that his new Duty is to provide financial support to the Bowes, the fact that he plans to do it "in public view" so that others "would see who was charitable and who was not" (196) makes it rather an egotistical Duty to himself, one no longer motivated by a sincere desire to help those in need.

"Words have power, George. Words are deeds. [...] words and deeds should be the same. You make a promise, you should keep it. You hold a view, than you should stand by it. You should say what you do: you should do what you say" (141), says Aymer explaining why he revels in long speeches, to which George replies with his typical common sense turn of phrase: "People in these parts in't impressed by words. They don't mean what they say. They only mean what they do. And that, I think, makes better sense" (141). What Aymer gradually reveals is that his flawless theory about words and deeds does not tally with what he does in practice. However, long before he does, Crace provides the readers with several, more or less ironic, examples of this discrepancy: as soon as Aymer decides to travel to Wherrytown in order to perform what he sees as the moral Duty, he realises that he has "no appetite for such a long and testing journey" and that he is not "suited to the countryside" (22), and what helps him endure his unease is not so much the idea of ethical responsibility for the fate of the poor kelpers as the prospect of finding himself "a loving country wife" (22) there; he sets Otto free, "a greater duty to a greater Brotherhood" (41) as he calls it in his letter to his brother Matthias, without thinking about the consequences of his act, namely the immediate fate of the illiterate slave who cannot even speak English, thus spending much of his waking time searching for the African and daydreaming foolishly about bringing him, "disguised in a dress and bonnet" (164), secretly home and giving him a job at Hector Smith & Sons: "The plan was not preposterous. He'd dress him well. He'd mould him into shape. Otto would learn to read, write, cipher, be a gentleman, and enjoy the status of emancipation that otherwise could flourish only in his dreams"

(164); when he makes up his mind to marry Miggy Bowes, he does not think about her as a human being but as a project he has a moral duty to accomplish, similar to that concerning Otto as in his visions Aymer plans to “*liberate* the girl” and “*break her chains of poverty*” (76), with the aim of turning her into a lady. Crace ironically makes his protagonist use almost identical rhetoric as with the slave: “The thought was not preposterous. He’d dress her well. He’d mould her into shape. She’d learn to read and write and cipher. She’d pick up the proprieties of city life and adopt a more womanly demeanour” (73). Despite his noble words, Aymer’s acts run contrary to the very essence of humanism as he is unable to acknowledge other people’s desires, needs and wishes, imposing on them exclusively his own, thus “revealed to be a pompous prig out of touch with the world he wants to save” (Lane 27). The selfishness and pettiness behind his words and acts is only more clearly demonstrated by Aymer’s looking forward to his brother’s jealousy of his new young wife.

Another example of the lack of concordance between words and deeds in Aymer’s life can be seen in the book he is reading – *Truismes* by Emile dell’Ova, both the text and its author invented by Crace, namely the passage about the benefits of solitude: “The solitary Traveller has better company than those that voyage in the multitude, for he has Nature as his best Companion and no man can be lonely in its Assemblies of sky and earth and water, nor want of Friends” (159). Aymer likes to see himself as such a destined solitary traveller, a “Radical, an aesthete and a bachelor” (160), whose noble mission is higher than an ordinary person’s life and thus transcends and inevitably excludes most earthly pleasures. However, having gone through all the troubles and injustice in Wherrytown, the book offers little solace in Aymer’s loneliness as he comes to understand the naked truth of his deprivation: “He couldn’t fool himself. He’d rather be some cheerful low-jack, welcome at an inn, than the emperor of all this landscape” (160). This painful realisation of what human needs actually are in everyday life, and of the fact that words alone offer little consolation if detached from reality, is the most useful lesson Aymer learns in Wherrytown, one which makes him throw the book in the fire, watching as “[t]he fire grew strong on aphorisms, epigrams and teasing ambiguities” (176), a mocking commentary on the connection between his bookish erudition and genuine emotional warmth.

Therefore, ironically but understandably, the only instance when Aymer does something that another person finds beneficial or desirable occurs when he is not the initiator and when he is actually not aware of its effect – the sexual intercourse with Rosie Bowe during which her second child is conceived. The situation which precedes the act makes Aymer very ill at ease, as none of his speeches or wisdoms prove helpful in handling it – he is alone with a woman he has nothing in common with, and this woman is strong, independent and self-sufficient, which makes him realise his uselessness:

Nothing that he valued in himself had any value there. His modest wealth, his manners and his education – what did they count for? His charity? His Scepticism? His love of conversation and debate? His unexpected sympathy for dogs? His democratic spirit? His prodigious memory for Latin names? Which among these attributes should Rosie Bowe admire? Which of his parts and virtues could she burn for candle wax, and which would stew well with a turnip root? What use were manners for catching fish? Would Scepticism make a sauce? Would education batten down the roof against a lifting wind? (233)

It is only when he resigns from being useful in his terms and lets Rosie take the initiative that Aymer is eventually depicted as a proper human being. Without words, without giving soap or coins, he performs what he has been preaching about since he arrived in Wherrytown and makes someone's life better. His late loss of virginity thus becomes symbolic as, more than physically, it transforms him mentally by making him learn that in order to help another person it is essential to get to know what he/she is like, wants and feels, even though he might not fully understand or identify with it. This simple lesson in the necessity of empathy for any humanistic project appears to be the central moral of Crace's parable.

Symbolic Topography – Landscapes of Distress

Crace admits his keen concern with imaginative landscape construction: "I see myself as a landscape writer. There are interesting landscapes to be explored both in and out of the city, in books and in life" (quoted in Tew 6). In his novels, the landscape always serves as a mediator between the characters and the happenings of the external world. "Places lend themselves readily to symbolical extension because there is so little that is inherently affective in their physical properties" (Lutwack 35). Aware of this attribute of physical environments, Crace makes the setting a crucial component of the stories of his novels, as in each he creates a distinctly unique landscape and implements it in the novel's symbolic meaning. It is so closely linked with the characters' consciousness that it forms a kind of a "mental space that is both cognitive and emotional [...], both free floating and yet time-bound and situated, both inward-facing to the habits of pure thought yet also compromised by the circumstances of the corporeal self" (Menigan 19). Moreover, the very act of imaginative construction of a "verbal space endowed with psychological, ideational, and aesthetic dimensions" and the "retreating to the neutral territory fashioned by the imagination" gives the author a measure of freedom, as it liberates him or her from the "constrictions of the ordinary time/space matrix of 'reality'" (Malmgren 25). Place in literature evokes numerous connotations – both positive, such as "security, stability and meaningfulness", and negative, for instance "oppression, repression and the related desire to escape from the place in question" (Hardy 7). If place is rather fixed and limited, "space is more suggestive of openness and freedom to move, but also of emptiness and lack of meaning and orientation" (Hardy 7). It is therefore obvious that if the setting of a story is to fit into its meaning framework, there must be a correlation between the place and the space in the narrative. It is precisely the profound complex of geographic place with physical and mental space that generates the unique atmosphere of Crace's novels.

From the geographic point of view, *Signals of Distress* can be understood as a counterpart to *Arcadia*, which is set almost exclusively in a city and deals with urban themes, such as the implementation of rural elements into the texture of a modern city, the changing role and form of the agora, and the effects of postmodern commercial architecture on the understanding and exploitation of public space. The unnamed, imaginary city in the novel thus becomes a scene that allows its creator to explore the various sociological, architectural and city-planning issues characteristic for contemporary city life, while, at the same time, he develops a parable on humanity and morality through Victor's pitiable/admirable life story. The prevailing generic framework of *Arcadia* is that of the social satire which,

combined with psychological probes and sociological contemplations, reflects the very complexity and ambiguity of the novel's milieu.

The fictional landscape of *Signals of Distress* is substantially different: not only is it that of a village, countryside and sea shore, but Wherrytown, the setting of a large part of the story, was a genuinely existing small settlement in west Cornwall until it was destroyed by a storm in 1962. However, although both the location and the time are precisely specified, the whole story, including the shipwreck of the *Belle of Wilmington*, is completely made up, which renders its actual year and place subsidiary in terms of the novel's meaning structure and enables an interconnection between the plot, the characters and the landscape in a way similar to its predecessor. What the two novels have in common is the relationship of the protagonist to the environment in which he finds himself. Although Victor has spent almost his entire life in the city, he has never become a proper "townie [...] through and through" (*Arcadia* 67) and has developed, due to his unfortunate fate, a rather detached, indifferent and at times even hostile attitude to the place where he has grown rich, still feeling like an unwanted stranger there. Aymer, on the contrary, is a townie born and bred, without a notion of what life in the countryside is like, and so he is also a stranger and loner in Wherrytown where "[t]here wasn't any city etiquette" (151), and perplexed by the realisation that the locals are not in the least "paralysed by such a visitor" (65). Both Victor and Aymer are determined to set things right by making their mark, thus showing other people their worth and, consequently, winning deserved respect and gratitude. Yet, while Victor employs the means natural to him, his money and managerial skills, and remains safe in his wished-for isolation, Aymer treads on the unfamiliar grounds of socialising with people whose values he can never fully comprehend and inevitably ends up in an isolation that causes him only despair and confusion.

Crace's construction of the landscape Aymer finds himself in reflects perfectly the relationship between the place and its uninvited intruder. That he will not feel comfortable there is already foreshadowed by the description of the inn, which becomes a metaphor of the whole local community and its attitude to strangers – wary, reticent, distrustful and suspicious. The effect is even intensified by the fact that the inn has no name, which Aymer is not willing to accept as in his view all things must have names (which he is so proud of being good at remembering), and which points to the irrelevance of words in this world. "The inn was ideal for hide-and-seek. It was a warren, untouched by architects. [...] There wasn't any logic to the place nor, even, any regimental regularity to the shapes and sizes of the building's bricks and stones" (16). It is a place where the logic, rules and values of Aymer's life do not apply, a place where more is hidden than laid bare and which will therefore forever remain a mystery to him, a place that will at best brush him away, but also with the potential to destroy him. As with Aymer's attempts at "liberating" Otto and Miggy, Crace uses a doubling image when he describes the inn and the village: Wherrytown, "just like the inn, was made for ambushes and hide and seek. It was a warren, with perplexing levels [...] There weren't streets or civic places, just a lattice of steep intersecting alleyways and lanes, some no wider than a horse and none with any compass sense or geometric logic" (89). The settlement symbolically lacks all the traditional properties of a small town, suggesting no overlap with Aymer's experience and he feels as if in a maze, a "reckless labyrinth" (90) in which he soon loses his way and himself, and which toys with him in a manner he neither likes nor is able to restrain and resist.

Another landscape essential for the story is the coastal beach around Wherrytown, namely the Cradle Rock, a massive boulder that can be swung on its pivotal stone like a cradle or seesaw. The rock assumes a symbolic meaning in the novel: if the beach is a busy, bustling and often chaotic workplace for the kelp gatherers and fishermen, the Cradle Rock is a peaceful and calm place, the only solid point in the lives of the local people, a natural monument whose remarkable quality gives it an aura of solemnity and a profound spiritual, almost religious, dimension:

It was a perfect paradise of rocks, much loved, in summer, by watercolourists and lizards. But in the winter, with so much grey about and so little light, the dull pinks of the exposed stone were warm and beckoning. [...] If it was natural masonry, then it had been weathered by a geometric wind and shaped by architectural frosts. This topmost block – the shape and size of a small stone cottage – rested with solid poise on the nipple of a flat but slightly rounded rock. If anyone sat [...] on the bench and stared for long enough it could seem the block was hovering an inch above the world. It had a tarred cross on its side. (81)

The swinging of the rock can be taken as a barometer of events and changes happening in Wherrytown and its surroundings, an indicator of social equilibrium within the local community. At the beginning of the novel, a storm makes it seesaw in the gale as the sea is bringing two ships with people on board who are to affect the life of the small and quiet port – Aymer, Otto and the crew of the *Belle of Wilmington*. Symptomatically, all of them in the course of the story have something to do with the rock, which illustratively reflects their position in the local community.

For Otto, the Cradle Rock becomes a hiding place, a refuge where he hopes to be at least temporarily safe from those hunting him for a financial reward, the sacred place thus ironically playing the role of sanctuary for the biggest conceivable outsider of the community. For Aymer, the rock becomes a source of momentary happiness when he and the young sailor Ralph set it swinging on their way back from the Bowes to Wherrytown. Excited that he managed to do something so astonishing, Aymer “had seldom felt such unselfish pleasure” (82). Yet, when the short moment passes, they set out on an unpleasant and tiresome journey to the village through the ice and snow, only to find the inn empty and cold. Aymer thus soon forgets his elating experience with the rock as he first realises that his clothes are gone and later even has to face an embarrassing and painful confrontation with Shipmaster Comstock. The scene shows how unwelcome Aymer is in Wherrytown and that it is only far away from the settlement and its inhabitants that he can do something he would be satisfied with. At the same time, it suggests that even such an act will be rather an irrational one, stemming from outside the realm of his manners and erudition, and therefore short-term and consequently accompanied with confusion and unease, anticipating thus his lovemaking with Rosie Bowe.

The characters who most markedly change the life and events in Wherrytown are the crew of the *Belle of Wilmington*. These sailors are typical representatives of their kind – restless, mischievous, “becalmed and idle and, almost, bored” while ashore, unable to amuse themselves and therefore looking for a “chin they’d like to punch, a silver time-piece or a pair of boots they’d like to lift, a mouth they’d like to kiss” (46). However, they

still manage to affect the lives of several people from the local community, such as Rosie Bowe, Palmer Dolly, Walter Howells, Alice Yapp and Lotty Kyte. Because they feel stuck in the dull village of hard work, sober mores and strict religious morality, they more than appreciate the opportunity to leave Wherrytown for the coast in order to drive a herd of cattle back to Howells, equipped moreover with bottles of spirits. As expected, they get drunk and decide not only to swing the Cradle Rock but to “displace it from its pivot stone” (217), and by doing so the massive rock loses its centre and falls from its platform into the sea. Palmer Dolly, the only local person in the group, does not take part and only watches the scene superstitiously, believing that destroying the rock will bring bad luck and when at home he hears “the distant impact of the Rock” he “trembled in his bed. The Rock was down. The coast would never be the same” (218). The bringing down of the rock could have several interpretations within the symbolic meaning of the story: it suggests that the very core of the local community’s livelihood, kelping and catching pilchards, might soon give way to other, possibly more industrial and mercantile, activities; it can also reflect the transformation of the community as many of its young members are to leave it in hope of finding a better future overseas; but it can also indicate the future fate of the ship, which sinks on its voyage to Canada. The Cradle Rock, much like the simple rural community of Wherrytown, which has survived all the blows of natural powers, thus symbolically succumbs to the social and economic pressures of the fast-developing capitalist world outside.

In order to complete the novel’s irony, in the last chapter Crace moves the story to the city where Aymer lives. Although he seems to be a different person now, “less preacherly, and more resigned” (258) as his brother points out, deep inside he has remained the same self-deluded fool and idealist, which can be seen from the very first lines of the chapter: “City air makes free? Well, yes. It was a liberation to be home again amongst the soft civilities of city life, and free from the embarrassments of Wherrytown. But Aymer Smith affected not to like the taste of city air that much. He was a travelled man now, amphibious between the country and the town” (256). Based solely on his short and, to a large extent, unfortunate stay in Wherrytown, Aymer already considers himself a well-travelled man with a newly acquired capacity to feel natural both in the country and the city, while in reality he will always be a stranger in both, though in the latter it is easier for him to sink into the anonymity and refined manners of the crowds. Therefore, although the city is the milieu in which he should be happy and safe, the opposite is in fact the case. When in search of adventure and education he decides to visit the poorest area of the city, dressed “democratically” in plain clothes, because “[o]ne ought to know the city of one’s birth, including those parts that were not well furbished” (264), so as to prove that “[i]t would be wrong to regard as low and mean in character those people whose homes are low and mean in built” (264), he gets terribly beaten, not only because Howells asked for it, but also because his appearance enrages the rogues, especially the apparent discrepancy between his shabby dress and “that bony, educated face, those soft and fussy hands, that self-esteem” (265). Once again, his inability to empathise with other people turns his theoretical humanism into pompous conceitedness in the eyes of those who should supposedly benefit from it. The fact that he is attacked in his city but on the order of a person from Wherrytown symbolically demonstrates that he will never fit into either of these two environments, as his truly natural milieu is that of his books and dreamt-up world, his “childish landscape” where he can always “put the world to rights again” (276).

Conclusion: the Old, the New and the Unchanging

In terms of genre, characterisation and plot construction, *Arcadia* and *Signals of Distress* do share several features: they both feature a male protagonist, a loner with difficulties in dealing with other people who, nevertheless, strives to win their respect and sympathy; despite the serious issues they deal with they both bear distinctive elements of social satire, with surprisingly intense employment of irony directed at the fracturing between the naivety of a character and the world that has always moved on (Lane 28). However, they at the same time differ significantly in the setting and time of their stories, as well as in their central thematic preoccupations. *Signals of Distress* should thus be rather understood within the complex framework of the idiosyncrasies of Jim Crace's fictional world. Like his other novels, it portrays a community in transition, an establishment facing inevitable transformations and losses due to external social and economic developments; its fictional landscape becomes an inseparable component of the story; it explores the essential human moral concerns through allegorical meanings. The novel also demonstrates its author's remarkable descriptive powers, an "uncanny talent for making invented places and events feel here-and-now real" (Begley): the characters and settings are vivid, sharply observed, convincing, authentic and agreeably unpredictable and through them he creates unique imaginary microcosms, the "variously obsessed landscape and cultures" (Kermode 8), in which his uncomplicated stories assume a larger symbolic or even mythic dimension.

Signals of Distress can be read, above all, as a parable of the passing of the old establishments, either antiquated, obstructive, or redundant, and their replacement by new, dynamic and progressive social and economic forces. Set shortly before the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign, in the winter of 1836 and 1837, the novel depicts the community of Wherrytown, enclosed, rural and self-sufficient, at the dawn of a new era in which it will be forced to open to fresh impulses and become part of the surrounding industrial and commercial world. Aymer realises this immediate progress when watching the coastal steam packet *Ha'porth of Tar* passing the sailing boat the *Belle of Wilmington*: "It seemed to Aymer that the tussling spirits of the age were passing on the sea; the old, the new, the wind, the steam, the modest and the brash. The future would be driven by steam, he was sure. It was a more compliant slave than wind" (228). Being an anachronism himself, he sees the upcoming changes as dangerous if not downright shameful but, as in *Arcadia* with the rainbow that symbolically connects the old and the new at the end of the story, pointing to "urban renewal, and the human possibility of a city that retains its pastoral symbolism" (Head 210), *Signals of Distress* is rather muted as far as some conclusive interpretation of the scene is concerned. When read as a parable, the novel has a strong moral dimension, which, however, does not side with either party of the conflict; Walter Howells and Matthias Smith, the two men who represent the spirit of the new era, are shown as inconsiderate and immoral, while Aymer, an advocate of the good old days, is depicted as an impractical and unfortunate dreamer. As is characteristic of Crace's writing, the key moral focus of *Signals of Distress* is put on the universal, unchanging and timeless human and humanist values which constitute any functioning social paradigm, regardless of particular historical circumstances, and whose implementation can never be achieved through self-centered idealisation or plain theoreticising.

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Challenging Traditional Approaches to Eugene O'Neill

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Abstract

O'Neill is the greatest American playwright, but traditional approaches to O'Neill criticism and theatrical production require reappraisal in the 21st century. Traditional attitudes limit understanding of the range of O'Neill's plays and the possibilities for their productions. There is much more to the understanding of O'Neill's plays than reading them as the dramatist's personal psychoanalysis or autobiographical expiation. So too must directors look beyond performance traditions mired in mid-20th century psychological realism. They must see beyond the legacy of the famous productions of the late masterpieces. O'Neill's plays must not only be revered by audiences; they must ensoul them.

Keywords: Eugene O'Neill, 20th century American theatre, James O'Neill, George Pierce Baker, American drama criticism, Jose Quintero, Jason Robards, Al Pacino, Jonathan Miller, Kevin Spacey, Long Day's Journey Into Night, The Iceman Cometh, "Hughie" George Jean Nathan

It is generally understood that serious American drama begins with Eugene O'Neill. Nonetheless, more than a century after his birth, and more than half a century after his death, America is still not ready for Eugene O'Neill. Admittedly, this is a broad-based accusation. Certainly historians of the American theatre no longer universally accept that O'Neill single-handedly created modern American drama, yet it is still the conventional wisdom that before O'Neill there was no serious American drama. So my accusation is a response to decades of criticism and commentary whose emphasis is on making connections between O'Neill's life and his plays. The outstanding text in this regard, a *summa* of this school, is Stephen A. Black's *Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy*.¹ To counter the assertion that O'Neill is primarily, if not exclusively, an autobiographical playwright it is necessary not only to question the putative autobiography in his plays, but to also stop

relying on the productions presented during O'Neill's lifetime (and overseen by him) as the benchmark for all subsequent ones.

Historically, we see that O'Neill emerges during the first quarter of the 20th century, during a time of artistic and social ferment. The theatre of his father that O'Neill grew up with—and in—was a mass medium; James O'Neill was one of the leading romantic actors of his day and was also a great matinee idol. James O'Neill was even more popular though than a conventional leading man in that both men and women flocked to his performances. Thus though he was part of a soon-to-be-moribund style, the way that he managed his career was much closer to that of a contemporary star. James O'Neill carefully manipulated his public image and always had a press agent on his payroll. The tall tales and “good copy” that O'Neill's press agents provided were part of what kept the Monte Cristo production a going concern for three decades. (Not to mention a source of frustration for O'Neill's early biographers who were frequently misled by the stories planted in late-19th century newspapers by these press agents.)

Indeed, James O'Neill's theatre was something like television and cinema today; the theatre of the late-19th and early 20th century featured dramatic spectacles to thrill, excite and entertain audiences by appealing to basic instincts and emotions. Sympathy was evoked by situations such as an honest woodsman toiling in loneliness until one blessed day in the forest a basket is discovered with an infant. The babe grows up to rose-cheeked, heaving-bosomed womanhood and falls in love with a convenient handsome stranger who turns out to be the son of a logging tycoon who can settle papa into a soft job, but just before the wedding the sweet innocent girl is abducted by the treacherous dancing master. She resists his advances and is (here you must take your choice) either tied to the railroad tracks to await an onrushing locomotive or tied down in a sawmill to bide a while until a buzz saw cuts her in two. Needless to say, the Handsome Hero arrives in the nick of time to save her and the play ends with a suitable wedding march. Nevertheless, in spite of such scenarios, most plays featured activist heroines (Booth 2). This important conventional characterization is exemplified by the first successful use of the rescuing-the-victim-tied-to-the-railroad-tracks. It occurs in the play *Under the Gaslight* in which a woman saves a man tied to the tracks. O'Neill would draw on this convention and amplify it by creating numerous strong-willed female protagonists: Nina Leeds in *Strange Interlude* and Lavinia Mannon in *Mourning Becomes Electra*, are but two of these. O'Neill's amplification of a staid melodramatic convention complicates his relationship with the “Broadway showshop” style of industrialized theatre that O'Neill despised. Indeed though, the entire dramaturgy of the popular American theatre is more complicated than the simple plot outlines detailed above would have one believe. The range of both plays performed and performance styles was far more complex than conventional wisdom presumes. These heavily plotted and usually spectacular plays are the foundation of conventional wisdom about the “Broadway showshop” style of industrialized theatre that O'Neill despised. Even if one considers only James O'Neill's *Count of Monte Cristo*, one learns that he performed in productions of this play ranging from first class Broadway extravaganzas with huge casts and spectacular sets to vaudeville “tab” versions that cut the play down to minimal length, relied on almost no scenery, and used as few actors as possible.

The career of James O'Neill had a tremendous impact on the playwright. Those who take his son's word for it believe that O'Neill's father had “sold out” by exchanging the

struggle of artistic striving for the security of guaranteed financial success via the perennially popular "Monte Cristo." The elder O'Neill is estimated to have performed this role over 4,000 times. "That God-damned play," says the father in O'Neill's putatively autobiographical masterpiece *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, "I bought for a song... it ruined me with its promise of an easy fortune" (809). Most accept as simple fact that because he was able to earn a minimum of \$45,000, tax-free, pre-inflation dollars a year, he "sold out", and by the end of his life was so embittered by the loss of his great gift through mind-numbing repetition, that his last words to his son were "Glad to go boy—a better sort of life—another sort—somewhere. This sort of life—froth rotten! – all of it—no good!" (*Letters of Eugene O'Neill* 132).

One must note that this is Eugene O'Neill's projection of his father's perspective. None of James O'Neill's contemporaries notes any such bitterness on James O'Neill's part. Benjamin McArthur's *Actors and American Culture, 1880-1920* is typical in that it cites James Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* as the authority for James O'Neill's assessment of his own career (47). In spite of these seeming contradictions between the father and son's approach to the theatre, one can extrapolate that Eugene was even better at manipulating the media than his father ever dreamed of being, and he did so without resorting to press agents.

In a letter of application to George Pierce Baker's famous workshop at Harvard, O'Neill declared that he was determined to be an "artist or nothing" (*O'Neill Letters* 26). This is a frequently quoted statement, but what is not so often cited is O'Neill's dropping the name of then famous drama critic Clayton Hamilton as a reference (in the same letter). It may seem odd that O'Neill who ultimately recoiled from George Pierce Baker's embrace of the commercial theatre, is not shy about mentioning his famous father and drawing on other connections of his own from the commercial theater in order to secure a place in Baker's "47 Workshop" at Harvard. As we know, his gambit worked and Baker accepted him. Be that as it may, this was probably the last time O'Neill put himself out in such a way.

In contrast to the aspiring student who readily traded on his Broadway connections, O'Neill the playwright, would become one of the most intransigently uncompromising artists in the history of the theatre. During rehearsals for *The Iceman Cometh*, director Eddie Dowling despaired: "Mr. O'Neill, you repeat the word pipe-dream in one scene 18 times!" O'Neill slowly considered Dowling's plaint, for he was as taciturn as he was committed to his artistic vision. He replied, "Mr. Dowling, that's right, 'pipe-dream' is in that scene 18 times." Later Dowling, backed by the Theatre Guild, the play's producers, would demand that O'Neill cut 45 minutes out of the play. O'Neill agreed to cut two minutes (Vena 4). Thus I would argue that O'Neill is more in harmony with late 19th/early 20th century dramaturgy than not. What is most "Wagnerian" about O'Neill's approach to the production of his plays is his insistence on total control over their production. Even more significant than the grandiosity of his spectacle plays: *Marco Millions* and *Lazarus Laughed* is O'Neill's determination from the outset of his career to oversee the casting, design, and staging of each of his plays. No matter who was ostensibly in charge of a given production, O'Neill himself attended every rehearsal and was the final authority on any production decision as long as he lived. Each of his plays was indeed a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Thus, it is important to link O'Neill to the conventions of his time—there is far too much myth-making about O'Neill representing a *complete* break with his predecessors.

Not to mention how and what he learned in Baker's course at Harvard. Paul Voelker and Travis Bogard have decidedly different views on O'Neill's relationship with Baker. Going over the chronology and reviewing the now available correspondence between O'Neill and his then inamorata, Beatrice Ashe, it is clear that O'Neill bore no animosity towards Professor Baker, and indeed had respect for him, perhaps even affection. Voelker's research reveals a more complex understanding of O'Neill as a playwright struggling with his craft—one who is in fact not absolutely clear about being "an artist or nothing." Voelker determines that O'Neill was uncertain as to the direction his playwriting ought to take and that in the beginning he even considered comedy (211). This is not the O'Neill most readers imagine. I would argue that the atmosphere of Baker's class encouraged O'Neill to stop trying to be a conventional playwright—or to even be a topical one like Baker's star pupil Edward Sheldon (whose great hit *Salvation Nell* had become a Broadway sensation starring Minnie Maddern Fiske when he was barely more than an undergraduate). What is more, the contrarian in O'Neill would have been inspired by the classmates who, no doubt, sought the same kind of fame and fortune as Sheldon. O'Neill's appreciative letter to Sheldon is frequently quoted, if only to verify that he was dazzled by the touring Abbey Theatre and Mrs. Fiske's Hedda Gabler—the fact that he wrote the admiring letter *to Sheldon* is overlooked.

Part of O'Neill's supreme confidence about his work came from his lifetime in the theatre. O'Neill boasted that he was born into the theatre, and as he put it: he knew the theater from the back wall to the box office. He saw the Broadway show shop product, such as that described above, but he read the great modernist dramas of Shaw, Wilde, Ibsen, Brieux and especially Strindberg. The Swedish playwright's grim and tortured husbands and wives had a lasting impact on O'Neill, and O'Neill would always credit Strindberg with exerting the greatest influence on him. But another explanation proffered by O'Neill was that if one wanted to understand his plays one only needed to know that he was born Irish and raised a Catholic. This sense of otherness, this self-conscious Irishness is a telling factor in O'Neill's dramatic oeuvre. It is a sensibility that contrasts with the ideology behind the popular plays of his day, and even the serious plays that were written during his first years as a dramatist. For there were playwrights struggling to free the American stage from the shackles of formula melodrama and cheap farces—such as *Edna*, *The Pretty Typewriter*, from 1907, (at that time "typewriter" was a term for a professional typist, usually a woman) or *Up in Mabel's Room* from 1919. As we have seen, in the 'teens and 'twenties, Edward Sheldon created dramas of political and social relevance, yet even his "relevance" in treating racial and even sexual issues is tempered by a reliance on happy endings. As noted, Sheldon's most famous play *Salvation Nell* ends with joy all around as the title character, whom we have observed transform herself from innocent to almost-prostitute to Salvation Army soldier to contented helpmate of a reformed wastrel. O'Neill's dramas are about the impossibility of such integration into society. Once he determines his artistic vision, with few exceptions, O'Neill writes about alienation, the despair of existential tragedy and the "hopeless hope." His characters thrive on pipe-dreams.

In a comment on his last project, a great cycle of plays about the development of the United States, to which he gave the title: "A tale of possessors self-dispossessed," O'Neill said: "We are the greatest failure in history—no other country was given so much—and look at what we have done with ourselves. I can't help but think of the words what profit it a man if he gain the whole world, but loses his own soul? We've lost our soul" (qtd. in

Connolly 20). O'Neill refers to the drive for material possessions that had become the "American dream." And he does not ignore the consequences of occupying territories in the Caribbean and Pacific, which transformed the United States into an imperial power.

As noted above, America is still not ready for Eugene O'Neill. The country of his birth still cannot fully comprehend his monumental genius. Productions of O'Neill plays are still "events" somehow—revivals seem to be undertaken almost from a sense of duty.² While it is true that the Colossus O'Neillensis would seem to be the tallest statue in the lobby of America's metaphorical national theater, in fact O'Neill is still backstage waiting to go on. How can this be? The literature anthology boiler-plate statements: "America's greatest playwright," "America's only Nobel-prize winning playwright," "only American playwright of world stature," confirm his presumed status. Until most recently productions of O'Neill have not been nearly frequent enough to satisfy O'Neill specialists who contrast the relative lack of O'Neill with the abundance of Shakespeare. It must be admitted though that at least on the East Coast of the United States, the theatrical season of 2011-2012 was something of an antidote to this theatrical malaise. In New York there were two revivals: The Irish Repertory presented *Beyond the Horizon* and The Pearl Theatre Company offered *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (not to mention the parody production "The Complete & Condensed Stage Directions of Eugene O'Neill Volume 1: Early Plays/Lost Plays"). In Washington D.C. the Arena Stage produced *Ah, Wilderness!* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; The Shakespeare Theatre company presented *Strange Interlude*. Even this flurry of new productions of O'Neill does not dispel a legacy that haunts O'Neill studies almost as deeply as his biography: the living legacy of the landmark productions of *The Iceman Cometh* in 1956, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in 1956 and *A Moon for the Misbegotten* in 1973. The first two productions put on three years after O'Neill's death, resuscitated his reputation, largely due to the self-described mystical bond achieved by the director José Quintero and the actor Jason Robards with the playwright. The productions that these artists made returned O'Neill to the first rank of American dramatists.

No doubt, these productions will always live in the memories of those who saw them, but a playwright sustained only by memories of past productions is a playwright without a future. Unfortunately, O'Neill sometimes seems to be in danger of having his work bear out the truth of Mary Tyrone's fateful pronouncement "the past is the present and it is the future too" (*Long Day's Journey* 761). It is hard to shake off the burden of the past, especially for O'Neillians who have made such visceral connections to the playwright himself, the plays, and their performers. Nevertheless, if we do not shake off the past we risk revering O'Neill to death. Of course, O'Neill never intended that we accept Mary Tyrone's line about the past as a way of living life or making art. Nonetheless, there are those who insist that all productions of O'Neill conform to standards set in the middle of the 20th century. Such O'Neillians would dismiss any production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* whose staging exceeds the limits of the actual parlor of Monte Cristo Cottage in New London, Connecticut.³ No one disputes that O'Neill was an intensely autobiographical playwright, but it is time to move beyond O'Neill's life as the primary lens through which to gain perspective on his plays.

What is more, the life and times of O'Neill are now fully explicated in a soon to be published three-volume biography by Arthur and Barbara Gelb. It is an historic event; never before have biographers so thoroughly revised their own work. With the third volume's

publication, we will surely have all the pertinent facts needed to inspire coming generations to ponder the exigencies of the playwright's life. Therefore, it is time to let the plays live as works of art independent of their creator. O'Neill's biographers have guaranteed that his life will always excite interest in its own right.

The current state of O'Neill in the U.S.A. is a dichotomy between those who hold him dear and those who begrudge him his preeminence with a shrug, à la Victor Hugo's reluctant French admirers ("O'Neill, *hélas!*").⁴ Rather than dwell upon the difficulties that O'Neill continues to contend with, I should like to discuss an interesting phenomenon of recent years: the advent of a "non-classical" approach to staging O'Neill that has only recently been possible in the United States. By "non-classical" I mean a production style that deviates from O'Neill's original stage directions and presumed intentions. As we have seen, this development has not always been met with approval by American O'Neill scholars and those O'Neill enthusiasts who can still recall the original productions of O'Neill's plays. Not a small point since we are really only talking about one or two generations—at least in terms of memory—since those original productions.

The traditionalists *are* being to true to the spirit of O'Neill. O'Neill hated the slightest deviation from his lines or stage directions. Perhaps it is stating the obvious to say that unless new approaches are "allowed," O'Neill's plays will ossify. This can happen. The D'Oyly Carte Company played the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas exactly the same way for over a century in London and on tour. Eventually audiences grew bored and the company of performers so stale that the enterprise withered away. But other serious modernist dramatists in the United States face similar problems: Shaw and Brecht for instance, not to mention Ibsen. Reconsidering production styles is relevant to the study of American drama because it offers us insight into the ways in which O'Neill's plays are being viewed with fresh perspectives. The production details presented for discussion here are not meant to detail stage history, per se, but rather as an exploration of O'Neill's larger theatrical "text". We must consider the discourse that theatrical productions have entered into if we are to place O'Neill in the critical context of the present. In terms of production, only since the late 20th century have productions of O'Neill in America moved beyond the paradigm of the "classical" canonical approach, and it is most significant that the influence of an English production of *Strange Interlude* has been paramount. This production came to New York in 1985. Glenda Jackson's star turn as Nina Leeds punctuated an unabashedly flamboyant production, which played out the raw emotions of the play in all their overwrought Freudian mania. Even the dry wit of Edward Petherbridge's moving characterization of Charles Marsden could not keep the play down to earth. Of particular note were the howls of laughter that greeted the three attempts of Nina's lover, Ned Darrell (played by Brian Cox), to leave on the line "Got to go! Can't go! Got to go!" The "can't go" being of course an internal "thought" vocalized. (A perfect example Roman Ingarden's *Nebentext*.) It was a remarkably successful production—flirting with an irreverent approach that displeased many O'Neill stalwarts. And even though the *New York Times* was displeased by the production's irreverence, it printed so many stories about the production that the show was one of the most talked about dramatic productions of the season and this combined with good business at the box office generated enough attention to warrant a television production—a rare occurrence indeed (See Kerr, Anderson, Gussow and Rich, February and March 1985 *New York Times* articles).

A year later in 1986, Jonathan Miller's abridged production of *Long Day's Journey into Night*, featuring Jack Lemmon in a rare foray from Hollywood, as Tyrone and Kate Reid, the noted Arthur Miller actress, as Mary, was greeted with pleasure only by avowed anti-O'Neillians. Miller cut an hour from the running time by trimming speeches; particularly the poetry quotations in the fourth act, and by having the actors speak rapidly and "at" each other so that their dialogue frequently overlapped one another's. Miller elaborately defended his choices on medical as well as dramaturgical grounds. Miller the physician maintained that the alcoholic father, sons, and morphine-addicted mother would actually have rattled away in such a way, oblivious to one another. And, Miller insisted, these characterizations showed both the closeness and the isolation of the Tyrones ("Jonathan Miller" 29). They take each other so much for granted that that they neither have to listen, nor do they expect to be listened to. It sounds good on paper perhaps, but it was such a glaring directorial intrusion that the play suffered. Moreover Lemmon's performance was at best a recreation of Fredric March's original with its resort to an Irish brogue when Tyrone was in despair.

To introduce such controversies is not to diminish Quintero's accomplishments. He directed three of the greatest productions in the history of the American theatre. In 1956 he staged the revival of *The Iceman Cometh* (which virtually started the off-Broadway movement at the Circle-in-the-Square-Theatre) and the first New York production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. In 1973 he directed the first successful production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, which was a triumph winning many awards and was filmed for television in 1975 with the original cast. In 1996, one of his final efforts was a well-received staging of two early O'Neill one-acts, "Ile" and "The Long Voyage Home" in Provincetown eighty years after their original performances there. Quintero successfully evoked the subtleties and extremities of both plays using a cast of unknown actors.

Yet Quintero's productions with great actors have not always been unqualified successes, as seen with the relative failure of the centennial year productions of *The Iceman Cometh*, which Quintero directed and starred Robards. The proscenium staging and large theater have been blamed (interestingly, the large playhouse used for the 1947 production premiere was blamed at the time for that production's failure). The first time Quintero directed it was in an intimate theater-in-the-round, but nothing about the 1985 production caught fire, perhaps expectations were too high. Robards' recreation of his role as Hickey was a disappointment for some. Many who saw it believed he was only walking through the part, that he was somehow too tired for its rigors.⁵

So the close of the 20th century brought American O'Neillians a dilemma, one that Europeans would never have to face, since O'Neill is not the problematic dramatist for Europeans that he is in his homeland: is O'Neill in danger of being "revered" away from the playhouse and on to a library shelf? A New York production from 1996 production indicated otherwise, the "Hughie" directed by Al Pacino and starring Pacino as "Erie" Smith and Paul Benedict as the Night Clerk proved to be an outstanding critical and box office success. The casting was interesting on the superficially physical level. Pacino was quite close to O'Neill's description, a bantam rooster—as the stage directions indicate; Benedict was a very large and imposing figure. This instantly created a unique chemistry between the two on stage. It also pitched the dynamic in an interesting way for this play. Erie Smith is constantly trying to impress the Clerk and there are moments when Pacino

and Benedict take on a resonance from Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (of the two drifters Lenny and George). I stress that O'Neill's lines call for the gestures Pacino used. His "hey, look at me, why don't you look at me" attitude was effective at achieving a down-in-the-mouth pathos (See Jacobson and Johnson; both are representative reviews).⁶

As with the *Strange Interlude* referenced above, laughs were found where none had been perceived before. This production inspired comparisons in the popular press between Smith and the Night Clerk to the Vladimir and Estragon of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*—a point apparent to some O'Neill scholars eager to unite the playwright to the theatre of the absurd, even if it was not a particularly fresh observation.⁷ Samuel Beckett has set the standard for critics of the drama since the 1960s—when Jan Kott applied Beckett's *Weltanschauung* to Shakespeare. Undoubtedly the play has much humor—Erie's regaling the Night Clerk with his visit to Hughie's Brooklyn bower of domestic bliss for instance. But in this production almost everything that Pacino did could be perceived as comic because of the lumbering reactions of Benedict's Night Clerk.

The raucous laughter that this production inspired demonstrated that audiences could easily respond to O'Neill as a comic playwright. It was not only the night clerk that inspired mirth. Pacino played Erie Smith as a sort of song-and-dance man—which given O'Neill's identification of Erie as a "teller of tales" is not altogether off the mark. Pacino's Erie Smith was a most self-conscious yarn-spinner. He was compelled *to* entertain; nevertheless this was not so much a radical departure from O'Neill as it was a challenging re-interpretation. This was a marked contrast to Jason Robards' Erie. Robards inspired forty years of Eries who were almost ghoulishly desperate for companionship, clearly one stop away from the final terminus. So powerful was the memory of Robards' performance (especially if one recalls that the one-act play was originally intended to be part of a cycle entitled "By Way of Obit") that it caused some critical contortions. Describing the Pacino/Benedict partnership, the writer in the *Eugene O'Neill Review* contradicted her previous descriptions by concluding her essay with the assertion that Pacino and Benedict are "headed together down a road toward impending doom" (Garvey 178). This comment negates the essay's earlier paragraphs describing the lighthearted atmosphere of the production; granted that the reviewer was attempting to convey her impression of the entire production. Any suggestion of lightheartedness was in sharp contrast to Robards' performance, which intimated that if his Erie failed to engage the Clerk with his Broadway banter he would have climbed up the stairs and jumped out a window. Pacino's Erie would be more likely to rush upstairs and return with a juggling kit or wearing tap shoes for a dance routine. This is not to diminish one performance in terms of another. Both characterizations reveal O'Neill's complexity.

It is imperative to revisit the roots of the mythology that has grown around O'Neill's dramaturgy, thus we must look back at the original production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Though more than half a century has passed since the Broadway premiere of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, November 7, 1956 remains a signal date in American theatre history. By the time the production closed, 390 performances later, it had already passed into theatrical legend. Eugene O'Neill's reputation was not only salvaged; it was forever secured. For as long as he lived José Quintero would be identified as *the* O'Neill director, and the cast, in particular Fredric March, and Jason Robards would be celebrated for the roles they created. It is not only because of the performance per se that this is one of the

most important Broadway productions of an American play in the 20th century. In addition to being widely regarded as the greatest production of O'Neill's greatest play, it cemented the idea that O'Neill is primarily an autobiographical playwright, and this has become central to both the study of O'Neill and the performance of his plays. The American premiere also anointed José Quintero and Jason Robards as O'Neill's foremost interpreters. (As discussed earlier, both had established themselves in the landmark off-Broadway staging of *The Iceman Cometh* in the previous season). Thus the influence of this production is profound in two ways; it irrevocably connected O'Neill's work to his life and limited the production style of his plays to the psychological realism that prevailed in the middle of the 20th century. This has also affected the way almost all other American plays are studied in English classes and performed on Broadway.

Ever since O'Neill turned his back on Broadway in 1934 there had been rumors that he was working on his greatest play ever. No less a source than magisterial drama critic and O'Neill confidant George Jean Nathan intimated that the playwright was holding back a masterpiece from publication and performance because it was dangerously controversial (Connolly, *George Jean Nathan* 43). Nevertheless, the failed first production of *The Iceman Cometh* in the 1946-1947 season stanching Broadway's interest in O'Neill, even as Nathan continued to suggest that O'Neill had written his greatest play, but would never allow it to be sullied by Broadway producers. Nevertheless, by the time of his death in 1953, O'Neill was almost forgotten. Depending upon one's sympathies, O'Neill's widow was either desperate to revive her husband's reputation or provide for her old age when she decided to assert her authority as literary executrix and offer *Long Day's Journey* to the public. Carlotta Monterey O'Neill countermanded both Saxe Commins, O'Neill's editor and close friend, and O'Neill's publisher, Bennett Cerf, the head of Random House, who both insisted on sticking to their original agreement with O'Neill. This would have held up publication of the play until 1978, and would have forever prohibited any performance. Mrs. O'Neill had total control over all aspects of her late husband's work so she was able to make all decisions about publication and production. Cerf removed the manuscript from his vault and handed it over. The Broadway failure of *The Iceman Cometh* still stung, so Mrs. O'Neill charily decided that the play should first be performed abroad. Noting O'Neill's affinity for Strindberg and the regard the Swedes had for him, Mrs. O'Neill opted for a Stockholm try-out. The triumphant February 1956 world premiere at the Royal Dramaten sent transatlantic flashes of the play's magnificence. When the play was published by Yale University Press within days of the Stockholm opening, Broadway was doubly overwhelmed with yearning. Relentless speculation about the inevitable Broadway production began.

Fresh from the acclaim from his off-Broadway revival of *The Iceman Cometh*, the previous season, José Quintero was determined to direct *Long Day's Journey*, so he began a deft campaign of wooing the widow, abetted by an equally intent Jason Robards, who had starred in that revival. Over numerous cocktails, dinners and late night conversations—sometimes with O'Neill's ghost in attendance—according to the enraptured widow—Quintero and Robards successfully courted her. Doubts about Quintero's relative inexperience were assuaged by the casting of Hollywood star and respected actor Fredric March as James Tyrone and his wife and frequent co-star Florence Eldridge as Mary. Each of the performers received superlative reviews. Indeed, the finale provoked one of the most

poignant curtain calls in American theatre history. Testimony from the actors and first-nighters attests to the silence that descended after the play's final words. Backstage, an eternity went by as the cast waited in heart-stopped silence. Then suddenly, torrentially, applause shook the walls, floor and ceiling, it seemed to push the curtain open with its force. Overwhelming ovations, countless bows—the audience crowded the front of the house trying to touch the actors, because, as Quintero recalled, they would not be parted from the Tyrones (Gelbs 3-23).

Thus a legend was born and O'Neill transfigured. Never again would anyone dare question his reputation—he *is* the colossus of the American theatre. Henceforth, O'Neill's late-blooming genius would eclipse all his other work, just as the Tyrones would the O'Neills. Appropriately, since he was playing an actor, March's performance attracted the most description. Most frequently commented on was his choice to give Tyrone a brogue as he slipped into abyssal despair in the later scenes. Less frequently commented on was the costume he wore which defied O'Neill's stage directions. March wore an ascot quite different from the knotted handkerchief that O'Neill gives Tyrone. March transformed the unassuming gardener in a threadbare suit "who doesn't give a damn how he looks" (as O'Neill describes him in the stage directions) to a bespoke-kitted-out gentleman of leisure.⁸ Theatre historians familiar with the diary of the Monte Cristo company actress Elizabeth Robins are aware that Mr. and Mrs. O'Neill were quite different from Mr. and Mrs. Tyrone (Matlaw 177 ff). What is more James O'Neill always had defenders among his surviving contemporaries. Old troupers spoke out against *Long Day's Journey* in 1956, but their voices were overwhelmed. The crushing burden of biography has not only limited academic discussion of the play. As we have seen, it has virtually proscribed the play's performance unless its set conforms to the dimensions of that parlor in New London, Connecticut in the original "Monte Cristo Cottage" where the O'Neills summered.

The bellwether for this was Brooks Atkinson who declared that the play was "as personal and as literal as drama can be." (Atkinson 47). And productions since have been judged according to a bizarre standard of being true to the life of the O'Neills rather than the Tyrones. Conversely, since the Tyrones of the original Broadway cast were the embodiment of the O'Neills it is best to follow their example.

Note though that a central article of faith in our understanding of Ella O'Neill/Mary Tyrone probably never existed: the glorious wedding gown provided by a munificent parent. Ella's father did not contribute anything to her wedding; he had died three years earlier. O'Neill could not possibly have known the things about his parents that he seems to be revealing in *Long Day's Journey*. Nonetheless these issues cannot detract from the play's essential greatness. The final scene *is* the most harrowing in American drama. The conclusion of Walter Kerr's opening night review sums up the place of O'Neill's masterpiece in American drama: "For anyone who cares about the American theater, *Long Day's Journey* is, of course, an obligation. But it is more than that. It is a stunning theatrical experience" (Kerr 125).

More important than individual performances in particular plays are entire productions that capture the public's attention. Significantly, as we have seen, in the final decade of the 20th century important stagings of "*Hughie*" and *The Iceman Cometh* extended O'Neill's reach toward the millennium. The productions were third and fourth Broadway revivals, respectively, of these plays, and demonstrated that O'Neill is by no means a

dated modernist cast adrift by postmodernist trends. They have shown that like Ibsen and Chekhov, O'Neill ought not to be a playwright limited to the psychological realism that prevailed in the first decades of the 20th century. As Otamar Krejča has said, no single production of a play can reveal everything about it (qtd. by Burian). To keep O'Neill alive, great productions from the past must be regarded as part of history not as theatrical exegesis. Directors, critics, and scholars must find ways of staging, analyzing and studying O'Neill irrespective of what are now stage conventions that are more than a century old.

Notes

¹ Dr. Black became a psychoanalyst in his pursuit of O'Neill's family tragedy. The book argues that all of O'Neill's plays are a response to the deaths of his parents and brother and are a form of O'Neill's personal psychoanalysis.

² A sign of changing times may be "The Complete & Condensed Stage Directions of Eugene O'Neill Volume 1: Early Plays/Lost Plays" presented by the New York Neo-Futurists in September and October of 2011. The Neo-Futurists cut all the dialogue and performed only O'Neill's detailed stage directions. Poking fun at O'Neill is all too rare, and this parodic tilt at O'Neill's grandiosity represents a new turn in O'Neill performance. Even the *New York Times* enjoyed the joke (See Isherwood, "Long Day's Journey Into Laughter").

³ The Gogol Theatre of Moscow's production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at the 1995 "O'Neill's People" conference at Suffolk University in Boston was criticized by several O'Neillians in attendance not only because the chrome and glass parlor furnishings were anachronistic but much too big for the original Monte Cristo Cottage (O'Neill's People).

⁴ David Savran cogently articulates this bifurcated attitude in his chapter "The Canonization of Eugene O'Neill."

⁵ Frederick C. Wilkins, the founder of both "The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter" and *The Eugene O'Neill Review* averred as much in an interview with the author. In retrospect Wilkins was less enthusiastic than he had been in his original review (See "Family Reunion at the Bottom of the Sea"). Wilkins had also seen Robards in the earlier Quintero production.

⁶ It is also possible to watch Pacino discuss his performance and give a reading of the role on the Youtube website.

⁷ Steven F. Bloom wrote about Beckettian elements in "Hughie" in 1988.

⁸ Doris Alexander exhaustively details the flawed "autobiography" presented in *Long Day's Journey* (67–156). One telling fact is that Mrs. O'Neill's father died three years before her wedding, making it impossible for him to have paid for her lavish nuptial accoutrements.

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Sense of Community in the Work of Gary Snyder

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Abstract

This essay examines the concept of community in six selected works by Gary Snyder. Living rooted in a place in symbiosis with the non-human has been a model found in most indigenous cultures and Eastern religious traditions. Snyder's anthropological scholarship and a life-long involvement with Zen Buddhism have shaped his vision of a sustainable model of living. In his work Snyder convincingly shows that living in a place-based community has not diminished in importance in the globalized world. The sense of community in Snyder's work will be scrutinized from multiple perspectives. Those include Snyder's understanding of the concept of community and his own role within it, his relation to nature and the non-human, his understanding of the food chain as the key process of energy sharing within a community, and the importance of the sense of place for establishing a lasting community.

Keywords: Gary Snyder, community, sense of place, shamanism, Buddhism, ecology, food web, nature, ecocentrism

1. Introduction

Besides being a renowned nature poet and activist, Gary Snyder was also elected the head of the California Arts Council. Even in this prominent position, Snyder never gave up on his values and ideals and supported small-scale projects that aimed at fostering a sense of community and a sense of place. His active engagement in community life at the San Juan Ridge has become his lifelong commitment, and a practical example of the famous motto "think globally, act locally."

Community is usually conceived of as a group of people who live in a particular area. However, Snyder's conception of community is much wider, as it includes the non-human element. He synthesizes his anthropological knowledge of indigenous cultures and his

long-lasting Zen apprenticeship. These traditions have influenced him mostly because in both spiritual traditions the non-human element plays a vital role.

This essay will address the author's definitions of community and his relationship to nature and the non-human; it will probe into the sense of place as a necessary precondition for establishing a lasting community; it will examine Snyder's own place and the role of a poet within a community; and it will also deal with the issue of the food chain, which is a necessary process within a community that includes the non-human.

This analysis will limit itself to six selected works by Gary Snyder: *Myths & Texts* (M&T), *Earth House Hold* (EHH), *Turtle Island* (TI), *The Real Work* (TRW), *A Place in Space* (PIS), and *The Practice of the Wild* (POW). The selected works represent all the author's genres and at the same time cover the five decades of his writing from the 1950s to the 1990s. *Myths & Texts* is Snyder's second collection, originally published in 1960. Although published after *Riprap*, *Myths & Texts* is regarded as Snyder's first completed work.¹ It gathers poems that originated between 1952 and 1956. *Earth House Hold* (1969) represents the writer's journal excerpts, notes, book reviews and essays covering a 16-year period from 1952 to 1968. The Pulitzer Prize-winning *Turtle Island* (1974) is a collection of poems written between 1969 and 1974. *The Real Work* (1980) gathers talks and interviews from 1964 to 1979. *The Practice of the Wild* (1990) is a highly acclaimed book of essays. And *A Place in Space* (1995) is another, more recent, collection of essays that, as the writer says in the opening Note, "draws on some forty years of thinking and writing" (unpagged).

2. The nature of nature: Other, Another, or our Mother?

Gary Snyder is often referred to as a nature poet, or a poet of the wilderness. Since his early years, nature and wilderness have been instrumental for Snyder because that is where he has searched for spiritual values and his own identity. Yet Snyder does not limit his view on nature as a mere vehicle for man's spiritual growth. He goes beyond anthropocentrism, with man standing at the center and determining the value of nature depending on whether it serves man's needs, be they material or spiritual.

The anthropocentric view implies the existence of man and nature as separate entities. Snyder rejects such a duality in accordance with the Buddhist doctrine, which does not discriminate between "self" and "other" simply because it denies the very existence of the individual self. To illustrate that isolating one's self from the whole is a mere illusion, Snyder quotes the metaphor of a web of polished jewels where each individual self is like a jewel that is defined by the reflections of all the other jewels:

... the universe is considered to be a vast web of many-sided and highly polished jewels, each one acting as a multiple mirror. In one sense each jewel is a single entity. But when we look at a jewel, we see nothing but the reflections of other jewels, which themselves are reflections of other jewels, and so on in an endless system of mirroring. Thus in each jewel is the image of the entire net. (qtd. in Snyder, *PIS* 67)

This metaphor is the basic image and definition of existence in the Hua-yen tradition within Buddhism (or Avatamsaka in Sanskrit). It presents the mutual interconnectedness and interpenetration of all things and beings. Snyder also encapsulated it in saying that

“[a]ll are one and [at the same time] all are many” (*PIS* 51). The image of a mutually linked web may be also considered the essential image of Snyder’s concept of community.

Snyder’s “no self” resonates with his call for “no nature,”² however paradoxical it may sound. In other words, “he rejects the idea of nature as something outside humans which might be either used for their needs (to be cultivated, exploited or destroyed), or even kept under their protection, isolated from them and preserved for future generations” (Erban, “Konec přírody” 31, translation mine). Thus Snyder does not speak of going back to nature because that would imply that people could possibly ever have turned themselves away from it. Acknowledging that nothing exists in isolation and seeing ourselves as a part of an interrelated web stands in juxtaposition to the self-centered consciousness, which, as Snyder believes, is what “moved them [humans] further and further from a spontaneous feeling of being part of the natural world” (*PIS* 47).

For a better understanding of Snyder’s approach to nature, it will be helpful to compare his perspective with one from which it differs. Therefore, the analysis will draw on two diametrically opposed ways of relating to something outside ourselves: either by referring to it as “Other” or “Another.” These concepts of Otherness and Anotherness were developed by the Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, who applied them in the philosophy of language and culture.³ The notion of Otherness has been central to recent gender and cultural studies. That which is Other (e.g. foreign cultures, women, etc.) is supposedly separate, inferior, and lacks a subject position as well as voice and value. Barnhill argues that “[s]uch a view of culture and women has allowed for imperialism and sexism to work so destructively” (“An Interwoven World” 125). It has worked in a similar way for nature. The study of Otherness acquired another dimension when Patrick D. Murphy and David L. Barnhill applied it in the field of ecocriticism and ecofeminism, examining the reasons for and the consequences of placing nature and women into the category of alienated Other.⁴ The following lines will show how seemingly similar terms may imply extremely different approaches toward nature.

Firstly, if nature is treated as Other, it means that there is a profound split between nature and humans. However, if nature is Another, it “is not hostile to the *I* but a necessary component of it, a friendly other, a living factor in the attempts of the *I* toward self-definition” (Barnhill, “Great Earth Sangha” 202). This Anotherness rejects the strict dichotomy of self and Other, and so does the Buddhist doctrine. Murphy confirms that Bakhtin’s concept of Anotherness implies that self and Another are “interdependent, mutually determinable, constructs” (*Literature, Nature and Other* 5), which faithfully represents Snyder’s concept of nature as a community. Snyder encourages people to avoid thinking in terms of Other since it is alienating: “One moves continually with the consciousness / Of that other, totally alien, non-human: / Humming inside like a taut drum, / Carefully avoiding any direct thought of it, / Attentive to the real-world flesh and stone” (*M&T*, “Burning 1: *second shaman song*” 38).

Secondly, regarding nature as Other goes hand in hand with devaluing it. Nature as Other is viewed as a mere commodity, a passive, silent *object*. By contrast, being Another means being a voiced *subject* with its own integrity and value. This is why Snyder warns against an objectifying consciousness: “At the root of the problem where our civilization goes wrong is the mistaken belief that nature is something less than authentic, that nature is not as alive as man is, or as intelligent, that in a sense it is dead, and that animals are of

so low an order of intelligence and feeling, we need not take their feelings into account” (*TI*, “The Wilderness” 107). Snyder sees intrinsic value in nature regardless of whether it serves people or not.

Last but not least, if nature is Other and as such separate and distinct from man, as a consequence there is little if any sense of obligation to it. However, as soon as nature is Another—a part of us and our community—then we have a natural obligation to preserve it. “But even more: if nature is truly a community we belong to, then there is a responsibility to participate in it as community” (Barnhill, “Great Earth Sangha” 187–188). The feeling of obligation toward nature will naturally arise from man’s commitment to place, the concept that has been so much promoted by Snyder, and which will be discussed later.

Snyder’s view of nature as an interconnected web, as a community in other words, opposes the traditional view of nature as Other, which is how Western culture has tended to see nature. Otherness, on the other hand, enables a dialogical interchange and reinforces the interdependence and the natural necessity of diversity.

Moreover, Snyder goes beyond suggesting that nature is Another, our community: it is a living organism, too. In his “Introductory Note” to *Turtle Island*, he writes: “[t]he land, the planet itself, is also a living being—at another pace” (*TI*). His reverence for the Earth is personified in the deity of Mother Earth, Mother Gaia, who sustains life. He expresses his humble servitude to Her: “*in the service / of the wilderness / of life / of death / of the Mother’s breasts!*” (*TI*, “Tomorrow’s Song” 77, italics in the original).

Such a relation to the Earth as to our mother can be found throughout indigenous cultures as well as within Eastern philosophies: “Buddhist Tantrism is probably the finest and most modern statement of this ancient shamanistic-yogic-gnostic-socioeconomic view: that mankind’s mother is Nature and Nature should be tenderly respected” (Snyder, *EHH* 105).

On other occasions, Snyder refers to the Earth by the term Gaia, which is derived from Greek mythology and refers to the Goddess of Earth or Mother Nature. In ecological terms it refers to the hypothesis that Earth is a single living organism.⁵ In compliance with his philosophy that “we are one and at the same time we are many,” Snyder asserts that humans are inseparable from the Earth, that humans, in fact, are the Earth: “This living flowing land / is all there is, forever / We *are* it / it sings through us—” (*TI*, “By Frazier Creek” 41).

Taking into account Snyder’s rejection of the subject-object duality, one will understand that his goal is not to reach harmony with nature, but rather to create harmony within himself, in other words, to reach such a state within himself that would be equivalent with that of nature.

3. Shaman-poet: the healer of a community

Snyder believes that for the sake of community, inter-species communication should be re-established. It has already been proposed that, in Snyder’s view, nature and the non-human is Another, and as such it has a voice. He thinks that people who have regained (or kept) the ability to hear their voices, among whom he includes himself too, should take a political stand and transmit this knowledge to the community. This is what Snyder has aspired to become, a spokesman for nature: “The reason I am here is because I wish to bring a

voice from the wilderness, my constituency. I wish to be a spokesman for the realm that is not usually represented either in intellectual chambers or in the chambers of government” (*TI*, “The Wilderness” 106). He sees this trying to be “a voice for the non-human” as his responsibility transmitting in this way the knowledge that “the humans are indeed children of, sons and daughters of, and eternally in relationship with, the *earth*” (*TRW* 171–172).

Such a spiritual transmission of the knowledge from the non-human realm is, in fact, what is accomplished by a shaman. Mircea Eliade, one of the most prominent scholars in the field of shamanism, asserts that a shaman is a person who can link himself up with the spirits, be it spirits of the dead, of demons or the spirits of Nature (26). Snyder explains in his own words that “[t]he shaman speaks for wild animals, the spirits of plants, the spirits of mountains, of watersheds. He or she sings for them. They sing through him” (*PIS* 50). A shaman has an entrance to the world which is “behind the world we see that is the same world but more open, more transparent, without blocks,” where it is “[l]ike inside a big mind, the animals and humans all can talk, and those who pass through here get power to help” (*POW* 164). Shamanism, then, is described by Snyder as a process, “which allows some individuals to step totally out of their human roles to put on the mask, costume, and *mind* of Bison, Bear, Squash, Corn, or Pleiades; to reenter the human circle in that form and by song, mime and dance, convey a greeting from the other realm” (*PIS* 51).⁶

Such a communication of shamans can then serve various goals—they use it to heal, to accompany the dead or otherwise. It can be stated that a shaman can fulfill various functions—that of a magician, medicineman (healer), priest, mystic, prophet or even a poet (Eliade 25). On this point Barnhill argues that Snyder identifies himself with a shaman in three principal respects: “[C]ommunication with the non-human (animals, spirits, and, more broadly, life’s network), giving voice to that contact in one’s community, and healing” (“An Interwoven World” 120).

As for his communicating with the non-human, Snyder claims to have experienced an animistic vision in which he could hear voices from the non-human realm. For instance, in the poem “The Uses of Light” he informs readers what the trees and other beings say: “It warms my bones / say the stones / I take it into me and grow / Say the trees” (*TI* 39). The poet functions here as a mediator of the feelings from the non-human realm. He seems not to have lost the capacity to hear the songs of his brothers and sisters, the capacity that all once had, as he believes: “There’s a sense of communication with all of life’s network that somehow happens in the wilderness for some people, and I’m one of them” (*TRW* 154). He compares this voice to what in the Western tradition is called the Muse: “You would not think a poet would get involved in these things. But the voice that speaks to me as a poet, that Westerners have called the Muse, is the voice of nature herself, whom the ancient poets called the great goddess, the Magna Mater. I regard that voice as a very real entity” (*TI*, “The Wilderness” 107).

The second aspect is giving voice to that contact in the community. Shamans can see and hear what others cannot, so they provide the tribe with their visions in order to help the whole community. Steuding argues that “[i]n a very real sense, the shaman is the first poet; he expresses, through incantations he sings and the visions of his trance which he reports, the anxieties of the group” (105). This corresponds quite well with Snyder’s understanding of poetry: “A reading is a kind of communion. I think the poet articulates the semi-known for the tribe. This is close to the ancient function of the shaman” (*TRW*

5). Snyder considers the shaman-poet to be “the man whose mind reaches easily out into all manners of shapes and other lives, and gives song to dreams” (*EHH* 122). And through this “giving shape or form to the unconscious life of the people, giving it imagery—essentially through the act of naming—the shaman exorcises mental disorder and heals psychic wounds” (Steuding 105). Therefore Snyder emphasizes that shaman’s concern is “healing / not saving” (*TI*, “Without” 6).

The etymological root of the term to heal, Snyder often asserts, is to make whole. And this is the shaman’s task: to help others to reach wholeness, “like our oneness with nature, the oneness of mind and body, the oneness of conscious and unconscious, our oneness in society with each other” (Snyder, *TRW* 156–157). Thus, poetry reading fulfills the shaman’s healing function: “Poetry within the civilized area of history is the fragmented attempt to recreate a ‘healing song’ aspect of the shaman’s practice” (Snyder, *TRW* 175, see also *EHH* 121–122). Snyder’s focus, therefore, “is not on the shaman or monk as individual practitioner but on the community as the context for interdependent religious practice” (Barnhill, “Great Earth Sangha” 205).

4. The sense of place: where a community starts

In socio-economic terms we have been witnessing an increasing resistance to globalization in the form of a shift toward “localization.” The idea of localization is centered around a smaller bioregion, a localized community as a model for living a more sustainable life. Similarly, literature of place has begun to receive critical attention.⁷ Gary Snyder is one of its enthusiastic proponents. Kopecký asserts that Snyder “promoted small-scale projects whose aim was the fostering of the sense of community and sense of place. He has always seen the future of democracy in small, decentralized communities” (“Jazz” 86).

According to Snyder, a true community starts with people who share the place. Place is one of the oldest ways in which people organize themselves into communities, which is also a completely natural act because “[u]ltimately we can all lay claim to the term *native* and the songs and dances, the beads and feathers, and the profound responsibilities that go with it. We are all indigenous to this planet” (Snyder, *PIS* 250). Furthermore, becoming a real native naturally makes people “act as gentle stewards of the earth’s community of being” (*PIS* 32). He repeatedly states that this wise stewardship means that people should “find [their] place on the planet, dig in, and take responsibility from there” (*PIS* 43). He says so because becoming a native of a place assumes that when you live in a certain place and you get to know it, then you develop a certain affection for it, so then, naturally, you care about it and prevent it from being damaged.

However, apart from the obvious ecological and economic benefits of becoming a native of a place, there is yet another, spiritual benefit: “Because by being in a place, we get the largest sense of community. We learn that community is of spiritual benefit and health for everyone, that ongoing working relationships and shared concerns, music, poetry, and stories all evolve into the shared practice of a set values, visions, and quests. That’s what the spiritual path really is” (Snyder, *TRW* 141). This passage reminds one of the words of Dōgen: “When you find your place, practice begins” (qtd. in Tan, 259). So for Snyder re-inhabitation does not only refer to “the tiny number of persons who come out of the industrial

societies . . . and then start to turn back to the land, back to place,” but he adds that “it is a moral and spiritual choice as well” (*PIS* 190–191).

If one wants to become a native of a place, the first step required is to get to know the place where one lives: “You know whether or not a person knows where he is by whether or not he knows the plants. By whether or not he knows what the soils and waters can do” (Snyder, *TRW* 69). Snyder acknowledges here that to know the plants is the basis for knowing the place, since plants are at the very bottom of the food chain that supports all other life-forms. Snyder gives the reader some accounts of his own journeys exploring the land surrounding his house, such as in the poems “The Wild Mushroom” (*TI* 46) or “Ethnobotany” (*TI* 51).

However, knowing the land intellectually is not enough; it should involve “one’s body, commitment, time, labor, walking” (Snyder, *TRW* 23). And to give it a yet deeper dimension, one should not omit to “consult the Indian mythology and ritual and magic of the area and try to understand why it was they saw certain figures as potent” (Snyder, *TRW* 16). To put it differently, one should try to listen to the spirits of the land. Anybody can do that if they stay long enough. Snyder cites a Crow elder who said: “I think if people stay somewhere long enough—even white people—the spirits will begin to speak to them. It’s the power of the spirits coming up from the land. The spirits and the old powers aren’t lost, they just need people to be around long enough and the spirits will influence them” (*POW* 39). Only then one can claim to be really educated: “To be well educated is to have learned the songs, proverbs, stories, sayings, myths (and technologies) that come with this experiencing of the non-human members of the local ecological community” (Snyder, *POW* 18).

Snyder’s vision of a spiritual bond to the land stems from the Native Americans’ respect for and knowledge of their land: “There is something to be learned from the Native American people about where we all are. It can’t be learned from anybody else” (Snyder, *PIS* 156). He admires how “[t]he people of precivilized times or places knew their specific watershed ecosystems and mastered those details with beautiful and empirical precision” (Snyder, *PIS* 96). However, he is not so naïve as to believe that we could return to the old ways. Snyder’s idea is not to return to the primitive, but rather to search out some ways to regain the consciousness of sharing, of being a partner rather than an exploiter: “Although it’s clear that we cannot again have seamless primitive cultures, or the purity of the archaic, we can have neighborhood and community” (Snyder, *TRW* 161).

5. Kitkitdizze: Snyder’s place in space

The use of the term ‘place’ as opposed to ‘space’ is not accidental here. They illustrate a different degree of man’s intimate relationship to the land. Snyder brings this important difference to our attention in the title of his book *A Place in Space*.

In his pursuit of leading a life spiritually bound to a particular place, Snyder settled in the Sierra foothills. “Gradually, he began to concentrate more and more on the specific needs of his home region and got involved in community-based projects aimed at the preservation of the natural environment” (Kopecký, *California Crucible*, 103). One of those projects was building his house Kitkitdizze. The way of living in Kitkitdizze is an example of living with an intimate understanding of the place. His self-built ecological house stands on a piece of land that had previously been destroyed by extensive mining during the Gold

Rush, but Snyder recovered it so that it would return to its original state. He employed features of local Native American buildings and used local materials for the construction so that it would be in symbiosis and interrelation with the place where it is located.

The philosophy of Kitkitdizze is in sharp contrast with those “ex acid-heads from the cities / Converted to Guru or Swami”, who “Do penance with shiny / Dopey eyes, and quit eating meat,” yet they fail to hear the song of the place (Snyder, *TI*, “The Call of the Wild” 21). Such people retreat from cities to live in the country, yet they fail to live where they are: their “oil-heated / Geodesic domes” are “stuck like warts / In the woods”—and even their dreams are displaced, dreams “of India, of / forever blissful sexless highs” (Snyder, *TI*, “The Call of the Wild” 21).

Snyder’s use of the old Native American names such as Kitkitdizze for his house, and Turtle Island to refer to the whole American continent, is also of significance. It clearly indicates that he wants to lead a reinhabitory life, in symbiotic relationship to that place, which also means taking into account its history, character and mythological significance. In his works he refers to places with these indigenous names, for he wants the readers to look at them from another perspective. For example, by calling the continent Turtle Island, which draws on the indigenous creation myth, he then speaks about a continent which does not have a 200-year nor a 500-year history, but a history covering hundreds of millions of years. In this way he wants his readers to realize where they really are.

Accordingly, Snyder’s action supports what he has been putting forward in his works, namely that it is man who should adapt to the place, not the other way round. Thus Kitkitdizze is a model of a life committed to a place that seeks a spiritual and ecological harmony with the land. And it is this commitment to the place where, as Snyder believes, a gradual path toward the revolution of the whole culture starts: “To restore the land one must live and work in a place. To work in a place is to work with others. People who work together in a place become a community, and a community, in time, grows a culture. To work on behalf of the wild is to restore culture” (Snyder, *PIS* 250).

6. Sangha: the community of all beings

Sangha is a Buddhist term meaning a community of monks who are devoted to spiritual practice, separated from normal society. However, Snyder has deliberately expanded the original meaning of this term. He does not like the idea of a purely ‘intentional’ community, a community gathered around an idea, a single purpose, or—in Buddhist terms—a community that only ‘sits’ together. A real community emerges when people realize that they are going to live in a place “for a thousand years or more” (Snyder, *TRW* 117 and 140–141).

Snyder’s equivalent for sangha is “Village Council of All Beings” (*PIS* 74–84). For him it means a community which “includes all living beings” (*TRW* 136) asserting in this way that wholeness and health of human life can only be achieved in a community which also includes the Earth’s non-human processes and entities (Elder 34). Snyder suggests a new kind of society of “[m]en, women and children—all of whom together hope to follow the timeless path of love and wisdom, in affectionate company with the sky, winds, clouds, trees, waters, animals and grasses” (Snyder, *EHH* 116). He adds that this sense of community is daily lived by indigenous cultures, whereas Christian and Buddhist monks

have been trying to achieve this spiritual ascesis by leaving the world, which is artificial and cannot be equalled to it (*EHH* 121).

The Buddhists as well as the Native Americans teach respect for all life and for wild systems. They know that a lack of respect for growing, living things soon leads to the lack of respect for humans too (Chief Standing Bear, qtd. in Yip 80). Snyder, being aware of the fact that “a human life is totally dependent on an interpenetrating network of wild systems” (*PIS* 54), suggests that “[l]ove and compassion should extend to animals, rocks, dirt” (*TRW* 4). In fact, there is nothing unnatural about it as “we are many selves looking at each other, through the same eye” (Snyder, *PIS* 187).

Native Americans do not see human people as more important than anything else. In their tradition, all beings must share the land equally. Such an attitude is opposed to the Judeo-Christian tradition where God gave the man the dominion over land and other living beings: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (*King James* 1.26, italics added).⁸ This passage from the Book of Genesis has become the subject of heated debates between deep ecologists on one side and Christians on the other. Ecologists consider the dominion and feeling of supremacy to be the foundation of exploitative consciousness and ecological crisis in the Western world. Christians, on the other hand, argue that the passage was not meant to be a call to arms against nature but a plea for wise stewardship.⁹

Following in the footsteps of Native Americans, Snyder does not see a human being as higher than any other animate or inanimate thing. He does not exclude humans from the animal realm; he claims that “[m]an is a beautiful animal” (*EHH* 120). By contrast, he calls other non-human beings “people”, just like the indigenous people call them—as people off on various trips: “*Solidarity*. The People. / Standing Tree People! / Flying Bird People! / Swimming Sea People! / Four-legged two-legged, people!” (*TI*, “Mother Earth: Her Whales” 48).

Snyder provides other examples of how the ancient is reminiscent of people’s kinship with animals, now from the realm of Eskimos: “The animal icons of Inupiaq people (‘Eskimos’) . . . have a tiny human face sewn into the fur, or under feathers, or carved on the back or breast or even inside the eye, peeping out . . . It is a way of saying that each creature is a spirit with an intelligence as brilliant as our own” (*POW* 20). On the other hand, neither do the Eastern philosophies exclude humanity from nature: “[t]he Buddhist iconographers hide a little animal face in the hair of the human to remind us that we see with archetypal wilderness eyes as well” (Snyder, *POW* 20).

In Zen tradition all beings, animate or inanimate, are considered to be endowed with Buddha-nature so their lives must be equally respected. This corresponds closely with the Native American basic notion of animism or the belief that everything is endowed with spirit. In fact, Snyder admitted having experienced a kind of animistic vision: “I have had a very moving, profound perception a few times that everything was alive . . . and that on one level there is no hierarchy of qualities in life—that the life of a stone or a weed is as completely beautiful and authentic, wise and valuable as the life, say, of an Einstein” (*TRW* 17).

Snyder compares a community, where all the living entities are equally valuable, to the Buddhist mandala—which in Sanskrit means circle—where all entities depicted are equally important for the mandala as a whole. In terms of energy flow it is hierarchical, but from the standpoint of the whole, all of its members are equal (*PIS* 76). “Any single thing or complex of things / *literally* as great as the whole” (Snyder, *EHH* 31).

7. The magic of energy sharing: the food web

Snyder is well aware of the fact that community does not only mean sharing of place, but also sharing of the food it provides. The key process of the system is energy exchange, or the issue of maintenance of life. In fact, quite a significant part of Snyder’s work is dedicated to answering the question, “Where am I in this food-chain?” (*EHH* 32). If one turns to Buddhism to see how it relates to food, one will encounter the First Precept of *ahimsa* or causing no unnecessary harm, which is against hurting and taking life.¹⁰ This precept is commonly understood as an encouragement toward vegetarianism. However, the question remains: what is the minimum harm to be caused in order to sustain life?

Snyder does not identify with vegetarianism in the fullest sense. He has grappled with this question a lot because, as he argues, this precept was settled in an agrarian world, whereas he has been living in an area without adequate water where eating fish or animals is an economic necessity. Although he had been an on-and-off vegetarian, he realized that the distinction ‘vegetarian/nonvegetarian’ is too simple. During his studies in Japan, Snyder saw that some Zen priests and monks ate fish outside a monastery, so he once asked his master, a strict vegetarian, about it. The master then replied that it had been his own way of practice and that each person had to take the First Precept as a deep challenge and find his own way through life with it (Snyder, *PIS* 69). And so, it has proved to be one of existential kōans¹¹ for Snyder to solve for himself.

Consequently, Snyder looked at the solutions of societies which have always had to rely on much nonplant food, given their geographic latitude. What he found was that both primitive societies as well as Buddhists teach gratitude toward food, acknowledging that it represents a loss of life. “Primary people have had their own ways of trying to understand the precept of nonharming. They knew that taking life required gratitude and care” (Snyder, *POW* 183–184). They understand that “Other beings . . . do not mind being killed and eaten as food, but they expect us to say please, and thank you, and they hate to see themselves wasted” (Snyder, *POW* 20).

Such gratitude toward food is quite explicitly conveyed in Snyder’s work. He says grace and does a little meditation on his food before meals: “We offered our respects and gratitude to the fish and the Sea Gods daily, and ate them with real love, admiring their extraordinarily beautiful, perfect little bodies” (*EHH* 139). He explains that “The grace we say clears our hearts and guides the children and welcome the guest, all at the same time” (*POW* 184). So in his house the family say a Buddhist grace: “We venerate the Three Treasures [teachers, the wild, and friends] / And are thankful for this meal / The work of many people / And the sharing of other forms of life” (*POW* 185).

Thus on the question of vegetarianism he takes the side of the primitive hunter who believes that humility and gratitude expiate the blame for eating meat or taking furs, although it seems that for Snyder both of the attitudes are compatible (the attitude of a Zen

Buddhist as well as of a primitive hunter), and both are influences in his poems (Almon 85–86).

The issue of killing animals is further reflected in many of his poems, for example in “One Should Not Talk to a Skilled Hunter about What is Forbidden by the Buddha” (*TI* 66), or in “The Dead by the Side of the Road” (*TI* 7–8). The Buddhist and Native American visions in Snyder’s poems are more likely to reinforce than contradict each other. Both traditions condemn thoughtless slaughtering and killing for comfort or sport, which is a different matter than eating to sustain life. The poem “Steak” (*TI* 10) rejects such killing and criticizes the waste of animals practiced by modern agribusiness. A key statement in this poem is “slowly thinking / with the rhythm of their / breathing,” which reminds readers that all animals are sentient, as they are portrayed as thinking beings.

Another example of the author’s disapproval of people killing animals for mere gain or comfort can be found in the poem “The Call of the Wild” (*TI* 21). The poem presents a sad portrayal of people who have coyotes trapped because they make noise, and who sell their cedars because some logger tells them that “trees are full of bugs” (Almon 86). Peiffer explains what drives such people to that deeds: “Such folks do not know themselves, nor do they know much of the natural world around them . . . The logger’s appeal to the people’s fear of the wild (including insects) succeeds because they had not explored or studied or tarried in their woods long enough to know for themselves how beautiful the trees were. So they lost what could have helped enlighten them” (151–152).

Snyder mentions two important reasons why people are willing to sacrifice their environment: not knowing the place and the fear of the inner wilderness. His work reveals a powerful link between the fear of the outer wilderness and our own inner wilderness area. He believes that behind the destruction of the outer wilderness lies the fear of the wilderness within, of the unconscious. As Erban puts it, “The devastation of the inner nature goes hand in hand with the outer, ecological devastation. We cannot behave ecologically unless we reconcile with our inner nature and make it part and parcel of our identity” (“Konec přírody” 31, translation mine). Peiffer confirms this suggestion in her explanation: “People who fear the unknown in themselves also try to eliminate mystery in the world because it reminds them of their own fearsome wildness” (153).

In Snyder’s view, being part of the food-chain “acknowledge[s] the simultaneous pain and beauty of this complexly interrelated world” (*PIS* 70). He sees eating flesh as inevitable and natural: “A key transaction in natural system is energy exchange, which includes the food chain and the food webs, and this means that many living beings live by eating other beings. Our bodies—or the energy they represent—are thus continually being passed around. We are all guests at the feast, and we are also the meal!” (Snyder, *PIS* 76). Everything that lives eats food and is food in return, and Snyder affirms that people should not try to escape from it, but rather join in Indra’s net.¹² Barnhill argues that Snyder ecologizes the Buddhist notion of interpenetration of the Indra’s net and Buddhacizes the notion of ecosystem: “The implication is that the ecological net of Indra is made not of jewels but of flesh: that of plants, animals and our own (“Great Earth Sangha” 189).

Snyder acknowledges that biological desire and need drive everything in this world. Thus living depends on eating each other: “Food chain: salts-diatoms-copepods-her-ring-fishermen-us.eating” (Snyder, *EHH* 31). And for Snyder, this eating each other is a sacramental act rather than a brutal necessity. His acknowledgement that we will all

be eventually the meal “is not just being ‘realistic.’ It is allowing the sacred to enter and accepting the sacramental aspect of our shaky temporary personal being” (Snyder, *POW* 19). It is, in fact, an act of joy, an act of loving: “the joy of all the beings / is in being / older and tougher and eaten / up” (Snyder, *TI*, “Night Herons” 36). Snyder once even said that after his death he hoped it would be by being eaten by a bear that he could reenter the food chain (Laughlin 247).

Those who cannot accept this natural exchange of energy cut themselves from the very life, from the real communion of beings:

If you think of eating and killing plants or animals to eat as an unfortunate quirk in the nature of the universe, then you cut yourself from connecting with the sacramental energy-exchange, evolutionary mutual-sharing aspect of life. And if we talk about evolution of consciousness, we also have to talk about evolution of bodies, which takes place by that sharing of energies, passing it back and forth, which is done by literally eating each other. And that’s what communion is. (Snyder, *TRW* 89)

Snyder believes that such an approach is one of the greatest contributions of the primitive cultures because it solves the critical problems of life and death in relating to food. Snyder encapsulated this approach in the formula: “You sing to it, you pray to it, and then you enjoy it” (Snyder, *TRW* 89). Hence his following remark: “As Buddhists we have something yet to learn on that score” (*PIS* 70).

It must be pointed out that Snyder has been fascinated by the hunting tradition of the indigenous people. For them it was not a mere question of food supply; the hunters took part in a deep spiritual practice as they had to pray and become pure. They had to establish a relationship with the hunted animal and ask it to sacrifice itself for the sake of people (Freke 46). Steuding argues that if properly undertaken, hunting is holy and sacred to Snyder (80). The ancient forms of hunting therefore did not consist in man’s manifestation of his lordship over other non-human beings, but rather it meant taking direct part in the life of animals and being aware of his own dependance on them (Erban, “Kulturní pluralismus” 34, compare Steuding 79).

Snyder describes that real hunting requires tuning up one’s consciousness with the hunted animal, “like in love or hunting, you must become one with the other” (Snyder, *EHH* 139). That is why Snyder states that “[t]hey didn’t hunt with tools, they hunted with their minds” (*TRW* 107). Hunting is not thus portrayed as a brutal act but rather as a compassionate deal: “Hunting magic is designed to bring the game to you—the creature who has heard your song, witnessed your sincerity, and out of compassion comes within your range” (Snyder, *EHH* 120). Such a compassionate deal is portrayed in “This Poem Is for Deer” where the author must undergo purification and penance before he is worthy of the compassion of the deer: “Deer don’t want to die for me. / I’ll drink sea-water / Sleep on beach pebbles in the rain / Until the deer come down to die / in pity for my pain” (*M&T*, “Hunting 9” 28).

The act of hunting is even compared to the state of meditation, as they share common features: “the necessities of identity, intuition, stillness, that go with hunting make it seem as though shamanism and yoga and meditation may have their roots in the requirements of the hunter” (Snyder, *EHH* 139). It is no wonder then that Snyder has been criticized,

particularly by other Buddhists, for writing poems about eating meat and killing animals. However, as Murphy points out, his poems do not promote hunting but rather they show that if a person wants to eat meat, there is a right way to do it and there are wrong ways (*A Place* 115).

8. Conclusion

The essay has manifested the complexity and coherence of Snyder's perception of community. It has been mentioned that Snyder compares the nature of a community to the shape of a circle because an important feature of a circle is that it connects. In the Far East, as well as in Native American spirituality, the circle has always had a spiritual significance. In the Native American view, all the vital processes of the Earth are believed to occur in circles—Earth itself and other planets are round, birds make round nests, seasons come and go in circles, even human life proceeds like a circle. In Hinduism as well as in Buddhism the circles are to be found in the omnipresent mandalas that represent the oneness in the universe. A community, too, is a circle that links the human with the non-human world. Snyder argues that a community rooted in place and including all the living beings is the secret of success if people want their children to be here. Despite its complexity, his answer to the principal question of how to be in this world is simple enough: “stay together / learn the flowers / go light” (*TI*, “For the Children” 86).

Notes

¹ See for example Bob Steuding: *Gary Snyder* (Boston: Twayne, 1976) p. 66.

² *No Nature* (New York: New Directions, 1992) is also the title of one of Snyder's books.

³ Bakhtin makes explicit the difference between relational and alienational otherness by employing the different Russian words for “Another” in Appendix II in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). He also addresses the issue in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

⁴ See Patrick D. Murphy: *Literature, Nature and Other: Ecofeminist Critiques* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), and David L. Barnhill: “An Interwoven World: Gary Snyder's Cultural Ecosystem” (*Worldviews* 6.2, 2002) pp. 111–144. Barnhill recognizes ten main points of difference when approaching nature as Other or Another, which is summarized in an online article on <<http://www.uwosh.edu/facstaff/barnhill/490/other>>.

⁵ The so called Gaia hypothesis was first presented by James Lovelock in 1979, postulating that the biosphere was a self-regulating entity. It did not receive serious attention from the scientists at that time. It did receive closer attention, though, from ecologists. What was meant to be a scientific hypothesis was gratefully interpreted as the romantic Mother Earth by some ecologists. For a more comprehensive analysis see Erazim Kohák: *The Green Halo: A Bird's-Eye View of Ecological Ethics* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), pp. 129–135.

⁶ Snyder's interest in primitive cultures is visible in his work most obviously via his references to shamanism and mythology. It should be noted that he is not a layman in this sphere due to the fact that he graduated in anthropology. Therefore any possible deviations from established theories are not due to his ignorance, but rather due to his own beliefs and approach to the issue.

⁷ For more about the shift to localization see Reidar Almas, Geoffrey Lawrence, Ed. *Globalization, Localization And Sustainable Livelihoods* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), Colin Hines, *Localization: A Global Manifesto* (London: Earthscan, 2000).

⁸ Bearing in mind the wide range of different versions of the Bible available, I have decided to make use of the King James version as it is the most widely used English translation of the Bible.

⁹ Lynn White in his influential study “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis” (1967) was the first to squarely blame Christianity for its exploitative approach to nature. Although there have been green initiatives among Christians, associated with personalities such as Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Albert Schweitzer, Teilhard de Chardin or even Pope John Paul II, it cannot be denied that the Bible is more anthropocentrically oriented in comparison with other spiritual traditions. Protestantism especially is regarded as a strongly anti-nature stream within Christianity, in particular the Puritans and Quakers (Librová 30). The basis of their worldview was their work ethic, which emphasized hard work that would transform nature into useful products. Having a rest, observation of art or admiration of nature was regarded as a waste of time and even a sin. “This negative approach to nature has been inherited in American society for a long time” (Librová 30).

¹⁰ “Ahimsa,” “Glossary of Buddhist Technical Terms,” Site created and designed by Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc., 5 May 2010 <http://buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/b_gloss2.htm>.

¹¹ Kōan (Japanese) study is one of the three principal methods of Zen. It is a type of challenge that prompts its students to step outside of traditional concepts of dualism, language and rationalism, and beyond conventional truths, to ultimate truth or awakening. The student is teased and frustrated into relinquishing his hold on logic. The most typical example of kōan is: “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” Through repeated failure to solve it, the student gradually realizes that the kōan cannot be solved logically. It makes the student understand, to see in a different way. The first kōan given to Snyder—that took him a year and a half to solve—was to show what his face looked like before his parents met.

¹² Indra’s net refers to the Buddhist metaphor of a jeweled net.

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Fašismus, my a Ezra Pound: Esej o jednom jazykovém hříchu

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Abstrakt

Esej se zabývá užíváním termínu fašismus v soudobém obecném a akademickém diskursu. Tradičním esejistickým přístupem, aniž by byly užity jakékoliv lingvistické metody, zkoumá esej různé způsoby znevažování významu tohoto slova. Značná pozornost je věnována společenskému rozměru užívání termínu; užití slova fašismus nebo fašista je považováno za výkon „komunitní moci“ na označovaném a adresátovi promluvy. Příklad Ezry Pounda dokládá, jak byl význam termínu zamlžen a jak by snad mohl být znovu ustaven.

Abstract

This essay examines the usage of the term “fascism” in present-day academic and everyday discourse. Not using linguistic methods but instead applying a traditional essayistic approach, the author outlines the ways in which the meaning of the word has been abused. The essay pays attention to the social dimension of the usage of the term; using “fascism” or “fascist” is considered an exercise of the “community power” which is imposed both on the referent and the addressee. The case of Ezra Pound is discussed in detail in order to exemplify how the meaning of the term has been destructed and how it can possibly be reconstructed.

Klíčová slova: fašismus, modernismus, Ezra Pound, Benito Mussolini, kulturní kritika, jazyk

Keywords: fascism, modernism, Ezra Pound, Benito Mussolini, cultural criticism, language

*musíš napsat (řekla): och, musíš napsat, že
v Pompejích
všichni pomřeli;
že fašisti jsou zlí;
že čísla nikdy nekončí...*

Edoardo Sanguineti (*Tříkrátník* 102)

Určit přesně význam slova fašismus je dnes takřka nemožné. Z části proto, že se změnil náš postoj k významu, k významovosti. To slovo se, jako tolik jiných, stalo v naší řeči významově promiskuitním: po vůli je kdekomu. Nepřesným užíváním, mnohdy záměrným zneužíváním, jsme ztratili představu o dějinách a hranicích jeho významu: slovo se stalo značkou, jeho význam je druhotný. Označkování je signálem ke konvenční reakci, vždy více či méně citově nabitě. Z kolektivně stvrzované moci těch, kdo právě mají slovo, uplatňujeme dohled nad minulým a současným, zároveň prověřujeme postoje svých bližních. Podobně jako fašismus ztratil právo na přesný význam, označkovatému fašistovi odnímáme právo na osobitost. Konkrétní osud jedinečné lidské bytosti v určité dějinné situaci je podružný; je nám lhostejné, proč věřila jistým myšlenkám a zastávala určité postoje, nebo zda tyto myšlenky a postoje skutečně odpovídaly dané ideologii. Zájem o individuálnost označkovatého považujeme za obranu fašisty, mnohdy i za obhajobu fašismu. Nevíme sice, kdo a co to je, jsme si ale jisti, že je to zlé. Takový postoj k významu považují za jazykový hřích, jeho různými podobami se budu dále zabývat.

I.

Zneklidněn těmito myšlenkami, vzpomněl jsem si na Danta, který zdůrazňoval nutnost pečlivého rozlišování významů a byl přesvědčen, že „znalost definovaného plyne z poznání definovaných prvků“ (Dante 157). Přesnost jazykového vyjádření, jasnost definice a útěchu, kterou mohou poskytnout jen tyto kvality, jsem hledal ve slovnících. Nehledal jsem jednu jedinou určující definici, ale různé způsoby jasného a přesného vyjádření významu slova, případně nástin dějin jeho chápání. Čtenáře prosím o trpělivost; listování slovníky je sice zdoluhavé a mnohdy nepříliš zajímavé, domnívám se ale, že je nutné, aby touto cestou prošel se mnou.

Pavel Váša a František Trávníček ve *Slovníku jazyka českého* z roku 1937 rozumí fašismem „politické hnutí v Itálii a jeho napodobeniny v cizině“. Vilém Pech ve *Velkém slovníku cizích slov* (1948) chápe fašismus jako „italské politické hnutí protidemokratické a protisocialistické, zdůrazňující svrchovanost státu a vůdcovský princip; jeho napodobeniny jinde, zvláště v Německu.“ Podle prvního svazku *Slovníku spisovného jazyka českého* z roku 1960 je fašismus „(za imperialismu) otevřená diktatura nejreakčnějších

a nejšovinističtějších živlů finančního kapitálu.“ *Slovník cizích slov* Ladislava Rejmana roku 1960 fašismus definuje jako „krajně reakční, šovinistické a rasistické hnutí, které vedlo v některých kapitalistických zemích k nastolení neobyčejně brutální diktatury velkoburžoasie, nejvýrazněji do konce 2. světové války v Itálii a Německu; krajní prostředek buržoasie v této imperialistické etapě kapitalismu k udržení třídní nadvlády a k potlačení dělnického hnutí; svou diktaturu vykonává nejen složkami státního aparátu, ale i pomocí kontrarevolučních masových, namnoze polovojenských organizací.“ Podle masově používaného *Slovníku cizích slov* Lumíra Klimeše je fašismus „za imperialismu otevřená militaristická, teroristická diktatura nejreakčnějších a nejšovinističtějších živlů finančního kapitálu; jeho zásady, poprvé systematicky vyložené Mussolinim, našly v rozmanitých obměnách politické uplatnění v Itálii, v Německu, ve Španělsku a jinde.“¹ *Slovník cizích slov*, vydaný roku 1993 Encyklopedickým domem, popisuje fašismus jako „nacionálně šovinistické a rasistické hnutí spojené s totalitní formou moci.“ *Akademický slovník cizích slov* nakladatelství Academia² vymezuje význam slova fašismus takto: „1. politický režim původně nastolený v Itálii (B. Mussolinim v roce 1919 [sic!]), založený na diktatuře jedné strany, agresivním nacionalismu, potlačování občanských svobod; totalitní protidemokratické režimy tohoto typu: *hitlerovský fašismus*. 2. ideologie tohoto režimu obhajující rasismus, šovinismus, násilí.“ Podle *Českého etymologického slovníku* Jiřího Rejzky z roku 2001 je fašismus „ultrapracvicová, šovinistická a rasistická ideologie.“ Ve *Slovníku českých synonym* Karla Paly a Jana Všíanského, který několikrát vydalo Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, se lze dočíst, že synonymem fašisty je slovo nacisti...³

Domníval jsem se, že po slovníku saháme ve chvíli, kdy se naše představa o významu střetne s odlišnou představou, která si nárokuje stejnou platnost. Důvěra, s níž jsem tak činil, nebyla odůvodněná: mínění o významu má i zde nad významem jednoznačnou převahu. Slovníky zřejmě plní funkci důležitější než přesným slovním vyjádřením vymezit význam: utvrdit nás v přesvědčení, že význam daného slova určuje jeho soudobé užívání „veřejností“.

Vymezit s určitostí význam fašismu je obtížné i pro vzdělance, akademiky a kritiky, kteří jsou do značné míry za tento stav odpovědní: dopustili, aby byl tento termín používán, aniž by se shodli na jeho významu, jak poznamenává Claudio Sergè, autor hesla „Fašismus“ v *Oxfordském slovníku světové politiky* (176). Podle Noëla O’Sullivan se slovo fašismus „od samého počátku vyznačovalo tím, že bylo termínem velmi sporným a nedefinovatelným, a to jak v lidovém, tak i akademickém úzu. V akademických kruzích se dodnes nedospělo k jednotnému názoru na podstatu významu tohoto termínu, ačkoli máme za sebou již padesát let bádání a úvah“ (13). O’Sullivan se domnívá, že v pochopení podstaty fašismu nám brání „převládající intelektuální nálada naší doby“, především „nebezpečně optimistická představa“ (7), že zlo vzniká ve společenských strukturách, a proto může být jejich změnou navždy odstraněno (13–14). „Představa, že by moderní ideologie mohla být záměrně destruktivní,“ píše O’Sullivan, „naprosto zaskočila liberály, socialisty i konservativce“ (7).

Fašismus k politickému myšlení ani praxi nepřispěl ničím novým, jedinečný je pouze jakožto svérázná kombinace evropských myšlenek, postojů, ideologií a institucí. Ideologie fašismu nebyla vymezena přesně; Sergè píše, že mnohdy „bylo snazší pochopit, proti čemu fašismus byl, než za čím stál“ (176). Robert Paxton se proto ve vlivné studii *Anatomie fašismu* zabývá převážně jeho praxí; vymezit fašistickou „praxí“ je ale stejně obtížné

a problematické jako určit fašistickou „teorii“. Co si počít s různými podobami rasismu, od vágně pociťované hrdosti na ethnický původ až k biologickému rasismu, který volá po násilné očištění rasy?⁴ Jak přistupovat k nacionalismu, od pocitu příslušnosti k dějině, kulturně a společensky určenému státnímu zřízení po apotheosu soběstačného, ale zároveň výbojného a rozpínavého státu?

Je fašismus, pokoušející se skloubit nacionalismus se socialismem, skutečně pravicové hnutí? Fašistický socialismus, který pranýřoval spekulativnost mezinárodního finančnictví, respektoval soukromý majetek a do značné míry bránil zájmy měšťanstva (Paxton 15). Nepodněcoval třídní nenávisť, rozdíl mezi třídami nezdůrazňoval ani neprohluboval, snažil se je překlenout prostřednictvím korporací, struktur, na nichž se měli podílet příslušníci všech společenských tříd podle svých hospodářských zájmů. Tato sdružení měla vytvořit společnou základnu pro úspěšný rozvoj daného hospodářského úseku (Sergè 117). Spekulovat, zda je fašismus odvozen od marxismu nebo zda je marxismus jednou z podob fašismu, je jistě zavádějící. (O'Sullivan 10–11) Lze ale oprávněně tvrdit, že – navzdory údajné ideologické nesmiřitelnosti – byl vztah fašismu a komunismu především vzájemnou nevraživostí konkurentů.

Fašismus nelze vymezit libovolnou kombinací hesel jako „systém jedné strany“, „militaristická diktatura“, „totalitní forma moci“, „antiracionální svody“, „potlačování občanských svobod“, „antidemokratický režim“, „teatrální forma vládnutí“, „policejní stát“, „všemocný diktátor nadaný osobním kouzlem“. Mnohé podoby fašismu byly mezi světovými válkami vnímány jako radikální reakce na krizi utilitárního liberálního pojetí státu a takto pojímaných politických institucí, jako určitý projev touhy po mravně soudržném, normativním, „ethickém státu“ (Sergè 176, 177). Domnívám se, že takovýto přístup k fašismu je myšlenkově poctivější a plodnější než povinně rozhořčené odsudky, které často jen zastírají nevědomost.⁵ Chceme-li se skutečně o fašismu něco dozvědět, je nutné vnímat tuto „ideologii“ jako důležitou součást duchovních dějin Evropy, nikoli jako tragický omyl několika národů.

Evropa se nikdy zcela nevyrovnala s moderností. Konfrontace s moderností představovala příležitost k obrodě hodnotových struktur a vnitřních kulturních forem evropských společností, původně vzešlých ze zemědělských společenství. Vytvořit takovou životnou strukturu hodnot, která by umožnila se ctí čelit ethickým a mravním dilematům „moderní“ doby, se v Evropě nepodařilo.⁶ Na konci 19. a počátku 20. století v Evropě došlo k hodnotové stagnaci, která vyústila ve všeobecně pociťovanou krizi hodnot. Fašismus lze v těchto souvislostech chápat jako určitý radikální moderní postoj k evropské hodnotové krizi. Takový přístup by snad mohl představovat vhodný počátek úvah nad podstatou a významem fašismu, který v současné době očividně znovu získává na přitažlivosti.

II.

Jedna ze současných italských neofašistických organizací se nazývá Casa Pound. „Poundův dům“ o sobě dal poprvé důrazně vědět v Římě, nejde ale o spolek místního významu, jak dokládá následující fotografie, pořízená v srpnu roku 2011 v historickém centru Florencie na Via Ricasoli, několik kroků od Piazza del Duomo.⁷



Různá neofašistická sdružení se snaží přivlastnit si Pounda, označovaného fašistu, jako ikonu od počátku padesátých let. Během Poundova pohřbu na podzim roku 1972 vtrhla do benátského kostela San Giorgio Maggiore skupina neofašistů, svolávali fašistická hesla a křičeli, že Pound byl „jejich“ básník. Neofašisty, stejně jako mnohé jeho samozvané soudce, nezajímají Poundovy ekonomické a politické teorie ani jejich dobové souvislosti, jeho básnické dílo považují za propagaci fašistických myšlenek a postojů – osobitost díla není podstatná, jde o jméno, pověst a značku.

Pound měl k italskému fašismu blízko, zároveň mu ale byl vždy velmi vzdálený.⁸ Byl kosmopolita potírající provinčnost prostorovou i časovou⁹; jeho pojetí kultury rozhodně nebylo evropocentrické nebo rasově podmíněné. Zdůrazňoval potřebnost estetického a společenského řádu¹⁰ a jejich souladnosti; model takového řádu představují Poundova *Cantos* – struktura otevřená básnický a do značné míry i hodnotově, rozvrh řádu, který měl být schopen dynamicky reagovat na proměny kulturní, společenské a politické situace.

Poundovo dílo z třicátých a první poloviny čtyřicátých let 20. století sice sympatie k Mussoliniho režimu neskrývá, rozhodně je ale nelze považovat za propagaci italského fašismu. Pound vždy hájil své názory a postoje, k jejich prosazování však často využíval jiných osobností a jejich díla. Ačkoli se rozsáhlý esej *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony* (Antheil a pojednání o harmonii, 1924) zabývá převážně dílem amerického skladatele, Pound zde především představuje vlastní pojetí „horizontální“ hudby, svérázně rozvíjející odkaz J. S. Bacha. Antheil ke svému „obrazu“ v Poundově knize poznamenal: „Nikdo nemohl být ani z desetiny tak dobrý, jak mě Ezra vyličil“ (120). Podobně přistupoval Pound k Mussolinimu, navzdory zcela zřejmým rozporům shledával četné analogie s Thomasem Jeffersonem (1743–1826) a Sigismundem Malatestou (1417–1468).¹¹ Píše-li Pound o Mussolinim, neodkazuje ke skutečné osobě italského diktátora, ale k ideálnímu zosobnění svých představ a nadějí – nikoli dějinný Mussolini, ale Poundův „Ben“, pomyslný yankeeský Malatesta obeznámený s konfucianstvím.¹² Pound byl mytologizátor, konkrétní skutečnost vždy přetvářel ve vzor.¹³

Mussoliniho smrt Pound v úvodní sekvenci prvního z *Pisan Cantos* (Pisánská Cantos, 1948) zobrazuje jako událost mythických rozměrů:

Nesmírná tragedie snu v ohnutých zádech rolníka
Máni! Mániho opálili a vycpali,
Tak Ben a la Clara a Milano
za kotníky v Miláně
Aby mrtvého býka sežrali červi
DIGONOS, Δίγωρος, ale dvakrát ukřižovaný
kde v dějinách to najdeš?

(„LXXIV.“ 3; ineditní překlad Anny Kareninové)

Tragický konec snu, nikoli Mussoliniho snu o fašistické Itálii, konec Poundova snu.

Na italském fašismu přitahovala Pounda – mimo zdánlivé porozumění avantgardnímu umění, důraz na činy, výrazné posílení regulačních funkcí státu a zmíněnou nenávisť k prospěchářství nadnárodních finančníků – především kritika utilitárního liberalismu. Ve dvacátých, třicátých a čtyřicátých letech 20. století Pound napsal desítky popularizačních a odborných článků, v nichž se zabýval alternativami k liberálnímu pojetí ekonomie jako hodnotově neutrální vědy. Ekonomii a hospodářstvím by se měl zabývat každý, začít je nutno základními otázkami: na př. „Co jsou peníze?“ Je třeba překonat hodnotové odcizení – jednotlivec by měl ve společenských a politických institucích i v hospodářství být činným podmětem, nikoli trpným předmětem.¹⁴ Poundův „fašismus“ je nedílně spjat s jeho úvahami o spravedlivějším a zároveň lidštějším společenském uspořádání.

Podobu italského fašismu i Poundova „fašismu“ zásadním způsobem určila první světová válka. „Armageddon“, jak Pound nazýval Velkou válku („Henry James“ 300), smrtelnou křeč evropského řádu, přečkal americký básník v zázemí. Jeho přátelé a spolupracovníci, na příklad vlivný myslitel a básník T. E. Hulme (1883–1917) a Poundovi velmi blízký vorticistický sochař Herni Gaudier-Brzeska (1891–1915), kteří pro něj představovali příslib hodnotové obrody evropské kultury a civilizace, zatím umírali na bojištích. V první světové válce, slovy George Steinera, zahynula budoucnost Evropy (In *Bluebeard's Castle*

33). Zamyšlíme-li se nad důvody Poundova vytrvalého odmítání – dokonce popírání – druhé světové války, je třeba vzít v úvahu možnosti a příležitosti, které první světová válka zmařila, její dopad na život evropských společností a jejich kulturní identitu a kontinuitu.¹⁵ Pound byl přesvědčen, že Velká válka odvedla pozornost od zásadních hodnotových problémů, jež ji zapříčinily, že syndrom zaměňujeme za nemoc. Řešit celoevropskou hodnotovou krizi dalším globálním válečným konfliktem považoval Pound za velmi nešťastné. S traumatickou zkušeností první světové války se nikdy nevyrovnal; esejistické práce o obecně kulturních, ekonomických, společenských a politických problémech, které začal Pound po válce psát, svědčí o nově nabytém pocitu „světoobčanské“ odpovědnosti. „Symbolistická posice, umělecká povznesenost nad záležitosti tohoto světa, je teď k ničemu,“ napsal Pound roku 1921 (Cit. in Redman, „Pound’s Politics“ 252). Odmítl postoj prokletého básníka, který se v „moderní“ společnosti spokojuje s životem na jejím okraji, pokoušel se překlenout „moderní“ rozpor mezi etikou a estetikou a znovu umělcům vydobýt místo v jejím středu.

Na Mussoliniho Poundovi jistě imponovalo, že byl literát, který se rozhodl své myšlenky uskutečnit – napřel svou vůli, chopil se moci a začal společnost přetvářet podle svých představ. Pound politické ambice neměl. Své úvahy o ekonomii považoval za pokusy přemýšlet jinak: v dějinných a kulturních souvislostech, s ohledem na jednotlivce i celek společnosti. Pound nebyl původní myslitel, dobové „alternativní“ ekonomické myšlenky, přístupy a modely promýšlel a snažil se je kombinovat; přílišnou dogmatickostí Poundovi vyčítat nemůžeme, během třicátých let 20. století mnohé své ekonomické názory a postoje výrazně změnil. Za spasitele se Pound nepovažoval, chtěl ale sloužit, nalézt vládu, která by byla ochotná „alternativní“ ekonomické modely vyzkoušet v celospolečenském měřítku.¹⁶ Na jaře roku 1939 se Pound, po osmadvacetiletém pobytu v Evropě, vrátil do Spojených států, aby přesvědčil americké politiky, že by měli změnit svůj přístup k ekonomii a vyzkoušet některý z jím doporučených hospodářských modelů (Tytell 251–253). President Roosevelt a většina členů kongresu Pounda vyslechnout odmítli, na rozdíl od Mussoliniho, který Pounda přijal roku 1933, převzal souhrn jeho ekonomických teorií a pochválil mu *Cantos*.¹⁷ Při návratu do Itálie zdvihl Pound pravici ve fašistickém pozdravu.¹⁸

Za zásadní příspěvek Mussoliniho režimu považoval Pound své překlady Konfucia do italštiny – překlad *Velkého učení* (Ta Suě) vyšel roku 1942, *Učení o středu* (Čung jung) v roce 1945.¹⁹ Věřil, že model spravedlivějšího, přiměřenějšího a přirozenějšího společenského uspořádání musí být – na základě své vnitřní hodnoty – okamžitě vlivný. Příkladnost přirozeně podněcuje uskutečnění: Kdo by dal přednost horšímu řešení? Pound byl přesvědčen, že vztah mezi etikou a estetikou je osmotický – vytvoří-li z Mussoliniho estetickými prostředky vzor hodný následování, promítnou se jeho rysy i do reálně existujícího Mussoliniho. Během roku 1942 se Poundovy pořady vysílané Římským rozhlasem (Radio Roma), vyzdvihující určité umělecké, obecně kulturní, společenské a politické hodnoty a postoje a svérázné pojetí ekonomie, které se jinak nijak podstatně nelišily od jeho esejů, změnil v zuřivou obhajobu Mussoliniho režimu, Poundova chápání tohoto režimu. Před kritikou přátel hájil Pound italský fašismus už před válkou; William Carlos Williams (1883–1963), americký modernistický básník a jeden z jeho nejstarších přátel, před nímž Pound obhajoval na příklad italský vpád do Habeše a Mussoliniho pomoc Francovi ve

španělské občanské válce, s ním proto zcela přerušil styky (*Selected Letters* 172).²⁰ Slepotu ke skutečné podobě italského fašismu si Pound zvolil dobrovolně a snad i úmyslně.

III.

Mravní rozhořčení nad „padlými“ autory možná rozněcuje především zklamaná touha po souladnosti díla a osobnosti, která je v „moderní“ kultuře dosažitelná jen těžce. Pobuřuje nás, že velcí umělci lidsky selhávají stejně jako my. Máme pocit, že zrazují nikoli sebe, ale nás, že nás připravují o dokonalé vzory.

Poundovo dílo bývá zavrhováno na základě přesvědčení, že pokud autor mravně selhal, musí nutně být mravně závadné i jeho dílo. Pound byl přesvědčen, že umělec je jako umělec mravně odpovědný pouze vůči svému dílu. Dílo je umělecky poctivé, pravdivé a mravné, pokud funkčně přesně ztvárňuje svůj předmět. V knižní eseji *ABC of Reading* (ABC četby, 1934) napsal:

Literatura neexistuje ve vzduchoprázdnu. Spisovatelé mají jako spisovatelé určitou společenskou úlohu, která je přímo úměrná jejich SPISOVATELSKÉMU nadání. Tím jsou nejvíce prospěšní. Všechn ostatní užitek je relativní a dočasný a lze jej posoudit jen ve vztahu k názorům toho, kdo je posuzuje. [...] Dobří spisovatelé jsou ti, kteří s jazykem zacházejí účinně. To znamená přesně a jasně. Nezáleží na tom, jestli dobrý spisovatel chce být prospěšný nebo jestli špatný spisovatel chce způsobit škodu. (*ABC četby* 29)

V kontextu těchto výroků bychom měli vnímat jeho tvrzení, že „spisovatelé selhávají spíš z nedostatku charakteru než z nedostatku inteligence“ (*ABC četby* 231). Z tohoto pohledu jeho dílo – přesto, že Poundův Mussolini nemá s italským diktátorem mnoho společného – bezpochyby je umělecky pravdivé, upřímné a mravné.

Pound za své mnohé hříchy pykal do konce života, bez nadsázky lze říci, že za některé z nich platí dodnes. Následuje-li po každém provinění trest – a doufejme, že tomu tak skutečně je – je na místě se zamyslet, jak a čím za své hříchy, jichž se dopouštíme na jazyku, platíme my.

Poznámky

¹ Cituji 2. vydání z roku 1983. Pro „zásadně přepracované vydání“ svého slovníku, které vyšlo roku 1998, Klimeš heslo fašismus upravil; nyní jde o „otevřeně militaristické a šovinistické hnutí ideově i v praxi nahrazující parlamentarismus diktaturou, navenek zaměřené proti levicovým a socialistickým proudům, ve skutečnosti proti demokratickým ústavním institucím a svobodám; jeho zásady, poprvé systematicky vyložené Mussolinim, našly v rozmanitých obměnách politické uplatnění v Itálii, v Německu, kde bylo spojeno s agresivní a rasistickou ideologií, ve Španělsku a jinde.“ Význam fašismu podle profesora Klimeše zřejmě určuje jeho rozpornost s právě přijímanou ideologií. Demokracie je, stejně jako fašismus, dnes značkou, konvenční reakce je ovšem povinně kladná.

² Jde o jednu z inkarnací souhrnu definic, pravidelně se na českém trhu od devadesátých let 20. století objevujícího v různých obměnách pod odlišnými názvy (na př. *Akademický slovník cizích slov*, *Nový akademický slovník cizích slov*, *Slovník spisovné češtiny pro školu a veřejnost*). Významy jednotlivých slov zde mnohdy nejsou rozlišovány, ale do značné míry svévolně spojovány – srov. na př. hesla etika a morálka.

³ Účel synonymických slovníků popisují autoři názorně: „Každý, kdo se ve své každodenní práci setkává s češtinou, cítí jistě potřebu mít k dispozici slovník, ve kterém by mohl najít potřebné slovo či výraz, inspirovat se příbuzným nebo podobným výrazem a tak oživit svou – vždy do jisté míry omezenou – slovní zásobu“ (Předmluva, str. 5). Proč se snažit říci přesně to, co říci chceme? Vždyť stejně dobře můžeme říci něco jiného.

⁴ Za jeden ze znaků fašistických „ideologií“ se zpravidla považuje nedůvěra vůči racionalitě. Britský spisovatel D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930) vyznával „víru v krev a tělo, v to, že jsou moudřejší než intelekt“ (cit. in Paxton 49). Budeme pro to považovat Lawrence za fašistu, případně „protofašistu“ nebo „raného fašistu“?

⁵ Jeden příklad za všechny: důležitou součástí argumentace Michaela Coylea v bezpochyby přínosné práci *Ezra Pound, Popular Genres, and the Discourse of Culture* (Ezra Pound, populární žánry a kulturní diskurs) je konstatování obsahové neurčitosti pojmu kultura; nad bezobsažností termínu fašismus se ovšem autor nepozastavuje, v úvodu své práce (6–7) ovšem považuje za nutné čtenáře ujistit, že i on považuje Pounda za fašistu.

⁶ Tímto thematem jsem se podrobně zabýval v práci *Slepoucí Apollon, kastrovaný Dionysos* (na př. 18–27).

⁷ Foto J. G.

⁸ Poundův postoj (a jeho proměny) k italskému fašismu důkladně popsal Tim Redman v práci *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism* (Ezra Pound a italský fašismus).

⁹ Na tento „moderní“ druh provinčnosti upozorňoval T. S. Eliot: „Slovem ‚provinciální‘ myslím také zkreslování hodnot, jejich potlačování či naopak povyšování, které nepramení z nedostatečně širokého geografického rozhledu, ale z toho, že měřítko získaná ve velice omezené oblasti aplikujeme na celou lidskou zkušenost. V důsledku toho pak dochází k směřování podružného a podstatného, pomíjivého a stálého. V naší době, kdy lidé čím dál tím častěji řeší problémy života prostřednictvím techniky, vzniká nový druh provincialismu, který si snad zaslouží nového jména. Je to provincialismus ne prostoru, ale času, provincialismus, v němž se lidské dějiny proměňují v pouhou kroniku lidských vynálezů, které jsou odepsány, jakmile splní svůj účel, provincialismus, podle něhož svět je pouze vlastnictvím živých, vlastnictvím, na němž mrtví nemají žádný podíl. Nebezpečí tohoto druhu provincialismu spočívá v tom, že pak všichni, všechny národy zeměkoule, mohou být provinciální společně. A ti, kdo se nechtějí stát provinciálními, mají jedinou volbu: stát se poustevníky. Kdyby tento provincialismus vedl k větší toleranci ve smyslu shovívavosti, snad by se dalo něco říct na jeho obranu. Daleko pravděpodobnější však je, že povede k naší lhostejnosti v těch záležitostech, v nichž bychom si měli udržet nějaké rozlišující dogma nebo měřítko, a k naší netolerantnosti v záležitostech, které by mohly zůstat otázkou lokální či osobní volby“ (70–71).

¹⁰ Na př.: „Velikáni jsou naplnění velmi odlišnou vášní, vůlí k řádu“ (*Jefferson and/or Mussolini* 99; přeložil JG).

¹¹ Možným analogiím „Mussoliniho“ a Jeffersona věnoval Pound knižní esej *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* (Jefferson a nebo Mussolini, 1933). Pound renesančního kondotiéra Malatestu, který vládl v Rimini od roku 1432 až do své smrti, považoval za příkladného vůdce, jeho působení věnoval cantu „VIII.“–„XI.“

¹² Dalšími souvislostmi Poundova přístupu k Mussolinimu se zabývám v eseji *Příliš těžké lry* (srov. str. 100–101).

¹³ Výmluvný příklad jeho přístupu k Mussolinimu představuje následující úryvek z Poundova *ABC of Economics* (ABC ekonomie, 1933): „Mussolini jako inteligentní člověk je zajímavější než

Mussolini politický předák. Duceho aforismy a postřehy mohou být studovány nezávisle na tom, jakými prostředky je uvedl v činnost“ (*ABC of Economics* 261; citováno z ineditního překladu Anny Kareninové).

¹⁴ „Přesto je povinností jednoho každého snažit se vymyslet rozumné hospodářství a snažit se ho vnutit tím nejnásilnějším ze všech možných způsobů: přimět lidi myslet“ (*ABC of Economics* 246; citováno z ineditního překladu Anny Kareninové).

¹⁵ V této souvislosti zní velmi výmluvně slova italského diplomata Carla Sforzy, která tento přední odpůrce fašismu napsal roku 1936: „Ze všech příčin, které způsobily duchovní a morální úpadek evropského ovzduší, zdá se mi hlavní tato: že během čtyř let nejkrvavější z válek, padli na obou stranách zákopů duchové největší a nejčistší. Kdokoliv z nás, kdo přežil válku, nemůže necítiti, že to bylo na Krasu nebo Alpách, na francouzském bojišti, jako na močálovitých pláních Makedonie, kde zemřeli nejlepší z našich přátel, na které myslíme v r. 1913 či 1914 jako na nejkrásnější a nejčistší naděje vědeckého a morálního života naší země. Kolikrát, pokud jde o mne, jsem později hledal marně jejich stíny, ať již na lavicích italského parlamentu, či v řadách diplomacie. Tentýž dojem mne postihoval později jako vyslance v Paříži, nebo člena Nejvyšší rady v Londýně, když jsem sledoval s výše diplomatické tribuny parlamentní debaty“ (*Evropa a Evropané* 20–21).

¹⁶ Pound ve třicátých a první polovině čtyřicátých let 20. století živě cítil analogii mezi svými snahami a Konfuciovým životem — jeho vyhnanstvím, blouděním po světě, hledáním vladaře, který by mu naslouchal a uskutečnil jeho myšlenky; „Pravil Mistr: Kdyby jen někdo chtěl mne užít, třeba jen na jediný rok, dovedl bych vykonat mnoho; a za tři léta bych mohl dokončit celé dílo.“ „Pravil C'-kung: Dejme tomu, že někdo má krásný drahokam, má jej zabalit, dát do krabice a uschovat, nebo by se měl pokusit dostat za něj dobrou cenu? Pravil Mistr: Prodej jej! Zcela určitě jej prodej! I já čekám na nabídku“ (*Rozpravy* 140, 120). Životy Konfucia a Pounda byly prostoupeny stejným pocitem obecné občanské odpovědnosti.

¹⁷ Mussolini tehdy prohlásil, že *Cantos* jsou „divertente“, zábavná, což Pound považoval za doklad diktátorových kritických schopností a umělecké citlivosti (Tytell 229).

¹⁸ Fašistický pozdrav – jako výraz sympatií k Mussoliniho režimu – Pound používal už dříve. Srov. na př. fotografii z roku 1938 reprodukovanou na předsádce knihy *The Salò Cantos*.

¹⁹ Ve třicátých letech vydal Pound dvě popularisační studie: „Okamžitá potřeba Konfucia“ (1937) a „Meng-c“ (1938). První vyšla v indickém theosofickém časopisu *The Aryan Path* (Arijská cesta); druhou vydal britský literární časopis *The Criterion*.

²⁰ Pound Williamse ve svých válečných rozhlasových pořadech několikrát zmínil; poté, co americké Ministerstvo spravedlnosti (Department of Justice) vydalo pokyn k přípravě obvinění z vlas-tizrady, vyšetřovala Williamse FBI (Williams 316–318).

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Snad mají pravdu básníci – hlavní je láska. Aneb partnerské a milostné vztahy v díle Woodyho Allena

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Abstrakt

Jedním z typických rysů díla Woodyho Allena je touha jeho postav po lásce a intimitě. Tento článek představuje Allenova typického mužského protagonistu jako člověka, který kromě naplnění svých fyzických potřeb touží po ideální ženě a hledá dokonalost, zároveň však pochybuje o možnosti harmonického partnerského soužití, cítí se ohrožen dominantními ženami a navazuje vztahy, které jsou předurčeny k zániku. Pozornost je věnována schématu Galatea-Pygmalion, v souladu s nímž Allen prezentuje vztahy mezi mladými ženami a staršími muži, kteří fungují jako autorita a utvářejí osobnost a názory svých partnerek. V neposlední řadě se tento článek zaměřuje na Allenův přístup k manželství a jeho zájem o dynamiku vztahů mezi zákonnými partnery.

Abstract

The need for love and intimacy shared by the characters created by Woody Allen is one of the typical features of Allen's work. This article presents the typical male protagonist as a man who, apart from satisfying his physical needs, longs for an ideal woman and wants relationships to be perfect, but at the same time doubts the possibility of a harmonious love affair; feels threatened by dominant women and seeks relationships which are predestined to fail. Attention is paid to the Galatea-Pygmalion model applied by Allen when presenting relationships between young women and older men, who act as authorities insisting on the right to influence the personality and opinions of their partners. The article also focuses on Allen's portrayal of marriage and on his interest in relationships between husbands and wives.

Klíčová slova: Woody Allen, Allenova persona, partnerské vztahy, sex, manželství, nevěra, Pygmalion a Galatea, Annie Hallová, ideální žena

Keywords: Woody Allen, Allen persona, relationships, sex, marriage, infidelity, Pygmalion and Galatea, Annie Hall, ideal woman

Již přes čtyřicet let stojí milostný život a úskalí vztahů mezi muži a ženami v popředí zájmu amerického herce, režiséra, spisovatele, scénáristy, komika a hudebníka Woodyho Allena. Od šedesátých let 20. století prošel typický protagonista Allenových děl (až do konce 20. století až na výjimky ztělesňovaný samotným autorem) v lásce několika fázemi – od nesmělého smolaře, často marně usilujícího o přízeň krásných žen, až po sebevědomého profesionála, který sice většinou nemá problém vztahy navázat, přesto však musí čelit celé řadě komplikací, které mu život se ženami přinášejí.

Není neobvyklé, že především Allenovy mužské postavy jsou často rozvedené nebo řeší partnerskou krizi v důsledku nevěry či stereotypu spojeného se vztahem. Počáteční okouzlení partnerkou záhy vyprchá a postavy si začínají uvědomovat nedostatky a omezení, která pro ně trvalý vztah znamená. Allenovi protagonisté jako by měli strach ze závazků – znovu a znovu se zaplétají se ženami, které jsou mladší a poddajné, či na druhou stranu pocítují neodolatelnou přitažlivost k takzvaným ženám „kamikadze“, s nimiž vztah představuje neodvratitelnou katastrofu.

V Allenově tvorbě se muži mnohdy snaží udržet si svou nezávislost a nechat si ve vztahu otevřená zadní vrátka; záchranný kruh pro ně často představuje samostatné bydlení. Alvy Singer z Oscary ověřeného filmu *Annie Hallová* (Annie Hall, 1977) tak například sice neochotně souhlasí s tím, aby se k němu jeho přítelkyně Annie přestěhovala, trvá však na tom, aby si zároveň ponechala také svůj vlastní byt, zatímco Ike Davis z filmu *Manhattan* (Manhattan, 1979) se vehementně brání pokusům své výrazně mladší partnerky Tracy strávit u něj noc. Od společné noci je jen krůček ke společnému životu, který pro Allenova protagonistu mnohdy představuje ztrátu osobní svobody a hrozbu trvalého monogamního vztahu, jehož možnosti si není zcela jistý.

Allenovy postavy hledají svůj ideál, dokonalou ženu, spojující inteligenci a tělesnou krásu, a skvěle fungující vztah. Slovy Allenova Sandyho Batese z mnoha kritiky i diváky nedoceneného či rovnou zatracovaného filmu *Vzpomínky na hvězdný prach* (Stardust Memories, 1980), ideální kombinací je žena, která je „mimo postel zakřiknutá, v posteli pravý opak“ (Stardust Memories). Za celou řadu jiných postav hovoří také šilený doktor z téhož filmu, když o svých vztazích se ženami tvrdí: „Nikdy jsem se nezamíloval, nenašel dokonalou ženu. Vždycky něco neklape“ (Stardust Memories). Na čem tedy závisí dokonalý vztah? Odpověď na tuto otázku dává opět Sandy Bates, který na dotaz, zda existuje dokonalý partner a zda vztahy nestojí na kompromisu, odpovídá: „Ani na kompromisu, ani na zralosti či dokonalosti. Musíte mít štěstí. To se lidem nelíbí, protože tak ztrácejí kontrolu“ (Stardust Memories).

Stejně jako v jiných oblastech svých životů, také v rovině partnerských vztahů Allenovi protagonisté celý život podvědomě touží po nevinosti a usilují o ni. Ideálem je tedy žena, která je přirozená a jejíž city a myšlení nemůže zkorumpovat ani moderní odlidšťující společnost. Teprve v momentě, kdy o takovou ženu přicházejí, si Allenovy postavy uvědomují, jak mnoho pro ně tato žena znamenala, a idealizují si ji. Bývalá přítelkyně se tak mnohdy stává vzorem, s nímž Allenovi protagonisté podvědomě srovnávají všechny další potenciální partnerky. Není však překvapením, že žádný další vztah nesnese srovnání

s tím bývalým, který však již z nějakých příčin nelze vrátit zpět. Právě tato skutečnost poskytuje Allenovým mužským postavám jeden z důvodů, proč se neusadit a pokračovat v hledání té pravé.

Přestože je typický Allenův protagonista obvykle posedlý dokonalostí, je patrné, že v momentě, kdy jí alespoň zdánlivě dosáhne, často ztrácí zájem, dokonalost jej omrzí a on se vydává vstříc dalším milostným dobrodružstvím. Stejně jako již zmíněný šílený doktor z filmu *Vzpomínky na hvězdný prach*, který operativně spojí dvě ženy, aby touto cestou získal jednu dokonalou partnerku a následně podlehl té druhé, nedokonalé, i další Allenovy postavy jsou odsouzeny toužit po něčem, co je jen iluzí a lákavým snem.¹

Allenovy postavy se vyznačují neutuchající sexuální žádostivostí, v nefunkčních vztazích však brzy ztrácejí zájem o intimitu a instinktivně si hledají záminky pro své odmítavé chování. V takových případech se Allenův typický protagonista obvykle pokouší vyhnout sexu a důvody jeho odtažitého chování bývají zcela irelevantní a průhledné. Alvy Singer z filmu *Annie Hallová* tak s jednou ze svých partnerek například namísto sexu rozebírá konspirační teorii o atentátu na prezidenta Kennedyho. Je zřejmé, že ačkoliv sex hraje v životě Allenovy osoby důležitou roli, ve vztahu se nespokojí pouze s jeho tělesnou stránkou, nýbrž nutně potřebuje také lásku a pocit sdílení. V momentě, kdy se Allenovým protagonistům nedostává kýžené lásky, mnohdy zvažují možnost sebevraždy či se k ní dokonce rovnou uchýlí.

Jak již bylo řečeno, Allenovi protagonisté mnohdy vyhledávají také vztahy s výrazně mladšími ženami, jejichž věk slibuje onu kýženou nevinost a ochotu nechat se svým partnerem formovat. Tyto vztahy však obvykle fungují pouze do té doby, než si ženy uvědomí své vlastní já, ambice a nedostatky mužů, k nimž do té doby vzhlížely. Partnerky Allenových postav po jejich boku vyzrávají a vydávají se vlastní cestou, čímž obvykle ještě více podlomí důvěru Allenových mužských protagonistů v možnost harmonického trvalého vztahu a přispějí k jejich životní skepsi.

V otázkách partnerských vztahů jsou Allenovy postavy často smolaři bojující s pocitem vlastní méněcennosti a sexuální frustrace, nebo naopak střídají ženy a své komplexy skrývají pod maskou svůdců. Snad největší potupu a pocit naprostého partnerského selhání představuje pro typického Allenova protagonistu možnost, že by jeho partnerka mohla dát přednost lesbickému vztahu před životem s ním.

Tento motiv ohrožení mužského protagonisty jinou ženou, která by mohla zaujmout jeho místo, se opakovaně objevuje především v Allenově filmové tvorbě. Zatímco někdy se nejhorší noční můry naplní (jako v případě bývalé ženy hlavní postavy filmu *Manhattan*, která jej opustila kvůli jiné ženě a následně ve své knize neváhala barvitě vylíčit svou zkušenost s ním, či v případě protagonisty snímku *Vzpomínky na hvězdný prach*, Sandyho Batese, který náhodou vyslechne, jak se objekt jeho zájmu přiznává ke vztahu s jinou ženou), jindy nebezpečí lesbického vztahu zůstává pouze v teoretické rovině – během psychoterapie Annie Hallová například projeví názor, že život se ženou by byl mnohem jednodušší.

Allenův typický mužský protagonista je ve své podstatě šovinista, který od ženy očekává péči a oddanost a jen špatně se smíruje s její nezávislostí či dokonce dominancí. Například Alvy Singer z filmu *Annie Hallová* tak bojkotuje intelektuálně nadřazenou společnost obklopující jeho ambiciózní manželku Robin a ne náhodou se i další postavy cítí nedocenené po boku silných žen. Stejně jako manžel protagonistky filmu *Hana a její*

sestry (Hannah and Her Sisters, 1986), Elliot, který přiznává: „Chci ženu, které na mně záleží!...Jen dáváš a tak málo potřebuješ“ (*Hannah and Her Sisters*), jiný manžel, Frederick z filmu *Interiéry* (Interiors, 1978), v sobě dusí frustraci z manželčina úspěchu: „Chci se milovat s někým, před kým nemám komplex!“ (*Interiors*) Jelikož má Allenova typická persona ve své podstatě ze žen a vztahů s nimi strach, pokouší se za každou cenu působit sebevědomě a svou partnerku ovládat. Pocit vlastní dominance tak Allenovým mužským postavám poskytuje obranu proti nástrahám lásky a odmítnutí.

Přestože jsou vztahy včetně jejich fyzické stránky jedním ze stěžejních témat Woodyho Allena, jehož persona se od počátku Allenovy kariéry, reprezentované především žánrem jevištních skečů, nebojí otevřeně přiznat svá selhání v sexu a neúspěchy u žen, sex v Allenově podání nepůsobí nijak odpudivým dojmem a nevzbuzuje pohoršení. Jak se domnívá také Vittorio Hösle, německý filozof a autor knihy *Woody Allen: An Essay on the Nature of the Comical*,

Woodyho postava dává bezostyšně najevo své problémy s erekcí. Komická síla Woodyho sexuálních vtipů obvykle nepramení z toho, že by obcházel potlačované sexuální pudry ve stylu Freuda, protože v takovýchto vtipcích se sexuální význam obvykle objevuje na konci náhle a maskovaný. Naproti tomu Allen, který se zabývá bohem dvacátého století, tedy sexem, často používá strategii snížení jeho hodnoty...začne s něčím sexuálním a odebere sexuální napětí. Jeho efekt je tudíž antipornografický. Allan Felix hovoří o svých líbáncích s Nancy, která jej právě opustila -“strávil jsem celé dva týdny v posteli. Měl jsem úplavici.“ A Cliff Stern říká své ženě, že si vzpomíná na přesný den, kdy měli naposledy sex, ačkoliv je to už dávno – protože to byly Hitlerovy narozeniny. Když Ike, vyprovokovaný Maryinou poznámkou, že její jezevčík je náhrada za penis, odpovídá, že by v jejím případě očekával dogu, není to on, kdo je obscénní; dělá si legraci z její obscénnosti, přičemž dokazuje pozoruhodný psychologický důvtip. (50–51)

Příklady, které Hösle uvádí, mimo jiné odkazují na tradici židovského humoru, z něhož Woody Allen ve svém díle velmi často vychází. Allen i zde využívá svou oblíbenou juxtapozici dvou protichůdných pojmů, když nejprve evokuje sexuální význam, který však vzápětí vyvrátí něčím tak asexuálním, jako je například úplavice.

Někteří autoři, mezi nimi například Richard Blake či Ronald D. LeBlanc (in Silet 100–111), vidí v Allenově díle také spojitost mezi intimitou a jídlem. Podle nich se jídlo v pojetí Woodyho Allena stává metaforou pro lásku či sex. Postavy se setkávají v restauracích, jejichž druh obvykle odráží charakter těchto postav – módní hollywoodská vegetariánská restaurace v případě uvolněné mladé zpěvačky Annie Hallové, cukrárna, kam Isaac Davis z filmu *Manhattan* vezme svou mladičkou školou povinnou přítelkyni, či tradiční Carnegieho lahůdkářství, v němž zasloužilí komici vzpomínají na svého neúspěšného kolegu, židovského uměleckého agenta Dannyho, ve filmu *Danny Rose z Broadwaye* (Broadway Danny Rose, 1984).

Jídlo provází také významné okamžiky života Allenových protagonistů – rodiny se setkávají u večeře (v případě filmu *Hana a její sestry* tvoří opakované večeře u příležitosti Dne díkůvzdání rámeček celého příběhu) a postavy spolu při jídle prožívají intimní chvíle. Jídlo a vztah Allenových postav k němu také odrážejí povahu partnerských vztahů. Zatímco pro protagonistu filmové povídky *Oidipus dnes* (Oidipus Wrecks),² Sheldona

Millse, se tak například symbolem něžných citů stává rosolem obalené kuřecí stehno, které mu na cestu zabalila jeho nová židovská přítelkyně Treva, v jiných případech nevydařená večeře symbolizuje dysfunkční vztah – Sonja z Allenova filmu *Láska a smrt* (Love and Death, 1975) vaří svému nemilovanému muži beztvaré a nechutné pokrmy ze sněhu stejně chladné jako jejich vztah (Blake 63), a špatné kuchařské schopnosti manželky protagonisty filmu *Seber prachy a zmiz* (Take the Money and Run, 1969) vypovídají o vztahových potížích.

Jako i v mnoha dalších ohledech, také symbolika jídla odkazuje na židovskou tradici, z níž Allen do značné míry čerpá. Pro židovské etnikum, které v minulosti muselo přežít období, kdy v původní vlasti či nacistických koncentračních táborech mnohdy trpělo nedostatkem potravy, představuje jídlo lásku a pohostinnost. Jak ve své knize *Yiddishe Mamas: The Truth About the Jewish Mother* píše Marnie Winston-Macauleyová, prostřednictvím jídla židé vyjadřují lásku svým nejbližším a židovská žena jednoduše považuje za důležité někoho nakrmit (19).

Jak již bylo řečeno, přístup Woodyho Allena k otázce vztahů a sexu se v rámci jeho díla liší, a to především v závislosti na fázi a také na žánrech jeho tvorby. Na počátku všeho byl Woody-komik. V šedesátých letech 20. století se na pódii především newyorských barů a klubů začal objevovat malý, zrzavý muž s typickou dikcí a druhem humoru, který se lišil od většiny ostatních populárních komiků své doby. Postava, kterou přijal na scéně za svou, brzy oslovila celou řadu lidí, kteří se do jisté míry identifikovali s pocity a obavami, které Woody-komik ztělesňoval. V tomto období ještě Woody Allen neřeší otázku trvalosti vztahů, ale zaměřuje se především na jejich fyzickou stránku. Téma sexu se stalo typickým rysem klubových vystoupení a následně také Allenovy především rané filmové tvorby.

V šedesátých letech, kdy Ameriku ovládla sexuální revoluce, Woody Allen zosobňoval to, po čem publikum prahlo. Jen málokdo by v malém, nejistém chlapíkovi spatřoval sexuální šelmu a úspěšného svůdce žen. Ačkoliv se na pódiu tvářil blazeovaně a sám sebe označoval za „hřebce“, na první pohled odporoval vžité představě mužného hrdiny. Každodenní prohry v lásce této nově vznikající postavy pak byly vlastní celé řadě lidí.

Otevřená zpověď Allenovy postavy o vlastní sexuální neschopnosti vysílala jasný signál – když já mohu přiznat vlastní prohry a nesetkat se s posměchem okolí, můžete to udělat i vy. Ve svém článku nazvaném „The Outsider“ se spisovatel, esejista a novinář píšící pro časopis *The New Yorker* Adam Gopnik zamýšlí nad příčinou vzestupu a pádu Woodyho Allena. Okolnosti Allenovy počáteční popularity vidí následovně: „Vytvořil nejlepší komedii tím, že si uvědomil, že sexuální revoluce otevřela široký prostor mezi abstraktním přesvědčením a skutečným životem – mezi tím, co nás padesátá léta učila říkat, a tím, co nám šedesátá a sedmdesátá léta dovolila dělat“ (86–93). Allen skutečně správně pochopil, po čem jeho publikum touží, využil atmosféry ve společnosti, která odmítala tabuizovat sexualitu, a ve svých skečích zmiňoval sex velmi často.

Jakkoliv se však Woody na pódiu stylizoval do role výkonného milence, jeho činy odhalovaly pravý opak – smolaře, který se neustále pokoušel překonat vlastní sexuální handicap. Allenova postava z jevištních skečů³ je podle vlastních slov milenec, jehož výkonu během svatební noci manželka tleskala ve stoje (skeč *Výlet do Evropy* – European Trip), a velmi citlivý člověk, který když vidí krásnou ženu, chce „brečet, napsat báseň, vrhnout se na ni“ (skeč *Druhé manželství* – Second Marriage).

Zdrojem humoru v Allenových jevištních skečích je tedy rozpor mezi jeho image sexuálního přeborníka a realitou v podobě úsměvných milostných proher. Ačkoliv Woody prezentuje svou postavu jako miláčka žen a skvělého milence, mnohdy nemá šanci své schopnosti ani prokázat – jako správný smolař svádí ženu, aby následně zjistil, že je v pokoji sám a dívá se na vlastní obraz v zrcadle (skeč *Vegas*), či namísto očekávaného milostného dobrodružství stráví nevydařenou schůzku naslepo s jeptiškou, s níž místo tělesných požitků debatuje o Bohu (skeč *Druhé manželství*).

Jindy sice k intimnímu styku dojde, výsledek však nijak nepotvrzuje Woodyho pověst zkušeného milovníka – jeho postava tak například pro oddálení momentu extáze při sexu myslí na hráče baseballu, zatímco jeho partnerka se již dávno sprchuje (skeč *Výlet do Evropy*). Ve světle všech těchto neúspěchů proto není překvapením, že zatímco ve skeči *Orální antikoncepce* (Oral Contraception) je Allenův milostný návrh odmítnut jediným rázným „ne“, ve skeči *Los* (The Moose) i zvíře slaví více úspěchu, když se losovi podaří na večírku „skórovat“.

Dalším tématem, k němuž se Allen ve svých skečích pravidelně vracel, byla kromě sexuálních vztahů se ženami především zkušenost s manželstvím. V té době již byl skutečný Woody Allen rozvedený a manželství se pro něj stalo bohatým zdrojem inspirace. Jeden člověk však, zdá se, nesdílel nadšení z jeho břitkého humoru – bývala žena Harlene Rosenová na něj dokonce podala žalobu pro opakované urážky na cti. Vrcholem pro ni bylo veřejné zesměšňování jí a její rodiny ze strany bývalého manžela.⁴

Ačkoliv nikdy nepadne její skutečné jméno, v Allenových jevištních skečích je bývalá manželka nepříliš lichotivě označovaná jako strašlivá paní Allenová či Quasimodo a bývá líčena jako nezralá žena, která při koupeli svévolně potápí manželovy lodičky, vaří své nacistické recepty jako „kuře Himmler“ a jejíž znásilnění vyvolá místo soucitu posměch.⁵ V duchu Allenova humoru má postava dvojí možnost jak vyřešit svou neuspokojivou rodinnou situaci – jet na dovolenou na Bermudy, nebo se dát rozvést. Nakonec zvítězí druhá varianta, protože „dovolená je za čtrnáct dní pryč, ale rozvod je něco, co má člověk nadosmrti“ (Žantovský 10).⁶

V šedesátých letech 20. století se Woody Allen kromě své kariéry sólového komika začíná věnovat také literatuře a především povídkové tvorbě. Téma svádění a sexuálních vztahů se ženami, tak typické pro postavu z jevištních skečů, však v Allenově literární tvorbě ustupuje do pozadí – zmínky o milostném životě postav se v povídkách Woodyho Allena vyskytují jen ojediněle, vztahy hrají pouze epizodní roli. Taková absence jednoho motivu je dána skutečností, že jelikož povídky většinou neprezentují tradičního Allenova protagonistu, chybí také typické rysy, které tuto postavu definují.

Byť okrajově, i v povídkách se setkáváme s prototypem smolaře, pro nějž ženy představují spíše hrozbu – postava z povídky „Žádný kaddish za Weinsteina“ (No Kaddish for Weinstein) je například „impotentní s každou vysokoškolačkou, která měla výsledky lepší než chvalitebné. Nejlépe se cítil s absolventkami sekretářských kurzů, ovšem jakmile dotyčná žena vyťukala šedesát slov za minutu, zpanikařil a nedokázal podat žádný výkon“ (Allen, *Bez perí* 82). V případě Weinsteina se tak komplikovaný vztah k opačnému pohlaví ještě umocňuje obavou a nechutí k intelektuálům, což je další z typických rysů Allenovy persony.

Také v povídkách se vyskytuje postava manželky, která se stává cílem Allenova ironického humoru. V povídce „Zhrzen osudem“ (By Destiny Denied) tak například

vystupuje žena, s níž jediná sexuální zkušenost přiměje manžela k pokusu podřezat si zápěstí (Allen, *Vedlejší účinky* 18), a protagonista povídky „Vzpomínky na Needlemana“ (Remembering Needleman) říká: „Dávám mnohem větší přednost kremaci před uložením v zemi, a obojímu před víkendem s manželkou“ (Allen, *Vedlejší účinky* 7).

Ani ve své povídkové tvorbě tedy Woody Allen nenahlíží na manželství nijak optimisticky – není proto překvapením, že také v povídce „Na kvarkovou strunu“ (Strung Out) z jeho zatím poslední sbírky *Čirá anarchie* (Mere Anarchy, 2007) jediné, co hrdina ví o fyzice je, že „muži stojícímu na břehu utíká čas rychleji než muži ve člunu – obzvlášť je-li ten ve člunu s manželkou“ (136).

Výjimku oproti zbytku povídkové tvorby tvoří dvě Allenovy povídky, „Postava Kugelmase“ (The Kugelmas Episode)⁷ a „Odplata“ (Retribution) z jeho v pořadí třetí sbírky *Vedlejší účinky* (Side Effects, 1986), v nichž vztahy se ženami stojí ve středu autorova zájmu. Obě povídky vyprávějí příběh muže, který hledá ideální ženu a je hnán svými sexuálními touhami a vášněmi. Ani v jedné z těchto povídek však milostná dobrodružství nekončí velkým úspěchem.

Protagonista první z povídek, postarší profesor humanitních věd Kugelmas, žije již ve druhém nespokojeném manželství a touží po novém vztahu, vzrušení a exotice. Kugelmas je člověk, který sám o sobě tvrdí, že i v pokročilém věku potřebuje romantiku, lásku a něhu (Allen, *Vedlejší účinky* 31). Jak je pro Allenovy postavy typické, také Kugelmas touží po dokonalé ženě. Jediné východisko z neutěšené vztahové reality vidí v zázraku ztělesněném postavou kouzelníka Perskyho, jenž slibuje, že pomocí kouzelnické bedny přenese Kugelmas do libovolného literárního díla. Hlavní protagonista nakonec zvolí Emmu Bovaryovou, jejíž postava slibuje francouzskou vášeň a otevřenost vůči mimomanželským vztahům.

K profesorově rozčarování se však jeho milenka ze světa kouzel a představ brzy začíná podobat všem skutečným ženám, které zná, včetně té vlastní. To, co začalo jako ideální vztah a splnění všech Kugelmasových představ, se postupně mění v noční můru. Stejně, jako kdysi nechal Emmu zhmotnit, nechá ji Kugelmas tedy nakonec navždy zmizet zpět ve Flaubertově románu. Díky svému milostnému dobrodružství Kugelmas zjišťuje, že ideální žena neexistuje ani ve snech, a zklamaně se smiřuje s realitou. Ne však na dlouho – touha po vzrušení a vášni je natolik silná, že jej znovu žene vstříc Perskyho kouzlům. Naneštěstí však dojde k potížím a místo dalšího románu je Kugelmas odsouzen strávit zbytek života ve staré učebnici španělštiny, kde je pronásledován hrozivě vypadajícím nepravidelným slovesem *tener* (mít). Touha po intimitě a ideální ženě typická pro většinu Allenových mužských postav se tak stala Kugelmasovi osudnou.

Druhou z povídek zabývajících se výhradně vztahy mezi muži a ženami je „Odplata“. Její protagonista, Harold Cohen, zdaleka není ideálem mužské krásy, který by přitahoval atraktivní a zajímavé ženy. Allen se zde znovu vrací k postavě výřečného a sympatického outsidera z jevištních skečů a jeho prvotních situačních komedií, který tváří v tvář objektu svého sexuálního zájmu nemotorně taktizuje a rudne. Hlavní postava však nakonec musí nečekaně volit mezi dvěma ženami – svou vášnivou a krásnou partnerkou Connie a její atraktivní a oduševnělou matkou Emily. V momentě, kdy se rozhodne pro stabilitu svého dlouhodobého vztahu, dojde k náhlému ochladnutí ze strany jeho přítelkyně a sexuálním problémům. Connie se mu odcizuje, odmítá s ním jakýkoliv sexuální styk a zdůvodňuje to tím, že jí připomíná jejího bratra.⁸ Na rozdíl od jiných Allenových děl není v případě vztahu

Harolda a Connie tím, kdo pocítuje potřebu nenechat se spoutat fungujícím vztahem a jít dál v momentě, kdy dosáhne svého cíle, muž, nýbrž jeho partnerka.

Když Harold nakonec skončí v náručí mnohem starší Emily, tento nerovný vztah vzbudí značný odpor u jeho rodičů. V souladu se způsobem, jakým Allen obvykle prezentuje židovské rodiče, otec i matka se jako reakci na toto sdělení pokoušejí spáchat sebevraždu skokem z okna svého bytu v desátém patře. Je ironií osudu, že ve chvíli, kdy se ožení s Emily a teoreticky se stane pro Connie nevlastním otcem, začíná být pro ni znovu sexuálně přitažlivý. Jako i jiní Allenovi protagonisté, také Harold tedy musí znovu čelit dilematu, zda odolat svodům a zůstat věrný, či zda podlehnout své touze.

V obou citovaných povídkách Woody Allen znovu demonstrovuje, jak nepředvídatelné jsou lidské vztahy. Hledání ideálních partnerů se zdá být celoživotním úkolem, který je málokdy korunován úspěchem, manželství je instituce svazující dva často velmi rozdílné jedince a partnerská věrnost je pouze relativní. Ačkoliv Allenovým postavám rozum mnohdy radí držet se zpátky a nevrhat se do milostných dobrodružství, vášně a potřeba intimity obvykle vítězí.

Vedle povídkových sbírek, spadajících především do prvního období jeho tvorby, je Woody Allen také autorem několika divadelních her. Již v jeho prvotině nazvané *Nepijte tu vodu* (*Don't Drink the Water*, 1966) odehrávající se v šedesátých letech v nespécifikované zemi za železnou oponou se objevuje postava velvyslancova syna Axela Mageeho. Magee má všechny rysy, které charakterizují prvotní Allenovu personu – je to smolař, nešika, naprosto nezapadá do své profese, pro kterou mu chybí patřičné vlohy, a v otázce lásky a vztahů projevuje příznačnou nezkušenost a plachost.

Hra *Nepijte tu vodu* vypráví příběh rodiny neurotického dodavatele jídla z New Jersey, Waltera Hollandera, která je díky nedorozumění pronásledována komunistickou tajnou policií. Hollanderovi vyhledají útočiště na americké ambasádě, která je dočasně v rukou velvyslancova syna Axela, jehož působení představuje sérii zmatků a nepříjemností. Současně se snahami nenápadně vyvést Hollanderovy z budovy ambasády a dostat je zpět do vlasti se Axel postupně sbližuje s jejich dcerou Susan. Zatímco Susan Axel od počátku přitahuje a pomalu se s ním pokouší navázat bližší kontakt, Axel je spíše nesmělý a potřebuje provést úskalími rodícího se vztahu. Je jasné, že v tomto páru je Susan ta praktičtější, aktivnější a ví, co chce. V tomto příběhu má láska terapeutické účinky, jelikož teprve jejím prostřednictvím *schlemiel*⁹ Axel ztrácí něco ze své nešikovnosti a následně, v důsledku změny zaměstnání, najde své místo v životě a skrytý talent pro aranžování jídla.

Tématem vztahů v celé jejich šíři se zabývá také Allenova pravděpodobně nejúspěšnější divadelní hra *Zahraj to znovu*, *Same* (*Play It Again, Sam*) poprvé uvedená na Broadwayi v roce 1969 a následně zfilmovaná v roce 1972 v hlavních rolích s Woody Allenem, který tentokrát výjimečně sám nереžíroval, a Diane Keatonovou.

Hlavní postavou hry je spisovatel a filmový kritik Allan Felix, který prochází emocionální krizí po rozvodu s Nancy, podle vlastních slov jedinou ženou, kterou se mu „podařilo obelstít, aby jej milovala“ (Allen, *Play It Again, Sam* 12) a na niž snaží se zapomenout prostřednictvím nových vztahů. Allan si ve svých vzpomínkách vybavuje všechna obvinění z úst své bývalé ženy a znovu prožívá okolnosti jejich rozchodu, který výrazně podkopával jeho sebedůvěru a schopnost sbližovat se se ženami. Nancy byla natolik nespokojená se svým manželstvím, že Allanovi oznámila své rozhodnutí opustit jej slovy:

„Nemůžu to manželství vystát. Není s tebou zábava. Dusím se s tebou. Nemám s tebou žádný kontakt a jsi mi protivný fyzicky. Proboha, neber si to osobně!“ (Žantovský 24)

Allan Felix se pokouší překonat minulost a na radu svých nejlepších přátel, manželů Lindy a Dicka Christieových, podniká řadu domluvených schůzek. Většina z těchto schůzek naslepo však končí neslavně, jelikož Allan ze strachu z odmítnutí neumí být sám sebou, předstírá a svým příliš chlapáckým chováním nebo naopak nulovým sebevědomím ženy odpuzuje. Allan připouští, že ani před rozvodem nebyl příliš úspěšný milenec: „Nepodíval jsem se na jinou ženu už dva roky. Jsem z formy. Byl jsem z formy, už když jsem byl ve formě“ (Allen, *Play It Again, Sam* 17). Děsí jej také samotná představa svádění: „Do postele! S mým štěstím bych nebyl schopen ji dostat ani na židli“ (Allen, *Play It Again, Sam* 19). Po zkušenosti s bývalou manželkou má odpor k intelektuálním ženám.

Marion Meadová, autorka knihy *The Unruly Life of Woody Allen*, vidí spojitost mezi Allenovou první ženou Harlene Rosenovou a postavami bývalých žen v jeho díle, počínaje Nancy Felixovou:

Woody nikdy nezapomněl, ani Harlene neodpustil. Ona je pravděpodobně vzorem pro archetyp ženy zbavující muže mužnosti všude v jeho filmech: bývalá žena Allana Felixe Nancy v *Zahraj to znovu, Same*; bývalé manželky Alvyho Singera, politická aktivistka Alison Portschnicková a učená intelektuální kariéristka Robin v *Annie Hallové*; ex-manželka Isaaca Davise, lesbická autorka pamětí, ve filmu *Manhattan*; a bývalá žena Harryho Blocka, která se podobá šampiónovi v těžké váze z nacistického Německa, Maxi Schmelingovi, ve filmu *Pozor na Harryho*. (76)

Pro Allenovu především filmovou tvorbu od dob *Zahraj to znovu, Same* je typické, že v okamžiku, kdy nám Allen své protagonisty představuje, mají za sebou mnohdy již jedno neúspěšné manželství, s jehož krachem se obvykle jen těžce smiřují. Zkrachovalé vztahy zanechávají v Allenových postavách hořkou pachut' a bývalé manželky jsou pak často příčinou neschopnosti Allenova typického protagonisty intimně se sblížit s jinou ženou či sexuálních potíží.

Důležitou roli v celém příběhu filmu *Zahraj to znovu, Same* hraje duchovní rádce hlavní postavy, zhmotnělý herec Humphrey Bogart, který pro Allana Felixe představuje vše, čím by chtěl ve vztahu k ženám být. Milovník filmů a snilek Allan k božskému Bogartovi, jehož filmová postava je drsný světák, kterému leží ženy u nohou, zvládá každou situaci a s něžným pohlavím jedná s přehledem i mírnou přezíravostí, bezmezně vzhlíží. Allan se snaží Bogarta kopírovat a schovává své skutečné já za filmovými klišé.

Změna nastane, když Allan Felix postupně odhalí své city k manželce svého nejlepšího přítele, Lindě. Linda je ženskou obdobou Allana, s nímž má mnoho společného: sdílejí stejné neurózy a oba jsou beznadějní hypochondři. Allan si sice uvědomuje, že vztah s Lindou by znamenal zradit svého přítele, na druhou stranu k ní však cítí silné pouto a v její společnosti se cítí uvolněný. Vědomí, že je jejich vztah pouze platonický, je pro něj velmi osvobozující.

Navzdory všem snahám vzájemné city si nepřipouštět Linda s Allanem nakonec podlehnou kouzlu okamžiku a prožijí spolu vášnivou noc. Nesmělý Allan tak díky Lindě ztratí zábrany a podaří se mu také překonat svůj strach ze sexuálního selhání: „Minulou noc jsem byl skvělý! Ani jednou jsem se nemusel posadit a podívat se do manuálu“ (Allen,

Play It Again, Sam 87). Podvědomě však oba milenci tuší, že jejich dalšímu vztahu stojí v cestě Lindin manžel, kterému nechtějí ublížit. Allan také nabádá Lindu, aby si nevyčítala svou nevěru: „Poslouchej, stalo se to – nic s tím neuděláš. Stalo se to. Není to moje chyba. Není to tvoje chyba. Fakt je, že ses cítila jako žena a já jsem se cítil jako muž, a ti tohle dělají“ (Allen, *Play It Again, Sam* 80).

V konečném důsledku tento románek nikomu neublížil, právě naopak. Linda si uvědomí, co skutečně cítí ke svému muži, a Allan se z nesmělého smolaře stane sebevědomým mužem, který již nadále nepotřebuje rady svého filmového idolu, aby dokázal bez zbytečné přetvářky jednat se ženami. Bogart je najednou zbytečný; Allan jej svým jednáním překonal. Závěr této hry je parodií na slavnou letištní scénu z filmu *Casablanca* z roku 1942. Nový, sebevědomější Allan, který již nepotřebuje unikat před realitou vztahů do světa filmových klišé, ještě naposledy odkazuje na svůj idol a ukončuje vztah s Lindou v duchu Bogartových hrdinů:

Allan: Uvnitř oba víme, že patříš k Dickovi. Jsi součástí jeho práce, která ho udržuje v pohybu. Jestliže tohle letadlo odstartuje a ty nebudeš s ním, budeš toho litovat. Možná ne dnes, možná ne zítra, ale brzy a po zbytek svého života.

Linda: To je krásné.

Allan: Je to z *Casablancy*. Celý život jsem čekal, až tohle řeknu. (93)

Woody Allen se k tematice vztahů mezi muži a ženami a zejména jejich negativních aspektů znovu vrátil v osmdesátých a devadesátých letech ve třech jednoaktovkách nazvaných *Central Park West* (1982), *Riverside Drive* (1995) a *Old Saybrook* (1995), přičemž obě hry z roku 1995 jsou součástí celku nazvaného *Tvůrčí blok* (Writer's Block). Všechny tři hry jsou místně propojené městem New York a jejich společným tématem je nevěra, kterou Allen ukazuje z různých pohledů. Jelikož však v těchto hrách chybí typický Allenův protagonista, liší se jednoaktovky od předešlých dramatických počínů Woodyho Allena svou formou i pojetím.

Ústředními postavami hry *Central Park West* jsou dva manželské páry středního věku, jejichž členové se navzájem podvádějí. V této hře Woody Allen ukazuje nevěru coby důsledek nespokojenosti a nudy v dlouhodobém dysfunkčním vztahu, kdy spolu manželé již nejsou schopni komunikovat. Je ironií, že jedna z manželek, psychiatricka Phyllis, jejíž profesí je naslouchat problémům druhých, připouští, že v jejím manželství byli „dva mluvící lidé, ale žádní posluchači“ (Allen, *Three One-Act Plays* 142). Jako již mnohokrát předtím, i zde Allen představuje motiv ženy zbavující muže jejich mužnosti a jeho Phyllis je příkladem silné, úspěšné a emancipované ženy, v jejíž společnosti se muži cítí nedocenění a podřízeni. Stejně jako dříve Nancy v *Zahraj to znovu, Same*, i jedna z postav hry *Central Park West* má pocit, že jej manželství dusí, že se topí, manželka ničí veškeré jeho naděje a ze vztahu se ztratila spontánnost.

Ve hře *Central Park West* nevěra nezůstane neprozrazena a ani jeden z cizoložných partnerů nakonec nenajde štěstí a novou lásku, kvůli nimž se rozhodl zatratit dosavadní manželství. Navzdory šokujícím odhacením a otevřeným citovým výlevům postav nakonec vše zůstává při starém a protagonisté nakonec volí jistotu svých původních vztahů a kajícně se vracejí ke svým zákonným partnerům.

Druhá z uvedených jednoaktovek řeší otázku, jak se zbavit nepohodlné přítelkyně a neohrožit své dosavadní manželství. Hlavní protagonista, spisovatel Jim, se cítil ve vztahu zanedbávaný a hledal útěchu v náručí jiné ženy, která však odmítá přechodný vztah ukončit. Jim se tak ocitá v zoufalé situaci a uvědomuje si, že ať už řekne své ženě o svém milostném dobrodružství sám, nebo se o něm dozví z úst jeho zhrzené milenky, bude to znamenat konec jeho manželství. Řešení nabízí tajemný tulák, který navrhuje zbavit se milenky násilnou cestou. Jim takový návrh striktně odmítá jako amorální a protizákonný, avšak Fred vezme situaci do svých rukou a jedná za Jima.

V této hře se Woody Allen znovu vrací k motivu dopadu prozrazené nevěry na manželství, které hlavní postava nemá v úmyslu opustit. Stejně jako již dříve jedna z postav Allenova filmu *Zločiny a poklesky* (Crimes and Misdemeanors, 1989) Judah Rosenthal, i Jim Swain musí přijmout zodpovědnost za svůj poklesek. V obou případech situaci komplikuje zrazená milenka, která nehodlá nechat hlavního protagonistu beztrestně vyklouznout. Rozdíl mezi oběma muži však spočívá ve skutečnosti, že zatímco Judah dobrovolně zvolí zločin a najme si na svou milenkou vraha, Jim takové řešení resolutně zavrhne. V konečném důsledku se však osud obou mužů příliš neliší, jelikož jak Jim, tak Judah jsou schopni přenést se přes tragické důsledky svých mimomanželských poměrů a podaří se jim jejich manželství zachránit.¹⁰

Třetí hra, *Old Saybrook*, jako by svým námětem kopírovala *Central Park West* a znovu rozehrává šarádu nevěř a jejich veřejného odhalení. Protagonisty jsou opět manželské páry, jejichž členové spolu udržují sexuální vztah. I v poslední ze tří zmíněných jednoaktovek si Allen prostřednictvím svých postav klade otázku, proč dochází k nevěrám, a dochází k závěru, že důvodem je povětšinou nuda. Slovy jedné z postav: „Proč začne manžela nudit jeho žena? Protože se časem velmi dobře znají. Vzrušení vyprchá – jsou spolu pořád v jednom domě, vidí se navzájem nazí, už neexistuje žádné tajemství, dokonce i jeho sekretářka nebo sousedka odvedle jsou teď pro něj více sexy“ (Allen, *Three One-Act Plays* 111).

Muži však zdá se nejsou jediní, kterým v dlouhodobém vztahu něco chybí. Zatímco manželovi se žena okouká a zevšední, manželka má často pocit, že ze vztahu vyprchala veškerá romantika: „Co jestliže byl manžel kdysi romantický, ale postupně začne brát svou ženu jako samozřejmost? Vztah, který býval plný nápaditých, roztomilých překvapení je nyní pouze společný život, v němž ti dva provozují sex, ale nemilují se“ (Allen, *Three One-Act Plays* 111).

Na rozdíl od jeho první velmi úspěšné hry *Zahraj to znovu, Same*, kde nevěra dvou hlavních protagonistů působí až romanticky a vyznívá příznivě pro všechny zúčastněné, Allenovy další hry zabývající se vztahy mezi muži a ženami nestaví mimomanželské vztahy do nikterak pozitivního světla. „Hřešící“ manželé a manželky nesou následky svých činů a odhalení jejich poklesků ničí jejich dosavadní vztahy. Allen však v tomto případě není moralista, který by poukazoval na neetické chování svých postav a kritizoval je za jejich poklesky, nýbrž jej ve skutečnosti zajímá dynamika partnerských vztahů a příčiny, které vedou k jejich ochladnutí a k nevěře.

Paralelně s Allenovou dramatickou tvorbou se motiv nevěry spolu s dalšími aspekty partnerských vztahů objevuje také v jeho rozsáhlé filmové tvorbě. Allenovy filmové scénáře se však do určité míry liší od jiných jeho děl. Adam Gopnik vnímá rozdíl mezi Allenovou čistě literární tvorbou a jeho filmy co do významu a způsobu zpracování sexuálních témat

následovně: „Ve Woodyho psaní může být konflikt mezi tím, co říkají o životě knihy a co o něm říká život, ztvárněný pouze jako kritika, hra nápadů. Ve filmech byl Allen tento konflikt schopen ukázat jasněji jako hru lidí a vášní. Neřest a sexuální touha jsou v jeho psaní kulisou. V jeho filmech se z nich může stát hlavní událost“ (89–90).

Zatímco v Allenově literární tvorbě jsou vztahy vesměs pouze implicitní a často představují pouze pozadí pro fabuli příběhu, v jeho filmové tvorbě se téma vztahů a intimity skutečně stává alfou a omegou a postavy se netají svým zájmem o opačné pohlaví a tím, jaký význam pro ně láska a sex mají. I v otázce zpracování milostného života Allenových filmových postav platí rozdělení na jednotlivé fáze tvorby, přičemž přístup prvotního Allenova protagonisty k sexu i charakter jeho milostných vztahů se liší od toho pozdějšího.

V první polovině sedmdesátých let Woody Allen ztělesňoval postavu outsidera, který se marně pokouší včlenit do společnosti a jehož milostný život se skládá z řady zklamání a neúspěchů. Allenův protagonista, posedlý touhou po ženě svých snů, se pokouší nešikovně svádět ženy, které o něj často nejeví sebemenší zájem. Allenovy postavy sice téměř vždy nakonec dosáhnou kýžených sexuálních úspěchů, ne však v důsledku svého šarmu či pověsti svědců nebo ideálních partnerů; postavám mnohdy nezbyvá než ženu získat trpělivostí či ji přesvědčit záplavou slov.

Již v první komedii, kterou Woody Allen sám napsal, režíroval a v níž také hrál hlavní roli, *Seber prachy a zmiz*, má protagonista Virgil Starkwell potíže s láskou. Virgil je první z celé řady Woodyho neúspěšných bezvýznamných smolařů; je to mladík od dětství předurčený k prohrám a následně osudem odsouzený k neslavné dráze bankovního lupiče.

Woody Allen zvolil v tomto snímku pseudodokumentární přístup, kdy se divák dozvídá o Virgilově životě prostřednictvím výpovědí lidí, kteří jej znali – od bývalé učitelky, učitele hry na cello a rodičů až po sousedy nic netušící o jeho skutečném povolání. Z nenápadného mladíka šikanovaného svým okolím se postupně stává v očích okolí zatvrzelý lupič, což z něj paradoxně činí v jistém smyslu celebritu.

Virgil je nešika nejen ve své „kariéře“ lupiče, ale stejně nemotorně působí i jeho milostné pokusy. V duchu velikánů němého grotesky se Virgil připravuje na svou schůzku s dívkou, roztržitě pobíhá po bytě a vytahuje části oblečení z těch nejnepravděpodobnějších míst, jako je například lednice. Vrcholem romantiky a ryzích citů je pro „zavilého zločince“ Virgila fakt, že se v přítomnosti ženy svých snů vzdal myšlenky ukrást její kabelku. Přes svou poněkud drsnou pověst zločince je Virgil ve své podstatě nesmělý a nezkušený člověk působící natolik konzervativně, že se jej psychiatr ptá, zda považuje sex za obscenní, aby si sám odpověděl, že „je, když ho děláte správně“ (*Take the Money and Run*).

V duchu snímku *Seber prachy a zmiz* následovalo v první polovině sedmdesátých let ještě několik filmů s typově příbuznými protagonisty – *Banáni* (Bananas, 1971), *Spáček* (Sleeper, 1973) a *Láska a smrt* (Love and Death, 1975). Ve všech těchto snímcích se Allen zaměřuje především na tělesnou stránku vztahů mezi muži a ženami a představuje sex jako nedílnou součást života svých postav, která v žádném případě nemá být společenským tabu, nýbrž se naopak v jeho pojetí stává téměř věcí veřejnou.

Allen jde dokonce tak daleko, že milostný akt staví na úroveň frašky a často také čehosi zcela mechanického. Například hlavní postava filmu *Banáni*, Fielding Mellish, je typický nenápadný člověk, smolař a nešika a jediný muž ve firmě, jehož milostné návrhy odmítne i ta nejsvolnější kolegyně. Souhrou náhod se Mellish dostává do víru revoluce ve fiktivní jihoamerické zemičce San Marcos a teprve nově získaná politická moc a zdání

úspěchu a rebelství mu dodají na sexappealu a pomohou mu dobýt srdce jeho vytoužené, politicky angažované Nancy, která nakonec svolí ke sňatku s ním, ačkoliv jí ve vztahu stále „něco chybí“ (*Bananas*). V případě protagonistů tohoto snímku lze tedy jen stěží hovořit o skutečné lásce, nýbrž se zde jedná spíše o kompromis.

Vrcholem odosobnění sexu je závěrečná scéna „naplnění“ manželství, kdy mají diváci možnost v přímém přenosu shlédnout svatební noc novomanželů Fieldinga a Nancy Mellishových včetně profesionálního komentáře v podání známého sportovního komentátora Howarda Cosella. Intimní zážitek je zde přirovnán k zápasu v boxu, kdy oba partneři procházejí přípravou, soustředí se na samotný výkon a vzápětí poskytují rozhovor o průběhu vzájemného „utkání“ na poli sexu.

Podobně abstraktní sex jako Fielding Mellish prožívá také protagonista filmu *Spáček*, Miles Monroe, který se po banální operaci probudí z umělého spánku v daleké budoucnosti. Jako mnoho dalších Allenových postav, také on věří v životě v „[s]ex a smrt. Ty jsou jednou za život. Ale po smrti ti aspoň není nevolno“ (*Sleeper*).

Miles ke svému překvapení zjišťuje, že moderní totalitní společnost žije v souladu s mnoha pravidly a sex provozuje veřejně prostřednictvím přístroje zvaného orgasmitron. Tento vynález, který je součástí vybavení mnoha domácností, představuje kabinu, v níž člověk během několika vteřin dosáhne uspokojení, aniž by došlo ke skutečnému sexuálnímu styku. Sex již tedy nemá charakter jedinečného spontánního intimního fyzického prožitku, který vyžaduje partnera, nýbrž čehosi plánovaného a technicky dokonalého.

Není překvapením, že Milesův ženský protějšek, autorka blahopřejných textů a rádoby intelektuálka s titulem z kosmetiky, sexuální techniky a poezie a doktorátem z orálního sexu, Luna, lituje, že na večírku nedošlo na sex, jelikož přišlo málo lidí. Jakkoliv podivná se tato situace může zdát, ve světě budoucnosti není místo pro vztahy či skutečný intimní kontakt. Ostatně, většina populace fyzický sex s partnerem ke svému životu ani nepotřebuje, protože je až na výjimky frigidní. Pesimisticky vyznívá také Lunino přesvědčení, že „[l]idské vztahy nevydrží, jak dokázala věda. Chemikálie způsobují, že si jdeme na nervy“ (*Sleeper*).

Třetí ze snímků řadící se do první fáze Allenovy filmové tvorby, *Láska a smrt*, sice podle názvu slibuje city a vztahy, avšak i zde se jedná spíše o jejich fyzickou stránku než o skutečné emocionální prožitky. Fabule filmu je zasazena do carského Ruska, kde na pozadí napoleonských válek mladík Boris marně touží po své krásné a filozofující sestřenci Sonje. Ačkoliv se Sonja považuje za romantickou duši a neustále prohlašuje, že touží po muži, který by byl zosobněním jejích představ a spojoval tři důležité tváře lásky – intelektuální, duchovní i smyslnou (*Love and Death*), nic jí nebrání opakovaně zrazovat svůj ideál, provdat se bez lásky a vrhat se do řady sexuálních dobrodružství.

Ačkoliv Sonja Borise nemiluje a netají se svou slabostí pro jeho mužného, ale prostoduchého bratra Ivana (ten však již na první pohled odporuje ideálu lásky, který Sonja tak vášnivě deklarovala), nakonec přece jen souhlasí se sňatkem, jelikož nevěří v jeho dlouhé trvání. Borise totiž čeká souboj s mnohem zkušenějším soupeřem. Když však Boris oproti všeobecnému očekávání zvítězí, Sonje nezbyvá, než splnit svůj slib a provdat se za něj. I v tomto případě je tedy sňatek kompromisem a chybí v něm hlubší city.

Jejich vztah je zprvu jednostranný a Sonja se k Borisovi chová chladně a odmítavě. Teprve postupem času změní svůj postoj, opětuje Borisovy city a umí si představit šťastný rodinný život po jeho boku. Jako i jiné Allenovy postavy, v momentě, kdy dosáhne splnění

svých snů, propadá Boris depresi a rozhodne se pro sebevraždu. S pomocí Sonji se však podaří krizi zažehnat a mladí manželé k sobě najdou cestu. Allenův Boris je další z postav, které získají ženu svého srdce nikoliv hrdinstvím a sex-appealem, nýbrž vytrvalostí, odhodláním a výřečností. Boris je sympatický smolař a zbabělec, který nakonec uspěje alespoň v lásce.

Do první poloviny sedmdesátých let spadá také film, v němž sex a jeho nejružnější podoby hrají hlavní roli. V roce 1972 natočil Woody Allen snímek *Všechno, co jste kdy chtěli vědět o sexu, ale báli jste se zeptat* (Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex ...but were afraid to ask), který paroduje populární knihu dr. Davida Reubena sestavenou z otázek a odpovědí na téma sex a sexuální úchytky. Reuben využil zájmu veřejnosti o sexuologii a vytvořil populárně-naučnou příručku o sexu a jeho různých podobách. Allen se držel názvů jednotlivých kapitol a vytvořil vlastní, nevědeckou verzi toho, proč k daným jevům dochází. Film je tvořen sedmi povídkami, z nichž každá se zaměřuje na jeden konkrétní aspekt sexu, přičemž ve většině případů se jedná o patologické jevy. Allenova typická persona se objevuje především ve třech povídkách, v nichž Woody Allen také hraje hlavní roli.

V první povídce nazvané „Fungují afrodiziaka?“ (Do Aphrodisiacs Work?) je Allen věrný charakterovému typu, který představoval ve svých klubových vystoupeních. Allenova postava je zde šašek na středověkém královském dvoře, který vášnivě touží po královně. Jako správný smolař musí šašek při nemotorném dobývání ženy svých snů a uspokojení svých potřeb čelit řadě překážek, aby byl nakonec odhalen samotným králem a ke své příslovečné smůle popraven za zneuctění královny, k němuž ve skutečnosti vůbec nedošlo.

Druhý z příběhů v hlavní roli s Woody Allenem je reakcí na vlnu italské kinematografie šedesátých let 20. století reprezentovanou tvůrci jako Fellini či Antonioni. Woodyho postava je tentokrát poněkud netypický blazeovaný Ital, muž, který nemá problémy získat sympatie žen a považuje se za dobrého milence. Tento „hřebeč“ nesnese prohru a za každou cenu se pokouší sexuálně uspokojit svou přítelkyni, což se mu nedaří ani s pomocí dobře míněných rad jeho okolí. Svou roli hraje v této povídce také jazyk, kterým postavy hovoří a který ještě dokresluje Allenovu image svůdce a miláčka žen.

Pravděpodobně nejznámější z Allenových postav obsažených ve snímku *Všechno, co jste chtěli vědět o sexu, ale báli jste se zeptat* je jeho spermie prožívající napětí i úzkost předcházející ejakulaci. Spermie zde zosobňuje lidské vlastnosti, pochybuje o účelu a zdaru své „mise“ a zabývá se otázkou života a smrti tváří v tvář sexuálnímu aktu. Povídka příznačně nazvaná „Co se děje při ejakulaci?“ (What Happens During Ejaculation?) tak ukazuje sex jako mechanický a složitě řízený proces, v němž každá buňka má svou přesnou funkci a úspěch celé akce závisí na dokonalé spolupráci všech částí lidského organismu.

V pasáži věnované tomuto snímku Maurice Yacowar ve své knize tvrdí, že „člověku je prostřednictvím společensky nuceného pocitu hanby bráněno užívat si požitků animální sexuality a jeho instinktivní život je omezován nesmělostí, již jsou zvířata naštěstí prosta“ (137). Allenovo *Všechno, co jste chtěli vědět o sexu, ale báli jste se zeptat* v tomto ohledu boří veškerá tabu a dotýká se témat, která nejsou běžně považována za společensky přijatelná. Allen prezentuje jednotlivé tabuizované stránky lidské sexuality s nadhledem a jejich ztvárnění zbavuje filmové situace sexuálního napětí.

V souvislosti s tímto povídkovým filmem však byl Allen také často obviňován z nedostatku vkusu, který se projevil ve způsobu zpracování některých prezentovaných sexuálních úchylek. Kritici se také mnohdy shodli na tom, že v některých částech tohoto filmu zcela chybí kvalitní Allenův humor. Michael Žantovský, překladatel celé řady Allenových povídek, tak například vidí nedostatky tohoto filmu ve skutečnosti, že „paroduje ne vážnou věc, nýbrž anachronicky působící příručku, která je sama o sobě směšná“ (57).

Všechny předchozí snímky spojuje absence skutečných citů. Postavy se většinou omezují na uspokojení svým potřeb, sex pro ně není výrazem intimity a vzájemné náklonnosti. Na počátku své filmové tvorby se Allen ještě nepokouší hlouběji analyzovat psychologii vztahů mezi dvěma pohlavími, avšak jde mu především o dosažení komických efektů, k čemuž přispívá také povaha milostného snažení jeho postav.

Druhá polovina sedmdesátých let však odstartovala novou etapu Allenovy tvorby – film *Annie Hallová* z roku 1977 znamenal výraznou změnu Allenova dosavadního charakteristického autorského rukopisu a představil nový druh protagonisty, který již v přítomnosti ženy jen zmateně nekotá a jehož milostný život nepředstavuje pouze sérii trapasů. Tato nová persona řeší závažné otázky své existence, problémy vztahu k opačnému pohlaví a v lásce hledá dokonalost.

Hlavním protagonistou filmu *Annie Hallová* je čtyřicátník Alvy Singer, jehož životní filozofii a postoj ke vztahům se ženami výstižně shrnují dva vtipy, které Alvy vypráví. První z nich vychází ze slavného výroku Allenova idolu, Groucha Marxe: „Nechci patřit do klubu, kam by mě vzali“ (*Annie Hall*). Jak Alvy sám tvrdí, tento vtip vystihuje jeho vztah k ženám, přičemž zároveň demonstrovuje, že Alvy podvědomě bojkotuje vztahy se ženami, které by o něj měly zájem a s nimiž by hrozilo nebezpečí dlouhodobějšího závazku, a naopak se pokouší o nemožné tam, kde je jen malá šance na úspěch. Alvyho vztahy jsou zcela v souladu s jeho životním pesimismem, fascinací pocitem marnosti a strachem ze smrti. Alvy je typický anhedonik¹¹, cítí se vykořeněný a netají se svou slabostí pro nevhodné ženy: „Vždycky jsem letěl na nevhodné ženy. Na Sněhurce jsem se zabouchl do královny“ (*Annie Hall*).

Druhý vtip dokazuje, že jakkoliv zoufalé a nepochopitelné partnerské vztahy mohou být, nedá se bez nich žít: „Pán si stěžuje lékaři: ‚Bratr věří, že je slepice.‘ – ‚Dejte ho zavřít.‘ – ‚Ale já potřebuju vejce.‘ Takové jsou lidské vztahy. Iracionální, bláznivé a absurdní. Ale pouštíme se do nich. Potřebujeme ta vejce“ (*Annie Hall*).

Alvy Singer je dvakrát rozvedený newyorský komik, který vypráví historii svého vztahu s Annie a s lítostí si uvědomuje, že se nic z jeho vzpomínek nemůže vrátit. Alvy je komplikovaný člověk, který na jednu stranu odmítá příliš intelektuální svět reprezentovaný například bývalou ženou Robin a jejími sofistikovanými přáteli, na druhou stranu však sám sebe rád staví do pozice člověka, který může ovlivňovat vkus a názory druhých. Od ženy očekává naplnění svých potřeb včetně pravidelného vášnivého sexu, jehož prostřednictvím, podle slov bývalé ženy Robin, vyjadřuje své nepřátelství.

V určitém bodě vztahu s osudovou ženou svého života Annie i Alvy cítí, že něco není v pořádku, že se mezi nimi prohlubuje propast a dochází ke stále větším rozporům a sexuálním potížím. Annie obviňuje Alvyho ze sobectví, kvůli němuž si nedokáže připustit vlastní chyby a uznat svůj podíl na partnerských neshodách, zatímco on jen těžce nese její sexuální otažitost a nově získanou názorovou nezávislost. Ani jeden z nich však nemá

odvahu jejich poměr oficiálně ukončit ze strachu, jak to ten druhý přijme. Woody Allen v tomto filmu opakovaně používá metodu vnitřních monologů a rozdělený záběr, které ještě více prohloubí a zdůrazní rozdíly a odcizení obou partnerů:

Annie (v duchu): Zbožňuju Alvyho, ale náš vztah je k ničemu.

Alvy (v duchu): Večer se zase bude cukat. Mám to zapotřebí?

Annie (v duchu): Rozešla bych se s ním, ale zranila bych ho.

Alvy (v duchu): Ať se odstěhuje! Řeknu jí to rovnou.

Annie (nahlas): Náš vztah za moc nestojí.

Alvy (nahlas): Vztah je jako žralok. Nehýbe-li se, zahyne. A nám žralok pošel.

(*Annie Hall*)

Ve filmu *Annie Hallová* se také poprvé objevuje schéma, které se mělo na dlouhou dobu stát typickým pro Allenovy mužské postavy – variace na téma antické pověsti o sochaři Pygmalionovi, který se zamiloval do vlastního výtvaru představujícího ideální ženu. V Allenově pojetí postavy navazují vztahy, v nichž je žena intelektuálně i emočně závislá na svém partnerovi, je jakýmsi jeho výtvozem. Americký profesor filozofie Sander Lee se domnívá, že „v tom nejhanlivějším smyslu jsou tyto vztahy formou prostituce, jelikož každý z partnerů vymění cokoli, co může nabídnout, za něco jiného. Muž obvykle poskytuje ženě vzdělání a emocionální podporu, za což dostává společnost, péči a sex...“ (190). Zatímco v případě prostituce se však jedná čistě o vidinu zisku, většina ženských protagonistek nevstupuje do vztahu se svými staršími a zkušenějšími partnery pouze ze sobeckých důvodů.

Prototypem novodobého Pygmaliona je bezpochyby Alvy Singer, který se pokouší vymodelovat svou ideální Galateu z Annie Hallové. Jako v celé řadě následujících filmů je i v tomto případě muž, tedy Alvy, starší než jeho partnerka, považuje se za intelektuálně nadřazeného a vyhrazuje si právo mladší a nezkušené ženě (Annie) diktovat, co je správné a co ne. Alvy se pokouší svou partnerku formovat prostřednictvím pečlivě zvolených knih, z nichž všechny nějak souvisejí s tématem hledání smyslu života a hrozbou smrti, návštěv filmových představení i podporou nápadu začít navštěvovat večerní kursy na univerzitě.

Jako správná Galatea, Annie vstupuje do vztahu s Alvym jako nevyhraněná osobnost bez větších intelektuálních ambicí a je otevřená novým podnětům a zkušenostem. Alvy si je plně vědom moci, kterou nad svou partnerkou má, a proto těžce nese její postupně získanou samostatnost. Jeho přístup se také náhle dramaticky změní: začne žárlit na všechny, kteří ohrožují jeho výhradní pozici pevné autority, rádce a učitele, a nechce, aby Annie pokračovala ve svém vzdělávání.

Je pouze otázkou času, kdy se Annie stane natolik sebevědomou, aby si uvědomila, že jí stávající vztah nadále nevyhovuje, dusí ji a Alvyho mentorský přístup ji omezuje. V momentě, kdy si to připustí, je Galatea-Annie připravena odpoutat se od svého „stvořitele“ a posunout se v životě dále. Její odmítnutí dosavadního způsobu života je navíc korunováno rozhodnutím odstěhovat se z Alvyho temně intelektuálního New Yorku do požitkářského Los Angeles. Tento krok představuje definitivní tečku za vztahem s Alvym a Annie se jeho prostřednictvím zřiká všeho, co ji k němu poutalo.

Alvy naopak zjišťuje, že život bez Annie je prázdný, že s ní odešla i část jeho samotného a jiné ženy se jí nemohou vyrovnat. Ve své snaze získat svou Galateu zpět Alvy dokonce

podnikne zoufalou cestu do Los Angeles, aby na vlastní oči viděl, že nová Annie již dávno překonala svého učitele, stala se nezávislou, úspěšnou a na rozdíl od něj také psychicky vyrovnanou a uvolněnou. V tuto chvíli Alvy Annie definitivně ztrácí a zbývají mu pouze vzpomínky a konstatování, že Annie „je skvělá a jsem rád, že ji znám“ (*Annie Hall*).

Alvy však může cítit jakési uspokojení, když je po nějakém čase svědkem toho, jak Annie (v tu dobu již opět natrvalo zpět v New Yorku) doslova vleče svého nového přítele na promítání snímku, který byl kdysi Alvyho oblíbený. Annie se přece jen úplně nezbavila jeho vlivu a hrou osudu je nyní v pozici té, která vychovává, poučuje a diktuje vkus svého partnera, pro nějž se stává ženským Pygmalionem.

Jak již bylo řečeno, téma vztahů mezi dvěma lidmi, v němž je žena závislá na svém partnerovi, který ji intelektuálně vede a poskytuje jí emocionální jistotu, se od vzniku *Annie Hallové* objevilo v Allenových filmech ještě mnohokrát. V dalších snímcích sice tento pygmalionovský model nestojí natolik v centru pozornosti a nehraje tak důležitou roli pro charakter vztahů jako v případě Alvyho a Annie, přesto však ovlivňuje chování postav a svým způsobem determinuje jejich milostný život.

Dva roky po uvedení *Annie Hallové* natočil Woody Allen další snímek, v němž hlavní roli hrají partnerské vztahy, *Manhattan*. Protagonistou tohoto příběhu je newyorský spisovatel Isaac (Ike) Davis, který prožívá vztah s mladičkou Tracy. Isaac je opět čtyřicátník, který se ve skutečnosti bojí hlubších citů a závazků a používá velký věkový rozdíl mezi ním a Tracy jako výmluvu a zdůvodnění, proč by takový vztah nemohl dlouhodobě fungovat.

Ani Isaacův milostný život před Tracy nebyl nijak triumfální, což potvrzují jeho sebehodnocení jako člověka, který „nikdy neměl delší vztah než Hitler s Evou Braunovou“ (*Manhattan*),¹² a v otázce partnerského soužití vítěze ceny Augusta Strindberga.¹³ Silnou ránu jeho mužství navíc zasadila jeho bývalá bisexuální manželka, která jej opustila kvůli jiné ženě a ke všemu se rozhodla vydat knihu o svém manželství s ním a o jeho výstřednostech. O to překvapivější je skutečnost, že ačkoliv mu vztah s Tracy poskytuje vše, co by si mohl přát, Ike si nepřipouští, že by pro něj jeho přítelkyně mohla představovat stálé partnerské soužití a ne pouze krátkodobou aférku, která brzy skončí jejím odchodem.

Ike se schovává za patetické řeči a vlastní nejistotu a obavy maskuje jako starost o dobro Tracy: „Neunáhlej se! Je to sice báječný... Máme se bezvadně, ale jsi moc mladá. Ty ještě potkáš mužů. Užij si mého humoru, úžasné sexuální techniky, ale pamatuj, že život máš před sebou... Přece se neupneš na jednoho. Má to sice kouzlo, erotiku, ale s ničím nepočítej. Já jsem jen odbočka na dálnici života“ (*Manhattan*). Ačkoliv je Ike s Tracy spokojený a může s ní být sám sebou, ohlíží se navíc také na mínění okolí, jež se na jeho vztah s dívkou, která ještě stále dělá domácí úkoly, dívá často s despektem či posměchem.

Podle Sandera Leeho je „ústředním morálním konfliktem filmu: Je lepší dělat to, co je správné, ať se to druhým jeví jakkoliv, nebo je lepší dělat to, co vypadá dobře, ale je nakonec pokrytecké?“ (87) Isaac je ve své podstatě pokrytec, který nakonec pod tlakem mínění svého okolí nepříteli šťastně zvolí druhou z možností a dobrovolně se tak zbavuje upřímných citů ve prospěch hektického avšak věkově vyváženého a tudíž pro společnost zdánlivě přijatelnějšího erotického dobrodružství.

Na rozdíl od něj je Isaacova původní přítelkyně, ačkoliv teprve sedmnáctiletá, v jejich vztahu ta zralejší a připravenější pro partnerství. Neřeší budoucnost a nedělá si starosti s reakcí okolí na svůj věkově nevyvážený poměr. Odmítá Isaacova tvrzení, že se v jejím případě jedná pouze o pobláznění, a vidí vše jasně a jednoduše: „Já tě miluju... Baví nás to

spolu. Sdílím tvé zájmy. V posteli nám to jde“ (*Manhattan*). Pro Tracy neexistují důvody, proč pochybovat o svých citech a neužívat si všeho, co jí poměr s Ikem nabízí.

Vztah s Tracy je ohrožen v okamžiku, kdy Isaac poznává rádoby intelektuálskou „takovou nervózní, nervní...“ (*Manhattan*) novinářku Mary, milenkou svého nejlepšího přítele Yalea. Ačkoliv Mary Isaaca zprvu spíše odpuzuje, připadá mu afektovaná a neupřímná a její postřehy jej iritují, postupně se s ní sbližuje a podléhá jejímu neurotickému chování. V momentě, kdy se citově zanedbávaná Mary rozejde se svým ženatým milencem, nic nebrání jejímu vztahu s Ikem, který se neváhá kvůli ní rozejít s Tracy.

Allen vytvořil postavu Mary jako přímý protiklad mladé Tracy, která představuje čistotu a nezatíženost minulostí či vnímáním sebe sama ze strany okolí. Tracy je zosobněním nevinnosti, po níž Allenova persona ve vztahu k ženám prahne. Isaac Davis si však naneštěstí neuvědomuje, že ve své mladé přítelkyni nalezl vše, co u žen hledá. Zatímco Tracy jedná instinktivně, nijak nekalkuluje a do vztahu s Ikem vkládá celé své srdce, Mary předstírá, že je úspěšná a vzdělaná. Pod slupkou vyrovnané intelektuálky se však skrývá neurotická žena, žijící ve vzpomínkách na nedostižného bývalého manžela, který ji, stejně jako například Alvy Annie, „stvořil“. V jejích očích je bývalý manžel Jeremiah téměř bůh, arbitr dobrého vkusu, génius a nepřekonatelný milenec, v jehož stínu žila a bez nějž se cítí ztracená.

Zdá se, že Mary má celkově slabost pro ty nesprávné muže, jelikož ani její převážně sexuální vztah s Isaacovým přítelem Yalem nikam nevedl: „Nestačí obětí? Musí to být sex? Co vřelost a duchovno?“ (*Manhattan*) Mary od svého milence očekávala více, než jí on mohl a chtěl dát, propadala pocitům méněcennosti a potřebovala někoho, kdo by se jí věnoval. Tím někým se měl stát Isaac: „Jsem krásná a chytrá! Tohle si nezasloužím... Jsem krásná, mladá, inteligentní... Akorát jsem úplně rozesraná. K čemu mi tohle je?“ (*Manhattan*)

Jelikož se Ike od počátku vyhýbal jakýmkoliv závazkům a slibům vůči Tracy, nečiní mu potíže vyměnit ji za starší a zkušenější Mary, která by se k němu měla teoreticky více hodit. I v okamžiku rozchodu se Tracy chová mnohem dospěleji, neztropí scénu, nevyhrožuje, pouze tiše pláče a ujišťuje Isaaca o upřímnosti svých citů, což se však mine účinkem.

Isaacův nový vztah s Mary se výrazně liší od toho s Tracy – ačkoliv si zpočátku rozumějí a prožívají spokojené okamžiky, Mary má daleko do klidné a věrné Tracy. Ke svému překvapení Ike brzy zjistí, že byl pouze přechodnou epizodou a jeho nová přítelkyně se za jeho zády opět potají schází se svým bývalým milencem, jehož sexuálnímu naléhání zjevně nedokáže odolat. Mary je z těch žen, které potřebují být využívány silnějšími muži, potřebuje být závislá a cítit nadřazenost svého partnera – představuje Galateu, kterou opustil její Pygmalion a nechal ji na pospas jejím vlastním neurózám a obavám.

Teprve když Ike odhalí Maryinu zradu, vrací se pokorně zpět k Tracy, která však mezitím (částečně také v důsledku své zkušenosti ze vztahu s ním) ještě více dospěla a rozhodla se jít vlastní cestou. Až nyní si Ike také uvědomuje, co pro něj Tracy znamenala. Když se pokouší sestavit seznam věcí, které dávají životu smysl, vedle Allenova idolu, Groucha Marxe, baseballového mistra Willieho Mayse, druhé věty Jupiterovy symfonie, nahrávky *Potatohead Blues* Louise Armstronga, švédských filmů, Flaubertovy *Citové výchovy*, Marlona Branda, Franka Sinatry, úžasných jablek a hrušek od Cézanna a krabů u Sama Wo se mu vybaví také Tracyin obličej.

I v tomto vztahu staršího muže a velmi mladé ženy se objevují motivy pygmalionovského modelu, přesto však Tracy není typickou Galateou. Přes svůj nízký věk není zcela závislá na svém zkušenějším příteli, má vlastní emocionální život, postoje a názory. Není to ona, kdo využije svého partnera a v příhodnou chvíli jde za svým cílem v podobě dalšího vztahu. Navzdory rozchodu s Ikem a Tracyině rozhodnutí studovat v cizině, k němuž ji sám Isaac kdysi přemlouval, aby si uvolnil ruce ke vztahu s Mary, zůstává šance, že se oba milenci jednou znovu dají dohromady, protože, jak Tracy uklidňuje Isaaca „co to [šest měsíců] je, když se máme rádi? ... Každý se nezkazí. Musíš lidem trochu věřit“ (*Manhattan*).

Ve snímku *Manhattan* Woody Allen staví do kontrastu čistý a upřímný vztah a poměr založený na fyzické přitažlivosti a vášni, který nakonec končí zradou. Článek „Woody Allen dospěl“ (Woody Allen Comes of Age) uveřejněný v roce 1979 v časopise *Time* charakterizuje tuto Allenovu love-story následovně: „Isaac Davis má své potíže se ženami, ale sám sebe prezentuje jako muže, který ‚nikdy neměl problém najít si ženu.‘ Ústředním bodem tohoto filmu je jeho vztah s dospívající dívkou, který je odvážně prezentován idealisticky... Tytám jsou také jeho [Allenovy] vtipy o zanedbaném dětství v Brooklynu. Jak se zdá, Isaac Davis vstřebal svůj dřívější život; současnost je dostatečně deprimující, aby se s ní snažil vyrovnat“ („Woody Allen Comes of Age“).

Allenův přístup ke vztahům se ve filmu *Manhattan* liší – na rozdíl od svého slavného předchůdce Alvyho Singera z filmu *Annie Hallová*, kterému nezbývá než nostalgicky vzpomínat na příjemné okamžiky s Annie, připomenout si klíčové momenty svého tak důležitého vztahu a najít souvislosti mezi svým milostným životem a vlastní minulostí, se Isaac Davis pokouší vyrovnat se svou současnou situací. Zatímco pro Alvyho však již neexistuje možnost cokoliv vrátit zpět, Isaac, který si nakonec přece jen uvědomil své priority, dostal ve vztahu druhou šanci.

Dalším významným snímkem, v němž se objevuje schéma muž-mentor a jeho přítelkyně-dychtivá žákyně, je příběh mapující vztahy členů jedné rodiny nazvaný *Hana a její sestry*. V tomto případě se jedná o dvojici malířů Frederick a jeho partnerka Lee. Zatímco anhedonik Frederick, podobně jako Alvy Singer, není schopen se naplno radovat ze života a neustále se zabývá svými chmurnými myšlenkami, Lee se podobá Annie v tom ohledu, že ani ona není vyhraněnou osobností. Bývalá alkoholička Lee teprve hledá své místo v životě, potřebuje podporu a pocit, že se ubírá správným směrem.

Také v tomto příběhu nastane partnerská krize, v jejímž důsledku jsou ohroženy zájmy Pygmaliona-Fredericka. Ke svému částečnému uspokojení Lee zjišťuje, že je jí zcela fascinován manžel její sestry Hany, Elliot, který při jejím svádění postupuje podobně jako kdysi Frederick. I on má touhu stát se jejím mentorem a zahrnuje ji poezií a hudbou podle svého vkusu. Lee se vlivu a touze svého nového obdivovatele příliš nebrání a je jen otázkou času, kdy zradí svou nic netušící sestru a dá souhlas k vášnivému románu se svým švagrem.

V Elliotově případě opět funguje komplex muže žijícího ve stínu úspěšné a všemi obdivované ženy. Jeho manželka Hana je skvělá matka, která zároveň triumfuje i na poli kariéry, když se jí po letech strávených péčí o rodinu a domácnost podaří návrat na divadelní prkna. Elliot má vedle své ženy pocit, že jej nepotřebuje, a hledá obdiv a zájem u bezbranně působící a snadno ovlivnitelné Lee, k níž jej poutá především silná tělesná přitažlivost. Elliot chce být potřebován, zatímco jeho žena pouze nesobecky dává, aniž by očekávala cokoliv na oplátku.

Ještě dříve než Lee si uvědomuje, co se mezi ní a Elliotem děje, sám Frederick, jenž prohlédne Elliotovy snahy převzít jeho roli: „Bývalas se mnou šťastná. Chtěla ses ode mne učit. To už jsem tě naučil všechno?“ (*Hannah and Her Sisters*) To, co Lee kdysi na Frederickovi imponovalo, jí najednou připadá omezující a chce se vymanit ze svého dosavadního způsobu života. Následující konverzace přesně vystihuje podstatu a nevyhnutelný osud většiny pygmalionovských vztahů, jak je Woody Allen ve svém díle prezentuje:

Lee: Už to nesnesu.
Frederick: Chci dokončit tvé vzdělání.
Lee: Už nejsem tvá žačka.
Frederick: Jednou ve světě obstojíš.
Lee: Tohle se musí změnit.
Frederick: Co?
Lee: Víš, že se dusím!...
Frederick: Věděl jsem, že odejdeš. Musí to být teď?
Lee: Možná jen na čas. Musím to zkusit.
Frederick: Jsi celý můj svět! ... Spojuješ mě se světem.
Lee: To je moc velká zodpovědnost! Chci jednodušší život. Rodinu, než bude pozdě. Ani nevím, co chci. Co ze mě vůbec máš? O sex už nejde. A ve všem jsi lepší...
Frederick: Věděl jsem, že odejdeš s někým mladším. (*Hannah and Her Sisters*)

Lee není zdaleka první z Allenových ženských postav, která v souvislosti se svým vztahem používá výrazy jako „už to nesnesu“ či „dusím se.“ Pod vlivem svého nového románu se rozhodne ukončit svůj dosavadní vztah a vzdát se role Frederickovy Galatey. Ani nově štěstí s Elliotem však nemá trvat dlouho, jelikož i jeho Lee na své cestě za samostatností opustí. Není náhodou, že ani její nový a snad na dlouhou dobu poslední partner, učitel z kursů, které (podobně jako Annie Hallová) navštěvovala, představuje určitou intelektuální autoritu. Stejně jako ženské protagonistky jiných Allenových děl, i Lee potřebuje vedle sebe partnera, k němuž může vzhlížet a přizpůsobovat se mu.

Netypickou partnerskou dvojici představil Woody Allen v roce 1995, kdy ve filmu *Mocná Afrodité* (*Mighty Aphrodite*) svedl dohromady sportovního manažera Lennyho a prostitutku Lindu. Lenny a jeho žena Amanda se rozhodnou adoptovat dítě, čímž se však jejich vztah změní. Stejně jako celá řada Allenových ženatých postav, také Lenny začne mít postupně pocit, že mu v manželství něco schází. Je hnán zvědavostí a doslova se upne na myšlenku najít skutečnou matku svého adoptivního syna Maxe, která podle něj musí být nesmírně inteligentní a ušlechtilá žena. Ke svému překvapení zjišťuje, že Maxova biologická matka je primitivní pornoherečka a prostitutka používající umělecké jméno Linda Ashová. Linda je zcela nekultivovaná, animální a bezprostřední a svou neobvyklou profesi bere jako něco zcela přirozeného.

Allen na postavách Lindy a Lennyho znovu aplikuje vzorec muž-tvůrce a žena-jeho výtvor. Na rozdíl od jiných partnerek Allenových postav, které představují jakýsi potenciál pro vzdělávání, se Linda zcela vymyká představě Galatey, postupně se měnící v obraz svého tvůrce. Lenny se nemůže smířit se skutečností, že matka jeho dítěte zdaleka není ideální, získává si její důvěru a stává se jejím mentorem, jehož hlavním cílem je přemluvit

ji, aby změnila svůj dosavadní způsob života. Tato dvojice se od klasického Allenova schématu Pygmalion-Galatea liší i v tom ohledu, že Lennyho zájem o Lindu není sexuální, ani nemá vyústit v hlubší partnerský vztah.

V tomto případě Allen nenechává svou postavu kupovat Lindě filozofické knihy (jak by to zcela jistě učinil Alvy Singer), ani ji nenutí znovu navštěvovat školu. Místo toho se snaží udělat z ní počestnou ženu a najít pro ni vyhovujícího partnera. Ačkoliv se tak nestane Lennyho přičiněním, Linda nakonec přece jen nalezne svého prince na bílém koni (v jejím případě pilota, který se svým vrtulníkem nouzově přistane těsně vedle ní).

Allen v tomto snímku nejen představuje pro něj ne zcela typické postavy, nýbrž také volí originální formu zpracování. Jeho příběh je ve skutečnosti komedie zasazená do rámce klasické antické tragédie. V souladu s tímto záměrem Allen používá řecký chór, který komentuje dění a Lennyho neustále varuje, aby si nezahrával a nepokoušel osud.

Woody Allen se při zpracování motivu vztahu mladší ženy a staršího a intelektuálně nadřazeného muže neomezil pouze na žánr komedie. Také v jednom z jeho psychologických dramát, *Jiná žena* (Another Woman, 1988), má hlavní protagonistka Marion Postová podobnou zkušenost. Přestože se s Marion setkáváme teprve v momentě, kdy dovrší věku padesáti let a náhoda ji přiměje začít rekapitulovat její dosavadní zdánlivě spokojený život, postupně se dozvídáme, že v mládí byla provdaná za svého profesora filozofie – mnohem staršího muže, který jí nahrazoval otcovskou autoritu a měl uspokojit její hlad po vědění. Ačkoliv je Marion další netypickou Galateou v tom ohledu, že se inteligencí může rovnat svému učiteli a má mnohem jasnější představu o tom, co od života chce, i ona zpočátku potřebovala správně nasměrovat a do jisté míry intelektuálně vést. Marion vědomě plnými doušky nasává vše, co jí může její partner nabídnout.

Oproti jiným snímkům na podobné téma má vztah Marion a jejího bývalého manžela tragičtější rozměry. Marion je natolik cílevědomá, že volí kariéru před neplánovaným mateřstvím, aniž by považovala za nutné vzít v potaz také názor a přání svého muže. V důsledku jejího rozhodnutí uměle ukončit těhotenství spěje manželství k neodvratitelnému konci. Ani po rozvodu se však bývalý manžel nedokáže smířit s její zradou a nakonec volí sebevraždu.

Marion snad ze všech Allenových protagonistek nejvíce naplňuje představu Galatey, která jde tvrdě za svým cílem. Jako mladá využila vztahu se svým profesorem, který byl připraven jí dát vše. Naproti tomu Marion nebyla ochotna na oplátku poskytnout nic ze sebe, jak by se dalo ve fungujícím vztahu očekávat. Způsob, jakým jednala se svým mužem, naznačuje absenci hlubších citů. Bývalý manžel Marion je pak nejsmutnějším ze všech Allenových Pygmalionů, jelikož bez ní nebyl schopen dále existovat a zapomenout a dobrovolně si vzal život.

Po sérii filmů, v nichž podstatnou roli hraje spíše partnerské soužití postav a problémy s ním spojené, se Woody Allen v roce 1982 znovu zaměřil na tělesnou stránku vztahů. Stejně jako u filmu *Všechno, co jste chtěli vědět o sexu* i v případě *Erotické komedie noci svatojánské* (A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy) již samotný název naznačuje, co může divák očekávat. Allen zde rozehrává příběh tří párů – jednoho manželského a dvou mileneckých – v němž není nouze o vášně, tělesnou přitažlivost a nevěru. Allenova partnerská šaráda nakonec mimo jiné končí zjištěním, že nejlepší příležitosti nastanou v životě pouze jednou a ani v lásce nelze nic vrátit zpátky. Ačkoliv jedna z postav, postarší

profesor, nakonec umírá, jeho smrt je odlehčena skutečností, že zemřel šťastný při vášnivém sexu s mladou svobodomyšlnou ženou.

Přestože se tematika partnerských vztahů v různých podobách a rozsahu objevuje prakticky ve všech jeho snímcích, v roce 1992 natočil Woody Allen další film, kde toto téma opět tvoří základ celého příběhu. Jak opět prozrazuje samotný název, snímek *Manželé a manželky* (Husbands and Wives) se znovu vrací k tematice zákonných partnerských svazků a představuje dva manželské páry, které řeší svou partnerskou krizi a pokoušejí se vyrovnat s institucí manželství a vším, co společný život přináší. Allenův film představuje sondu do hořké reality dvou vztahů, kterými otřese nevěra a vzájemné odcizení partnerů. V rozhovorech s blíže nespecifikovaným reportérem se všichni zúčastnění vyznávají ze svých pocitů, frustrací a skrytých tužeb ve vztahu ke svým partnerům a milostnému životu.

V úvodu příběhu manželé Sally a Jack oznamují přátelům Gabovi a Judy své rozhodnutí rozvést se. V důsledku této šokující informace začne také Judy přemýšlet nad svým manželstvím a zjišťuje, že ve skutečnosti ani ona není ve svém svazku spokojená. Její téměř zuřivá reakce na rozchod přátel svědčí o tom, že myšlenka na život bez manžela a znovu získanou svobodu ji také již napadla.

Manželství Sally a Jacka je dalším z řady Allenových dysfunkčních vztahů, z nichž se již dávno vytratila vášeň a v nichž vedle sebe žijí dva prakticky cizí lidé. Ačkoliv oba manželé zpočátku působí vyrovnaně a tvrdí, že rozchod byl společným rozhodnutím obou, brzy vychází najevo, že především chladná Sally za maskou klidu skrývá bouřlivé emoce a hysterické reakce. Je zřejmé, že se Sally nesmířila s Jackovým rozhodnutím opustit ji kvůli mladší ženě. Uvědomuje si také, že dospěla do věku pro ženu kritického, a ačkoliv se na jedné straně nebrání své nově nabyté osobní svobodě a možnostem, které její nová situace přináší, její city a hrdost jsou zraněné a ona nedokáže Jackovi odpustit jeho zradu: „Když ženská zestárne, tak už není zajímavá... Neobhajuj své pohlaví, je to pravda. Jsi skvělá, dokud nezačneš stárnout, a pak chtějí novější model... Mokrát jsem si představovala, že jsem volná. Víte, není lehké vést klidné manželství, při všech frustracích a přitížích. Vážně není“ (*Manželé a manželky*).

Jackova nová partnerka je naprostým opakem jeho racionální, schopné, intelektuální a sexuálně chladné ženy – zajímá se o zdravou stravu, cvičí aerobik, naplno projevuje své emoce a neopovrhne neintelektuální zábavou jako Sally. Jack s ní prožívá vášnivý románek a po letech strávených ve sterilním manželském prostředí se cítí uvolněný, aniž by byl někým „opravován, kritizován“ (*Manželé a manželky*). Jackovo opojení novým životním stylem však netrvá dlouho a brzy si uvědomí, že si nechce jen užívat života po boku povrchní ženy, jejíž názory a impulsivní chování jej postupně začínou obtěžovat. Právě v tomto okamžiku Jack volí návrat ke své ženě, která však mezitím navázala jiný vztah.

Také ve svém novém vztahu s přizpůsobivým Michaelem není Sally schopna se oprostit od myšlenek, které se jí neustále honí hlavou a brání jí naplno se oddat svým pocitům a jednat spontánně. Sally je svým partnerům intelektuálně nadřazená, je dominantní a staví sama sebe do pozice mentora. Následující rozhovor demonstrovuje její neustálou potřebu opravovat své okolí a prezentovat své odlišné názory:

Michael: Dnešní večer se nám vydařil, že?

Sally: Ano, bylo to dobré.

Michael: A ta hudba byla fantastická.

Sally: Obvykle Mahlera nesnáším, ale tohle bylo dobré. Poslední věta byla příliš dlouhá. Ta druhá byla dobrá. Dobře to začalo a pak to bylo sentimentální, nemyslíš? Ale dirigent se snažil. Večeře byla báječná. I když toho kuchaře bych měla naučit, jak se dělá Alfredova omáčka. Moc se mu to nepovedlo.

(Manželé a manželky)

Skutečnost, že se Michael v průběhu Sallyina takřka monologu nezmohl na víc, než jen tiše souhlasit či maximálně přitakat, jen dokazuje, jak výraznou a nekompromisní osobností Sally je. Sally je tedy dalším příkladem ženy zbavující muže mužnosti, jejíž intelektuální převaha a racionální myšlení mohou představovat překážku v partnerském soužití.

Manželská krize Sally a Jacka nezůstala bez následků, nýbrž rozpoutala vlnu emocí a pochyb také v do té doby zdánlivě spokojeném vztahu Judy s Gabem. Judy do jisté míry závidí Sally krach jejího manželství, jelikož sama ve skrytu duše touží po změně. Také v tomto vztahu to již dávno mezi partnery nejiskří.

Ačkoliv spisovatel a učitel tvůrčího psaní Gabe žije ve svazku s první normální ženou v jeho životě (alespoň dle mínění přátel), ve skutečnosti má slabost pro beznadějně typy, takzvané ženy kamikadze, které „vždycky havarují letadlo, jsou prostě sebedestruktivní, narazí do vás a vy zemřete společně s nima“ (*Manželé a manželky*). Gabe na adresu svých beznadějných vztahů se ženami dodává: „A když se objeví výzva, velmi malá naděje, že to vyjde, vyskytnou se překážky a zátaras, něco mi v hlavě přeskočí. Možná je to proto, že jsem spisovatel, ale nějaká dramatická nebo estetická součástka si prosadí svou a já už tu osobu nepustím. A zde je určitá dramatická prostředí, která se objeví ve stejnou dobu, kdy se já zamiluju do určité osoby nebo situace samozřejmě, že to pro mě dobře neskončí“ (*Manželé a manželky*).

Jako celá řada Allenových mužských postav i Gabe navíc cítí uspokojení ze zájmu mladé studentky Rain o jeho osobu i tvorbu. Na rozdíl od jiných Allenových postav však Gabe dokáže odolat jejím svodům a nestane se dalším z řady jejích mnohem starších milenců-mentorů. Ani v tomto snímku se Allen nevyhýbá svému oblíbenému pygmalionovskému motivu a staví Rain do role mladé a cílevědomé ženy přitahující starší muže, kteří touží ji chránit a formovat až do chvíle, než jsou nahrazeni někým jiným.

Gabeova žena Judy není spokojená se svým životem a manželstvím a pokouší se získat přízeň Michaela, jehož předtím sama seznámila s opuštěnou Sally. Slovy bývalého manžela je Judy „pasivně agresivní. Na všechno zná jen: Já chudák, nech mě být... Vždycky dostane to, co chce. Chtěla mě, chtěla Gabea, chtěla práci v časopise, skončit manželství, teď chce Michaela“ (*Manželé a manželky*).

Navzdory jeho počátečnímu odporu se Judy nakonec v duchu její pasivně agresivní strategie přece jen podaří získat Michaela, kterého Sally opustila v zájmu obnovení vztahu s manželem Jackem. Zdá se, že bývalý manžel měl pravdu, jelikož Judy znovu dokáže, že je mistryní v umění přimět muže, aby nakonec vždy vyhověli jejím přáním. Nedá se ničím odradit a její nejnovější obětí, Michael, od počátku nemá šanci a jeho vzdor nikam nevede:

Michael: Judy, nech mě být. Nechci strávit neděli společně. Potřebuju být sám.
Judy: Tak si buď, já tě do ničeho nenutím!
Michael: Jo, to víš, že jo. Tím svým tichým, vytrvalým způsobem. Vždycky jsi mi nablízku. Podporující, chápající. Bože, přestaň být tak zatraceně chápající.
Judy: Díky za všechno.
Michael: Promiň, pořád myslím na Sally...Judy, promiň.
Judy: Nechci tě nikdy ani vidět, rozumíš mi?
Michael: To neříkej, já tě potřebuju, potřebuju tě...Ale já to tak necítím. Jen jsem byl rozčilený, zlato...Dej mi ještě šanci. Nemyslím to tak...Rozumíš mi, byl jsem zmatený, rozčilený...Nezasloužím si tě, promiň.
(*Manželé a manželky*)

Triumf Judy je ještě větší, jelikož svého nového přítele nejen získá, ale dokonce se jí podaří jej nenápadně přesvědčit, že usiloval on o ni, a ne naopak, jak tomu ve skutečnosti bylo.

Přes všechny neshody a aférky je Gabe jediný, kdo ve skutečnosti prohrál. Sally a Jack nakonec volí stereotyp a stabilitu svého dosavadního manželství před změnou a dobrodružstvím s novými partnery. Sally ovšem přiznala:

Líbí se mi ta volnost...Když se uklidníš, tak si uvědomíš, že to není tak špatné, jak se ti zdálo. Je to, jako když ti vytáhnou špatný zub. Všechny ty hnisavé rány tvého manželství, zklamání, zášť, všechno s jedním škubnutím zmizí a ty jsi volná...To si nedovedeš představit, po těch letech shromažďování problémů a polykání něčeho zla máš šanci začít znovu...Ženě to utíká rychleji. Musíš to udělat, dokud máš ještě nějaké kouzlo. Výhoda je, že jsi trochu starší, máš hodně zkušeností...Mám mnohem větší šanci, že to bude klapat, jestli někoho poznám. (*Manželé a manželky*)

Sallyina zkušenost s manželstvím je spíše negativní, přesto však nemá odvahu posunout se v životě dál a řídit se tím, co prohlašuje. Naproti tomu Judy využije situace a jde za svým cílem v podobě vztahu s poddajným Michaellem, který má potřebu nechat se vést silnější a dominantnější ženou.

Ze všech zúčastněných je Gabe Roth nakonec také jediný, kdo v manželství nezahlavil, neprovinil se proti svému přesvědčení, ani nesáhl po kompromisu. Na základě svých čerstvých zkušeností s manželstvím Gabe říká: „Ted' nikoho nemám. Nechci se s nikým zaplést a nechci nikoho ranit a nechci být raněn. Nevadí mi, že žiju a pracuju sám. Je to dočasné. Ty pocity přejdou a pak budu mít potřebu vrátit se zpět do víru událostí“ (*Manželé a manželky*).

Jakkoliv negativní se může zdát Allenův pohled na manželství a způsob, jakým mění lidi a jejich vzájemné vztahy, Gabeův závěrečný monolog do jisté míry dokazuje, že Allenova persona dokáže svá zklamání a neúspěchy překonat a nevzdává se ve svém úsilí najít lásku, ideální vztah a partnerku pro život. Víru Allenových postav v sílu lásky vystihuje také čínský lidový léčitel Dr.Yang z filmu *Alice* (Alice, 1990), jehož služby vyhledá hlavní protagonistka filmu, Alice Tateová. Podle Yanga je „[l]áska velmi složitý cit. Lidé jsou nepředvídatelní. City nemají logiku. Bez logiky není racionalita. Bez racionality je zamilovanost, ale i trápení“ (*Alice*).

Zájem o vztahy mezi muži a ženami je jedním z typických rysů tvorby Woodyho Allena a provází jej od počátku jeho kariéry v šedesátých letech 20. století. Ať už je Allenův typický protagonista svobodný muž čelící nástrahám svádění, svým sexuálním touhám a problémům spojeným s rodícím se vztahem, nebo prožívá neshody v manželství, láska a sex jsou pro něj nezbytnou součástí života. Zatímco na počátku své kariéry se Allen věnoval spíše fyzické stránce vztahů a jeho postava z jevištních skečů se, stejně jako později protagonisté prvotních situačních komedií, zoufale pokoušela uspokojit své touhy a překonat svůj handicap v podobě vlastní vizáže a smůly, která ji provázela takřka na každém kroku, počínaje druhou polovinou sedmdesátých let se v Allenově tvorbě objevuje mužský protagonista, který není v otázce lásky a sexu outsiderem, přesto mu však ve vztazích stále něco chybí. Tento nový typ protagonisty hledá dokonalost a touží po ideální ženě, zároveň však má strach ze závazků a podléhá svému životnímu pesimismu.

Woody Allen se neomezuje pouze na krátkodobé milostné vztahy, nýbrž prezentuje také manželské soužití, které by mělo představovat trvalý závazek. Celá řada jeho mužských postav má však s manželstvím spíše negativní zkušenost a jejich zákonné svazky končí rozvodem v důsledku nevěry či nudy a stereotypu.

Stále znovu se v Allenově díle objevuje také postava mladší a nevyhraněné ženy, kterou se ke svému obrazu pokouší přetvořit starší, zkušenější a intelektuálně nadřazený muž. Ačkoliv tyto nevyrovnané vztahy s železnou pravidelností končí partnerčíným odchodem, Allenův mužský protagonista se nevzdává a až na výjimky stále věří v lásku, bez níž si svůj život dokáže jen těžko představit.

Poznámky

¹ Příběh chirurga rozpolceného mezi milou a hodnou Doris, která jej však fyzicky nepřitahuje, a animální, komplikovanou a destruktivní Ritou představuje fabuli filmu, který natočil hlavní protagonista Allenova snímku *Vzpomínky na hvězdný prach*, režisér Sandy Bates. Stejně téma zpracovává Woody Allen v povídce „Šilencův příběh“ zahrnuté do sbírky *Vedlejší účinky* (Side Effects, 1986). I zde je protagonistou uznávaný a oblíbený lékař, který postrádá lásku a touží po dokonalé ženě. Touhy však této postavě nepřinesou štěstí – dříve úspěšný muž opouští svůj domov i práci a dobrovolně se stává člověkem žijícím na okraji společnosti.

² Tato povídka je součástí společného projektu tří významných amerických režisérů (Martina Scorseseho, Francise Forda Coppoly a Woodyho Allena) nazvaného *Povídky z New Yorku* (New York Stories, 1989).

³ Níže citované jevištní skeče vycházejí ze zvukového záznamu Allenových vystoupení z let 1964–1968, jak byly zachyceny na jediném v současné době dostupném CD nazvaném *Standup Comic*.

⁴ Allen zakomponoval své útoky proti bývalé ženě také do svého filmu *Láska a smrt*, kdy ukazatel směru informuje diváky, že zároveň s popravou Borise Gruščenko probíhá také svatba Rosenové (Rosen Wedding).

⁵ Ve skeči *Druhé manželství* (Second Marriage) je Woodyho postava požádána, aby reagovala na zprávu o znásilnění bývalé ženy. Woody na adresu bývalé manželky říká, že podle jeho zkušeností se v jejím případě zcela jistě nejednalo o „moving violation“. Jeho komentář je ve skutečnosti dvoj-
smyslný – výraz „moving violation“ lze chápat jednak jako dojemné znásilnění, či americký výraz pro porušení zákona řidičem vozidla během jízdy.

⁶ Replika ze skeče *Moje manželství* (My Marriage).

⁷ Za tuto povídku, která poprvé vyšla v roce 1977 v časopise *The New Yorker*, získal Woody Allen v roce 1978 O.Henryho cenu.

⁸ Podobné schéma dysfunkčního vztahu, kdy žena není schopna sexu s vlastním partnerem, zatímco střídá jiné milence, a nabádá svého partnera k nevěře, Allen rozvíjí ve svém filmu *Anything Else* (Cokoliv) z roku 2003.

⁹ Jeden z typů židovských smolařů a nešiků.

¹⁰ *Riverside Drive* není posledním z Allenových děl, v nichž se objevuje hrozba prozrazení nevěry a zoufalá snaha za každou cenu zabránit jejím následkům. V roce 2005 natočil Woody Allen snímek *Hra osudu* (Match Point), v němž použil motiv úkladné vraždy milenky, která je nakonec připsána na vrub jinému člověku, přičemž skutečný vrah zůstane nepotrestán.

¹¹ Anhedonie je psychologický termín označující neschopnost myslet pozitivně, zažívat kladné emoce a radovat se.

¹² Je otázkou, co Ike Davis považuje za dlouhodobý vztah, jelikož poměr mezi Hitlerem a Evou Braunovou ve skutečnosti zdaleka neměl charakter krátkého románu, nýbrž trval 16 let a vyvrcholil manželstvím.

¹³ Johan August Strindberg (22. 1. 1849 – 14. 5. 1912) byl švédský spisovatel a dramatik, který se ve svém díle zabýval vztahy mezi muži a ženami a realisticky zobrazoval postavení žen ve společnosti a problémy spojené se sexem a společenskou morálkou. V osobním životě byl Strindberg třikrát rozvedený a jeho vztah k ženám byl často označován jako nepřítel přátelský. Kvůli svým nekonformním názorům na manželství prezentovaným také v jeho díle Strindberg dokonce stanul před soudem.

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“Frequently Asked Questions”: A Genre between Centre and Periphery

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Abstract

Drawing upon the Hallidayan functional approach to language and current methodology used in genre analysis, the paper focuses on the relatively newly established web genre of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). The study traces the position and function of the genre within the genre colony of university website presentations and attempts to define its core generic properties. The genre of FAQs tends to be shaped by the interplay of conventional and variable features, with the conventionality stemming primarily from the genre's recurrent pattern and the regular use of its name, and with the inner variability captured by four tentative scales spanning between interactivity and monologic character; continuity and discontinuity, script-like organization and random composition, and between the field-dominated and tenor-dominated genre profile.

Keywords: functional systemic linguistics; genre analysis; FAQs; university website presentations; field-dominated discourse; tenor-dominated-discourse

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1 Introduction

Providing an insight into the characteristics of Frequently Asked Questions as a specific genre, the present study aims to contribute to research exploring the distinctive features of genres in the vast and internally variable area of communication on the internet. The goals and scope of the study are closely related to a larger research project aimed at exploring the generic properties of university websites, particularly university presentations

targeting prospective students (Tomášková). Within the genre colony of university websites, especially the hypertext paths targeting prospective or current students, FAQs cannot be neglected as they form a regular (though not obligatory) section.

The analysis focuses primarily on two aspects of this genre: on the one hand the generic features of the FAQ section in general – in other words the significant features of its recurrent pattern – and on the other hand the extent to which the explicitly dialogical form of FAQs contributes to the interpersonal component of university web sites as a whole.

2 Methodological framework

2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics and genre analysis

The methodology of the research is grounded in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and genre analysis, represented here mainly by Martin, Swales, and Bhatia.

Language is thus viewed as a socially and culturally grounded tool of communication, which is in principle multifunctional and fulfils simultaneously three metafunctions – or in other words, realizes three semantic components: the ideational component, as language reflects and represents reality; the interpersonal component, as language reflects but also shapes interpersonal, social relationships; and the textual component, as language represents an organized, structured, and cohesive form that enables it to fluently realize ideational and interpersonal meanings. The metafunctions correspond with three sets of contextual factors labelled by Halliday as the field, tenor and mode of discourse respectively. The interplay of all three components results in a contextualized choice and combination of linguistic devices termed register.

The concept of genre, similarly to the concept of register, is firmly embedded into the social context, which in SFL is viewed as a stratified system consisting of a hierarchy of levels: "Genre ... is set up above and beyond metafunctions (at a higher level of abstraction) to account for relations among social processes in more holistic terms, with a special focus on the stages through which most texts unfold. The relation of genre to register as complementary perspectives on the social 'content' of language (i.e. context) is thus comparable in some respects to the relation of discourse semantics to lexicogrammar as complementary perspectives on language's own content plane" (Martin 6).

Martin then defines genre as representing "the system of staged goal-oriented social processes through which social subjects in a given culture live their lives" (13). Besides the phases of unfolding mentioned above, the definition also emphasizes the fact that genres are always addressed to a certain audience and are closely tied to the producers' and receivers' culture.

Martin's approach towards genre within the framework of SFL corresponds in principle with the way in which genre is characterized by Swales and Bhatia: "Genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value" (Bhatia, *Analysing Genre. Language Use in Professional Settings* 13). The only limit to the accord between these two accounts of genre could be found in Swales's and Bhatia's focus on genres in professional or academic settings, on genres seen

exclusively as reflections of organizational cultures and institutional practices (Bhatia, *Worlds of Written Discourse. A Genre-Based View* 23).

In his recent study on discourse and genre, Bax presents a multi-faceted overview of a range of approaches towards genre, attaining an ultimate synthesis of generic components when defining the concept within the cognitive theory of mental schemas. He sees genres as mental structures, mental representations which we apply when producing and interpreting discourse, mental constructs which are shared by members of a particular community. In harmony with other researchers (e.g. Martin, Giltrow and Stein), he considers genres to be abstractions that find their realization in a range of instantiations, and further specifies his view by describing genres – with reference to Rosch’s Prototype Theory – as fuzzy mental concepts revolving around a limited number of clear-cut examples (Bax 39). Fuzziness, as he argues, is indispensable in facilitating the flexibility of genre realization and use.

A fairly similar focus on the cognitive nature of the concept of genre can be found in Santini, Mehler and Sharoff’s methodological treatise introducing a series of studies exploring specifically web genres (4): “[genre] reduces the cognitive load by triggering expectations through a number of conventions. Put in another way, genres can be seen as sets of *conventions* that transcend individual texts, and create frames of recognition governing document production, recognition and use. Conventions are *regularities* that affect information processing in a repeatable manner”. The authors emphasize that, by identifying a text as belonging to a certain genre, the receiver is given the power and advantage of predictivity of the communicative purpose and the context, which thus helps us to understand the text.

2.2 Genres in evolution and the genre continuum on the web

Although all the definitions discussed above mention the recurrence of communicative events as a feature crucial to the existence of genre and cite conventionalized features as an important prerequisite for genre identification, none of the researchers deny the dynamic nature of the genre system. Genres can never be characterized as static; on the contrary, they continually develop and change – they are in constant evolution (Santini, *Interpreting Genre Evolution on the Web*).

As genres are anchored in social context and culture, their existence is to a large extent dependent on their compliance with the current communicative needs of users and their institutions. Thus genres appear on the scene when they are needed, and expire when the situation is not relevant any more (Giltrow and Stein). Even genres that inhabit the scene for long periods are susceptible to changes and adjustments. As early as 1995 Bhatia commented on a growing tendency towards genre mixing, and distinguished this phenomenon from genre embedding (Bhatia, *Genre mixing in professional communication – The case of private intentions v. socially recognized purposes* 191). Genre mixing refers to the penetration of features typically associated with one genre into a different genre, in which they were not previously expected. Genre embedding means the insertion of one generic form into another, conventionally distinct generic form, as for example when a letter or a poem is used within an advertisement. Both genre mixing and genre embedding are examples of genre hybridization (Bhatia, *Worlds of Written Discourse. A Genre-Based View* 10).

The general fluidity and pragmatic openness of the genre system is even greater in the case of web genres or cybergenres (Giltrow and Stein 9). The hypertext net of the world wide web has brought unprecedented opportunities and substantially shaped situational factors – such as time and space restrictions and channel/medium specifications – and has therefore multiplied the opportunities for realizing one’s communicative purposes, thus multiplying the range of genres.

Santini (Interpreting Genre Evolution on the Web, Characterizing Genres of Web Pages: Genre Hybridism and Individualization) presents the synchronic genre repertoire as a continuum, in which there are three forces interacting together: traditional genres brought from the past as they were (reproduced genres), new genres and traditional genres adapted to the new environment (novel genres and adapted genres), and forms that are going to emerge but are not yet fully formed (emerging genres).

Drawing upon her long-term research mapping the proliferation of new genre candidates on the internet by testing the ability of web users to identify them and choose a proper label to name them, she suggests that “we might suspect an emerging genre when there is a recurrent textual pattern without an acknowledged name” (Santini, Characterizing Genres of Web Pages: Genre Hybridism and Individualization 6). It should be added, however, that – as indicated by the use of the present participle as a pre-modifier – the emergence of new genres is to be viewed as a process, which does not develop abruptly but continuously. Considering the vast space of the world wide web, it can be expected that both the recurrence of an identical or similar pattern and the acknowledgement of its name will spread gradually, and the speed and nature of the process may be domain-specific or culture-dependent. The process of emergence may not proceed in parallel stages in different cultures, but is often highly asymmetrical.

Within the fluid environment of the internet, the inherent fuzziness of the concept of genre becomes even more exploited: “Genres are not mutually exclusive and different genres can be merged into a single document, generating hybrid forms”, and on the other hand, “... genres allow a certain freedom of variation, and consequently can be individualized” (6). These convergent and divergent tendencies are particularly powerful in emerging genres that are not yet acknowledged and that often show hybrid (mixing several genres) or highly individualized (with high authorial variation, high inner variability) forms and indistinct functions (6). Considering Santini’s research results, relatively recently emerged genres include e.g. home pages, blogs, and also FAQs.

2.3 Hypertext and the specificity of web genres

Considering the sophisticated technological background internet text producers may take advantage of and the emergence of genres that did not exist in pre-internet times, the question arises whether genre analysis methods rooted in non-electronic communication can be effectively applied to the system of web genres.

On the one hand, the answers suggested by researchers surveying the current genre repertoire on the web are positive. The methodology of their analyses is grounded in Swales’s and Bhatia’s definition of genre (Roberts, Askehave and Nielsen, Santini, Giltrow and Stein) and their research results show that the principles on which this definition is based are valid even within the electronic space. The rationale for this finding may lie

in the fact that the internet to a large extent encompasses electronic versions of traditional written genres, which preserve both their communicative purpose and formal structuring (electronic versions of research articles, magazine articles, course books, and other publications), and also in the fact that even many of the ‘novel’ genres are not completely new but could be associated with possible written or oral pre-electronic ancestors. Askehave and Nielsen trace the communicative purpose and structure of a home page back to the Aristotelian exordium or to a contemporary genre – the newspaper front page; Santini characterizes the web genre of Frequently Asked Questions as having “a very close antecedent in the paper world in the Troubleshooting section of technical manuals ... or FAQs can be seen as a written form of a help desk or information desk” (Santini, *Automatic Identification of Genre in Web Pages* 235).

On the other hand, though, traditional steps of genre analysis seem to fail to account for those generic features of web genres whose genuine novelty stems from exploiting the unique capabilities of the electronic medium. Ignoring these would deprive the web genres of their chief distinctive features. Rather than by their linguistic form, i.e. by a certain ritualized and expected store of linguistic markers, web genres are recognized and distinguished by the function they fulfil and by their hypertext form and organization.

Askehave and Nielsen attempt to benefit from the valid principles of traditional genre analysis and at the same time to compensate for the absence of consideration given by those traditional approaches to the specific features of the web medium. The model of analysis they propose respects the character of hypertext as “a system of non-hierarchical text blocks where the textual elements (nodes) are connected by links” (Askehave and Nielsen 14) by developing a two-dimensional approach, which reflects the generic properties of the text blocks (the reading mode) as well as the generic properties of the links between them (the navigating mode). The modal shifts between reading continuous texts and zooming out of them to follow a link, which readers need to do when negotiating their way through websites, are thus seen here as the key difference between traditional genres and electronic hypertext genres (17). Askehave and Nielsen distinguish two types of links according to the function they fulfil: structural links, which organize the information on the website into a hierarchy, and associative links, which reflect readers’ potential interests and chain the texts on the web in an associative manner. Secondly, considering the realization of links, they define generic links based on a general expression referring to a global topic, and specific links, providing thematically contextualized ‘appetizers’ for the destination texts.

3 Material

The corpus for analysis consists of the websites of 13 universities including 6 British universities (University of Bristol, University of Edinburgh, University of Oxford, University of Brighton, University of Sheffield, and Leeds Metropolitan University), 3 North American universities (University of California, Los Angeles; University of Central Oklahoma; University of West Alabama), and 4 Czech universities (Charles University, Masaryk University, Palacký University, and University of Ostrava). The corpus as a whole provides 347 adjacency pairs published in FAQ sections.

All the data from the university websites surveyed within this research project were downloaded between January and July 2011.

Whereas eleven of the university websites analyzed employ the genre of FAQs, albeit in different locations and of different structures, two of them do not include such a section, not even in a modified form. As not only the presence of a genre but also its absence within a corpus represents a significant research result, the two universities have not been excluded from the corpus presented here.

The institutional websites of universities are part of the world wide web, which means that they are part of, and at the same time they themselves build, a hypertext net consisting of a hierarchy of hypertexts, which in turn consist of sets of e-texts, i.e. electronic texts. The classification used here comes from Jucker, who develops the typology suggested by Storrer (Storrer in Jucker). University websites represent a discourse colony, as defined by Hoey, and a genre colony, as defined by Bhatia (Worlds of Written Discourse. A Genre-Based View): in other words, the website could be seen on the one hand as a set of independent but related textual components framed for their interpretation by the university as the home institution, while on the other hand the website could be viewed as a complex of closely related genres and sub-genres working towards a common communicative purpose.

As the hypertext net of university websites comprises an array of hypertexts and electronic texts unified by a common communicative goal yet shaped by a variety of fields and target readers, the corpus compiled for the current study is inevitably selective and – to preserve its consistency – consists of electronic texts chained along the hypertext paths aimed at prospective and current students of the universities included.

4 FAQs: the position of the genre within university website hypertext

The genre of FAQs is unique among genres in general due to its dependence on or relatedness to other genres, mostly genre colonies (Bhatia, Worlds of Written Discourse. A Genre-Based View). A genre colony, as defined by Bhatia, stands in principle very close to the notion of discourse/text colony as defined by Hoey, and represents a set of genres, distinct and independent in themselves, but working in a joint venture for one common communicative purpose, which – together with lexico-semantic cohesive devices – gives the colony its sense of unity.

FAQs thus do not appear on the web as an independent website, but instead play the role of a discrete unit, a sub-genre, within a larger genre set.

FAQs typically form a regular component of institutional websites, but their position and location in the hypertext hierarchy is highly variable. The FAQ section is signalled either by a generic link in the upper or lower bar of the homepage, i.e. a link having a general, topical status, like a library catalogue entry (Askehave and Nielsen), or it can be found along the line of different specialized paths through the web: as a generic link compiling various queries addressed to the institution, or as a specific link, i.e. thematically contextualized and often introduced by a specifying leading paragraph, related to a specialized e-text in the lower parts of the hypertext.

The introduction of the FAQs link in the upper or lower bar of the homepage is rare; the majority of the universities in the corpus prefer to encourage direct, authentic contact

with visitors through a “Contact (us)” link, whereas FAQs are effectively used within specialized paths chaining e-texts on related topics (see example 1 below).

Example 1:

– a generic link in the upper/lower bar of the homepage:

FAQ	Kontakty	Budovy	Mapa stránek
(FAQ)	Contact	Buildings	Site map)

(University of Ostrava)

– a direct, authentic contact with the visitors through the “Contact (us)” link:

[Home](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Help](#) | [Site map](#) | [Contact us](#)

(University of Brighton)

– a specific link down the path to e-texts:

bristol.ac.uk → prospectus → undergraduate → 2012 → moneymatters →
[Tuition fees and funding FAQs](#)

(University of Bristol)

5 The generic features of FAQs: recurrent pattern versus inner variability

The genre of Frequently Asked Questions is characterized by the contrast between the firmly established and easily recognizable surface structure built of question-answer adjacency pairs and the substantial variability of their semantic macrostructure and microstructure and lexico-semantic realization.

The analysis of the corpus surveyed has revealed four significant qualities, which could be viewed as scalar in nature and which contribute considerably to the dynamic and variable character of the genre. The variables can be presented by means of four tentatively defined scales.

5.1 Scale I: interactive FAQs versus non-interactive FAQs

Firstly, we can place the individual FAQ sections on a scale ranging between interactive and non-interactive Frequently Asked Questions series, by which I mean the distinction between genuine adjacency pairs – where the question and its answer are closely related not only semantically but also by means of grammatical cohesive devices such as ellipsis or reference in Halliday and Hasan’s terminology (Halliday and Hasan). which makes the answer dependent on the question for the interpretation of its meaning – and pairs in which the answer is both formally and semantically independent of the question.

Whereas in the former adjacency pairs the answer is inseparable from the question and the dialogue thus effectively simulates the interactivity of authentic exchanges (see example 2), the answers in the latter could easily stand alone – they actually remind the

reader of paragraphs from a continuous text, in which the questions may either serve as sub-headlines or can be seen as dispensable (see example 3).

Example 2:

What do I need to bring when I see an advisor? (Academic Advisement, UCO)
Copies of any transfer transcripts, your current schedule, and a list of questions you have
for your advisor...

(University of Central Oklahoma)

Example 3:

Can I study on a part-time basis?
Studying for a degree is a big commitment and we understand that you may not have time to study full time. Part-time study enables you to study on a more flexible basis...

(University of Bristol)

There are of course cases which fall in between the two poles of the scale: the intermediate positions are occupied by exchanges in which the question and answer are inter-related not by grammatical cohesive devices but by the thematic development realized in the adjacency pair. The question here introduces a topic which is further developed in the answer: the question and answer are tied together by the linear thematic development. The answer is not dependent on the question for the primary meaning interpretation, but it would sound inappropriate if isolated due to the impaired informative structure (see example 4).

Example 4:

What is Clearing and can I apply?
Clearing is a service run by UCAS highlighting any places still left on programmes after August ...

(University of Bristol)

More than 50% of the adjacency pairs analyzed in this study lie towards the right end of the scale, i.e. between the intermediate pairs and non-interactive pairs. This finding indicates that the question-answer pattern serves here as a structuring principle shaping the genre into a text colony framed by the interpersonal, dialogical form and facilitating quick and easy scanning by the readers, rather than as a tool for the imitation of authentic dialogical communication.

5.2 Scale II: continuous dialogue versus discontinuous string

Secondly, attention could be paid not only to the relations within the individual adjacency pairs but also to (possible) relations between them; in other words, we can draw a distinction between FAQs whose adjacency pairs form a continuous dialogue and FAQs that are

built of a series of adjacency pairs which form a discontinuous discourse colony, i.e. the meaning of the individual pairs does not stem from their position within the string, and thus they could be read in a more or less arbitrary order.

Understandably, most of the FAQs belong to discourse colonies, which facilitate quick and easy reading – or more precisely, quick and easy scanning for the information required, moving forwards and backwards according to the reader’s needs. Strictly ordered stretches of dialogue, as illustrated here by example 6 below, are rare and do not exceed the sequence of two or three exchanges.

Example 6:

Q1: What documents do I need to send you in order to obtain an I-20 form from UCLA?

A1: The I-20 is the “Certificate of Eligibility” form that schools issue to admitted students who have accepted an offer of admission so they can apply for their F-1 Student Visa. In order to process the I-20, please access our I-20 request site and follow the instructions there. You may also need to release your SEVIS record and send us official records (transcripts, exam results). Please review the page for admitted international students carefully, and contact us if you have any questions.

Q2: When do I need to do this?

A2: We strongly recommend that you send your documents as soon as possible.

Here, to be able to understand question 2 as well as answer 2 we need to read question 1 plus answer 1 first.

(University of Central Oklahoma)
(highlighting added)

The reliance of the referential expressions and general lexical items underlined in the Q2-A2 exchange on their antecedents in the Q1-A1 exchange for interpretation lends the sequence of the two exchanges the ordering of a continuous dialogical text.

5.3 Scale III: script-determined organization and general→specific organization vs. random collection of questions in a random order

Even though the discontinuous structure of FAQ colonies is obviously desirable and should not be challenged by unnecessary formal links, there is apparently an effort to support the coherence of the colony as a whole and to endow the string of question-answer adjacency pairs with an underlying logical structure, in an effort to build a macrostructure.

The FAQ structures vary from highly organized chains reflecting the scripts of typical situations (see example 7), through a simple structuring following the line from general information to more specific items (example 8), to random collections of queries presented in a haphazard order, framed only by their location within the hypertext, e.g. as part of the prospective students section, which includes questions regularly asked by applicants (example 9).

Example 7 below presents a series of questions from an Open Day FAQ section at the University of Sheffield website. The choice of the queries as well as their ordering mirror the structure and the chronology of an Open Day programme as it is introduced at

the above-mentioned website and as it is generally realized at universities in Britain and elsewhere.

Example 7:

Open Day FAQs

Do I need to book?

What time does the day start and finish?

Where can I park?

Can I attend more than one departmental talk?

How long do the departmental talks last?

I've booked a place on a departmental talk. Can I change my booking?

How long do the general talks last?

(University of Sheffield)

When the Frequently Asked Questions relate to a variety of aspects of a particular issue rather than to an event or process, the underlying script is replaced by the general-specific ordering principle.

Example 8:

What is the Leeds Met Bursary?

Do I have to repay the Bursary?

Will the bursary have any affect on other financial support I might receive?

How much is the Bursary?

What are the criteria for eligibility?

...

How is my Bursary paid?

When will the payment be made?

...

I am repeating a year of study, am I still eligible for the bursary scheme?

(Leeds Metropolitan University)

Generally, the way in which FAQ sets are ordered tends to be influenced considerably by their position and location within the website. Whereas FAQs tied with the more specific and specified sections or e-texts in the deeper parts of the hypertext often manifest sophisticated organizational patterns, FAQ sections accessible directly from the principle gateways – the university home page or the prospective students home page – exhibit a rather random ordering, within which the questions are recognizably unified only by the target audience of the home page in which they are anchored. The following extract (example 9) shows sample questions from the prospective students home page of the University of Sheffield.

Example 9:

Will I be eligible for a bursary?

I don't yet have a formal English language qualification. Can I still apply for a post-graduate course?

When will I receive my Open Day pack?

I have been made a conditional offer of a study place on a postgraduate course. What are the conditions of my offer?

What are the living costs in Sheffield?

(University of Sheffield)

It may be the case that the order in which the questions are published is based on their relative frequency within the corpus of questions the university needs to deal with; however, this is an assumption that cannot be proved from the audience's point of view.

5.4 Scale IV: field-dominated, official register vs. tenor-dominated register of partnership and advertising

The final distinction suggested by the present research results reflects the variability in the tenor, i.e. the extent to which the genre includes and manifests interpersonal meanings. The scale here spans between the field-dominated, official register of administration, focused on mediating the essential factual information or sometimes only the necessary minimum of information guiding the visitor to a relevant source, and the tenor-dominated register in FAQs, seen as an opportunity to come into contact with the target audience and complement the institution's enquiries service through an effort to develop a relationship between the website visitors and the university.

The interplay of field-dominated and tenor-dominated discourse within the institutional discourse of university website presentations may be also viewed as a reflection of the aspects of *shouldness* and *enablement* as defined by Iedema (73): “institutional discourses can be typified as concerned with the realization of constraint, or ‘shouldness’, on the one hand, and with the construal of levels of institutional enablement and power on the other”. The co-presence of the shouldness elements (requirements and duties) and the enablement elements (offers and partnership), bringing a certain tension as well as harmony into the discourse of university presentations, appears to be a highly significant feature of current university website presentations.

The following examples illustrate the inner variability of the genre registers, demonstrating brevity and matter-of-factness (example 10), the development of a more personal relationship of familiarity within the academic community (example 11), and compliance with the advertising goals of attracting prospective students (example 12).

Example 10:

I am a part time student, am I eligible for the Bursary?

No. The Bursary is only payable to students on full time courses who meet all the criteria.

I am an international student, am I eligible for the Bursary?

No. The Bursary is only payable to UK students who meet all the criteria.

(Leeds Metropolitan University)

Example 11:

Mohu žádat o děkanský termín?

...Právo na druhý opravný termín neznamená, že Vám ho vyučující vypíše, kdykoli budete potřebovat...musíte se do nabídky “vejít” i s druhým opravným termínem...

(Can I apply to the Dean for an extra examination retake?

...The right to the second retake does not mean the teacher will offer you an exam date just according to your wish...you are supposed to “fit” the second retake into the standard offer of dates...)

(Masaryk University, my own English translation)

When will I hear a decision on my application?

We want to tell you of our decision as soon as we can. ...

(University of Bristol)

Example 12:

Do you do courses in journalism?

Oxford is a great place to pursue an interest in student journalism, with two well-regarded student newspapers – Cherwell and Oxford Student. Many leading journalists began their careers at Oxford. The Faculty encourages the widest possible range of writing experience.

Whilst there aren't specific courses or papers on journalism, the Faculty runs a prestigious series of lectures by the News International Visiting Professor of Broadcast Media. The Faculty also has strong links with News International and runs a yearly work experience programme, offering students the opportunity to spend three weeks working on a News International publication.

(University of Oxford)

As the examples show, there is very little tenor-related variability in the register of the questions. They are neutral, usually simple in structure and modestly polite: they mostly avoid ‘you’ as a means of address (example 12 represents a rare example), instead opting for an impersonal structure (see e.g. example 8) or the first person singular pronoun (see examples 2 – 7 and 9 – 11).

It is the answers that exhibit a certain variation along the field-dominated – tenor-dominated scale. Whereas the exchange in example 10 is firmly anchored in the register of administration with strict impersonality in the answer, the answer in example 11 builds a more informal, personal relationship between the administration and the students,

enhancing the contact by using the pronominal form of address (second person pronoun) and by colloquial features in both the lexis and the structure. In the case of the Masaryk University example the use of the verb 'vejít se' ('fit in', or 'squeeze in') attracts attention, as it lends the text a flavour of oral rather than written discourse production. The inverted commas framing the verb reveal that the authors are aware of the marked character of this stylistic inconsistency. These features of familiarity, however, do not suspend the status difference between the university administration and the students: on the contrary, the informality of the answer in combination with the strictness of the deontic modality used ('musíte' – 'you are supposed to') reinforces the power of the institution.

A different stylistic effect of informality features can be traced in the Bristol sample (example 11 again), where the choice of 'want' rather than e.g. 'would like/wish' and the repetition of 'we' build a closer and a more equal producer-receiver relationship of rapport based on shared interests and shared needs.

Finally, the Oxford example (12) provides an illustration of yet another strategy in the choice and combination of lexico-grammatical and discursive means. While the text preserves impersonality of expression and avoids addressing the reader, it is still highly persuasive. A series of verifiable credentials supported by a selection of positively evaluating adjectives effectively background the answer to the question asked (which is actually negative – "there aren't specific courses or papers on journalism") and attracts attention to the University's offer. Here the genre of Frequently Asked Questions serves a promotional purpose.

6 The variable conventionality of the genre and beyond: final remarks

The four tentatively sketched scales attempt to provide a framework within which the inner variation of the FAQ genre can be possibly viewed. The tokens of the genre surveyed, occupying different positions on each of the scales, bear witness to the fact that in spite of the obviously recurrent textual pattern, the genre of FAQs is still subject to individualization and authorial creativity. It is important to note that the position of individual samples of FAQs on each of the scales may differ even when the samples in question belong to different parts of the same hypertext – the same university website.

Nevertheless, the FAQs in nine out of the eleven university websites analyzed can be clearly recognized as tokens of the same genre presented under the same name – Frequently Asked Questions. If there is a different link used (e.g. Questions and Answers, Ask Sheffield), the name FAQ appears later in the introduction to the question-answer string.

Two university websites represent an exception, with a realization of FAQs that does not meet the expectations generally related to the genre – namely Charles University and the University of Ostrava, where the FAQs are accessible through a generic link directly from a home page (targeted at prospective students) and their function is confused with the 'contact us' link; the e-text presents all personal questions sent ad hoc to the administrator, at one occasion even including the authentic names as found as signatures in the e-mail enquiries.

The use of the genre in the Czech environment has obviously been inspired by the English versions found on foreign websites. In the present corpus the level of the genre's domestication and of the functionality of its employment within Czech university

websites is eloquently reflected in the translations of the genre's name, which accompany the regularly used English abbreviation 'FAQ'. Whereas the Charles University and the University of Ostrava stick to a word-for-word translation (Často kladené otázky/dotazy), the Masaryk University website offers a more communicative, idiomatic Czech version: Na co se nás nejčastěji ptáte (literally: What you most frequently ask us about – my own working translation).

Out of the four Czech university websites surveyed, only one – Masaryk University – can be said to use the genre of FAQs appropriately and effectively.

7 Conclusions

Frequently Asked Questions represent a specific sub-genre of the university website genre colony, and in spite of the inner variability they manifest – individualization and authorial creativity – they are recognized as a genre used under a conventional name.

The nature of the discursive and lexico-grammatical features of the genre oscillates between interactivity and a monologic character, continuity and discontinuity, script-like organization and a random collection, and between a field-dominated and tenor-dominated genre profile.

Whilst relatively standardized within British and American university websites, FAQs still belong among the emerging web genres in the domain of Czech university websites, where the acceptance of the genre is at a different stage.

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Corpus

<http://www.brighton.ac.uk/>
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/>
<http://www.cuni.cz/>
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/home>
<http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/>
<http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/>
<http://www.osu.cz/>
<http://www.muni.cz/>

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/>
<http://www.ucla.edu/>
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The Manifestation of Positive Politeness in Medical Consulting Revisited

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Abstract

This paper offers some partial results from a long-term project aimed at an inquiry into the field of medical consulting. The primary goal of the project is to search for communicative strategies of doctors and patients that can convey empathy and trust. Via an interdisciplinary analysis, based on data excerpted from the most recent edition of the British National Corpus (2007), the author brings quantitative and qualitative evidence that doctor–patient interaction has undergone significant modifications, resulting in a social redefinition of the originally asymmetrical roles of the main protagonists. The present paper draws attention to those communicative practices of doctors and patients that are related to the manifestation of positive politeness.

Keywords: medical consultation, British National Corpus, positive politeness

1 Introduction

The present paper reports on an interdisciplinary investigation within the field of medical consulting, with the aim of discussing communicative practices of doctors and patients that are related to the manifestation of positive politeness. With respect to the primary goal of the long-term research, that being a search for discourse strategies of doctors and patients that are capable of conveying empathy¹ and trust, it focuses on a selected number of strategies, most of which can be characterized as patient-centred and/or expressing equality, mutuality, and symmetry in the doctor–patient relationship.

For the purposes of the analysis I have taken advantage of the spoken component of the *British National Corpus* (BNC XML, ed. 2007) and its collection of transcribed and annotated medical interviews. I have selected 50 medical interactions, all of them dyads, with the total extent of the text amounting to 34,376 words. Regarding methodology, I have combined the statistical perspective² of medical science with the qualitative viewpoints

of conversation and discourse analysis (cf. Wynn 1995). My findings are compared and contrasted with findings resulting from previous studies on the principle of politeness in doctor–patient interaction, conducted in the 1980s and early 1990s.

2 Politeness: Theory and Practice

Much has been written in recent years on the theory of politeness or the politeness principle, and many definitions of politeness have been advanced. The following four delineations are just random choices from the endless number of relevant sources.

“Politeness is a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange” (Lakoff 34). “Normal human interaction is governed by a set of culturally determined conventions, (...) often very properly moderated by politeness” (Lyons 300). “Politeness is not only connected with constantly recurring linguistic formulae but in particular with recurrent behaviour patterns, which regulate social interaction and gain their function and significance from the specific constellations for which they are obligatory” (Held in Watts et al. 148). “Politeness is a matter of what is said, and not a matter of what is thought or believed” (Cruse 362).

Despite all of the studies devoted to politeness – and maybe because of their large number –, no agreement has been reached on the concept as such, and we should rather speak of a number of diverse conceptions (for a summary see Wilamová 2005). Probably the most influential and respected work on politeness was written by Brown & Levinson (1987). They distinguish between negative politeness and positive politeness, presenting negative politeness as “the heart of respect behaviour, just as positive politeness is the kernel of ‘familiar’ and ‘joking’ behaviour” (Brown & Levinson: 129). In their view, the system of negative politeness consists of five supra-strategies, namely (i) *be direct*, (ii) *don’t presume/assume*, (iii) *don’t coerce H*, (iv) *communicate S’s want to not impinge on H*, and (v) *redress other wants of H’s*. The system of positive politeness consists of three supra-strategies (see below).

Brown & Levinson’s approach has not escaped criticism. Meier (1995), for example, criticizes the distinction between negative and positive politeness as fuzzy, and rejects “equating politeness with specific speech acts, lexical items, or syntactic constructions” (Meier 381). According to Urbanová (18), the “distinction between formal and informal politeness is functionally more relevant than the above-mentioned distinction between negative and positive politeness”. Nevertheless, Brown & Levinson offer quite a delicate system of politeness mechanisms, which I find useful for the purposes of my investigation. Moreover, as the following two examples illustrate, it is possible to distinguish between negative (Example 1) and positive politeness (Example 2). For that reason I label positive politeness strategies in accord with Brown & Levinson as (i) *claim common ground*, (ii) *convey that S and H are cooperators*, and (iii) *fulfil H’s want*.

- (1) P: *I don't know why I think maybe the tablets helped, but erm I was saying I was kind of having second thoughts whether I was wanting to go on the HRT³ [or*
 D: *No.]*
 P: *No.*
 D: *No chance. No chance. Not, not with your blood pressure like that.*
 P: *No er well she didn't say much, but she*
 D: *Well, no chance can tell you now.*
 P: *Whenever er*
 D: *Just get yourself [down.*
 P: *And I thought] er and I had wee tablets that you gave me a while ago, Brusdeximit.*
 D: *Mhm.*
 P: *And I was wondering maybe if I'd be better going back on them.*

(BNC/H5V/18–28)

- (2) D: *Cos these are the things that cause.*
 P: *Yeah I thought it was soap.*
 D: *Mhm.*
 P: *And I started see now they've brought out that Dove, the moisturizer, rubbish.*
 D: *(ha-ha)*
 P: *Crap. Right.*
 D: *(ha-ha)*
 P: *Good. I've been buying bars and bars of that see.*
 D: *((ha-ha)) No it's er*
 P: *Rubbish. I said maybe that'll sort it.*

(BNC/G43/36–45)

As is evident from the above examples, the first illustration (the negatively polite behaviour) takes place during the information-gathering phase, whereas the second illustration (the positively polite behaviour) occurs during the phase of diagnosis. It will be interesting to see if there really is a significant correspondence between the number of politeness strategies (positively polite in particular) and the interview sections or the interview participants, and to seek a qualitative explanation for the data. No less important will be to compare and contrast some of the findings related to the manifestation of the politeness principle arrived at in the 1980s and early 1990s (see Chart 1) with the research results I have obtained at the beginning of the 21st century, based on the electronic version of the *British National Corpus* (2007). Such findings can be relevant when considering to what degree the present-day style of doctor–patient communication reflects ongoing social transformations (cf. Furst 1998).

Chart 1: Findings resulting from previous studies on politeness strategies in doctor–patient interaction

Study	Research results
Paget (1983)	Politeness forms are almost entirely absent from the speaking practices of doctors.
Fisher (1983)	Patients very rarely carry out face threatening acts.
Cicourel (1983)	Doctors ignore symptoms presented by patients.
Raffler-Engel (1989)	The use of medical jargon when a doctor talks to his patient makes the doctor appear to be discourteous.
Henzl (1989)	The substitution of the address pronoun <i>you</i> by the first person plural pronoun <i>we</i> perpetuates social distance between doctors and patients during their communication.
Roter & Hall (1992)	Both positive and negative talk are quite rare and make up a smaller share of doctors' contributions.
Roter & Hall (1992)	Both positive and negative talk are quite common and make up a large share of patients' contributions.
Maynard (1992)	It is possible for doctors to build an interactional environment in which the delivery of medical expertise will not conflict with the lay perspective of their patients.
Heritage & Sefi (1992)	Advice-giving threatens both the positive and negative face of the advice recipient.
Heath (1992)	Patients do offer their version of postdiagnostic accounts, but without challenging doctors' assessments.

(cf. Wynn 1999: 64–68)

3 Quantitative Perspective: Distributions of Positive Politeness Strategies

The distributional summary of positive politeness strategies realized in the material under investigation is as follows (Table 1 & 2). Out of 50 medical consultations, comprising 5525 turns (34,376 words), it was possible to excerpt 178 cases. 133 (75%) of them are due to the initiation of doctors, 45 (25%) are due to the initiation of patients. 67 (39%) come to pass during the information-gathering section, 4 (2%) come to pass during the diagnosis section, and 105 (59%) during the treatment section. 120 (67%) instances can be classified as belonging to the supra-strategy 'claim common ground', 32 (18%) of them as

belonging to the supra-strategy ‘convey that S and H are cooperators’, and 26 (15%) to the supra-strategy ‘fulfil H’s want’.

Table 1: Absolute frequency of positive politeness strategies in doctor–patient interaction

Abs.	Participant		Phase			Total
	Doctor	Patient	Information	Diagnosis	Treatment	
<i>Common ground</i>	84	36	62	4	52	120
<i>Cooperator</i>	30	2	2	0	30	32
<i>Fulfil want</i>	19	7	3	0	23	26
Total	133	45	67	4	105	178

Table 2: Relative frequency of positive politeness strategies in doctor–patient interaction

%	Participant		Phase			Total
	Doctor	Patient	Information	Diagnosis	Treatment	
<i>Common ground</i>	63	80	92	100	49	67
<i>Cooperator</i>	23	4	3	0	29	18
<i>Fulfil want</i>	14	16	5	0	22	15
Total	75	25	39	2	59	100

As Chart 1 suggests, the previous investigation into politeness (both positive and negative) manifested in doctor–patient interaction was either vague or rather fragmented, definitely not anchored in statistical data. For this reason, the above distributional analysis cannot reveal much information of a comparative character; the only exception is a ‘cut and dried’ rebuttal of Paget’s (1983) opinion that politeness forms are almost entirely absent from the speaking practices of medical professionals. It is obvious that doctors (and patients) employ positive politeness strategies quite frequently, throughout the medical interview, and of all selected types (Example 3: *claim common ground*, Example 4: *convey that S & H are cooperators*, Example 5: *fulfil H’s wants*). As my previous research (see Černý 2008) pointed out, not only positively polite, but also negatively polite behaviour is embedded in the communication of doctors and their patients.

(3) D: *Mhm.*

P: *I’m not getting to sleep. It’s taking me oh quite a while to get to sleep and, and I’m not hearing [too good.*

D: *Right.] Let’s have a look in and see if your brains are expanding or what’s happening in here. (.) No wonder you’re not hearing so good. No wonder you’re getting a buzzing in your ears there’s a big lump of concrete in there.*

P: *Is there?*

D: *Let’s have another look at this. Oh my. For goodness sake. (ha-ha) There’s a wee man with a pick and shovel in [(unclear)*

P: *[(unclear)]*

D: *Oh aye. It's solid.*

P: *Is it?*

D: *Absolutely solid.*

(BNC/H4U/8–16)

- (4) D: *Er nineteen (.) four; (.) ninety three. (.) Er so that gives you another five or ten years before the dry rot sets in.*

P: *I hope so, hope so. (ha-ha)*

D: *Oh that's good. Oh that's*

P: *I sometimes think it's nature's (unclear) wear and tear.*

D: *Ah! You've got years and years and years to catch up yet.*

P: *(ha-ha)*

D: *Years and years and years.*

(BNC/G44/41–47)

- (5) P: *Well what really set my mind was when I lost my sister and my brother.*

D: *Mm.*

P: *Cathy and Hughie like, [in two*

D: *Yeah.]*

P: *months smoking.*

D: *That's right. That's right. I mean we we've got a friend and she used to smoke sixty a day, [and she never*

P: *(unclear)]*

D: *even talked about stopping, till her pal, into hospital, a dif a bypass operation. And that was it.*

P: *Enough.*

D: *Tt! That was it. No chance.*

(BNC/H53/28–37)

The calculation of the F-test (see the Appendix) and the Pearson correlation give more straightforward data: (i) the F-test indicates that, statistically, there is a significant distinction between the distribution of politeness strategies 'claim common ground' and 'convey that S & H are cooperators' with regard to the category of participants, which suggests that it is worth examining which strategy is employed more frequently; (ii) it shows that there is also a significant distinction in the distribution of politeness strategies 'convey that S & H are cooperators' and 'fulfil some of H's wants' with respect to the participants, which again suggests that this fact is worth studying; (iii) the F-test demonstrates a significant distinction between the politeness strategies 'claim common ground' and 'convey that S & H are cooperators' with respect to the category of dialogue phases; (iv) it shows that there is also a significant distinction between the strategies 'claim common ground' and 'fulfil H's want' with respect to the phases. Moreover, the correlation ($r=0.3896$) also gives evidence that there is a significant correspondence between the variables 'dialogue section' and 'type of positive politeness strategy'.

With respect to points *i*, *iii*, and *iv*, it can be said that both participants prefer positive politeness strategies involving ‘claiming common ground between speakers and hearers’ to strategies involving ‘cooperation of S & H’ and/or ‘fulfilling H’s wants’. The explanation appears to be closely connected with the number of substrategies embraced by each category and with the dialogue phases in which it is natural for the particular strategy to take place. As the former category comprises more than half of the total number of substrategies involved (8 out of 15: for details see Brown & Levinson⁴), it could be presumed that it is this variability and richness that supports the language choices. In a way, this is true. Nonetheless, as neither doctors nor patients are familiar with the categories produced by linguists, it must be added that unlike the latter two strategies, which occur almost exclusively in the treatment section, the former strategy is distributed throughout the interview. This is due to the character of the particular strategy. Whilst in ‘claiming common ground’ the speaker emphasizes that both S & H belong to the same group of persons (Brown & Levinson 103), which may be conveyed during any period of the encounter, the claim that ‘S & H are cooperators’ and, in particular, ‘fulfilments of H’s wants’ are perspectivized towards the end of the encounter.

Referring to point *ii*, it can be explained by the unbalanced distribution of instances between doctors and patients within the category ‘convey that S & H are cooperators’ (doctors 30 : patients 2) and a more balanced distribution of instances within the category ‘fulfil some of H’s wants’ (doctors 19 : patients 7).

4 Qualitative Perspective: Positive Politeness Strategies Manifested by Doctors

Having outlined the statistical perspective of the analysis, I will now continue with its qualitative interpretation. What may be stressed as the most significant point, if compared with available research results from the 1980s and early 1990s, is that medical professionals are willing to contribute to a trustful and sharing atmosphere in a medical consultation. By employing a variety of positive politeness strategies throughout the interview, they support courteous and tactful manners, and thus achieve smooth relations with their patients. The fact that medical professionals show empathy and understanding, attention and interest, encouragement and cooperation when interacting with their clients results in social closeness during the act of communication.

More specifically, qualitative interpretations have, for instance, indicated that doctors frequently choose a style of language that patients are familiar with (cf. Raffler-Engel 1989). Usually they switch from medical jargon to more colloquial expressions (Example 6–7). In other words, they try to build an interactional environment in which the delivery of medical expertise does not conflict with the lay perspective of their patients (Maynard 1992). To put it yet more differently, using terminology which is typical of pragmatic discourse, doctors tend to “choose such expressions which minimally belittle the hearer’s status”, or “cause the minimum loss of face to the hearer” (Cruse 362).

- (6) P: *Is it alright to put that on, you know, when it's broken. The skin*
D: *Yes, you've got, you've got to be a bit careful with broken skin because if you put things directly on it, they tend to irritate. It won't do the skin any harm particularly, but it can smart. [And*
P: *Mhm.]*
D: *that might be one good reason for using the er the soaks. The other think I'd recommend, is, using a fine pair scissors, is take off the scaly bits, the bits that stick out, cos they're the bits [that catch*
P: *Mm.]*
D: *and hurt [and*
P: *Yeah.]*
D: *pull the skin apart. And once they're all sticking out, dead and scaly, they're redundant anyway, so you may as well trim it all down. Neaten it up. And you're less likely to catch your hands then. Okay?*
P: *Okay.*

(BNC/GYE/54–62)

- (7) D: *It it's a funny little drug it's related to sodium, old sodium, you've got loads of sodium. You take it it everyday as with salt. Er but I I it can replace sodium in certain systems of the body. In fact that's how it seems to work. But because of that you've got to watch it's effects on the kidneys, on the body biochemistry.*

(BNC/G5X/91–91)

The positive talk of practitioners is further enhanced by the frequent use of laughter (Example 8), by showing solidarity (Example 9) and approval (Example 10), by tension release (Example 11), by displaying optimism and involving a high percentage of communication with positive content (Example 12), by giving reassurance (Example 13) and offering support (Example 14), by calming patients and promoting trust (Example 15), by initiating safe topics (Example 16) and by informal address forms (Example 17). Although merely enumerative in character, this information alters Roter & Hall's (1992) standpoint on doctor–patient interaction (see Chart 1).

- (8) D: *Turn you into a human being.*
P: *(unclear)*
D: ***(ha-ha)***
P: ***((ha-ha)) You're not kidding.***
D: ***(ha-ha)***
P: *That's what it feels like [(unclear)*
D: *Well]*
P: *especially with the wee one being*
D: *[well,*
P: *ill,] [I mean*
D: *well]*

P: *she's up all night, (unclear).*
D: *Turn you into a human being.*

(BNC/G47/112–124)

- (9) P: *And I don't want to go. I'm not one for [holidays.*
D: *No, no.]*
P: *I like being in I it's it's it's your nature, [if if*
D: *That's right.]*
P: *your if your nature's for gadding about,*
D: *I think that's [(unclear)*
P: *okey-dokey.] but if it isn't I mean I like me home. I'm a home bird.*
D: ***That's right. [That's***
P: ***Er]***
D: ***right, I must admit, I'm inclined the same way.***
P: *Yeah, yeah.*
D: *(ha-ha)*

(BNC/G5P/18–29)

- (10) D: ***Yeah, you're okay, you can go swimming, it shouldn't do you any harm.***
I mean in things like swimming baths are chlorinated so they've got a low bug count anyway, so, so you'll be at low risk of getting anything there.

(BNC/GYE/79–79)

- (11) P: *It's not doing very good.*
D: *Is it not?*
P: *No, it is not. (.) She that er that cream, and I couldn't doing any good.*
D: *Is it not?*
P: *No. No.*
D: ***Right. Oh I'll get that sorted out for you. No problem.***

(BNC/H5P/10–15)

- (12) P: *If it helps my blood pressure I could live with the cold*
D: *[Yes. Oh yes.*
P: *fingers.] [(ha-ha)*
D: *Oh aye.] Oh it's doing really nice. And we'll see you in four weeks again.*
P: *That's fine.*
D: *And get it checked again June.*
P: *Okay.*
D: *Okay.*

(BNC/H4P/67–74)

- (13) D: *Yes. Things from er data whenever can take ages and ages and ages to and you know doctors get sued every now and again, perish the thought, (ha-ha). Oh [(unclear)*

P: *Perish the thought but when]*

D: *you when you keep hearing reports in the medical journals about doctors being sued, and it can be several years after the event that the case comes to court. **Now it won't be that long in your case, but just goes to show how lengthy the whole thing can be.***

P: *Yea yeah yeah.*

(BNC/G5M/176–179)

- (14) D: *Er and I hope everything goes as smoothly as possible. **If there are any medical reports to do, we'll get them done as soon as possible.***

(BNC/G5M/146–146)

- (15) D: *What I want you to do is, just with you sitting just now, just lift your leg up like that, just hold it with your two hands. And just (.) do that. About twenty times a day. (.) Now your knee'll be sore, when you start doing it, because you, this muscle has to get strengthened up again. (.) And let the scar joined up. But as you keep doing that every day, it'll get less and less and less painful. And after about a week, there'll be no pain in it, and you'll be (.) doing it no bother at all. And that muscle'll grow over the top of that scar, and it'll get rid of all that for you Jim.*

P: *Okay.*

D: *Well that's so as you're, you're going to win after all. **You're going to win.***

(BNC/G46/23–25)

- (16) P: *I mean it's quite serious.*

D: *Yes. Oh, yes. It is. Oh, aye, [(ha-ha).*

P: *(ha-ha)]*

D: *[(ha-ha)*

P: *off her head.]*

D: ***Families are strange. Families are***

P: *[(unclear)*

D: ***strange.]***

P: *Doctor.*

D: *(ha-ha)*

(BNC/H4W/174–183)

- (17) D: *Now a teaspoonful in the morning. Teaspoonful at tea time. And two teaspoonful before you go to your bed. And that'll get the inside of that sorted out for a wee while again **young William.***

(BNC/H4N/23–23)

Expectedly enough, these communicative practices do not occur in isolation; they overlap and combine with each other. In the following illustration (Example 18), after the diagnosis is revealed (*thyroid gland*), the doctor conveys his social closeness to the patient by a combination of informal expressions (e.g. *zombie*) with utterances calming the patient down and assuring her that everything will turn out well (*we'll get you sorted out, we'll keep things right for you*). All this is performed in a humorous and sharing ambience.

- (18) D: *We'll get sorted out, but we'll check this first to make sure there isn't anything else, Ann. But it looks a fairly straightforward thing.*
P: *Mhm.*
D: *We'll get you sorted out, turn you into a human being again.*
P: *(ha-ha) (unclear) a zombie.*
D: *(unclear) instead of, instead of walking about like a zombie.*
P: *Aye, [a heavy]*
D: *But er]*
P: *zombie. (ha-ha)*
D: *And right, er if you give me a phone about twelve on Thursday morning,*
P: *Mhm.*
D: *we should have that result back, be able to tell you what's happening. Okay?*
P: *Mhm.*
D: *We'll keep things right for you. Okay Ann?*
P: *(unclear). Thanks.*
D: *Right. Okay now.*
P: *Cheerio.*
D: *Cheerio just now.*

(BNC/G4B/99–115)

As is evident from Example 18, such instances often take place at the end of the consultation. Doctors seem to be fully aware of the importance of their patients feeling comfortable, and leaving the doctor's surgery without a bad taste in their mouth, with a glow of satisfaction, with a sense of security and a feeling of fellowship. These circumstances support positive treatment outcomes because patients are more likely to comply with their doctors' instructions (cf. Pendleton 38–39).

By contrast, it seems that during the diagnosis phase doctors tend to retain a certain degree of distance, and their verbal behavior can be characterized as off-hand and curt (Examples 19 & 20). They are reserved and formal, possibly with the aim of supporting their professional authority – which can, however, be face-threatening for patients.

- (19) D: *Okay. You've got a nasty chest infection. (unclear) down here, the whole of the left side on the back.*

(BNC/GYC/46–46)

- (20) D: *But the way things look to me, it looks as though your thyroid gland's beginning to slow down. (.) And this is why you're whole lot's*
P: *Mm.*

D: *all beginning to puff up.*

P: *Mhm.*

D: *And you're your particular just under here. I see the difference in you under there.*

P: *Mm.*

D: *And your, your whole face is a bit puffed, but mostly round about there.*

(BNC/G4B/87–93)

In addition, giving advice (Example 21), usually following the revelation of diagnosis, can also be assessed as a face-threatening act (cf. Heritage & Sefi 1992); it imposes the doctor's expertise on the client, and does not allow the patient to arrive at her own conclusions.⁵ In the information-gathering phase, the patient is also exposed to a number of face-threatening acts. For example, the doctor may ask the patient to do something which could be embarrassing and/or uncomfortable for her (Example 22).

(21) D: *Okay. And what I suggest **we** do is seeing Georgina's here we send you through to see Georgina and she can, if she's got time, **we** briefly run through one or two types. See which suits you best.*

(BNC/G5W/81–81)

(22) D: *Okay, **can** you slip your shoe and sock off?*

(BNC/G5R/26–26)

In order to save both the positive and negative face of the patient, the doctor can employ a variety of techniques and mitigating devices. A large part of the present study demonstrates how the positive face of the patient can be saved, supported or maintained. (For some of the communicative strategies related to the way in which the negative face of the patient can be preserved, see Černý 2008.) The two examples above (22 & 23) illustrate just two such techniques: (i) the use of inclusive 'we' (cf. Henzl 1989), and (ii) the use of the modal verb 'can' to soften the impact of the directive.

5 Qualitative Perspective: Positive Politeness Strategies Manifested by Patients

Compared to the relative distribution of doctor-initiated positive politeness strategies, the figures for patient-initiated positive politeness strategies signal both similarities and differences (see Table 2).

As far as the classification of strategies is concerned, both participants give significant preference to a communicative mechanism labelled 'claim common ground', with even stronger stress placed on the part of the patient (D – 63% : P – 80%). A discrepancy can be seen in the use of the other two mechanisms: 'convey that S and H are cooperators' and 'fulfil H's want'. Whereas doctors prefer the former, patients give preference to the latter. According to Brown & Levinson (1987), this strategy ('fulfil H's want') is reflected in situations in which the S wants to satisfy the H's positive-face want by actually satisfying some of H's wants. "Hence we have the classic positive-politeness action of gift-giving,

not only tangible gifts (...), but human-relations wants such as those illustrated in many of the outputs considered above – the wants to be liked, admired, cared about, understood, listened to, and so on” (Brown & Levinson 129). Transferred into a more specific medical environment, patients not only do what their doctors want them to do, but often express respect, admiration, etc. (Example 23).

- (23) P: *I've got the post from the hospital to get*
D: *[(unclear)]*
P: *and medication from them, Doctor.] Ah, God, I don't know how you take your job.*⁶

(BNC/H4W/18–20)

Regarding the distribution throughout the medical interview, the doctor and the patient follow the same order of ‘phase productivity’: the most numerous section is the treatment phase, followed by the information-gathering phase, while the least numerous is the phase of diagnosis. The most interesting finding is that the relative number of strategies initiated in the treatment phase is identical for doctors and patients (60%). This confirms that the end of the consultation is the most positively polite section of the medical encounter. It is a section of reciprocity, intimacy, and empathy (Example 24).

- (24) D: *Nothing to worry about with that. (unclear) (.), there we are now.*
P: *I shall survive again then.*
D: *You are going to live for a wee while yet, going to live for a wee while yet. Yes. Oh aye oh.*
P: *((ha-ha))*
D: *If you've got anything funny like that, you get it checked.*
P: *Aye, right away.*
D: *Don't, don't ignore it.*
P: *Well I think you can go home now cos I was the last.*
D: *Och. You think so? I would, I wouldn't bet on it. I wouldn't bet on it.*
P: *(ha-ha)*
D: *[Right,*
P: *Thanks.]*
D: *okay Cathy, cheerio now.*

(BNC/G4E/45–57)

The positive talk of patients takes a range of forms. Patients ask their doctors quite personal questions concerning their families (Example 25) or the way they feel (Example 26 & 27). Sometimes they tease doctors, thus showing friendliness (Example 28). They may initiate a joking atmosphere, resulting in laughter (Example 29), or make social (non-medical) and informal remarks (Example 30 & 31).

- (25) P: ***What about your own family? You still got them?***
D: *Yeah. Oh well. Yeah, they're still*
P: *Still keeping you*

D: *still keeping me out of mischief.*
 P: *[Still keeping*
 D: *Still keeping me out of mischief.] (ha-ha)*

(BNC/H5V/132–137)

- (26) P: ***How are you keeping yourself, Doctor?***
 D: *Me? Fine.*

(BNC/H5A/128–129)

- (27) P: *Okay then.*
 D: *Right. Okay Alison.*
 P: *Thanks a lot.*
 D: *Right. Cheerio now.*
 P: *Bye. **Are you alright yourself?***
 D: *Yeah. Yeah. It's no no problem.*
 P: *(ha-ha) (unclear) it's just typical isn't it?*
 D: *That's it.*

(BNC/H59/83–90)

- (28) D: *Good evening*
 P: *Hello.*
 D: *Mary.*
 P: ***She said when I came in, there's only two in front of you. And you know I've been sitting an hour.***
 D: *(ha-ha)*

(BNC/H4F/1–5)

- (29) D: *This is old age coming.*
 P: *Old age doesn't come itself so they say.*
 D: ***((ha-ha))***
 P: *Och well.*
 D: ***((ha-ha))***
 P: *Och well, that's it.*
 D: ***((ha-ha))*** *If that's all, if that's all we get for getting old, w w we'll do (unclear).*
 P: *That's it. Well that's fine, we'll do.*

(BNC/G4D/134–141)

- (30) D: *(ha-ha)*
 P: ***Cos when you smoke you kept your money for your fags, but if you don't smoke you don't need to keep it.***
 D: *(ha-ha)*
 P: *[(ha-ha)]*

D: ((ha-ha)) *I thought you'd have been buying an oil well or something like that.*

P: *I know, I didn't realize, (unclear). My two brothers are off on holiday now for ten days.*

D: *Aye.*

(BNC/H53/11–17)

(31) P: ***It was bloody painful. If you excuse the French.***

D: *That's it.*

(BNC/H50/52–53)

Similarly to doctors, also the patient-initiated positive politeness strategies form a number of varied combinations. In Example 32, first the doctor and the patient give information regarding the treatment. Then the patient proceeds with a humorous remark (*well I didn't have to wait too long for you today*), resulting in mutual laughter and elaboration of the remark. After that the doctor plans to close down the interview (*away and look after yourself*), but the patient continues with a series of social complaints which draw the doctor back into the discussion, sharing his own perspective. Only then does the active patient shift the topic of the interview back to treatment issues (*so, four weeks?*), and the doctor finally closes the encounter.

(32) D: *Now I want to see you in four weeks again.*

P: *Oh you want to see me in four weeks?*

D: *Mhm.*

P: *How long did you give me my certificate for?*

D: *Thirteen weeks.*

P: *Thirteen weeks? But er you want to see me in four weeks to see about that?*

D: *Thirteen weeks. But I want you to come back in four weeks. Mhm. (.) I want you back in four weeks.*

P: *Well I didn't have to wait too long for you today.*

D: ((ha-ha)) *It's a change.*

P: ((ha-ha)) *Is it? I know I keep saying to*

D: *[It's a change.*

P: *myself, you know] er cos I'm saying I said, how many's that that's been into that doctor? And a new doctor I was talking to, I says, three went in (unclear) I says, ((ha-ha)) Hope they're all going into (unclear), doctor.*

D: *[(ha-ha)*

P: *((ha-ha))]*

D: *Away and look after yourself.*

P: *I think it's, I think it's er I'm just getting old, it doesn't happen (unclear). See, I'm used to doing everything myself.*

D: *Mhm.*

P: *I've always had to do everything.*

D: *Aye.*

- P: *And wheelbarrow, (unclear), you know and see now. I keep saying, (unclear) You used to (unclear) your children, but they don't do nothing for you now, don't they*
- D: *[Not much.*
- P: *not?]*
- D: *I wouldn't hold (unclear) your breath waiting for them nowadays.*
- P: *So, four weeks?*
- D: *Right, see you four weeks.*
- P: *Er right, aye.*
- D: *Right Agnes.*
- P: *Right. Thanks.*
- D: *Cheerio now.*

(BNC/G45/128–156)

Under certain circumstances the communicative behaviour of the above patient could be considered not face-addressing but face-threatening, as it imposes on the doctor the patient's ideas about how the consultation should proceed. However, the doctor does not seem to be offended; he empathizes with the patient, and lets her disclose what she wants to share. In general, patients very rarely carry out face-threatening acts (cf. Fisher 1983). In spite of this, there are a few instances of FTAs in the material under scrutiny. Usually they take place during a follow-up when the patient complains that her health condition is not better, thus questioning the doctor's professional reputation (Example 33), or she even offers her own version of post-diagnostic accounts (Example 34), and in this way she challenges the doctor's treatment assessments and recommendations (cf. Heath 1992).

- (33) D: *Well now. What can I do for you today?*
- P: ***Oh it's just it's not getting any better.***
- D: *You're still having trouble?*

(BNC/H4E/7–9)

- (34) P: ***See these tablets you gave me. They're no use. I prefer to keep***
- D: *[Are they not?*
- P: *with the (unclear)]*
- D: *[Mhm.*
- P: *that I've got.]*
- D: *Right.*
- P: ***Because you gave me ten milligrams and the five's not very strong. But I'm not very well with them and I just think they're terrible.***

(BNC/H51/51–57)

The last point which I would like to mention here and which is, naturally, related to the phenomenon of politeness as manifested in doctor–patient communication concerns the participants' orientations to conversation and politeness maxims. In Adegbite & Odebunmi's view: "The maxim of quality is almost always obeyed in doctor–patient

interaction because participants recognize the need for truth in the resolution of medical problems. However, the other maxims of quantity, relation and manner are sometimes flouted in the course of expression of sentiments and emotional feelings and avoidance of unpleasant consequences” (510). Politeness maxims are parallelly adhered to for salutary purposes (Adegbite & Odebunmi 511–513). Since this is exactly what can be found in my material, I shall merely refer to this source, without adding any detailed comments.

6 Concluding Remarks

Taking into consideration what has been said in the last paragraph of the preceding section, it could be argued that so much that is relevant and related to the topic of politeness is not given direct attention within the scope of the present paper. This is obviously true, but in my view, to provide a complete examination of such a complex and multivalent phenomenon would be impossible anyway. Despite all of these acknowledged deficiencies, I hope that my research has shed light on several (albeit limited) aspects of doctor–patient interaction with respect to the politeness principle.

The findings indicate that both dialogue participants (the doctor and the patient) employ positive politeness mechanisms quite frequently, throughout the medical interview, and of all selected types. The quantitative analysis, supplemented with qualitative interpretation, shows that the most productive category of positive politeness is ‘claiming common ground’ and the phase which witnesses the most frequent utilization of these strategies is the treatment phase. In addition, it can be stated that to address the positive face wants of their patients, doctors initiate a series of varied positively polite strategies, enabling them to convey, among other things, social closeness, empathy and understanding to their clients. The positive talk of patients also takes a range of diverse forms. Patients often manifest friendliness, tease their doctors, joke, laugh, and initiate social talk. Individual strategies are combined, and contribute to a trustful and sharing atmosphere between the doctor and the patient. At the same time, however, it needs to be remarked that both interactants initiate face-threatening acts, though patients do so only rarely. On the other hand, they also use a variety of techniques and mitigating devices employed in order to save ‘face’. In addition, both participants orient themselves towards conversation and politeness maxims, usually following the maxim of quality, from time to time flouting the remaining conversation maxim, and parallelly adhering to politeness maxims for salutary purposes. Importantly, the section of diagnosis, compared to the final part of the consultation, is much more formal, with the participants rather reserved and keeping their distance.

Clearly, the medical consultation is a dynamic discourse type which defies absolute and exhaustive conclusions. It is especially for this reason that I do not rely exclusively on my own findings, but often refer to other sources. On the other hand, I believe I have brought enough evidence to support the standpoint that recent social changes have modified the traditional model of the doctor–patient relationship and prepared ground for reduction of hierarchies and redefinition of roles in favour of the patient.

Notes

¹ In general, I understand empathy as an “emotional experience between an observer and a subject in which the observer, based on visual and auditory cues, identifies and transiently experiences the subject’s emotional state. To be perceived as empathic, the observer must convey this understanding back to the subject” (Hirsch 2009).

² Besides calculating absolute and relative numbers, I also use more sophisticated approaches, namely correlation and the F-test. Correlation is a measure of the relation between two or more variables. Correlation coefficients (I employ Pearson) can range from -1.00 to +1.00. The value of the former one represents a perfect negative correlation, the value of the latter represents a perfect positive correlation. The F-test calculates statistical evidence whether two samples have the same standard deviation with specified confidence level. Samples may be of different sizes. In lay terms, it proves whether two samples differ to such an extent that this differentiation is worth studying.

³ HRT = hormone replacement therapy.

⁴ Brown & Levinson (1987) distinguish the following fifteen positive politeness sub-strategies: within ‘claim common ground’: (i) notice, attend to H, (ii) exaggerate, (iii) intensify interest to H, (iv) use in-group identity markers, (v) seek agreement, (vi) avoid disagreement, (vii) presuppose/raise/assert common ground, (viii) joke; within ‘convey that S and H are cooperators’ we have (ix) assert or presuppose S’s knowledge of and concern for H’s wants, (x) offer, promise, (xi) be optimistic, (xii) include both S and H in the activity, (xiii) give (or ask for) reasons, (xiv) assume or assert reciprocity; within ‘fulfil H’s want for some X’ (xv) give gifts to H.

⁵ On face-threatening acts in nursing discourse, see Valdmanová (2008), in which she proposes similar findings for nurse–patient interaction.

⁶ This instance could be assessed as a face-flattering act (see Kerbrat–Orecchioni 1997).

Appendix

Below are results of the F-test, containing calculations relevant for the quantitative section of the present study. The asterisk indicates when the results are of particular significance.

F / Participant	<i>Cooperator</i>	<i>Fulfil want</i>
<i>Common ground</i>	0.0002*	0.9668
<i>Cooperator</i>		0.0016*

F / Phase	<i>Cooperator</i>	<i>Fulfil want</i>
<i>Common ground</i>	3E-05*	0.0191*
<i>Cooperator</i>		0.1375

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Will English become a new lingua franca in Georgia?

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Abstract

The paper reports on current language policy in the Caucasian country of Georgia with a focus on reforms concerning the use of the English language. It describes the historical and social context of the present governmental language policy and then discusses the role of English in distinct fields, such as the economy, tourism and education. The author also presents the results of original ethnographic research, based on semi-structured expert and other interviews, aiming to investigate the linguistic situation in the village of Duisi, inhabited by the Kists, one of Georgia's national and linguistic minorities.

Keywords: Georgia, Kists, lingua franca, Russian, language policy, government

1 Introduction

The present paper reports on current language policy in Georgia with a focus on policy concerning the English language. It is divided into four parts. The first part reports on the broad historical context including the political events in Georgia leading to the current governmental language policy. The second part focuses on the role played by the English language in present-day Georgian society. It outlines the government's reforms concerning the English language, and then attempts to capture the process of their implementation, including its challenges. The third part of the paper presents the details of the interviews and the results of the ethnographic research which was carried out in Georgia in the summer of 2011. The research aimed to investigate the language situation of the Kists – the Georgian Chechens – and their attitudes to the language policy of the state involving the promotion of the English language. The fourth part summarizes the results in a short conclusion.

2 History and political background

In order to understand the present political course taken by the Georgian government, the history of Georgia will be outlined briefly. The present lingua franca roles of languages will be placed into the historical context.

The present-day country of Georgia claims to be the successor to the united kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti (the endonym for Georgia is *Sakartvelo*, and the Georgian people call themselves *Kartveli*, hence part of the former name of the kingdom). The Christian Kartli and Kakheti kingdoms suffered numerous attacks by the Muslim Persians, but also by Arabs, Mongols and Turks. The key event leading to the Russification of the country occurred when the Kartli-Kakheti king Erekle II signed the Treaty of Georgievsk in 1783, seeking the protection of Christian Russia against another imminent Persian invasion (Baddeley 19-20, 45; Silogava and Shengelia 165–166). According to this treaty, “Russian soldiers were to be stationed in Georgia, and the king was to conduct his foreign policy in conformity with Russian preferences” (Suny 58). In other words, the Georgian kingdom was to be internally independent, while its foreign policy was to be in the hands of the Russian tsar. Russia, however, violated the Treaty when it failed to help Kartli-Kakheti against the Iranian shah Agha Mohammed Khan, who invaded the country and set fire to Tbilisi in 1795 (Baddeley 19). Georgia had thus not benefited from the Russian protectorate, nor had it regained its independence. The Georgians lived under Russian rule for almost two hundred years, with a short break, from 1801, when Tsar Alexander I decided to abolish the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti – which had been annexed to the Russian empire the year before (Suny 59). Soon afterwards, Kartli and Kakheti were followed by other regions of present-day Georgia. The Russian Protectorate brought an end to the following principalities: in 1803 Mingrelia (Samegrelo), in 1804 Imereti, in 1809 Abkhazeti, in 1811 Guria, in 1833 Svaneti, and in 1828 southern Georgia (Baddeley 66; Suny 64). During the 19th century the protectorates were abolished one by one in all these areas and replaced with direct Russian rule.

Georgia underwent Russification under Russian rule. Suny writes that in 1840 “Georgian was eliminated as an official language for state business, though the majority of the people of the area did not understand Russian.” (Suny 72). Russian culture was promoted in the Caucasus, and the Russian language was to be spread (Suny 93). The colonial empire founded institutions in Georgia which provided education in the Russian language (Silogava and Shengelia 177). Some of the Georgian intelligentsia became gradually attracted by their rulers’ language and culture, and received an education in Russian, often in Moscow or St Petersburg. To illustrate the situation in Georgia in the second half of the 19th century, we will quote Suny describing the process of Russification in education:

From 1868 Georgian was clearly inferior to Russian, not only in popular attitudes or the views of officials, but in the law as well. The teaching of Russian was required in all schools in the empire, and Georgian was no longer a required subject. Beginning in the 1870s only private schools taught courses in Georgian, usually on the primary level, with Russian given as a special course. When a student reached middle school the courses were taught in Russian, with Georgian given as a separate course. As the result of state policy and legal discriminations, the percentage of schools that taught

a local Caucasian language steadily declined and those that taught all subjects in Russian increased. (Suny 128)

However, some of the Georgian intelligentsia opposed the Russification policy imposed on them from abroad. The opposition was mainly connected with the revival of the Georgian language, and it is not surprising that it had a nationalist character. One of the most significant promoters of the Georgian language protection was Ilia Chavchavadze, who contributed to the establishment of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy among the Georgians in 1879, thus helping to revive national awareness (Silogava and Shengelia 187).

In May, 1918 Georgia declared its independence, which was to last until 1921, when the country became a part of the Soviet Republic (Silogava and Shengelia 208–216; Suny 192–208). In the 1930s the official Soviet policy significantly changed under Joseph Stalin's influence. The promotion of Georgian culture took place as part of the 'Korenizatsiia' policy (Stalin 1946), which aimed to reinforce national elements in governmental institutions in the various Soviet republics, thus appeasing local opposition and stabilizing Soviet rule in Georgia and other regions of the Caucasus. Stalin's "exasperating policy of divide et impera" (Baddeley 41) thus "gave Georgians the dominant role in a republic that still possessed significant non-Georgian minorities" (Suny 281).

At the same time, some sources state that 'national schools' were established in Georgia, providing instruction in minority languages, i.e. Georgian, Abkhazian, Russian, Ossetian, Azeri and Armenian (Suny 233). Other sources speak about a massive process of Georgianization in 1944 and 1945, only a few years later ("Summary of historical events"). In spite of these pro-minority reforms, a sudden reversal in Soviet policy stance soon followed, when in 1938 the Russian language became a compulsory subject in all Soviet schools, and "as a lingua franca for the whole Soviet Union was encouraged" (Suny 258).

Alongside the strengthening of Russification and the Soviet opposition to Georgian nationalism, the Georgians still seemed to show a considerable resistance to learning the Russian language after WWII and through the 1970s (Suny 300). This resistance finally resulted in openly expressed opinions in the 1970s, e.g. in 1975, when a petition was signed by the prominent members of the Georgian intelligentsia protesting against the implementation of bilingualism, or in 1976, when Revaz Japaridze, a Georgian writer, angrily spoke against "an order from Moscow that all textbooks for higher educational institutions be published in Russian and that dissertations and their defenses be translated into Russian..." (Suny 309–310).

Eduard Shevardnadze, who was then pursuing his career as the First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party, "tried to allay fears of Russification" (Suny 309), and two years later, when Russian and other minority languages were to gain legal official status in Georgia, he was the one who "stressed the importance of learning Russian and improving the instruction of Russian in Georgia in order to broaden the horizons of the Georgian people." (Suny 310). He obviously acknowledged the role of Russian as the lingua franca for the Georgians and the necessity of its knowledge for the integration into the Soviet Union when he stated that "... the sun rises for Georgia, not in the east, but in the north, in Russia – ... the sun of Lenin's ideas" (Suny 310). However, for many an educated Georgian and member of the Georgian intelligentsia, this was not the case even then – or at least

Russia was only regarded as a means of coming closer to the West: “The benefits of European civilization were greatly desired by a thin layer of Georgian society, and the road to the West lay through Russia. Generations of Georgian students trekked northward to Russian centres of learning to discover the latest intellectual advances of European thinkers.” (Suny 122). The opponents of Russification persevered in their resistance.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union and Georgia’s declaration of independence in 1991, the country has undergone many changes. These have included the wars in Abkhazia, where “the war ended in the so-called Moscow ceasefire agreement in April 1994” (Hoch 83), and South Ossetia, where the war lasted from 1991 to 1992. After Zviad Gamsakhurdia’s exclusionary nationalism exacerbated the Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts, and “proved to be more divisive than integrating” (Suny 326), Eduard Shevardnadze, a skilful diplomat and experienced negotiator, became the crucial political representative of Georgia. After serving as the *de facto* head of the country between 1992 and 1995, he was the President of the Republic of Georgia between 1995 and 2003, adopting “friendly relations with the Western World” (Silogava and Shengelia 247), leading Georgia to membership of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, and cultivating cooperation with NATO. At the same time, Georgia, which was “strategically situated between the Black and Caspian Seas, became focus of interest and conflict between the great powers, Russia and America” (Silogava and Shengelia 248), and a choice had to be made between the two directions.

After the apparently fraudulent (Silogava and Shengelia 248) elections of 2003, the Georgian people decided that the sun rises for Georgia neither in the east, nor in the north, but in the west. They turned towards the pro-Western reformist party, and conducted the ‘Rose Revolution’. The leaders of the new government were Mikhail Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania and Nino Burjanadze, who belonged to the new generation of politicians, some of whom had already held important government posts previously, and who came to power in Georgia after 2003. Most of them were under forty years old and some of them were Western-educated. They became the ministers in one of the youngest governments in the world. They neither look back nostalgically at the former Georgian Soviet republic, nor do they have a “Soviet mentality” (Saakashvili “President”). The President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, is a typical politician of this generation. In his speeches both on a national and international stage he frequently refers to Georgia as belonging historically to the Western, mainly European, tradition (Saakashvili “President”; Saakashvili *Speeches*). His political aim is to lead Georgia to NATO membership and closer to the European Union: “Georgia is forever yoked to Europe. We are joined by a common and unbreakable bond – one based on culture – on our shared history and identity and on a common set of values that has at its heart, the celebration of peace, and the establishment of fair and prosperous societies.” (Saakashvili “Inaugural”).

Since 1999 Georgia has been part of the European Neighbourhood Policy. It has already achieved unprecedented success in the reform of the criminal justice sector and the fight against corruption, and its economic growth has considerably increased since then, with the EU being its main trading partner (“European Neighbourhood Policy – Georgia”).

Why has the Rose Revolution, with its pro-Western orientation, attracted any supporters at all? This question can be answered easily if we take into consideration Hugh Richardson’s statement: “The EU has reaped tremendous rewards from its soft power, the

result of which is an enlarged union of 27 Member States and unprecedented peace and prosperity on the European continent”. If we consider that the Georgian citizens were able to choose between geographically close Russia, with Putin’s colonial policy and intensive attempts at Russification (Georgia had been a subject of Russia for almost two centuries, after which it became an economically damaged region), and the European Union with its soft power and prosperous single market (Richardson; Nye), Europe and its values must have represented a more attractive option for them.

3 The English language reforms

In Shevardnadze’s era it was Russian that was the most frequently learned foreign language at schools in Georgia (*Formal semi-structured expert interviews with two Kist women*). However, the strong pro-Western orientation of the new government has been reflected in the country’s language policy, which logically began to turn towards English. Knowledge of the English language has been one of the factors which is intended to bring Georgia nearer to Europe as well as to the whole of the Western international community. The new language policy is mainly aimed at individual Georgian young people. The main body responsible for the implementation of the language reforms is the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia [hereafter MES]. Since 2009 the MES has been running the English Language Learning Strengthening Programme, which aims at “raising the competitiveness of graduates of Georgian schools and their integration within the international market.” (“English Language”).

The programme is thus aimed not only at young people, but also at teachers of English and their professional development. It involves three different sub-projects: “English-language summer schools in Georgia” (“English Language”) (enabling more than one thousand secondary school students to attend a summer English course in Georgia including classes conducted by native speakers), “English-language summer schools in the United Kingdom” (the best 100 students will go to the United Kingdom for two weeks to study English), and “Georgian High School Exchange Students’ Programme in the United States” (about 100 scholarships for Georgian students to study in the USA, funded 50% by the Georgian and 50% by the US Government) (ibid).

Moreover, since the school year 2010-11 English has been a compulsory subject at Georgian schools, taught to children from the 1st grade, whereas previously they might have started learning it from the fifth or sixth grade. This significant reform to the general education curriculum was initiated by the Georgian President in April 2010, who himself can speak English fluently, having received a university education in the USA. He explained that the reason behind this reform was the desire to enhance the competitiveness of the country’s young people. In his TV interview in Kutaisi on 6 April, 2010 Saakashvili also encouraged Georgian television stations to broadcast English-language movies with subtitles (Saakashvili, “Saakashvili Speaks”).

It must be added that the implementation of the English language into general education has also faced significant challenges. Firstly there is a shortage of English language teachers in the country, and secondly there is English teachers’ poor knowledge of English (*Informal interview with NGO worker*). Both problems are being tackled through the programme *Teach and Learn with Georgia* [hereafter referred to as *TLG*], which was

launched in Georgia in 2010. This programme resembles other programmes which were conducted in other countries in the past – including the Czech Republic in the 1990s. The main goal of the project is to recruit English-speaking volunteer teachers to teach English at Georgian public schools from 2010-2011. The commercial recruiting video placed on Georgian government websites emphasizes three dimensions of the project: it should “open doors” (“Teaching in Georgia video”) for young English learners, who will be able to communicate in English, plus they will be able to “...find a job easily...” (ibid) and use the internet. Further, there will be benefits for Georgian teachers of English, who will improve their knowledge of the language and enhance their application of teaching methodologies used in Europe and the USA. The volunteer teachers will gain “life-changing experience” (ibid), as well as being offered the opportunity to learn the Georgian language. The volunteer teachers, either native speakers of English or qualified or even unqualified (*Informal interview with NGO worker*) English teachers, are to participate in English language teaching with local teachers, and will be accommodated in their households, which will enable Georgian teachers of English to improve their English communication skills, as well as sharing “Western values and culture” (*Teach and Learn*).

Secondly, the cost of foreign English textbooks published by publishing houses in Europe was an insurmountable problem for many parents of children from socially vulnerable families from the very outset. The MES have been dealing with this problem in two ways. Macmillan Publishers Ltd has been selected in a public competition as the sole provider of English textbooks for Georgian children, as they are able to offer a textbook at 10 GEL [approx. €5], which is an acceptable price for a Georgian child (Barabadze; “Macmillan Education signs agreement with Georgia”). Moreover, the publishing house has funded training for teachers as a bonus to the deal (Barabadze).

This solution of the expensive textbook issue is a very innovative one, even by Western standards. In 2010 the MES introduced a reform which enables pupils from socially vulnerable families to download electronic textbooks from the *Buki – Learn with Joy* (*Buki*) websites. All the first grade pupils have been granted laptops for free by the MES since 2011, which should replace textbooks for them, thus saving their parents’ money (Samadashvili; Paichadze).

The implementation of the English language into general education in Georgia has also been facing harsh criticism. It is mainly the Georgian Labour Party that criticizes its anti-national character. In addition to the fact that the socialist Labourites claim to be pro-Western and pro-European, and their programme includes the country’s integration into the NATO and European Union structures, they also struggle to maintain good relations with Russia, and moreover, they appear to be nationalist (“Shalva”), which forms part of their highly populist policy (*Georgian Labour Party*).

In September 2011 the Georgian Labour Party addressed the United Nations committee on discrimination with the aim of eliciting a resolution “against the Anglo-American colonization of Georgia” (“Labourites urge”). This address seems to appeal to the voters inclined towards nationalism. It views the English language reforms being carried out in Georgia as part of the “destructive process of Anglicanisation of the future generation” (“Labourites urge”), involving the “expulsion of the Georgian language, history, religion and fundamental education away from schools” (“Labourites urge”). It even seems to display the Labour Party’s nationalist paranoia about the “oppression from the United

States and their companions of the Georgian language, education and culture” (“Labourites urge”). Giorgi Gugava, the Georgian Labour Party’s secretary, goes to absurd lengths when he says that the USA are “aiming at establishing slave colony of Georgia” (“Giorgi Gugava”), and the Rose Revolution policy funded by the Americans is part of this (ibid).

It is therefore obvious that the issue of implementing English language teaching has a political aspect, as a nationalist party is using populist arguments to gain votes. There is one more critical argument of the above-mentioned reform – which, however, has not been put forward by the opposition. It seems to have remained in the background of the discussion of the reform, in spite of the fact that it suggests the existence of grave difficulties with successful learning among children belonging to linguistic minorities. As Georgia is a multi-ethnic country with between 20–30% of its population speaking other native languages than its official language – Georgian (Sedlářová 293), the Georgian language is regarded as a uniting and integrating element for the citizens of Georgia in the present governmental language policy, one of whose crucial aims is to contribute to restoring the country’s integration. By law, Georgian is the only language of general education (with the exception of Abkhazian in Abkhazia), and it is in the process of attaining this status even in some of the regions inhabited by national minorities who attended ‘national schools’ in the past, receiving an education either in their mother tongues or in Russian (Kilasonia). So far they have had compulsory classes of Georgian as a foreign language at schools, but the lack of emphasis on communicative aims and inappropriate teaching methodology have not contributed to a good acquisition of speaking and listening skills. As the Armenians in Akhalkalaki commented on this issue: “We can only read the Georgian mkhedruli script without being able to understand the meanings of words...” (translated from Russian by Kopečková, *Informal interviews with the Georgian Armenians in Akhalkalaki*).

The insufficient knowledge of the Georgian language has been compensated for by the use of minority native languages or Russian as the lingua franca in the regions (Pop-janevski 39). For this reason, in the past, the communities of linguistic minorities often lacked motivation for learning Georgian. Therefore teaching the Georgian language as a second language has been a difficult job for the Georgian language teachers at schools attended by children belonging to linguistic minorities – both in the past (e.g. in case of the Kists), or in the present (e.g. the Armenians or Azeris) – trying to comply with the new reforms which require it as a language of general education (Kilasonia; *Formal semi-structured expert interviews with two Kist women*). Such children often enter school without any previous knowledge of Georgian. They first have to learn the language, and it usually takes them between six to seven years to start thinking in it (*Formal semi-structured expert interviews with two Kist women*). Learning a foreign language such as English with a different script from the first grade is thus another obstacle to their successful learning, which is generally best achieved in the native language (Dutcher 1-2).

Knowledge of the English language not only enhances the personal potential of young Georgian people and their competitiveness in the labour market. It might also lead to friendly relations with Western investors or business partners. After the Russian Federation started blocking imports of Georgian wines and mineral waters into Russia in 2006, and supported the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states (Sywenkyj; “Russia bans”), the European Union became the main trading partner for Georgia. New European investors are often attracted to invest in Georgia by the following results of a

survey carried out for the World Bank. In June 2011, eight years after the Rose Revolution, after the period of social and economic reforms in Georgia linked also to the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan, the World Bank ranked Georgia as the number 1 country among the Eastern European and Central Asian countries (apart from Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] high income countries) for Ease of Doing Business (“Economy Rankings”). If new Western investors are welcomed in the English language in Georgia by Georgian business partners capable of direct communication in English, such a factor might also contribute to doing business smoothly there and bringing money to the country. A Western businessman considering his investment in Georgia will probably launch cooperation more easily if he is directly spoken to in English than if having to communicate via an interpreter.

In addition to encouraging investment from abroad, the post-revolutionary governments and President Saakashvili resolved to achieve the reconstruction of the Georgian economy through the development of tourism: “Tourism gives us the chance in the shortest possible timescale to revitalise the economies of those parts of Georgia which are currently ruled by unemployment and depression” (Vardiashvili). Georgia does not possess natural resources which could be exported, nor does not have enough investments in production which could boost the economy. However, it offers outstanding natural beauty, including the sea, mountains on which skiing slopes can be built, caves, and rivers suitable for white-water rafting, but also plenty of very old and unique historical sights.

Languages also play a certain role in developing tourism. After arriving in Georgia, every English-speaking tourist will be pleasantly surprised to find that most of the notices with information one would like to read and understand – such as those giving instructions at the airport, street names and traffic signs – are provided bilingually, in Georgian and in English. Use of the English language might be one of the strategies to make the speakers of Latin alphabet languages welcome in a country where the Georgian mkhedruli script is unintelligible for most foreign tourists, unless they learn it. However, the replacement of the Russian notices from the Soviet times with English ones rather seems to be part of the Georgian pro-Western policy (as the analysis of the official statistics below will show) than a reflection of a change in the numbers of incoming tourists.

The information centres in Georgian cities and towns such as Tbilisi, Tkibuli, Signaghi, Batumi and Mestia, frequently visited by Western tourists, provide their services in the English language, but their employees are often able to communicate in other languages too, or at least they provide visitors with brochures in other languages, such as Spanish, French, Russian, Italian, Polish, Japanese, Chinese or Turkish.

As has been stated above, it is the Georgian government’s goal to prioritize tourism as an industry that will rescue the country’s economy and provide income and jobs in a country with high unemployment. The statistics of the “Arrivals of non-resident visitors at national borders of Georgia by country of citizenship” in 2000-2011 show that the highest number of visitors, including tourists on holidays but also businessmen, and people passing through, still arrive in Georgia from the countries whose citizens are more likely to communicate in Russian because of their shared communist history. Their numbers have been increasing proportionately alongside the numbers of the tourists from other parts of the world since 2000.

In 2011 Georgia was visited by almost 3 million tourists, out of whom 63% arrived in Georgia from the Commonwealth of Independent States (hereafter referred to as CIS), whose citizens are more likely to know Russian, and 32% from Europe (non-CIS), who are likely to prefer English for communication, including 1.5% who came from Central and Eastern Europe (non-CIS), while the remaining 5% arrived from the Americas, Africa and Asia (“Arrivals of non-resident visitors at national borders of Georgia by country of citizenship”). The estimate of the numbers of potential speakers of the respective languages presented here is a rough one; it does not take into account that some of the non-resident visitors might be Georgians from diasporas abroad, how long the visitors stay in Georgia, the fact that some Russians or other CIS citizens might communicate with Georgians in English, or that some of the visitors merely travel through Georgia in transit to another country. The estimate is only included to illustrate the fact that in reality, Russian still probably prevails as the lingua franca between non-resident visitors and Georgian citizens.

The practicality of replacing the Russian traffic and information notices with the English ones can be thus seen as some sort of marketing strategy which aims to attract Western visitors to the country; visitors from the post-Soviet countries are already familiar with the fact that they can often communicate in Russian with the local citizens. Obviously, it also works as a visible demonstration of the state policy.

Finally, the following lines will mention the role of the English language in everyday communication by Georgian citizens. Thousands of Western tourists have been an incentive for people who run small businesses to learn the English language at a basic communicative level. The businesspeople running guest houses, hostels, hotels, shops, cafes and restaurants in the regions frequently visited by the Western tourists – such as the Black Sea resorts, the historical town of Signaghi and the vineyards in its surroundings, Mestia in Svaneti, or the capital Tbilisi – prefer to communicate in English, even if you offer them the chance to speak in Russian. The use of English instead of Russian may sometimes be a necessity for them, when e.g. meeting numerous Israeli tourists – or it may be symbolic, openly demonstrating the change for the better in their lives. Alternatively, it may simply signal that they want to develop their English-speaking skills. Naturally, there are regions rarely visited by tourists, where generally only educated people speak English, while others still prefer Russian as the lingua franca.

Moreover, there are regions in Georgia where Russian notices can still be found too, as well as Armenian ones; for example in Javakheti street names are provided in three languages – Georgian, Armenian and Russian. The language issue and the national minority question seem to be sensitive topics in the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti (*Formal semi-structured expert interviews with two Kist women* and *Informal interviews with the Georgian Armenians in Akhalkalaki*); the English language is thus being introduced there more slowly both into general education and into infrastructure, and the English native speakers from abroad recruited via *Teach and Learn with Georgia* have not arrived at all schools in the region yet. However, the local people seem to be eagerly expecting their arrival in the future (*Informal interviews with the Georgian Armenians in Akhalkalaki*). They also seem to associate English with a better future for themselves, availability of employment, and Western investment – after the two Russian military bases providing employment to over 1,000 people, which represented the mainstay of the local economy, were handed over to the Georgians in June 2007 (Kakachia 200).

4 The Kists, their language situation and attitudes

The Kists, the Vainakh (Chechen) people, are one of the numerous ethnic minorities in Georgia, most of whose 7,000 people (“Ethnic groups”) live in relatively compact settlements in the Pankisi Gorge, Akhmeta District, Kakheti Region. They settled in this eastern region of Georgia two hundred years ago after being invited there by local dukes to protect the border area against the numerous Dagestani attacks from the Northern Caucasus (*Informal interviews with the Kist villagers in Pankisi*). But as Kopeček claims, “it was probably combination of more factors” (Kopeček 158). The reasons for their settlement also involved the Russian conquest of the Caucasus, and its economic and social consequences, such as the radicalization of the northern Caucasus under the rule of Imam Shamil, as well as the highlanders’ customary law of adat (blood feud) practised in Chechnya (Kurtsikidze and Chikovani, *Ethnography* 235–236).

In recent history, the Pankisi Gorge became famous after it was invaded by thousands of Chechen refugees during the Second Chechen War between 1999 and 2000, who included “militants and Islamic radicals, allegedly connected with Al-Qaeda,” and “the valley was effectively taken out from the government control” (Kopeček 159). The region was then bombed by the Russian air forces “claiming they conducted an anti-terrorist operation” (Kopeček 159). Most of the refugees left the valley at the beginning of the Second Chechen War, after the militants had been expelled by the Georgian army (Sanikidze 278). According to Tamaz Bagakashvili, a state official of the Ministry of IDPs in Duisi, “in 2010 only a few hundreds of the refugees stayed in the valley.” (Kopeček 159).

Culturally, the Kist community consists of two Sufi orders, the Naqshabandi Tariqat and the Kunta Hajji Tariqat, sometimes called the Quadiri movement, which was only established at the beginning of the 20th century in the region, and whose members place the adat above sharia law (Kurtsikidze and Chikovani, *Ethnography* 251–252) – but also of the Wahhabis, which is a derogative word for radical Muslims often belonging to the generation of young men who have studied in Arabic countries and have become influenced by the Saudi Arabian type of Islam. These young men built the so-called New Mosque in Duisi with the help of Arab money (*Formal semi-structured expert interviews with two Kist women*). There is also the so-called Old Mosque in Duisi, which was completed in 1902 (Kurtsikidze and Chikovani, *Ethnography* 250). In this mosque, the Chechen ‘zikr’, dancing accompanied by chanting of religious words, is practised by the older generation of Sufi Muslims. The members of the local order pray for peace in the world and in the Caucasus at zikr every Friday, as has been confirmed to me by Badi, the leader of the Kunta Hajji order in Duisi (*Informal interviews with the Kist villagers in Pankisi*).

The economic situation in Pankisi has not been satisfactory since the closure of the local felt-producing plant at the end of the 20th century. The local Kist population has been growing old as the young people have started moving away to find employment outside the valley (*Formal semi-structured expert interviews with two Kist women*). Therefore the leading representative of the local NGO Marshua Kavkaz (Peace for the Caucasus), which was founded in 1999, seized an opportunity offered by the Polish NGO Fundacja Edukacji Międzykulturowej and the Georgian Biological Farming Association Elkana, and together with other local volunteers established an agro-tourism project (*Pankisi*), which was to start a business bringing foreign tourists and their money to the poverty-stricken

region. Since then about fourteen families have been offering accommodation to the Western tourists (Kopeček 160), who are attracted to the region by means of the offer to attend and watch zikr, go tyre-rafting on the Alazani river, go hiking in the mountains, and spend time on local farms and eat their delicious home-made food (for more information on agro-tourism in Pankisi see Kopeček).

Agro-tourism in Pankisi has been gradually developing. Dozens of tourists now come to the valley every year, bringing extra income to some families. In addition to relatively modest profits, there seems to be another, spiritual effect of tourism on the Kists. When asked what she regarded as the greatest benefit of the agro-tourism project to herself and the community, one of the interviewees said: “I had started doubting our conservative traditions and their role in the modern society. But after speaking to tourists I realized that our traditions are interesting for other people, and I began to value them again more.” (translated from Russian by Kopečková, *Formal semi-structured expert interviews with two Kist women*). This was confirmed to me when I saw Sufi Muslims in the village of Duisi being very proud of their zikr tradition. Their leader literally forced us to video their rite in the mosque, encouraging us all the time with the words: “Snimayte! Snimayte!”. She was also very happy that we had arrived one day before their neighbour’s funeral, and she could proudly offer us the opportunity to attend it. Therefore tourism in Pankisi has probably contributed to a strengthening of the Kist people’s identity too.

The research conducted in the village of Duisi, which the author of the present article visited in the summer of 2010 and again in the summer of 2011, was based on ethnographic methods involving several interviews (see Hendl 189–190; Tulmets and Střítecký). Two expert semi-structured interviews were held by the author of this paper in Russian and partly in English, with a local Georgian language teacher and organizer of agro-tourism and a young postgraduate student helping to run an agro-tourism business. The setting of the interviews was the interviewees’ household. The interviews took about three hours, approximately ninety minutes each, and were transcribed by the author of the paper. The interviewees had been asked about their language preference for the interview. The teacher-interviewee opted for Russian, as her knowledge of English was basic. The student-interviewee decided to speak Russian most of the time, including some English passages, which seemed to have the function of expressing a liking for the interviewer. Several informal interviews were also held with local villagers in the village of Duisi, such as the leader of the Marshua Kavkaz NGO, her son and others, all of them in Russian, in people’s households or in the village. All the interviewees will remain anonymous in the present article. The aim of the expert semi-structured interviews was to investigate the local linguistic situation and people’s attitudes towards the governmental language policy with a focus on English. The results of the interviews have been summarized in the following paragraphs.

The local Kist population lives in Pankisi in a situation of diglossia, which is defined as the existence of two distinct varieties, formal and informal, within one community, which fulfil different social functions in different social contexts. The lower variety spoken by the Kists is Nakh, or the Kist dialect of the Chechen language. The interviewees confirmed that the Kist people in Pankisi only use this language when they speak to their family members, neighbours, but also to the guests and relatives who frequently come to visit them from Chechnya particularly in summer. The Kist dialect, or Kistinski, as they call it

in Russian, contains some vocabulary of Georgian origin, which has been the result of the impact of living in Georgian society, and it seems to have several sub-dialects. The sub-dialects are distinguished by distinct intonation patterns used by inhabitants of different Pankisi villages (there are six of them). Most of the local Kists cannot write or read in the Chechen language, unless they have studied in Chechnya in the Soviet past, or have taken the opportunity to learn it at university in Tbilisi, as the younger interviewee has done.

The high variety spoken by the Kists is the Georgian language, which is genetically unrelated to Kist Chechen. The Kist children start learning the language as soon as they enter primary school, and they simultaneously receive their general education in the language. The Georgian language teacher interviewee complained about the difficulty of teaching children in Georgian, as they can hardly learn anything before they manage to think in Georgian – which takes a few years (as has been mentioned in the paragraphs above). The Kists then use the Georgian language to communicate with the other peoples in Pankisi, both Ossetians and Georgians, who are settled behind the dam on the Alazani river, as well as to those outside Pankisi. The interviewees were very aware of the necessity to be proficient in Georgian as this language is the language of their integration into Georgian society, and a door to a possible university education as well as employment outside their valley. It is also the language of the television programmes they often watch.

The foreign languages Kist children are currently learning at several local primary schools are Russian and English. Knowledge of the Russian language is regarded as highly useful. It is used as the lingua franca to communicate with peoples of other countries in the Caucasus, to talk to most of the tourists coming to the valley, and to watch Russian television channels and the Georgian PIK channel (*Perviy Informatsionniy Kavkazskiy*) based in Tbilisi, providing “...the best of Caucasian culture and unbiased, critical and independent journalism.” (*Kanal PIK Podcasts*). The younger interviewee also stated that Russian might improve the prospects of finding a job in Georgia as most job advertisements require knowledge of the language optionally as an advantageous skill. There is still a Russian section in the local school, which was opened recently for the children of the Chechen refugees, but it will apparently be closed soon because of the current governmental policy supporting learning in the Georgian language (see the paragraphs in the section “English language reforms”).

English language classes have been taught at Pankisi schools of general education since September 2011. The interviewee claimed that they were expecting a teacher from abroad who was to come on the *Teach and Learn with Georgia [TLG]* programme. The teacher was to stay in their household, and the family, particularly the grandmother, were looking forward to “her” (not taking into account at all that it might be a male teacher). In addition to English classes taught at schools of general education, the Roddy Scott Education Centre in Duisi provides after-school English courses, organizing them for six local schools. The Centre is supported by the Roddy Scott Foundation (*Roddy Scott Foundation*), which was established in 2008 by Roddy Scott’s parents in memory of their son, who was a British freelance journalist and lived in Pankisi during the Second Chechen War, making a documentary film about the thousands of Chechen refugees in the valley. He was shot dead in the Russian Republic of Ingushetia in 2002 (“Killed Reporter’s”). In addition to organizing after-school English classes and computer skills courses for children, the foundation also provides training for local Kist teachers of English, and runs a nursery.

The local people seem to be grateful for their children's opportunity to attend classes at the Roddy Scott Education Centre, and most of the children use it (Zuzajan).

Both the interviewees have been learning English. The Georgian language teacher does so with the prospect of using it in communication with tourists, particularly with those from Israel. The younger interviewee was going to take an exam in English when studying at university in Tbilisi. They consider knowledge of English necessary if one wants to find a good job, as most of the advertisements for qualified jobs require a knowledge of English. They have positive attitudes to learning it, and are proud that the Kist children can learn it at school. Moreover, the student-interviewee claimed that English might be useful for one's university studies; she can use materials in English too, as well as the internet websites in English. In everyday life English is useful as a lot of products from Europe are imported to Georgia which only have instructions or information labels in English.

When evaluating the interviewees' reasons for learning the English language, it seemed to me that the women were managing very well without English in real life in most social situations at the moment, which is not the case of the Russian language. The student-interviewee needed Russian to study at university, as her field of study has been offered to students from all over the Caucasus, and a Russian Section has been opened after the MES had given special permission to the university to do so. She mainly connects the use of English with future prospects.

The interviewed representatives of the Kists seem to fully accept the present governmental language reforms concerning the introduction of the English language; they seem to associate English with a better future, improving their own income and finding qualified employment. However, they also have their own demands of the government. As the Kist Chechen language only functions as a low variety in the region, the Kists are concerned with its future prospects. The teacher-interviewee literally said: "I am afraid the Kistinski language will stop developing if children do not learn to write and read in it at schools." (translated from Russian by Kopečková, *Formal semi-structured expert interviews with two Kist women*). The children can only learn it now in optional classes, which are very limited within the general education curricula. The representatives of the local community therefore recently decided to send an official letter to Tbilisi asking for the introduction of compulsory lessons in the Chechen language at local schools. To their disappointment, their demand has been rejected with the argument that there are optional lessons at primary schools which can be used for similar subjects. The interviewee explained that the government does not regard the Kists as a national minority, and therefore it does not acknowledge their right to learn the Chechen language at schools within the curriculum. She also added that she could understand the government, even though she disagreed with it, as the issues connected with national minorities were a very sensitive topic in Georgia, connected with attempts at the re-integration of the separatist regions and the integration of the regions possibly threatening irredentism.

It will be useful to conclude by taking a brief look at the legal framework of minority rights protection in Georgia. The crucial legal tool for minority languages protection in Europe, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, has not been ratified by Georgia although the Georgian political representatives promised to do so more than ten years ago. The Kist interviewee's point of view is in agreement with Johanna Pop-janevski, a specialist in minority protection and security issues in Georgia, who claims

that “Governments [Georgian and Azerbaijani] have remained reluctant to ratifying instruments at all, as they are believed to be counter-productive to integration of national minority groups” (Popjanevski 8). It seems that unless the integration of the country is achieved, the protection of language minority rights will not improve.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, at the moment the state’s integration policies seem to outweigh language minority rights protection, and this approach is also reflected in governmental language policy. The first key goal is the integration of the acknowledged national minorities, such as the Armenians or Azeris, into Georgia. They should be enabled, by developing communication skills in Georgian, to participate in political life actively, to become educated in the Georgian language at Georgian universities, and to find employment in Georgia. All this should be achieved by strengthening Georgian language education. However, when promoting these goals, the Georgian government does not seem to realize that the loyalty or integration of national or unacknowledged national minorities are often also a matter of maintaining their identity. Therefore in addition to supporting their integration by means of integrating the Georgian language into the curricula within general education, often leading to their assimilation rather than integration, some disintegrating elements might be best appeased by allowing them to maintain their own cultures and learn (in) their respective national languages. The Kists seem to be very aware of the integrating role of the Georgian language, but they also aim to enhance their Kist Chechen language skills, a goal which is not currently supported by the government.

The second key goal is the integration of Georgian young people and other citizens into the Western English-speaking community, finding a better alternative for the state’s model than the Russian one. It is European soft power that is attractive for the Western-oriented Georgian politicians, involving Europe’s prosperous society and the peaceful relations among the EU member states. The introduction of the English language into Georgian society often symbolizes a better future for the people from poverty-stricken regions, such as Pankisi, while in other parts of the country, such as Signaghi in Kakheti or the capital Tbilisi, it is a matter of earning considerable income. People of any ages running small businesses offering services for tourists, such as guest houses, restaurants, cafes or shops, often prefer and are proud to speak in English to tourists, rather than Russian, as their customer base has been changing in recent times. If future governments manage to persevere this direction of policy, a new generation of Georgian citizens will grow up communicating in English fluently, which will make them part of the European and Western community, thus bringing certain benefits with it.

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Book Reviews

Marguerite Rigoglioso.
The Cult of Divine Birth in Ancient Greece.
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

The claim that “this is the first scholarly book to explore the theme of divine birth in ancient Greece in an in-depth and comprehensive fashion” (5) might sound rather bold, but can a feminist critic such as Marguerite Rigoglioso state otherwise?

Based on archaeological, historical and literary records, she describes prehistoric Mother goddesses as parthenogenetic creatrices who were worshipped in order to give birth to divine progeny. In various rituals, their priestesses probably achieved a similar conception themselves and often delivered offspring in the form of an oracle at various locations, for example at Delphi or Dodona, after inhaling divine emanations in the form of vapours through their vaginas. Another effective means was a trance induced by entheogens¹, which were widely used to invoke “profound non-ordinary states of consciousness” (16).

The phenomenon of such a birth is described as the consequence of “autoerotic desire.” “The process is one whereby the woman must become *as one* with the generative power of the universe [...], she must ‘become androgynous’” (26). This actually excludes *hieros gamos*, a sexual act between a godhead and a mortal that frequently appears in the later patriarchal mythology. For this reason, we might presume that the mythic figures of Theseus, Heracles or Perseus’s stature were not the by-products of rape but the offspring of a Mother Goddess.

The author reconstructs the history of divinities through various techniques of reading: feminist hermeneutics of suspicion, neo-euhemerism² and esotericism. These approaches help to see selected phenomena from various perspectives. In many regards, her conclusions are questionable and even outrageous. However, the main issue is not resolved straightforwardly: Is parthenogenetic birth possible on the human plane?

The phenomenon is not quite uncommon in the contemporary world. As a reminder, the author speaks about *dermoid cysts* or *benign teratomas*, which are “jumbled masses of embryonic tissue that contain teeth, bones, hair, skin, and other recognizable human features. These strange interior growths in women are indeed the result of the spontaneous parthenogenetic division of the egg within the ovary” (38). Furthermore, she gives examples of certain animal species which can reproduce in a similar fashion and give birth parthenogenetically. Among many others, for example, is the queen bee. “The queen bee produces males – drones – spontaneously out of her own body without the need for fertilization by sperm” (193). There is only one case when she concedes to copulate with male drones, and this is the union out of which worker bees are produced.

The author’s main research focuses on Athena, Artemis, Hera, and priestesses from Dodona and Delphi who belonged to “pre-Greek antiquity” (118). These pythons, she assumes, were mortals who later became apotheosised in various myths. The term *nymph*

or *heroine*, which was later conferred upon them, “was a posthumous cultic marker for the priestess who was believed to have borne the child of a god” (19).

Another interesting piece of knowledge M. Rigoglioso shares is the origin of the Olympic Games, which might have had divine birth origins as the priestesses of Hera took part in diverse kinds of foot races. “The memory of this may well be preserved in the ritual of the opening of the games. For Greek women, now ‘playing’ the role of the Elean priestesses, still light the sacred torch at the altar to Hera at Olympia in front of her temple during this event” (138).

The author is very apt at linking mythology with astrotheology, astrology, asterism and cult practices. For instance, she traces the connection of Dodona priestesses with doves and Pleiades. The priestesses were, in the author’s view, communicating with the star cluster. The stars were conferring upon them “divinity and immortality” (157). The received *power*, which they afterwards transmitted, has often been described as speaking in tongues. According to the critic, this sound was not so dissimilar to humming, and it symbolizes “an entry point to the knowledge of the cosmos by means of a specific sound frequency accessed on the subtle realms” (201).

Besides the aforementioned issues, M. Rigoglioso hints at the possibility of receiving goddess-like power and spiritualizing contemporary humanity. By doing this, she wants to establish the link with the tradition that was cut off its origins and almost obliterated by patriarchy. It is to be acknowledged that some findings are surprising, but early *unsettlement* disappears before the end of the work, which reads delightfully well. We can accept, at least for a while, that it is really “the first scholarly book to explore the theme of divine birth in ancient Greece in an in-depth and comprehensive fashion” and value its contribution to women studies and interpretation of Ancient Mythology generally.

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Notes

¹ The word *entheogen*, a neologism, was derived from the Ancient Greek words *entheos* (ἔνθεος) meaning “G-d within” and *genesthai* (γενέσθαι) “to generate.” We can translate it as a means that generates G-d or godly inspiration within a person. *Entheogens* commonly refer to psychotropic substances.

² In the author’s own words: “The term *neo-euhemerism* derives from the name of the fourth century B.C.E. writer Euhemerus, who, by investigating the actions and places of birth and burial of the divinities of popular religion, claimed the gods were simply deified human beings, great heroes who were revered because they had benefited mankind in some important way” (8).

The review is the outcome of the Student Grant Competition: SGS2/FF/2012 – Song in Cultural Contexts / Píseň v kulturních kontextech.

News, Announcements

Conference Report

The Changes in Epochal Paradigms and the Opportunities They Offer for English Studies

3rd International Conference of the Slovene Association for the Study of English

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, 10–12 May 2012

The host institution of the conference was the Department of English at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, in close cooperation with the Slovene Association for the Study of English (in Slovene SDAŠ), a member of the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE), a federation of 33 national associations of English studies. The event brought together 102 speakers and over 150 scholars in total, from fields including linguistics, literature, translation, methodology, gender and cultural studies. The event was highly international, with participants representing 26 countries covering Europe (especially countries from the former Yugoslavia), but also including India, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia and the USA.

The conference was opened by the President of SDAŠ, Professor Smiljana Komar, a member of the host department. She was followed by ESSE President Professor Fernando Galván, who welcomed the participants on behalf of ESSE, briefly outlined the Society's activities, informed the audience that SDAŠ is among the low-membership ESSE subsidiaries with around 70 members (though such a number is perhaps not that low taking into consideration that Slovenia has a population of just 2.5 million), and reminded participants of the 11th ESSE Conference to be held in Istanbul on 4–8 September 2012. The opening session proceeded with three plenary lectures by Professor David Crystal (University of Wales, Bangor) on 'Language and the Internet', Professor David Staines (University of Ottawa) on 'Contemporary Canada: Fiction at the Multicultural Crossroads', and Raymond Kerr (The British Council, Istanbul) on 'The British Council's Continuing Professional Development Framework'. After the opening, the participants split into four parallel sections chaired mostly by scholars representing the host department.

The title of the conference itself opens up space for a number of interpretations. As the organisers claimed in the conference call, and as Professor Komar reminded us in the introductory speech, the aim was to question the traditional role of English studies as well as those traditional critical theoretical tools which emerged from a context of static print media and which were developed before the rise of TV and the internet. Thus the unifying themes of the conference may be summed up as follows: whether books and texts are an obsolete concept in the era of hypertext, what role the traditional canon plays in a context where reading is losing its primacy, and what lies ahead for the English language and English studies in an online environment. Naturally, the title of the conference invited much speculation and a range of readings: while some decided to focus on phonetic, morphological, semantic and many other aspects of well-established genres, others zoomed in on the 'changes' associated with emerging genres with unstable and 'elastic' generic conventions, such as blogs, web pages, social networks or e-books, all of which have arisen due to modern communication technologies. Probably due to the wide thematic scope which attracted a host of varied contributions, some sections lacked organic coherence (a potential weak point of any conference on a large scale) and many conference attendees might have found themselves section-hopping.

Speaking personally, the high point of the conference was the opportunity to see the famous 'spokesperson' for the English language, David Crystal, in the flesh. Professor Crystal was, as many eminent personages tend to be, very approachable – and the conference participants enjoyed communicating with him both on a professional and a personal level during the breaks and informal dinners. Professor Crystal's plenary speech offered a wider perspective on internet linguistics, an area which he sees as an indication of future trends and which is covered in his recent books – *Language and the Internet*, *Internet Linguistics: A Student Guide*, *Language Play*, and *Txtng: the Gr8 Db8*. He views electronically/ digitally mediated communication (E/DMC) as a new paradigm which is still emerging as a routine form of electronic interaction. As a result, 'electronic language' is a new phenomenon that is breaking and also complementing the traditional spoken/written paradigm: for people born before 1990 books are central and the screen marginal, while for those born after 1990 there has never been a world without the internet and it has become part of their lives – for them, the screen is central and books marginal. That is, according to Crystal, the nature of this



From the left: dr. Adam (PdF MU), prof. D. Crystal, dr. Zapletalová and dr. Tomášková (FF OU)

paradigm shift – this complete reversal of traditional expectations in relation to literacy – and our task (as teachers) is to understand the nature of the new medium so as to anticipate what it is doing to our students and all of us and to examine the impact of those new communication opportunities on individual languages.

Basically, the talk centred on two questions: what new communicative possibilities does the internet allow, and has it affected English in any particular way? With respect to the first question, Crystal discussed phenomena such as the lack of simultaneous feedback in electronic language in favour of multiple simultaneous conversations, the lack of permanence/stability versus the possibility of ‘refreshing the page’, hypertext links versus traditional footnotes, or ‘framing’ in emails as an expression of so-called ‘cutting linguistics’. Crystal sees internet language as a curious amalgam of the spoken and written medium, a property which can be sensed in the terminology – chatroom, email conversation, web page – in which the terminology of speech and the terminology of writing are mixed together.

The internet has radically altered our conception of some of the most widespread notions in linguistic and literary research, as the traditional notion of text – in a sense determinate, having a beginning, middle and end, carrying an assumed identity in terms of a stylistic homogeneity of spoken/written medium – is disappearing. The text is now being extended into a forum with no end, constantly ongoing, repeatedly edited, unfinishable. These texts are no longer synchronic/diachronic in Saussure’s sense, because the internet, as Crystal admits, blows this distinction out of the water. Some texts are now ‘panachronic’, for example those in Wikipedia. Another important quality of these ‘new’ texts is their stylistic heterogeneity; in a wiki-world anyone can enter the text, edit it, add comments or reflections, all of which is possible due to the internet’s anonymity: we have no idea about authorship.

Certainly, the internet has a fundamental impact on communication resembling a revolution; new communicative issues are being raised, while old familiar, comfortable concepts of language have to be revised. However, Professor Crystal maintains that with respect to the second question, the idea that languages are going to be rapidly reformulated by the internet is one of the big myths of the present day. To support this argument, analysis of electronic language does not offer evidence of profound changes; only in orthography is there a certain amount of innovation, such as trends towards punctuation maxi/minimalism. In summary, David Crystal concludes that the internet is a revolution in the sense that it is an epoch-changing paradigm as far as communicative function is concerned, yet not very much has changed as far as specific, individual linguistic means are concerned. Inevitably, the internet offers enormous scope for research because so little of this information has yet been given the kind of analysis it deserves.

Overall, the Ljubljana conference was a memorable experience; presenting and sharing one’s own research, meeting some colleagues and making new friends all took place in a highly inspiring setting, in a historic university city with an unexpected Salzburg-like charm. The next occasion where (not only) the Ljubljana conference participants can meet again will surely be, apart from Istanbul this year, the 12th ESSE Conference to be held in Košice in September 2014.

Gabriela Zapletalová
University of Ostrava



**The Department of English and American Studies,
Faculty of Arts, University of Ostrava**

invites postgraduate students in doctoral study programmes,
and their tutors/supervisors/teachers, to take part in the conference

**The Interpersonal Function of Language in the Genres
of Academic, Institutional and Media Discourse,
to be held on November 8–9, 2012**

We welcome papers presenting research results related to any of the wide range of means realizing the interpersonal metafunction in a variety of genres representing academic, institutional and media discourse.

Keynote speakers:

Hon. Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. H. G. Widdowson, University of Vienna, University of London
Prof. PhDr. Jarmila Tárníková, CSc., Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci
Doc. PhDr. Milan Ferenčík, M.A., PhD., Prešovská univerzita v Prešově

Important dates

If you wish to present a paper, please submit the abstract by electronic mail by August 31;
e-mail notifications of acceptance will be sent by September 15;
registration forms should be sent by September 30, 2012.

Contact address for abstract submission and registration:

gabriela.zapletalova@osu.cz

A selection of papers will be published in a conference monograph and in the Ostrava Journal of English Philology (<http://ff.osu.cz/kaa>).

Conference committee:

Mgr. Renáta Tomášková, Dr. (renata.tomaskova@osu.cz)

Mgr. Gabriela Zapletalová, Ph.D. (gabriela.zapletalova@osu.cz)

Mgr. Christopher Hopkinson, Ph.D. (christopher.hopkinson@osu.cz)

The conference fee, 1 000 Kč /40 €, includes participation in conference sessions, conference materials, coffee break refreshments and the conference dinner on November 8. The fee does not include travel and accommodation costs.

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